

Combating Conspiracy Theories

Workshop Materials For Adult Educators



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Content

introduction – The TEACH Handbook on Compating Conspiracy Theories	8
Trigger warning	11
Disclaimer	11
Module 1: Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories	13
Introduction	13
Aims of this Module	14
Day 1	15
Warm-up 1: The Jewish Conspiracy Gallery Walk	15
Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World-Power – Conspiracy Mindset	17
Wrap-up 1: Elevator Pitch: What have I learned today about Conspiracy Theories?	20
Day 2	21
Warm-up 2: The Twitter-Break	21
Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" What?	23
Wrap-up 2: "What do you take from today's session?"	26
Day 3	27
Warm-up 3: South Park and Jewish conspiracy theories	27
Exercise 3.1: "Normal Stuff on the Internet" (?)	28
Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game - Conspiracy Theory Manufactory	30
Wrap-up 3: Silent Conversation	32
Module 2: Anti-Feminist Conspiracy Theories	34
Introduction	34
Aims of this Module	37
Day 1	38
Warm-up 1: Wait What are anti-feminist conspiracy theories?	38
Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories?	40
Exercise 1.2: How to analyse antifeminist conspiracy theories - in your class!	42
Exercise 1.3: Dealing with conspiracy theories - a difficult Step for everyone	44
Wrap-up 1: Silent reflections on loud phenomena	46
Day 2	48
Warm-up 2: Let's get started and find associations!	48
Exercise 2.1: Do's and Don'ts for conversations	49



	Exercise 2.2: Anti-feminist conspiracy theories - A threat for democracy?	51
	Exercise 2.3: Argumentation strategies and options for action	53
	Wrap-up 2: Reflection is the key – sum it up!	55
M	lodule 3: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories	57
	Introduction	57
	Aim of this module	58
	Day 1	59
	Warm-up 1: Impromptu networking on topics of the workshop	59
	Exercise 1.1: Exploration: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories and Neighbouring Concepts	60
	Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories - a Tour d'Horizon	63
	Exercise 1.3: Great Replacement believers in practice	66
	Wrap-up 1: Insights received & Questions opened	69
	Day 2	70
	Warm-up 2: 1 – 2 – 4 - all!	70
	Exercise 2.1: Approaching Islam the Playful Way	72
	Exercise 2.2: Diving into the wicked world of "Great Replacement" on social media	75
	Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists	79
M	lodule 4: Anti-science conspiracy theories	83
	Introduction	83
	Aims of this Module	84
	Day 1	85
	Warm-up 1: Get to know me and the conspiracy theories surrounding us	85
	Exercise 1.1: Argumentation traps	87
	Wrap-up 1: Give one, Get one.	91
	Day 2	92
	Warm-up 2: Conspiracy Theory Memory Game	92
	Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector	94
	Wrap-up 2: Take-aways?	97
M	lodule 5: Conspiracy theories and the (Social) Media	99
	Introduction	99
	Aims of this Module	100
	Day 1	101



	Warm-up 1: Media and conspiracy theories	101
	Exercise 1.1: Getting familiar with social media and its role for conspiracy theories	103
	Exercise 1.2: Media, disinformation, conspiracy	105
	Exercise 1.3: False content, false information, fake news	107
	Wrap-up 1: Short reflection	110
D	ay 2	111
	Warm-up 2: One truth & two lies	111
	Exercise 2.1: Improved awareness for shared videos and short movies	112
	Exercise 2.2: Creating videos	114
	Exercise 2.3: Information-checking skills	116
	Wrap-up 2: Verification of information	118
D	ay 3	119
	Warm-up 3: Self-reflection and conspiracy theory management	119
	Exercise 3.1: Presentation of the survey results	120
	Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information	122
	Wrap-up 3: Take-away benefit	124



Appendix	125
Extra materials Module 1: Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories	126
Warm-up 1: The Jewish Conspiracy Gallery Walk	127
Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World Power – Conspiracy Mindset	135
Warm-up 2: The Twitter-break	144
Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" Wh	at? 145
Exercise 3.1: "Normal stuff on the Internet" (?)	148
Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory	160
Wrap-up 3: Silent conversation	173
Extra materials Module 2: Anti-Feminist conspiracy theories	174
Introduction: Presenting the module and the terminology	175
Warm-up 1: Wait what are antifeminist conspiracy theories?	176
Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories?	188
Exercise 1.2: How to analyse antifeminist conspiracy theories – in your class!	192
Exercise 1.3: Dealing with conspiracy theories – a difficult Step for everyone	197
Warm-up 2: Let's get started and find associations	198
Exercise 2.2: Antifeminist conspiracy theories – A threat for democracy?	199
Exercise 2.3: Argumentation strategies and options for action	200
Extra materials Module 3: Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories	202
Exercise 1.1: Exploration: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories and Neighbouring Concep	ots 203
Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon	207
Exercise 1.3: Great Replacement believers in practice	221
Warm-up 2: 1 – 2 – 4 – all!	222
Exercise 2.1: Approaching Islam the Playful way	223
Exercise 2.2: Diving into the wicked world of "Great Replacement" on social media	231
Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists	232
Extra materials Module 4: Anti-science conspiracy theories	244
Exercise 1.1: Argumentation Traps	245
Warm-up 2: Conspiracy theory memory game	247
Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector Presentation	250
Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector	251
Extra materials Module 5: Conspiracy theories and the (Social) Media	252



Warm-up 1: Media and conspiracy theories	253
Exercise 1.2: Media, disinformation, conspiracy	260
Exercise 1.3: False content, false information, fake news	262
Exercise 2.1: Presentation on how to check videos and images	264
Warm-up 3: Self-reflection and conspiracy theory management	265
Exercise 3.1: Presentation on the TEACH-Survey Results	269
Exercise 3.1: Presentation of the survey results	270
Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information	271



Introduction - The TEACH Handbook on Combating Conspiracy Theories

"The pandemic is a hoax", "The Zionists are the driving force behind the spread of the Covid-19 virus", "Bill Gates is using the pandemic to microchip the population".

After more than a year of keeping the entire world occupied, the Covid-19-pandemic has also left its marks in the world of conspiracy theorists.

Conspiracy theories – usually defined as allegations claiming that powerful people or organisations are plotting secretly to control the public – have long been an important element of discourse in Western society. Over the last years, it has become even more clear: conspiracy theories are part of European society; they weren't made up from scratch and they are here to stay. Western society was and is confronted with an increasing number and popularity of conspiracy theories, both before and during the pandemic, and will be in the years to come: The former president of the United States of America publicly promoting the idea that climate change was a hoax, corona protesters all over Europe questioning the existence of the virus, or a rising right-wing movement aiming to defame democratic institutions – all of these developments have in common that they have a radical core based on conspiracy theories.

When looking into research data from the past decades, it becomes obvious that conspiracy theories exist in all modern societies, and that they have been increasingly influential for decades, especially since the emergence of internet communication. Importantly, they are far from being a fringe phenomenon. Conspiracy theories played a significant role in history (e.g. during the persecution of Jews all over Europe under Nazi rule) and they continue to matter in our present time. It would be naive to think of conspiracy theories as abstract ideas disconnected to the real world: For example, the attacker of Halle (Germany) in 2019, later identified as a male 27-year-old German neo-Nazi, attempted to storm the synagogue on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur with homemade explosive devices and guns. His goal was to murder as many Jews as possible, he fantasized about the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, and justified his act in his manifesto relying on anti-Semitic and anti-feminist conspiracy theories. On November 2, 2020, a terrorist attack took place in Vienna, Austria, which killed four people and injured another 23. The act, presumably motivated by an anti-Semitic conspiracy mindset, took place near the main synagogue in Vienna.

Real-world effects of conspiracy mindsets in Bulgaria can be observed in the quite widely spread Covid-19 vaccine scepticism, and - in the long run - in how anti-Gypsyism affects the life of the Roma minority in the country. In Bulgaria, Roma people are significantly more likely to be the target of police violence compared to the rest of the Bulgarian population. Additionally, Roma people are discriminated against in various structural forms, e.g. in housing and education. This discrimination is deeply rooted in anti-Gypsyist conspiracy theories and stereotypes.





In the Scandinavian context, conspiracy theories led to one of the most brutal tragedies in Europe. In 2011, a Norwegian summer camp of young Social Democrats was attacked by the terrorist Anders Behring Breivik who murdered 77 people and injured over 300. He released a manifesto right before the attack that was heavily influenced by the Eurabia conspiracy theory.

These examples are abhorrent, but they are not unique. Violent attacks happened in the last years not just in Europe but globally, and the discrimination of ethnic groups is also a world-wide problem. The common feature of all these examples is an underlying pattern of conspiracy theories.

In the TEACH project (www.teach-erasmus.eu), we have conducted a survey to ask adult educators from Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Bulgaria if they have been confronted with conspiracy theories over the last year (the survey was implemented in Mai-August 2020). Even though the perception of conspiracy theories in adult education institutions varies depending on both the type of conspiracy and the country, it is clear that adult educators in all countries are faced with conspiracy mindsets in their classrooms. Adult educators in long-term settings such as evening classes for people to achieve a degree of formal education are more likely confronted with conspiracy mindsets, which might be related to the fact that participants and teachers typically spend entire days together and discuss topics more in-depth. However, it also happens in one-time events such as public lectures and discussions. In these cases, the presence of conspiracy theorists in the audience may become a major challenge for the trainer.

With this handbook we would like to offer an opportunity for adult educators to organise workshops in their institutions, which will not just provide knowledge on different aspects of certain conspiracy theories but also offer an opportunity to reflect on one's ability to interact with people in the classroom who believe in conspiracy theories.

The overall goals of the TEACH-Handbook are:

- i. Providing knowledge on different aspects and the background of a number of popular conspiracy theories.
- ii. Equipping adult educators with skills to recognize conspiracy theories
- iii. Providing insights into the role of (social) media in disseminating conspiracy theories.
- iv. Letting adult educators familiarise themselves with societal and psychological characteristics of people who believe in conspiracy theory, leading to a better understanding of why people adhere to such theories
- v. Providing ideas on how to react to conspiracy theories in one's own classroom.





The book offers curricula for workshops to be held as inhouse-events at adult education organisations for further training of their teaching staff.

There are five different basic workshops focusing on five types of conspiracy theories:

- anti-Semitic conspiracy theories
- anti-feminist conspiracy theories
- anti-Muslim conspiracy theories
- conspiracy theories questioning science
- conspiracy theories and the media (this module also includes exercises on media literacy)

For each of these workshop modules, the handbook provides suggestions for a two-to-three-day workshop. The curricula are designed in such a way that adult education professionals are able to implement a workshop essentially based on nothing more than this handbook. Each curriculum features a number of activities to be carried out with participants. Our default setup is a two-day classroom training with 20 participants, but of course everyone is free to adjust the setup to their needs. Most exercises can also be adjusted to remote learning. All activities are designed for interactive work in a group of learners (as opposed to simply lecturing to a class) and cater to the life and work experience of participants. Along with the curricula, the handbook offers all materials necessary to carry out the group activities.

Using only this handbook, a workshop can be organised without much additional research on the topic of conspiracy theories.

Moreover, three one-day modules are country-specific and deal with conspiracy theories that are important in the Austrian, Bulgarian and Swedish context but less known (or irrelevant) in other countries. A curriculum for a one-day workshop to introduce the topic of conspiracy theories in general is also available. This curriculum may be offered as a prelude to one of the two-day workshops focusing on a certain kind of conspiracy theory. Therefore, these specific modules are only included in the handbook version for the respective country as well as a standalone handbook, available on our homepage (www.teach-erasmus.eu).

Users may consider re-combining activities from several modules if they want to offer a mixed-topics workshop tailored to specific needs and interests in their organisation.

Trigger warning



The content of the TEACH-Handbook includes readings and visual materials and other content that some participants may find offensive and/or traumatising.

The goal of the handbook for trainings is to provide an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some parts of the handbook and discussions will probably touch upon sensitive topics such as anti-Semitic and xenophobic motivated violence as well as misogynist beliefs. This content might be disturbing to some. For this reason, the TEACH-team encourages you to prepare yourself as well as the participants of your workshop emotionally beforehand. If you believe that your participants might find the discussion or even the participation in the exercises to be traumatising, you may choose to encourage your participants to decide freely (not) to participate in the discussion on certain topics or to leave the classroom.

We ask you to warn participants about potentially disturbing content and to encourage all participants to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity. Furthermore, we ask you to leave no discriminating statement that you might address without context. Make sure to embed all materials in a context, stating that the aim of the modules is a profound examination of conspiracy theory content in order to be able to protect oneself in the best possible way in the event of a confrontation with that kind of content¹.

Disclaimer

- Incognito mode is useful in some activities: in many of the proposed activities, it will be necessary for participants to use their private digital devices. Therefore, we would like to advise the trainer to propose researching on conspiracy theories in incognito mode to the participants in order to prevent the personal search engine from changing.
- 2. **Information on extra materials:** all extra materials are named according to the following scheme: **ModuleX_exercise/warm-up/wrap-up_number_additional information**

For example, the title M1_exercise_2.1_characteristics means that this extra material is from module 1 and for the first exercise from day 2.

¹ Adapted from University of Waterloo (2021): Trigger Warning. Retrieved from: https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/trigger



TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

MODULE 1:

Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories





Module 1: Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories

Introduction

Conspiracy theories offer an easy solution in times of complexity and they satisfy the need for an accessible explanation pattern: they seemingly explain events and connections that are not understood or difficult to see through, and thus give them meaning. The feeling of having seen through what is hidden and now belonging to the circle of the 'knowing' leads to a re-valuation of one's own person and provides the individual with a supposed sense of security.

Some conspiracy theories blame "the Jews" for secretly controlling sectors of society and for steering those towards their particular interests rather than the common good, thus corroding society. Jews function as scapegoats for disasters and they are blamed for things gone wrong. Popular examples for such anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are claims that the attack on the World Trade Centre and other buildings in the United States in September 2001 (known as 9/11) was orchestrated by the U.S. government, or committed by Mossad, the foreign intelligence service of Israel.

Throughout history, conspiracy theories have proven to be flexible. In Europe, Jews were scapegoated already in the Middle Ages, most notably for causing the Black Death. The new wave of anti-Semitism within the Covid-Pandemic includes a wide range of elements that pick up right where the Middle Ages have left: the Jews, the Zionists, and/or the State of Israel are to blame for the pandemic and/or are accused of gaining from it.

Conspiracy theories are a central characteristic of anti-Semitism and present one of the main reasons why anti-Semitism differs from other forms of discrimination. Unlike other minorities, Jews are perceived as powerful and influential, and it is their very integration into different majority societies that stands at the core of conspiracy theories. Traditionally, conspiracy theories have been an important part of right-wing ideologies and have been absorbed by new generations. Such thinking can also be found among the radical Left. They are also inherent in the ideologies of some types of religious fundamentalism. However, representative studies also imply a strong popularity of these conspiracy theories even in the "center" of society.

Findings from the TEACH-Survey:

According to the TEACH-Survey (see www.teach-erasmus.eu), around 4-5% of adult educators in Germany, 6% in Austria, 8% in Sweden and almost 50% in Bulgaria regularly face anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in their work place. The anti-Semitic conspiracy theory which is mostly present is the idea of Jews dominating international financial





institutions. 6.2% of educators in Germany, 10.7% in Austria, 9.1% in Sweden and 38.8% in Bulgaria reported that they have been confronted with that statement (Jews dominating international financial institutions) "very often" to "sometimes" in the last year.

Aims of this Module

Overall Aim:

The goal of this module is to closely examine various anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. In addition to presenting basic terminology, this module serves to give insight to various historical and contemporary facets of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories as well as their origins, to their manifestations, and their psychological appeal.

The overall goal is to empower adult educators in their ability to deal with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and to develop ideas for coping with them in their own classrooms.

How to use:

This program is primarily intended to be used for the training of adult educators. The program can be used as part of a continuing education course or in combination with other modules (e.g. our module on Islamophobia, or Antifeminism) or as a stand-alone workshop.



Day 1

Warm-up 1: The Jewish Conspiracy Gallery Walk

	The aim of this Step is a first introduction to different conspiracy
Aim	theories around the topic of anti-Semitism. The Steps provide insights
	to the relevant terms for the subject of conspiracy theories. A first
	reflection of individual experiences with anti-Semitic conspiracy
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
	theories should take place.
Duration	45 minutes
Preparation	1. The trainer displays the Conspiracy Theory Posters
	(M1_warm_up_1_pictureA - M1_warm_up_1_pictureG) in the
	room (this is the gallery from now on).
	2. The trainer distributes sticky notes to all of the participants in two
	different colours.
Materials	Pencils
	 Sticky notes in two different colours, one to note impression, one
	to note emotion
Resources	 Conspiracy Theory Pictures (M1_warm_up_1_pictureA -
	M1_warm_up_1_pictureG)
Anything	In case you need some background info on the different conspiracy
else	theories that are displayed on the posters see extra material:
	M1_warm_up_1_explanation
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Instruction:

Step I: Gallery Walk (10-15 minutes)

- The trainer asks the participants to make a gallery walk and look at all pictures in two rounds:
- The trainer asks each participant to write down their impressions of the pictures on sticky notes and place them next to the pictures.
 - o Round A: What does that picture show? (Sticky note in colour A)
 - o Round B: What kind of emotions do you feel? (Sticky note in colour B)
- After this step is finished, the trainer asks the participants to come together in a circle and collects the impressions from the sticky notes which are now attached next to the pictures.

Step II: Group Discussion (25-30 minutes)

- What are the themes that all those statements have in common? (Important key words: Anti-Semitism and Conspiracy Theories)
- Have you ever been confronted with these or other anti-Semitic conspiracy theories? (e.g.: in public, in their family, in their classrooms, social media)



- Do you know how these statements developed and "what is behind" these conspiracy theories? (e.g.: the background of these statements, the ideologies they represent, the narratives they cover, it might be useful to have a look at the extra material M1_warm_up_1_explanation prior to the exercise).
- Transition to first Exercise: The trainer points out that the society that we live in (democratic, liberal structures that should ensure the freedom and integrity of every person) is obligated to stop the active spreading of such conspiracy theories because they do not remain mere theories but lead to violence. The trainer could refer to some current examples where anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have led to violence against Jews. For a brief overview, you can have a look into the text "Overview: Traction of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory in todays' society" (Exercise 1.1 overview)

Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World-Power - Conspiracy Mindset

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Aim	The goal of this unit is to provide knowledge of anti-Semitic conspiracy
	theories, their origins, and their manifestations. The psychological
	appeal of conspiracy theories should also be conveyed, and connections
	between anti-Semitic theories should be recognised.
	In addition, this unit aims at empowering adult educators in their own
	ability to deal with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and to develop ideas
	for dealing with them in their own classrooms.
Duration	3,5–5 hours
Materials	Index cards
Resources	Overview: Traction of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory in
	todays' society (M1_exercise _1.1_overview)
	Article A: Same but Different: Three anti-Semitic conspiracy
	Theories (M1_exercise 1.1_articleA)
	Article B: Why believing in anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories
	(M1_exercise _1.1_articleB)
	 Picture of George Soros (M1_exercise_1.1_soros)

Instruction:

Step I: The Opening: Traction of the anti-Semitic Conspiracy theories (25-40 minutes)

- The trainer asks the participants to exchange their experiences with conspiracy theories in smaller groups and to take some notes (2-3 people per group), according to the questions:
 - o Have they ever been confronted with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?
 - Have anti-Semitic conspiracy theories ever been a problem in their professional work?
- The trainer closes the small discussion round by asking each group to present their main points of discussion.
- The trainer should also make sure to connect anti-Semitism not just to the past (e.g. Shoah, 9/11) but also try to connect it to today's movements (e.g. QAnon – movement, far-right conspiracy theories of the Jewish supremacy, Anti-Semitism that is noticeable on social media; see: Overview: Traction of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory in todays' society" (M1_Exercise_1.1_overview)

Step II: Group Work: Getting to know the Conspiracy Worldview (60-90 minutes)

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-5 people per group).
- Each group should get one of the two articles (Article A or Article B, see "Resources" below).
- The trainer asks each group:
 - o to read the text (each participant reads for him-/herself)



- to use index cards and note down their answers to the following two questions.
 - Group A (reading article A: M1_exercise_1.1_articleA):
 - What accusations or attributions against Jewish people can be found in your text?
 - What do you think makes people believe in those conspiracy theories?
 - Group B (reading article B: M1_exercise _1.1_articleB):
 - What kind of motivations do people have to believe in conspiracy theories?
 - Can you think of any other motivations that were not mentioned in the text?
- After the groups discussed the questions, the trainer asks all groups to come together in plenum and let each group present their results. The goal is that each group also gets familiar with the article they did not read (the cards should be used as visuals, the participants could hang them on the wall or use them while presenting their results from the group work).

<u>Step III: The Anti-Semitism Lurking Behind George Soros' Conspiracy Theories (15 - 20 minutes)</u>

- The trainer presents the picture of George Soros as a print-out or via a projector (see resources).
- The trainer mixes the groups so that each group has at least one person who has read Article A and one person who has read Article B.
- The trainer asks the groups to answer the following questions:
 - What accusations or attributions against George Soros are made?
 - o Why is the picture anti-Semitic?
 - What kind of motivation could be behind those accusations?
- The trainer asks the participants to note down all points on index cards and attach them to the wall so that all participants can see the main points for the next exercise.

Step IV: Presentation (30 minutes)

- Sitting in a circle of chairs, the groups now compile their work results. Let each group explain their ideas (connecting them with the articles).
- The trainer moderates a discussion in which the participants discuss if they agree with the motivations named by the previous teams, or if they have any further ideas....



• The trainer should make it clear that the image reflects an anti-Semitic fantasy and is fed by presuppositions and insinuations.

Step V: What would you do? (60-90 minutes)

- The group is now familiar with the conspiracy theory connected to George Soros.
- The trainer describes the following scenario:

In one of your classes, the topic of fair distribution of resources and wealth comes up. One participant promptly says, "With George Soros as head of the Jewish mafia, the world will never be a fair one anyway!" (This is a statement that was originally made by the US-American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.)

Side note for the trainer: This is just an example of a possible scenario. If another interesting scenario might come up in the previous discussions (see: Step I or Step II), you could of course just be flexible and use the other scenario.

- The trainer divides the participants again into smaller groups (3-4 people) and asks them to think about possible ways in which they would (or would not) react to that statement. Each group prepares a short stage performance in which they recreate that situation and show how they would handle the situation. Depending on the group's knowledge and motivation, the trainer could also invite the audience (the other groups) to jump in and also become an active part of the group's performance (e.g. one person of the other group takes over the role of the adult educator). The person who plays the person who dropped the conspiracy theory is not necessarily needed to defend the theory. S/he can simply reduce his/her performance to refusing any other explanation by saying, "You have your sources, I have mine".
- Back in the plenum, the trainer opens a discussion in which the participants can share how they felt in this situation (safe, unsafe, reflection of their own reactions).

Step VI: Reflection (10 minutes)

- The trainer passes out one index card to each participant.
- The participants note down one new thing that they have learned during the exercise about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories or about themselves. The trainer lets each participant present his/her chart.



Wrap-up 1: Elevator Pitch: What have I learned today about Conspiracy Theories?

Aim	Participants recapitulate what they learned in today's session. They reflect on what they have learned and transfer this to their own field of
	action.
Duration	10-20 minutes
Preparation	The trainer asks each participant to briefly reflect on the question of
	what each person has learned today and to prepare a statement based
	on that. The statement should conclude with a reflection on what one
	would like to pick up from the workshop day to integrate it into one's
	own professional practice (= lessons / ideas / knowledge / awareness).

Instruction:

- The trainer sets a timer for two minutes. Each of the participants looks for a partner. In the 2 minutes, partner A first briefly tells what he or she has learned today about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and what he/she would like to integrate into his/her own professional practice.
- When the timer rings, it is partner B's turn to present to partner A his/her elevator pitch.
- After four minutes (each partner had one turn), the pairs switch, and new pairs form. You can repeat the step 2-3 times.



Day 2

Warm-up 2: The Twitter-Break

Aim	The aim of this Step is to provide a first introduction to conspiracy theories about the Rothschild family. The Steps give insights to the relevant terms for the subject of conspiracy theories. A first reflection of an individual approach on how to deal with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories should take place.
Duration	30-45 minutes
Preparation	The trainer takes a look at the tweet and gets familiar with it. The username is not real but the tweet is. The tweet alludes to the "Rothschild Conspiracy theory" (Rothschild is a very famous Jewish family, for further information see: M1_Excersise_1.1_articleA). In this tweet, the claim is made that the Rothschild clan allegedly caused the disappearance of the Malaysia flight 370 in order to take control of a semiconductor business.
Materials	PencilsPaper (notes)Projector
Resources	 Tweet (M1_warm_up_2_tweet) (printed or via projector)

Instruction:

Step I: Group Discussion A "Twitter Break" (10-15 minutes)

- The trainer presents the tweet of @real.doe (M1_warm_up_2_tweet) (as print-out or via a projector) to the participants.
- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-4 people per group).
- The trainer asks the groups to discuss the following questions:
 - o What are your first impressions?
 - o Is anyone already familiar with the Rothschild conspiracy theory?
 - What accusations or attributions against Jewish people can be found in the post?

Step II: Group Discussion B (10-15 minutes)

- The trainer asks the groups to summarise their main points that have been discussed within the working groups according to the assignment.
- Attention: If the keyword "conspiracy theory" is not mentioned, the trainer should make sure to direct the participants to that conclusion (i.e. that the tweet has a conspiracy theory narrative).
- The trainer briefly explains the Rothschild conspiracy theory, for example through this narrative:



"A longstanding anti-Semitic conspiracy theory posits that a cabal of Jews led by members of the Rothschild banking family have been manipulating currency and exerting influence on regional and national events since the early 19th century for the purposes of personal enrichment and/or world domination. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists claim that the Rothschilds interfered with the American Revolution, financed Nazism and/or the Bolshevik Revolution, perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, and created the state of Israel. They also allege that the Rothschilds are some of the chief architects of an impending 'New World Order' which will abolish nationalities and enslave humanity."

Step III: Round-up (10 minutes)

- In plenum, the trainer starts a discussion:
 - Do the participants feel that they know the main ideas behind the conspiracy theory of the Rothschild family after the session?
 - o Do they think that this is relevant for today's anti-Semitism?
 - Extra question: How would they behave if someone confronted them with the same statement that was mentioned in the tweet?

Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" ... What?

The goal of this unit is to provide knowledge of anti-Semitic conspiracy
, , ,
theories. The focus is on the question of how conspiracy theories are
being developed and how conspiracy theorists make them persist. The
participants will put themselves into the position of a) a conspiracy
theorist and b) debunkers of themselves.
In addition, it is the aim to empower adult educators in their own ability
to recognise anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and to develop ideas for
dealing with them in their own classrooms.
3-4 hours
Pencils
Paper (notes)
Projector
Worksheet: The characteristics of conspiracy theories.
(M1_exercise_2.1_characteristics)
Overview: Traction of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory in
todays' society (M1_exercise _1.1_overview)
Conspiracy theory tickets, green and yellow
(M1_exercise_2.1_conspiracy_tickets)

Instruction:

Step I: Conspiracy theories and their presence in my life (15-20 minutes)

- The trainer asks the participants if they have ever been confronted with conspiracy theories in their personal or professional life.
- The trainer lets the participants reflect on their experiences:
 - Where did they encounter conspiracy theories?
 - How did they know that this was a conspiracy theory?
 - o How did they react?
- The trainer hands out the worksheet "Characteristics of Conspiracy Theories" (M1_exercise_2.1_characteristics) and shortly summarises the three bullet points.

Step II: Develop your own conspiracy theory (40-60 minutes)

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-5 people) and hands out the working materials: a) Worksheet (M1_exercise_2.1_characteristics) b) Overview (M1_exercise_1.1_overview).
- The trainer asks the small groups to read both short summaries carefully.
- While the participants read, the trainer visits the groups and hands out two Conspiracy Tickets per group. Each group should get a **yellow** ticket and a **green**



ticket (M1_exercise_2.1_conspiracy_tickets). (The tickets provide them with elements to be used in their theories.)

- By using these tickets as a basis, each group should develop their own anti-Semitic conspiracy theory.
 - Attention: The teachers should remind participants that in this workshop we stick to the agreement not to develop anti-democratic or hurtful narratives: develop something that is so absurd that it is far away from the more commonplace conspiracy theories. Example for an acceptable theory: "Jewish elites are behind the Bermuda triangle". The crazier the better.
- As soon as the participants have come up with an idea for an (ideally extremely absurd) anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, the trainer asks them to note down their core idea:
 - What is the conspiracy theory focusing on?
 - Who else is involved?
 - What kind of bigger idea does it cover?

Step III: Build a safety-net for your conspiracy theory! (45-60 minutes)

A safety net is a collection of additional arguments and narratives that help to defend the theory against attacks of non-believers (attempts of de-bunking).

- The groups are instructed to prepare a presentation for their conspiracy theory.
- In order to find good arguments, searching could be done on the internet but participants can also create their very own explanations. They may use all disinformation techniques available: using misinformation, interpreting data wrong, 'cherry picking', etc.
- The result can be presented in different ways (press release, short clip, news broadcast, ... there are no limits to the creativity of the groups.)

Step IV: Presentation (45-60 minutes)

- Each group presents their conspiracy theory to another group
- The group's presentation of their theory is followed by a "debate": The other group should try to argue against the presented conspiracy theory and to convince them that their theory was wrong. The presenting group needs to stick to their theory as long as possible. Once no further arguments can be found, the groups can switch: The second group presents their theory, the first group first listens and then argues against it.





Step V: Reflection (30 minutes)

- Call the groups back into plenary session
- Let the participants summarise their experience of the whole exercise:
 - o How did they feel developing a conspiracy theory? Was it easy? Was it hard?
 - How did they come up with their "safety-net" for their conspiracy theory?
 - How did the presentation go?
 - What kinds of thoughts / ideas / emotions did they have while developing a conspiracy theory and while presenting it to the other group?
 - Would their reaction in their real field of action (in cases someone in their teaching class presented the same kind of absurd conspiracy theories) differ from the reaction that they had during the presentation?

Wrap-up 2: "What do you take from today's session?"

Aim	Participants recapitulate what they learned in today's session. They
	reflect on what they have learned and transfer this to their own field of
	action.
Duration	20-30 minutes
Materials	Four big pin board papers
	• Pens

Instruction:

- Attach four posters to the four walls of the room, the posters being headlined with one of the following statements each:
 - 1. What is my take-home message today?
 - 2. In case someone will confront me with a conspiracy theory in my professional life, I am going to...
 - 3. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are...
 - *4.* This is the topic I want to delve into beyond today's workshop:
- Let participants move through the room and write down their personal answers to the questions.
- Give participants the opportunity to publicly comment on their thoughts and ideas.



Day 3

Warm-up 3: South Park and Jewish conspiracy theories

Aim	The aim of this Step is to provide a smooth and satirical entry into the
	discussion about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. By choosing this
	introduction, one can prevent overwhelming the participants by directly
	confronting them with their own experiences.
	The video illustrates how anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are
	incorporated into everyday situations where one would not expect them
	at first. Additionally, it shows the absurdity of explanations people
	construct to verify their conspiracy theories. It further points to the
	dangers and fatal consequences conspiracy theories can have.
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	• Episode 9, Season 10 on <u>southpark.de</u> . The episodes are
	available in English, German and with subtitles in other
	languages.
	Projector/Screen
	Laptop
Anything	The trainer has to check beforehand if the episode is available in his/her
else	country and whether it is available in the correct language/with
	subtitles. The easiest way to find the episode is by typing in the episode's
	name into a search engine.

Instruction

Step I: Watch the episode 'Mystery of the Urinal Deuce' (20 minutes)

• The trainer has to open southpark.de (see "Materials" below) and play the episode 9, season 10.

Step II: Exchange about experiences with conspiracy theories (10 minutes)

 After the participants watched the video, the trainer should ask them about their experiences with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and which conspiracies they know or have been confronted with during their teaching. The group should talk about their experiences briefly. Discuss why conspiracy theories are so appealing to many people.

Exercise 3.1: "Normal Stuff on the Internet" (?)

Aim	The aim of this exercise is to raise the participants' awareness for anti-Semitic conspiracies. The group will compose a collection of defining features of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories by analysing caricatures. In the end, the participants should be able to identify and define anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. The exercise focuses on the visual representation of Jews, alleged character traits, emotions and common anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. At the end, the participants have the opportunity to test their new knowledge in a quiz.
Duration	60-90 minutes
Preparation	 Print out the worksheets (M1_exercise_3.1_caricaturesA-F) Provide index cards for each group (at least 10 per group)
Materials	 Index cards Pencils for the groups Magnets/sticky tape to collect the cards afterwards A board/wall
Resources	 Worksheet M1_exercise_3.1_caricaturesA M1_exercise_3.1_caricaturesF (number of prints according to the total number of participants and the number of groups) Worksheet M1_exercise_3.1_characteristics Worksheet M1_exercise_3.1_quiz (You can either print the quiz or present the pdf document digitally) Worksheet M1_exercise_3.1_solutions_quiz (Only for the instructor, do not need to be handed out)
Anything else	 Note that the sheet M1_exercise_3.1_characteristics is also needed for the next exercise "Conspiracy Theory Manufactory". One could use a digital tool, such as padlet, instead of the index cards.

Instruction

Step I: Small groups analyse caricatures (35 minutes)

• The participants should split up into 4-6 groups (depending on the size of the course). The trainer hands out a copy of the worksheet M1_exercise_3.1_caricaturesA - M1_exercise_3.1_caricaturesF to each group Attention: There are six different versions of M1 (A,B,C,D,E,F). The trainer should hand out a different version to each group.

The groups analyse their caricature with the help of the questions on the worksheet. Then they note down their results on the index cards.

Step II: Discuss the results with all of the participants (15 minutes)

- After the groups have finished their Step, they collect their index cards on the board and put them into categories such as: visual representation of Jews, character traits, emotions and common anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. The aim is to generate a definition of Jewish conspiracy theories. The trainer is supposed to supervise this Step and make suggestions for a structure.
- Discuss the results with the participants and remove some index cards or add something if a relevant aspect is missing. The trainer can check the results using the provided solution sheet (M1_exercise_3.1_characteristics).

Step III: Test your knowledge in a quiz (30 minutes)

- Now the participants have the chance to apply their newly gained knowledge in a
 quiz M1_exercise_3.1_quiz. The trainer presents the different scenarios, and the
 participants have to decide whether the presented material contains an antiSemitic conspiracy theory or not. (15 minutes)
- The trainer can check the answers of the group using the provided solution sheet
 M1_exercise_3.1_solutions_quiz
- Afterwards, the trainer hands out the sheet M1_exercise_3.1_characteristics to the participants. In this way, the participants get a brief summary of the previously compiled characteristics of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game - Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

Aim	The aim of this Step is to experience how conspiracy theories are constructed and what kinds of difficulties one has to face when trying to debunk them. This exercise is set up as a role play. First, the participants have to make up their own conspiracy theory in small groups. Afterwards, they have to defend their theory and try to debunk the other groups' conspiracy theories. Each group gets a role card containing some general information about their role and the conspiracy theory they have to represent.
Duration	3 hours
Preparation	The trainer has to print out the worksheets M1_exercise_3.2_partyA - M1_exercise_3.2_partyE, M1_exercise_3.2_government. There are different versions according to the number of groups.
Materials	 Pencil Paper Laptop, smartphone etc. for research (the exercise can also be done without a computer and internet) Name tags (For the parties to write their name on during the discussion)
Resources	 Scenario: M1_exercise_3.2_scenario Role Cards: M1_exercise_3.2_partyA - M1_exercise_3.2_partyE, M1_exercise_3.2_government
Anything else	Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too absurd to harm anybody in real life.

Instruction:

Step I: Presentation of the scenario (5 minutes)

• The trainer tells the group the story about the bloody floods using M1_exercise_3.2_scenario. The trainer may read the scenario out loud and show the pictures to the participants.

Step II: Developing conspiracy theories and an emergency strategy (2 hours)

- The trainer divides the group into 5-6 smaller groups (depending on the group size) and assigns different roles to them. There must be one group representing the government. The other groups represent different parties.
- The trainer hands out the worksheets M1_exercise_3.2_partyA M1_exercise_3.2_partyE, M1_exercise_3.2_government to the groups. The worksheets contain detailed information for the groups and their Steps.





- The trainer assists the groups while they are either working on a conspiracy theory or on the structure of the special meeting.
- Although the 'government-group' is responsible for watching the time, the trainer might watch the time as well.

Step III: Press statements and special meeting (75 minutes)

- Each party has three minutes to present their conspiracy theory and their emergency theory to the others.
- Afterwards, the government holds the special meeting. The parties and the government have 45 minutes to discuss their ideas.
- When the time is up, the government has to agree on a conspiracy. They have 10 minutes to discuss their decision.

Wrap-up 3: Silent Conversation

Aim	The participants reflect on the role play and what they have learned during today's seminar. They reflect on strategies that might help them
	with their own teaching.
Duration	60 minutes
Preparation	The trainer prepares the posters. He/she writes a different question in
	the middle of each poster. Possible questions (and one example poster)
	are listed on M1_wrap_up_3_silent_conversation.
Materials	6 posters
	1 pen for each participant
Resources	 Suggested questions M1_wrap_up_3_silent_conversation

Instruction

Step I: First Round of the Silent Conversation (10 minutes)

- The trainer has to place one poster per group on a separate table (e.g., for 6 groups you need 6 big posters in total). It is important that there is enough space for the small groups to sit around the poster.
- Each group starts at a different table (poster). The participants should not talk! They are supposed to answer the question by writing their thoughts on the poster.
- After 4 minutes, the groups have to rotate their poster clockwise on the table and read what the other group members have written. They can refer back to it through writing something next to it.

Step II: Exchange between the small groups (40 minutes)

- After another 4 minutes, the small groups rotate clockwise around the tables. Each
 group thereby sits at a different table with a different poster and question. This
 procedure is going to be repeated. The participants have 4 minutes to answer the
 question and to read the comments from the previous group. Then, they rotate
 the poster at their table, read the comments, and can add something.
- The procedure is repeated until each group has answered every question

Step III: Summary (10 minutes)

• The trainer collects the posters and summarises the results and the events of the seminar day.



TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

MODULE 2:

Anti-Feminist Conspiracy Theories



Module 2: Anti-Feminist Conspiracy Theories

Introduction

Context: Feminism and Anti-Feminism

The term feminism refers to various movements (political, cultural, and economic) that work to ensure that women get the same rights as men and that women's rights are getting protected. Feminism primarily focuses on rights such as the right to abortion and self-determination about one's own body, as well as property rights, equal pay and labour rights. Feminism is thus committed to combating all forms of discrimination against women.²

Anti-feminists are people who turn against feminism, do not recognise equal rights of women and men and delegitimise the feminist movement.³ In extreme forms of anti-feminism, these attitudes turn into a conspiracy theory. Anti-feminist conspiracy theories often overlap with conspiracy theories about media or anti-Semitism. Furthermore, there are many different forms and conspiracy theories of anti-feminists. This group of people is not homogeneous because the individual anti-feminists argue in different ways. However, it is assumed by most anti-feminist conspiracy theorists that feminism is a secret conspiracy to abolish traditional lifestyles and act against men.

For example, some anti-feminists, such as men's rights activist Arne Hoffman, assume that the media is controlled by women's rights movements and feminism. Others even go so far that they claim that their own country is in the hands of feminism. These structures of argumentation are typical of conspiracy theories.⁴

Anti-feminists often claim that feminism aims at enforcing non-traditional ways of life. Feminism wants to give women and men the freedom to decide for themselves which path to take in life. However, anti-feminists view the efforts of feminism as a re-education program through which people with traditional lifestyles are oppressed.⁵ Another more concrete form of anti-feminist conspiracy theory is that the Rockefeller Foundation invented feminism to pit both sexes against each other for capitalist goals.⁶

⁶ Ibid.



² Drucker, S. A. (2018): Betty Friedan: The Three Waves of Feminism, Retrieved from http://www.ohiohumanities.org/betty-friedan-the-three-waves-of-feminism/

³ Rosenbrock, H. (2012): Die antifeministische Männerrechtsbewegung. Denkweisen, Netzwerke und Online-Mobilisierung. *Schriften des Gunda-Werner-Instituts*, 8, p. 26.

⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

In connection with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, some anti-feminists are convinced that feminism is an invention of Jews who seek domination by women.⁷ Many anti-feminists fear that feminism would lead to a falling birth rate among women from Western countries and that the population would therefore be steadily replaced by (mainly Muslim) migrants. For this reason, it is a variation of the right-wing extremist conspiracy theory of "the great replacement". Some anti-feminist conspiracy theories also have a racist or anti-Semitic core.⁸ Belief in a secret conspiracy that controls the media and/or the state and discriminates against people with different lifestyles is clearly indicative of a conspiracy theory.

Anti-feminist conspiracy theories attack plurality and diversity in society as well as democratic values. For this reason, these myths represent a particular challenge for politics. Therefore, this module offers knowledge about anti-feminist conspiracy theories and exercises for dealing with these myths for adult educators. In this module, not only the cognitive but also the emotional level is taken into account when dealing with conspiracy theories.

Terminology:

Feminism is understood as referring to political and social movements that advocate equality between men and women. Feminism tries to break gender roles and takes action against sexism.

Anti-feminism pertains to the political and social counter-movements to feminism. Anti-feminists oppose feminism or feminist concerns.

Anti-feminist conspiracy theories combine conspiracy-theoretical and anti-feminist aspects. That the conspiracy theorists assume a secret conspiracy is central to any conspiracy theory. The conspirators are pursuing a plan to enforce their own interests to the disadvantage of the general public.

According to anti-feminist conspiracy theories, (popular) feminists are either the conspirators or the feminist movement is instrumentalised by certain institutions or groups (e.g. Jews, politicians) to achieve their own goals.

In the context of the exercises and the research assignments, the participants might come across the term "incel". Incel means "involuntary celibacy". A characteristic of incels is their pronounced misogyny. Women and birth control are accused of preventing some men

⁹ Wilde, G./Meyer, B.(2018): Angriff auf die Demokratie. Die Macht des Autoritären und die Gefährdung demokratischer Geschlechterverhältnisse. Eine Einleitung. In: Femina Politica 1, p. 9.



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⁷ Stern, F. (2007): Antisemitismus und Antifeminismus: eine zeitdiagnostische Studie der Vermittlung von Vorurteilen., p. 94.

⁸ Blum, R./Rahner, J. (2020): Triumph der Frauen? Das weibliche Antlitz des Rechtspopulismus und - extremismus in ausgewählten Ländern. In: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Ed..): Forum Politik und Gesellschaft 1. p. 3.

from having sex, meaning that women "owe" it to men. Incels' online forums often feature fantasies that glorify violence. There are some similarities with white supremacy as they share similar hate figures (women, especially attractive women, and attractive men).¹⁰ In the incel community, people are often classified according to certain categories regarding their attractiveness and supposed character traits. The descriptions of these categories are characterised by prejudice, generalisations, and hatred. These categorisations also determine a certain "value" for these people, which, for instance, becomes apparent through the connection between the categories and the well-known 10-point scale ("The average Stacy is a 10/10!").¹¹

The incel movement sometimes goes as far as to claim that men have a right/male basic right to women or women's bodies, which they are denied because of overly demanding attractive women and because of "alpha men" who are successful with women. This also legitimises violence as a means of claiming this right. An extreme example is the Plymouth Shootings in 2021, which unfortunately is not an isolated incident.¹²

If you want to use this introduction as an input, you can use the presentation in the appendix (M2_introduction_presentation).

Findings from the Teach-Survey:

The TEACH survey, which was carried out in 2020, found out that 8.6% of German, 21.9% of Austrian, 4.2% of Swedish and 21.9% of Bulgarian adult educators very often or at least regularly hear from their course participants that the current discourse regarding gender is getting out of hand. 2.4% (Germany), 4.7% (Austria), 2.4% (Sweden), and respectively 16.9% (Bulgaria) answered that they heard very often or regularly that feminists want to destroy the traditional family.

The statements that the current political efforts are aimed at actively weakening the position of men and that feminism leads to fewer births which leads to mass immigration from Muslim countries were heard in the classrooms too.

If you include the answers of those adult educators who only hear these statements from time to time, the numbers are alarmingly high. For more information on the survey results, visit the website www.teach-erasmus.eu.

¹² Casciani, D./De Simone, D.I (2021): Incels: A new terror threat to the UK? Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-58207064.



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¹⁰ Zimmermann, S./Ryan, L./Duriesmith, D. (2018): Recognizing the Violent Extremist Ideology of 'Incels'. Retrieved

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328081163_Who_are_Incels_Recognizing_the_Violent_Extremist_I deology_of_'Incels'

¹¹ Jennings, R. (2018): Incels Categorize Women by Personal Style and Attractiveness, Retrieved from: https://www.vox.com/2018/4/28/17290256/incel-chad-stacy-becky



Aims of this Module

Overall Aim:

The goal of this module is to closely examine various anti-feminist conspiracy theories. In addition to presenting basic terminology, this module serves to give insight to various facets of anti-feminist conspiracy theories, as well as their origins, their manifestations, and their psychological appeal. The central aim of the module is to give adult educators guidance in dealing with anti-feminist conspiracy theories.

The overall goal is to empower adult educators in their ability to deal with anti-feminist conspiracy theories and to develop ideas for dealing with them in their own classrooms.

How to use:

This programme is primarily intended as a training for adult educators. This programme can be used as part of a continuing education course or in combination with other modules (e.g., our module on anti-Semitism) or as a single workshop day unit.



Day 1

Warm-up 1: Wait... What are anti-feminist conspiracy theories?

Aim	The aim of this package is to get familiar with the basics of anti-feminist conspiracy theories. The participants activate their existing knowledge and learn the most important terms about anti-feminist conspiracy
	theories.
Duration	60 minutes
Materials	 Internet access, Internet-enabled device (if the participants work with <i>Padlet</i> or <i>Mindmeister</i>) or paper, post-its, pens
Resources	 Input "Characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories" (M2_warm_up_1_characteristics) Pictures for Step II (M2_warm_up_1_pictures): pictures from pexels.com Caution! These memes show anti-feminist, sexist and discriminatory content and were modelled on existing antifeminist memes. The images should only be used in a reflective context and should be critically questioned.
Anything	There is a matching wrap-up exercise to this warm-up on day 2, wrap-up
else	2 "Reflection is the key – sum it up".

Instruction:

Step I: Determine terms (45 minutes)

- The participants form groups of four people. All participants of a group create a mind map together either as a poster or with the *Padlet* or *Mindmeister* tool. The focus should be on the following terms: gender, feminism, anti-feminism, anti-genderism, gender mainstreaming, conspiracy theory.
- In the mind-map, the participants should note down what they understand of the terms, how they are related, and in case they aren't familiar with these terms what could be meant with the terms and which terms they don't understand. If a poster is created, the keynotes should be written on sticky notes. The sticky notes should later be peeled off and placed again (see Day 2, Round-Up, Step I).
- The trainer explains how anti-feminist conspiracy theories are characterised through an input (M2_warm_up_1_characteristics).
- Then, there should be time for questions and discussions about the exercise and input.



Step II: Conspiracy theories on pictures (15 minutes)

- All participants form a circle of chairs. In the middle, various images of anti-feminist
 conspiracy theories are placed (M2_warm_up_1_pictures). Each participant
 chooses a picture and explains why it fits the topic of the workshop or why it does
 not.
 - Which conspiracy theoretic motives can be found in it?
 - o Why does the picture fit the course, why not?
- Caution! These memes show anti-feminist, sexist and discriminatory content and were modelled on existing anti-feminist memes. The images should only be used in a reflective context and should be critically questioned.

Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories?

Aim	The aim of this activity is to enable the participants to deal with the elements of anti-feminist conspiracy theories and to distinguish them
	from sexist, non-conspiratorial statements.
Duration	1,5 hours
Materials	PencilsPaper
Resources	 In the appendix, there is a simple version of what a "conspiracy theory machine" could look like and a template so that the participants don't have to draw the machine themselves if they don't want to. (M2_exercise_1.1_machine) Worksheet "Anti-Feminist Statements" (M2_exercise_1.1_statements)

Step I: Conspiracy theory machine (45-60 minutes)

- In order to consolidate their knowledge of anti-feminist conspiracy theories, the participants create a "conspiracy theory machine". A machine with a kind of funnel is drawn, together with the whole class or in small groups.
- In groups of 3-5 people, the participants consider which components/ "ingredients" the machine needs to produce an anti-feminist conspiracy theory. The focus is on the question of what makes a conspiracy theory work.
- The participants draw elements that have to fall into the funnel, some of them are
 essential and some can optionally be thrown into the machine. The machine also
 has an exit that drops an anti-feminist conspiracy theory. For that, the participants
 formulate a concrete anti-feminist conspiracy theory that can result from the
 "ingredients" thrown in.
- The "ingredients" can pick up different aspects: platforms that can be used, types of language/wording, types of feelings that the theory should address, ideologies underlying the conspiracy theory, ...
- In the last step, each group presents their machine. There should be time for discussion.



Step II: Anti-feminist vs sexist statements (30-40 minutes)

- All participants receive a sheet of paper with various anti-feminist, conspiratorial, and sexist statements (M2_exercise_1.1_statements).
- The participants should recognise in which cases it is a conspiracy theory or a discriminatory statement and justify their decision.
- Furthermore, the participants determine which conspiracy theory is behind the statement and what motivates it (e.g. religion, extreme right political point of view).
- Those who finish earlier form teams of two and compare their answers. Finally, the results are presented in the class. There should be time for a discussion.

Exercise 1.2: How to analyse antifeminist conspiracy theories - in *your* class!

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Aim	The aim of this activity is to analyse and reflect on experiences in the
	participants' own classes. Furthermore, the participants deal with the
	characteristics of conspiracy theories and how to debunk them.
Duration	2,5-3 hours
Materials	Internet
	Internet-enabled device
Resources	• Input "Overview Antifeminism"
	(M2_exercise_1.2_overview_history_text)
	 Methods for debunking
	(M2_exercise_1.2_methods_debunking)
	 Suggestions for researching conspiracy theoretical content
	online:
	 Anti-Feminist memes on Pinterest
	 Search path: search online for "Pinterest anti-feminist
	memes" (when you click on the Pinterest link, you can
	see several memes without registering on the website)
	 Alternatively, memes on Giphy
	Search path: search online for "giphy". On the website,
	you can search for "anti-feminist" or equivalent
	commands
	The participants can research ideas to expose conspiracy theories here: • Tools to fight disinformation
	Search path: search online for "rand.org", visit the website, and
	search for "Tools That Fight Disinformation Online"
	 Since conspiracy theories are often spread with the help of fake
	news, chapter 4 of this text can help participants with this
	exercise:
	Detect: of Trolls and Bots
	Search path: search online for "detect Erasmus", visit the website
	and click on: Results, The Basics of Manipulation in Social
	Networks (IO1), COMPENDIUM (select your preferred language),
	scroll down to chapter 4
	The participants look for fact checking sites dealing with
	conspiracy theories and fake news from their country.



Step I: Background and argumentation strategies of anti-feminism (15 minutes)

 The trainer introduces anti-feminist conspiracy theories (M2_exercise_1.2_overview). The history and development of feminism and feminist movements are discussed. Furthermore, the arguments of anti-feminist conspiracy theorists should be named and refuted.

Step II: Anti-feminist conspiracy theories in the participants' own classes (45 minutes)

• This Step can be done individually or in teams of two or three. The participants contemplate if they know or have heard anti-feminist conspiracy theories in their own courses that go beyond sexist discrimination and contain conspiratorial elements. These are then presented in the course. Together with the trainer and the whole class, the participants' statements are checked and it is examined whether they are conspiracy theories.

Step III: Analysing and debunking conspiracy theories (1,5 - 2 hours)

- The trainer and the participants talk about the methods mentioned in the document M2_exercise_1.2_methods_debunking. The trainer briefly presents all of the methods and the participants have time to ask questions about them.
- The participants form teams of around three people each. Each team searches for anti-feminist conspiracy theories online (posts on social media, websites, memes, videos, fake news articles, etc.). The teams analyse the motivation that underlies the conspiracy theory, which motives occur and which expression (emotionalising, apparently factual, etc.) is used. They then develop strategies to debunk this conspiracy theory (google reverse image search, websites that expose fake news etc.). The document M2_exercise_1.2_methods_debunking can help the participants with this task.
- Then, the conspiracy theories are presented. Each team shows the rest of the class how these conspiracy theories can be debunked and what signs of conspiracy theories their post/video/meme shows.

Exercise 1.3: Dealing with conspiracy theories - a difficult Step for everyone

Aim	The aim of this activity is to develop and reflect on your own options for
	action in adult education. Participants reflect on situations in which
	conspiracy theories are voiced. The emotions of the participants are also
	dealt with. In the course of this exercise, the participants develop
	strategies for action that they can use in their classrooms.
Duration	3 - 3,5 hours
Materials	• Pen
	Paper
	Paper cards
	Adhesive tape
Resources	Template for guideline (M2_exercise_1.3_template_guideline)
Anything	The wrap-up 1 "Silent reflections on loud phenomena" is well-suited for this
else	exercise.

Step I: Analysing situations in the own class (75 minutes)

- In individual work, the participants answer the question of what they want to achieve in their own class with their handling of conspiracy-theoretical statements: Would they like to clarify immediately, question the participant, finish the topic as quickly as possible, etc.? Which situation are they aiming for?
- The participants also write down various situations in which an adult student expresses a conspiracy theory.
- Then the participants think about which situations they find disturbing and why, when they would react to the statement/behaviour and when they would overlook the statement in order to move forward with the class.
- In the next step, all participants form teams of two. The teams compare their notes and also address each other's situations. The answers should be reflected together.
- Now the teams write the descriptions of the situations on different cards. The
 cards are glued to the front of a board that is located in the front of the classroom.
 All situations are discussed together and possible ways of how to deal with them
 are suggested.
- The trainer points out that ignoring extreme statements threatens democratic values.

Step II: Developing guidelines (2 hours)

- The participants form small groups of around 4 people each. Those participants who have similar interests in dealing with conspiracy theories or who teach in a similar area should form a team.
- To do this, each participant writes a keyword on the board. The keyword should describe the field of activity of the participants. The trainer can assign participants from similar areas to the same group.
- Each team has the Step of developing guidelines for dealing with conspiracy theories. The following points should be included:
 - What options for action do I have, how could the reactions be, do other participants feel uncomfortable with the conspiracy-theoretical statement, what can I achieve with the various options for action, whom can I contact/ask for support?
 - (If Step I (Day 1, Exercise 1.3) has been done before, the results of the discussion and reflection can be used for this Step.)
- The guideline can be presented graphically or as text. You can find an example of a graphic template in the appendix (M2_exercise_1.3_template_guideline).
- The guides are then hung on the wall. All participants look at all elaborations and write down comments or questions about a guideline. Then all guidelines are reflected on together in the big group.

Wrap-up 1: Silent reflections on loud phenomena

Aim	The aim of the round-up is to reflect on the options for action discussed
	in the exercises and to determine their benefits for the participants' own
	courses. Furthermore, the most important contents of the workshop are
	to be summarised in a handout.
Duration	30 minutes
Preparation	Day 1, Exercise 1.3, Step I
Materials	Internet access
	Internet-enabled device
	• Pen
	Paper
Anything	This wrap-up works best if the exercise 1.3 "Dealing with conspiracy
else	theories – a difficult step for everyone" has been done previously.

Instruction:

Step I: Whisper groups (15 minutes)

- In order to keep the noise level low, so-called "whisper groups" are formed. The participants form teams of two or three. The participants are supposed to look for people with whom they have not yet spoken or have spoken very little that day. This increases the chance for more differentiated repetition and reflection, as new perspectives can come together.
- The teams discuss the following questions:
 - o In which option of action do I see possible weaknesses?
 - Which option of action is not useful for me and why not?
 - What would I like to learn more about, what do I know enough about by now?
 - What do I wish for the next day of the workshop?
- Over the course of this discussion, the participants should take notes and they should take their area of action/field of work into account. If the workshop takes place digitally, the tool *Edupad*, in which all participants can record their results, is ideal. Participants remain anonymous and can express their opinion freely. The participants can also write their notes on a piece of paper and then hand them in.
- This reflection exercise gives the trainer an overview of the participants' views, criticisms and needs.





Step II: Individual work: taking notes (10-15 minutes)

- In the last exercise, the participants should write down the five most important aspects from the workshop in individual work. This handout is to be continued on the second day of the workshop.
- For example, the participants can answer the following questions:
 - o What did I learn today?
 - What do I really want to remember?
 - o What surprised me?
 - What aspect would I like to find out/research more about?
 - The question on which the handout is based could be: Which contents of the workshop do I really want to remember?



Day 2

Warm-up 2: Let's get started and find associations!

Aim	The aim of this warm-up is to activate the participants' prior knowledge
	and to offer a playful introduction to the second day of the workshop.
Duration	1 hour
Materials	• Pen
	Paper
Resources	Bingo grid
	 Terms for the bingo game M2_warm_up_2_bingo

Instruction:

Step I: Conspiracy Bingo (45-50 minutes)

- To establish a relaxed workshop atmosphere, a playful warm-up method can be chosen: conspiracy bingo.
- Participants come up with nine terms that are frequently used in discussions about conspiracy theories and enter them into a bingo grid. The trainer reads a fictional conversation about conspiracy theories that he or she creates using the terms of the bingo grid (M2_warm_up_2_bingo). Whoever finishes a row first wins (typical bingo rules). Then it is discussed which of these statements have already been heard in the classrooms of the participants.
- The participants discuss how they would deal with the respective statements in their own class.

Step II: Stream of thoughts - Let it flow! (10 minutes)

- The participants have exactly two minutes to write down all of their associations with the subject of anti-feminism and conspiracy theories. The participants should not stop writing. If new associations don't occur to them after a while, they write for example "I'm thinking I'm thinking I'm thinking" or repeat the last word they have written until they come up with new associations.
- The various terms of the participants can then be discussed with the entire class. This means that previous content can be repeated together.

Exercise 2.1: Do's and Don'ts for conversations

Aim	The aim of this activity is to activate prior knowledge of various methods
	of arguing. The participants reflect on conversation behaviours, how
	they feel about it, and how they would react to them.
Duration	2 hours
Preparation	It should be ensured that the participants can either read the suggested
	research texts on a digital device or the trainer has to print them out
	beforehand via the links down below.
Materials	Pen and paper/index cards
	Internet
	Internet-enabled device
	Projector
Resources	"The conspiracy theory handbook":
	 Search path: search online for "The Conspiracy Theory
	Handbook Stephan Lewandowsky John Cook" and click on
	the "climatechangecommunication.org"-PDF-link
	• "Tulane News: The best way to fight a conspiracy theory isn't with
	<u>facts"</u>
	 Search path: search online for "Tulane news", visit the
	website, and search for "Expert: The best way to fight a
	conspiracy theory isn't with facts", click on the link from
	9 th Oct. 2020
	If the links are out of date, you can search for communication strategies
	dealing with conspiracy theories yourself. There are numerous
	resources that may be helpful in addressing the assignment below.
1	

Step I: Reflecting on language (40 minutes)

- In individual work, the participants think about which antifeminist/sexist behaviour and which antifeminist/sexist phrases they find disturbing in conversations, and which they find pleasant (e.g. "You are different from the other women" - meaning that there is a problem with most other women). The participants recall previous conversational situations.
- Then the participants reduce their notes to a few keywords. The trainer creates two-word clouds on *Mentimeter* one for positive conversation behaviour, one for undesirable. As soon as all participants have entered their keywords, the word clouds appear. These visual representations are discussed together (why is something annoying, why is something pleasant, which keywords were often mentioned and why, etc.). Alternatively, the keywords can be written on the blackboard. Instead of writing keywords twice, a "+" can be drawn next to the first mentioned keyword.
- The results are discussed together.

Step II: Finding your own communication style (75 minutes)

- The participants do an online search for communication strategies in dealing with conspiracy theories. The texts suggested in the 'resources box' are suitable for this.
- The participants write down the recommendation they would like to use in their own courses in the future.
- The participants form teams of two and have a conversation. One person takes on the role of an antifeminist conspiracy theorist. The other person tries to use the communication tips they wrote down. Then they switch.
- At the end, the whole group reflects on the conversations. The trainer asks the
 participants what emotional reactions the various behaviours evoke in them as
 discussion participants. In this way, the class discusses which reaction to which
 action can follow in a conversation. Because participants should include their own
 experiences from their courses, this establishes a link to conspiracy theories in
 their own courses.

Exercise 2.2: Anti-feminist conspiracy theories - A threat for democracy? (The answer is yes.)

Aim	The aim of this activity is that the participants examine the influence of
	conspiracy theories on democracy. The participants should recognise
	that anti-feminist conspiracy theories are a threat to democracy.
Duration	2 hours
Preparation	For Step I, the trainer has to ensure that at least one of the suggested
•	research texts can be read digitally by the participants, or the trainer has
	to choose 1-2 texts in advance and print them out for the participants.
Materials	Pen and paper
	Internet-enabled device
	Internet
Resources	 Input text on "Democracy and antifeminist conspiracy theories"
	M2_exercise_2.2_antifeminism_democracy_text
	Research texts for Step I (Hyperlinks):
	o 'Agenda Europe': an extremist Christian network in the
	<u>heart of Europe</u>
	 Anti-feminism is making right-wing stances socially
	<u>acceptable</u>
	 Can feminists be blamed for Corona?
	o Contentious Neocatholics going political: the Italian
	<u>perspective</u>
	 Europe heads to the polls: right-wing networks form along
	<u>family policy issues</u>
	 Feminist policy as collateral damage?
	 From weirdoes to political actors - the journey of Slovak
	gender ideology rhetoric
	 New courage instead of new taboos - overcoming
	dilemmas of gender politics in the EU
	 Organized Anti-Feminism in Turkey: A Quick Picture
	o <u>Pandemic management on the backs of women in</u>
	Hungary
	 Retraditionalization, Coronavirus Conspiracies, and Anti-
	Feminism
	Search path for the texts mentioned above: search online for "Heinrich
	Böll Stiftung Gunda Werner Institute", visit the website and make sure
	you choose the English language setting, search for the respective title of the article.
	Triumph of the Women?(Hyperlink) Search path: search online for "Eriodrich Ehert Stiftung", visit the website
	Search path: search online for "Friedrich Ebert Stiftung", visit the website
	and search for "Triumph of the women? The Female Face of Right-wing
	Populism and Extremism", click on the first link, it leads you to: "Triumph



of the Women? The Female Face of Right-wing Populism and Extremism – 03 Case study United States of America Cynthia Miller-Idriss"

If the links are out of date, you can search for texts on anti-feminism and democracy yourself. The website of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Gunda Werner Institute offers numerous articles.

Instruction:

Step I: What does democracy mean to me? (60 minutes)

- The participants contemplate what democracy means to them and what they think is particularly important about it. They reflect on the relevance of women's rights for democracy. The brainstorming can be done on a blackboard or using online tools such as *Padlet*.
- The members receive an input on why anti-feminist conspiracy theories are antidemocratic and endanger our democratic values (M2_exercise_2.2_antifeminism_democracy_text). The trainer refers to the previously mentioned statements of the participants.
- To get a deeper insight into the connection between democracy and anti-feminism, the participants read one of the texts they can find under "sources". The trainer (or the participants themselves) chooses one of the suggested readings. If you prefer something in your national language, you can suggest another reading on antifeminism.
- The input is then discussed in the course and questions are clarified (M2_exercise_2.2_antifeminism_democracy_text).
- During the discussion, the trainer collects the main points on the topic on the blackboard.

Step II: A world without democratic values? (60 minutes)

- The participants think about which democratic values are most important to them and which have the greatest impact on their lives.
- Then each participant writes a short text about what a society would look like without any democratic values. The focus should be on the aspect of equality and conspiratorial thinking. These dystopian stories make clear how important democracy is.
- In teams of two or three, the participants discuss their stories and present the aspects that they have described in their text.
- Then they consider which rules and laws there are in their country to prevent these grievances and problems.
- Finally, the results and the exercise are discussed with all participants.



Exercise 2.3: Argumentation strategies and options for action

Aim	The aim of this activity is to try out options for action and argumentation
	strategies and to consolidate them in a role play. In addition, the
	participants learn how to analyse situations in a reflected way. This
	should make the participants feel more confident in dealing with
	conspiracy theories in their own lessons.
Duration	2,5-3 hours
Materials	• Pen
	Paper
Resources	Cards with various argumentation strategies and behavioural
	options in a conversation
	(M2_exercise_2.3_argumentation_strategies)
	 Suggestions for anti-feminist conspiracy theoretic statements
	(M2_exercise_2.3_antifeminist_statements)
Anything	Description of the fishbowl method: <u>click here</u>
else	Search path: search online for "Facing history", click on the
	"facinghistory.org"-link, visit the website and search for "Fishbowl", click
	on "Teaching strategy Fishbowl"
	1. 3-5 people play the course situation (see Step I above).
	2. The rest of the participants stand around the group and listen.
	3. If a participant from the outer circle wants to take part in the role
	play, he or she taps someone from the inner circle on the
	shoulder.
	4. Both people swap places. So, the participants change constantly
	and various arguments are put forward without too many people
	speaking at once.

Step I: Argumentation role play (100-120 minutes)

- The participants receive cards with various argumentation strategies and behavioural options in a conversation (M2_exercise_2.3_argumentation_strategies). This is followed by a role play.
- The roles are as follows: adult educators, participants in an adult education course, and participants who speak out on conspiracy theories. Participants are given a short time to prepare for their role.
- Then the participants form groups of around four people (alternative: fishbowl method) and play a course situation: The adult educator holds his/her lesson. One of the participants disrupts the course by making anti-feminist conspiracy theoretic statements (M2_exercise_2.3_antifeminist_statements).
- The other participants consider how they would react to this (staying in their role). The trainer now has the opportunity to test various options for action.

- In a second step, the group reflects on the role play:
 - o How did I feel in my role?
 - o What wishes and needs did my role have?
 - o How did I feel with the various options for action?
 - o Did I expect other reactions?
 - o What surprised me? etc. (15 minutes)
- Now the roles are switched and other options for action and argumentation strategies are used. (30 minutes)
- Another discussion follows. Then the results of the role play and the discussion groups are discussed with the whole class. **(20 minutes)**
- The role play shows that it is often difficult to act spontaneously. However, if a participant expresses a conspiracy theory, one may be dissatisfied with one's own reaction as an adult educator in retrospect. In order to be prepared for the next time, it helps to reflect on the situation from a distance.

After the role play, a break is recommended so that the participants can concentrate better on their individual work after this method.

Step II: How to analyse! (40 minutes)

- In teams of 2-3 persons, the participants recall a situation in which a participant in their course expresses a conspiracy theory. To do this, they create an analysis grid:
 - o How often does the person come up with conspiracy theories?
 - o What is said, what is implied?
 - o How did the other participants feel, how did they react?
 - o Was there a turning point where I lost control of the conversation?
 - o What would I do differently now and how?
 - o What were the motives of the people who were there?
 - o How did the people react?
 - Did it escalate?
 - Did the topic get more space than necessary? If so, through what?
 - o When was this point reached?
 - o How could I have prevented that?
 - o Why did I act as I did in the moment?
- The participants choose 3-4 of these questions for their grid.
- Then the participants form teams of two and discuss their protocols. Afterwards, there is a short time to ask questions to the whole class and the trainer.



Wrap-up 2: Reflection is the key - sum it up!

Aim	The aim of this package is to reflect on the workshop and to complete previous Steps/texts. The participants produce outputs which they can still use after the workshop.
Duration	45 minutes
Preparation	Day 1, Warm-Up, Step I
	Day 1, Round-Up, Step II
Materials	Pen and paper
	Internet
	Internet-enabled device
Anything else	Attention! This task only works if the warm-up 1 "Wait What are antifeminist conspiracy theories" (from day 1) has been done previously.
	Moreover, step III from this wrap-up is linked to step II from the wrap-up 1 "Silent reflection on loud phenomena". However, this wrap-up also works without having done the wrap-up 1.

Instruction:

Step I: Revising the *Padlet* (15 minutes)

• The participants revise their *Padlet* or poster that was created on day 1. In doing so, they reflect on the content that they have newly acquired and add new knowledge.

Step II: Completing the handout (15 minutes)

• Similar to the end of the first day of the workshop, the participants summarise the most important points that they consider particularly relevant on the handout. They take their area of action into account. This allows participants to read through the main points quickly, even after the course.

Step III: Summarise together (15 minutes)

• Finally, the participants reflect on the entire workshop and the most important content is repeated together. In doing so, they take their area of action into account.



TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

MODULE 3:

Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories



Module 3: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories

Introduction

Conspiracy theories about Islam and Muslims have taken a back seat in the time of the pandemic. A visit to the notorious hotbeds of conspiracy theories such as the messenger service "Telegram" will, for example, bring up claims about Covid-19 in abundance; it also will bring up claims that the presidency in the USA was "stolen" from the Republican candidate in 2020; or about conservative views being "cancelled" from academic discourse, and so on. Conspiracy theories claiming that Islam is used in an orchestrated way to subdue (or fundamentally alter) European culture and population had their heyday in Europe in the years following 2015 in which, as a consequence of war in Syria, millions of Syrians left their homes, mostly to take refuge in neighbouring countries, and about one million of them in Europe¹³. It is, however, safe to assume that anti-Muslim conspiracy theories will become virulent again, as soon as there is a new increase of immigration caused by whatever regional or global tragedy. It is therefore important to be aware of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, as they continue to exist and spread in the hidden structures of society.

Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories come in a number of shapes. Currently, the most prominent one is the "Great Replacement" theory, and, very similarly, but with slightly different accents and roots, the "Eurabia" theory. Their circulation differs a bit in terms of country ("Eurabia" is most popular in Romance countries). Other types of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories are "Love Jihad", "Secret Muslims", the myths around Sharia laws, the "Kalergi plan", etc. These theories and beliefs are presented in more detail in the Introduction paper (see the *Resources* to this workshop module).

For those who want to organise a workshop on anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, it is highly recommended to read this paper for preparation.

It is important to be aware of the various theories, their theoretical underpinnings, and last but not least, their origins. When tracing back the theories, one will discover that all of them, although being massively popularised through social media, are eventually rooted in theories that were, quite traditionally, laid out meticulously in books by authors such as Renaud Camus (France), Gisèle Littman (UK), David Lane (US), and many others. It is also important to keep in mind that anti-Muslim conspiracy theories cannot be separated from anti-Muslim racism¹⁴ on the one hand and far-right racist ideology on the

¹⁴ Discussion of the terms "racism" and its applicability to Islam or Muslims, see the introduction paper in Resources: (M3_exercise_1.2_introduction).



57

¹³ Figures provided by Mediendienst Integration, June 2021.



other hand. A journey to discover the world of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories is therefore inevitably a journey into the world of the far-right fringe of Western society.

Findings from the TEACH-Survey:

According to the TEACH survey in 2020, about 3-5% of adult educators in Germany, Austria and Sweden are "frequently" faced with anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs in the workplace. The number of adult educators reporting that they are "at least sometimes" faced with such claims is about 15%.

For example, the statement that their own country "faces the danger of becoming an Islamic state soon" was noticed by 12.4 % of adult educators in Germany, 21.3% in Austria, and 12.7% in Sweden, at least sometimes in their classes.

The fourth country in the study, Bulgaria, has considerably higher figures. They are in the range of 25% for "frequently" and 50% for "at least sometimes" for all anti-Muslimism claims presented in the study. For more information visit: www.teach-erasmus.eu

Aim of this module

Overall Aim:

This concept for a workshop has been created to allow institutions of adult education to offer their staff a training event where they can start getting acquainted with anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs in an interactive way. The desired effect would be that teachers and trainers develop awareness for the phenomenon and are able, first, to recognise anti-Muslim conspiracy myths when being faced with them, for example in the classroom; and, second, that they have already laid out for themselves some strategy on how to react to anti-Muslim conspiracy mindsets.

How to use:

This programme is primarily intended as a training for adult educators. This programme can be used as part of a continuing education course or in combination with other modules (e.g., our module on anti-Semitism) or as a single workshop day unit.



Day 1

Warm-up 1: Impromptu networking on topics of the workshop

Aim	This activity aims at bringing participants into contact with each other.
	Participants start to develop first thoughts on the topic, and start to
	communicate with each other about it.
Duration	20-30 Minutes
Preparation	Trainer should be well acquainted with the method in order to be able
	to seamlessly direct it. Therefore: read the instruction attentively. (For
	more information, look up the method "Impromptu networking" online)
Materials	Open space, so that everybody can move around
	Some acoustic object for the trainer to indicate the transition
	between steps in the exercise (sound bowl, gong, or similar.)

Instruction:

This activity needs open space for the participants to move around freely. The method used here is known under the name of "Impromptu Networking".

- Open space. Participants spread out to form a random crowd. When the trainer
 gives a signal, everyone looks for a partner for a short dialogue in which everyone
 has exactly two minutes to express their thoughts on two questions. One member
 of the pair starts elaborating, the other one listens attentively and tries to
 memorise the gist.
 - What experience have I already had with anti-Muslim theories?
 - o Do I have any ideas on how to counteract the spread of anti-Muslim theories?
- After two minutes (sound signal by the trainer), the roles in the pairs change: the
 one who listened now starts presenting his/her thoughts, and the other one
 listens. After another two minutes, the trainer gives another signal, the pairs
 separate with a friendly greeting, start to mill around, and each individual looks for
 a new partner (not spoken to yet) from somewhere in the crowd.
- Altogether, this will be done three times, so that at the end, everyone will have talked to three other participants (preferably to those they did not know before).

Exercise 1.1: Exploration: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories and Neighbouring Concepts

Aim	With this exercise, the groups start approaching the topic of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories by thinking about the phenomena related to it.
	They use their general knowledge and their personal experience in
	order to define a number of phenomena that need to be considered
	when thinking of anti-Muslim conspiracy myths.
	The result of this exercise will be a map of terms on a large wallpaper.
	The actual content will vary depending on the group, their experience,
	their previous occupation with the topic etc. The activity is therefore
	designed to be very open and leave room for all kinds of pre-existing
	knowledge. One effect of the activity may be that the group discovers that the topic
	of Islam (and especially how we relate to it) is important for them and
	deserves more attention.
	deserves more determion.
	Link to final activity at end of workshop: The resulting map should
	be used to return to in the concluding session of the workshop:
	 Have we covered the notions we collected here?
	Have some become irrelevant?
	Have others appeared that would need to be included, now, with our
Duration	newly developed perspective? 60 minutes
Materials	Pinboard
Materials	Index cards
	• Pens
	Needles or sticky tape
Resources	M3_exercise_1.1_sample_whiteboard - Sample design for the
	paper wall / whiteboard
	• M3_exercise_1.1_essay - Part of an essay by Pia Lamberty,
	discussing the pros and cons of various terms for "conspiracy theory"

Step I: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Group is seated in a semi-circle facing a pinboard.
- Trainer introduces the topic¹⁵:

"Our topic today is anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Now, as we are just about to start the seminar, and we may come from very different backgrounds and have different preexisting understandings, I suggest that we first collect our ideas around that notion –

¹⁵ The wording here is of course only a suggestion





anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Seeing what our common understanding of the topic is will then shape our further activities."

[Trainer should write the term onto the whiteboard or pinboard]

"I would simply invite you to state terms that you find related to the topic (anti-Muslim conspiracy theories), or that define it in some way, or that otherwise need to be taken into consideration."

• Trainer sticks a big paper slip reading "Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories" in the middle of the pinboard, so that it may become the centre of a mind map.

Step II: Brainstorming for terms (10 minutes)

- People now say terms they find related to the topic of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Trainer notes the terms down on index cards (or looks after other members of the group doing this) and sticks them to the pinboard, in a straight column at the far left of the pinboard.
- Of the collected notions, the group (led by the trainer) singles out 3-5 that seem to be core notions. (These might typically be e.g. "Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories", "Islamism", "Anti-Muslim Racism", but the proper selection depends on what the group contributes and the personal attitude of the trainer).
- These core notions get highlighted with colour (or by drawing a circle around them) and are placed in the centre of the wallpaper in equal distance (e.g. forming a triangle).

Step III: Forming the cloud (15 minutes)

- With the core notions placed centrally on the pinboard, and the collection of more terms on the left-hand side in a column, the trainer now takes one card after the other, and lets the group decide where the card should be placed in the centre field, and thereby creates meaningful relations with the core notions that are already there.
- Below is an example how this could finally look (but again: your result may be totally different). (Picture also available in the resources for this module: M3_exercise_1.1_sample_whiteboard)
- Note that the idea is that most terms will relate to several "core notions". This can
 be indicated through proximity, or even more clearly through adding lines of
 different strength.



Note 1: In this example, a better decision might have been to make "Islam" (left-hand side) a core notion instead of "Islamism". In the workshop, you are free at any time to rearrange your map and improve it.

Note 2: The cloud of terms will also help the trainer to assess attitudes and mindsets of the group, and to spot some problematic biases that need intervention.

Step IV: Clarify terms that are unclear by discussing them - (20 minutes)

- In parallel with creating the cloud, the session can be used to clarify terms where needed. The trainer initiates this process by asking for terms that seem crucial for a definition – which will lead to discussion if there are opposing opinions.
- Here are examples for topics that might occur:
 - o **Racism without race** there are no races in humans. Why do we still use the term "racism" to designate what should be called "group-related enmity".
 - o **Islam is not a race** even if there were races in humans, Islam is no race.
 - Conspiracy theories an approximate definition should be available to participants. If they have worked on the topic already (e.g. in other modules of the TEACH series), they may have a satisfactory definition available in their minds. If not, it will be important to discuss the topic with them and to co-create a working definition for Conspiracy Theory with the group.

Step V: Final discussion (10 minutes)

- Once the mind map is created, a short summary discussion is carried out in a plenary circle. The trainer may use questions such as:
 - o What did we learn?
 - What are the consequences for the workshop?
 - Are there topics we should urgently cover or clarify?



Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories - a Tour d'Horizon

Aim	Participants get an impression of the main branches of Anti-Muslim
	conspiracy by first reading and discussing texts prepared for the
	purpose, and second, extending their knowledge base by doing some
	self-directed research on selected topics (topics they immediately find
	helpful or interesting).
Duration	2 hours
Preparation	Trainers should prepare themselves by thoroughly studying the
	material provided for this exercise (see Resources), as well as the
	separate "Introduction" text to this workshop concept
	(M3_exercise_1.2_introduction). This may take 2-4 hours of
	preparation, depending on how familiar the trainer is with the topic.
Materials	Whiteboard / Pinboard for introduction and plenary discussion
	Table islands for group work
	Computers / mobile devices with internet access (ideally)
	participants bring their own laptops, and the workshop venue
	provides WIFI access).
	 Ideally: a printer available to print out screenshots made during
	research.
Resources	For the teacher: "Introduction" essay to the topic of anti-Muslim
Resources	conspiracy theories, Resources M3_exercise_1.2_introduction
	Texts (etc.) on various anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, see
	Resources:
	o M3_exercise_1.2_great_replacement - Great
	Replacement
	o M3_exercise_1.2_eurabia - Eurabia
	 M3_exercise_1.2_kalegri_plan - Kalergi Plan
	 M3_exercise_1.2_love_jihad- Love Jihad
	 M3_exercise_1.2_sharia - Sharia
	 M3_exercise_1.2_secret_muslims- Secret Muslims
	 M3_exercise_1.2_islamophobia - Islamophobia
	 M3_exercise_1.2_counterjihad- Counterjihad



Setup: Desks (or groups of chairs) for small groups (3-5 people) in different parts of the room, each provided with printouts of the material [see below, Resources].

The material consists of texts (and illustrations) to introduce the main branches of anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs that are currently (2021) circulating in parts of the society.

Step I: Introduction (15 minutes)

- Plenary circle around a pinboard or whiteboard.
- Trainer provides a very brief introduction to anti-Muslim conspiracy claims that
 were mentioned in M3_exercise_1.2_introduction. It should be sufficient to write
 the names of the conspiracy theories on the whiteboard or pinboard to allow the
 group to focus on them. (The first four topics are essential and should be covered
 preferably; the remaining four can be used e.g. with larger groups, with smaller
 teams for group work, or of course, when participants are particularly interested
 in them.)
- For each term on the whiteboard (pinboard), the trainer asks the group to come
 up with keywords, explanations or just guesses to briefly explain or illustrate them.
 The keywords are collected (on index cards or written on the whiteboard) next to
 the terms. The pinboard thus becomes a map of existing knowledge and
 assumptions.

Step II: Exploring the concepts in small teams (60 minutes)

- Trainer now asks the group to form small teams (2-4 people), and each team will focus on one of the terms.
- Trainer has to find a way to assign topics to teams. He/she can try to let people form small groups for each topic autonomously, led by curiosity or interest.
- Groups, now gathered around their separate tables in different parts of the room, read the texts for the topic assigned to them. (On their tables they should find the text about all the terms, see below under "Resources" so that they can read those, too, if they decide to.)
- Trainer explains the Steps to them. These are three Steps in row, as presented below. The trainer should write some keywords on the whiteboard (or similar) to help participants memorise the Steps.



Team Step 1 - Read and understand

Teacher explains:

Your Step is now to read the texts (for the topic assigned to your group). That's Step 1. The texts are not easy, as the topics are sometimes very complex. So far, just try to get into the topic as good as you can.

When there are questions, you are allowed to start discussing immediately and help each other with understanding.

Team Step 2 - Identify questions

Teacher explains:

You will be faced with things that are new for you. – Prepare a list of questions / terms to clarify. (This list will be used later in the plenum, so keep it.). That's Step 2.

Team Step 3 - Research for answers and visuals

Teacher explains:

Step 3: Try to answer your open questions using the combined knowledge of the team, and by doing some ad hoc research using your computers / mobile devices 16.

Try to find some visual material for "your" anti-Muslim conspiracy theory (internet search). This may be cover pages of books published on the topic; photos of popular proponents; internet memes; screenshots of social media discussions...)¹⁷.

Step III: Sharing the experience with the plenum (45 minutes)

- Trainer calls everybody back into the plenary circle.
- Each team now presents:
 - 1. Outline of the conspiracy theory in their own words (just a few sentences)
 - 2. Questions the team had (list of questions compiled in previous step)
 - 3. Visual evidence found on the practical occurrence of the conspiracy theory (printouts, or projection from screen)
- When all teams have finished their presentation, the group (plenum) discusses:
 - o What is our general impression?
 - Have we personally faced these conspiracy theories somewhere in our life?
 - o How do we feel about it?

¹⁷ How to collect? Depends on equipment available. Ideal would be having a printing station (computer + printer) in the room so that participants can send screenshots (per e-mail) to print. - Other solution is collecting screenshots on one computer of each team, and at time of plenary presentation connect that computer to the projector. - Trainers must decide how to solve this with respect to what is possible in their venue.



¹⁶ When using social media based on the participants' own devices or accounts, the trainer should point out to participants that they may want to use incognito mode.

Exercise 1.3: Great Replacement believers in practice

1	<u> </u>
Aim	Participants will get insight into the societal context of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, especially the "Great Replacement" conspiracy. Participants will learn about the ideas behind the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory. They will also become aware of the link between "Great Replacement" conspiracy and terrorism. The various activities in this segment are designed to encourage participants to enter a process of research and discussion about the topic.
Duration	4 hours
Preparation	The trainer should be familiar with the material, i.e. they should have watched the video in advance (M3_exercise_1.3_video).
Materials	 Video screen of sufficient size for the group; possibility to cover the window of the room for better sight Pinboard with sufficient papers, index cards, etc. (moderation case) Ordinary writing paper for participants to take notes Mobile devices (or desktop computers) sufficient in number to form teams of 2-3 participants with each team being equipped with one.
Resources	 M3_exercise_1.3_video - Info-package on the video documentary "Der große Austausch" [the Great Replacement].

Step I: Watching the video (30 minutes)

• Trainer shows the TV documentary "Der große Austausch" (see Resources).

Note on language versions:

German speaking participants can watch the documentary as officially published. For other participants, there are the following options

a. Using the auto-translated subtitles on YouTube in various languages. YouTube allows setting the language¹⁸.

The video takes 30 minutes, and it is recommended to watch the full length. For workshops in other languages than German, the trainer may decide to watch only the first 20 minutes to keep it shorter.

Consider a break: After presentation of the video, a short break could be appropriate.

 $^{^{\}rm 18}$ Quality checked for the English translation in June 2021.



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Step II: General discussion (15 minutes)

- Participants gather in a plenary circle around a pinboard. The trainer leads the discussion. The trainer may ask (some of) the following questions:
 - o What did we see?
 - o What role does "The Great Replacement have" in the video?
 - What can we say about the people who were presented as believers in the "Great Replacement" idea? What could be their motivation?
 - What elements of the "Great Replacement" theory were presented in the video?
 - Did the video handle the topic adequately?
 - Do we have personal experience with believers like those shown in the documentary?
- Answers are collected on Index cards and stuck to the pinboard.

Step III: Identifying topics that need more clarification (45 minutes)

- Participants are back in plenary circle. The role of trainer can be taken on by a different (experienced) ad-hoc trainer.
- The Step for the group is now to identify topics from the video that are not clear and need additional background.
- To achieve this, the trainer asks the group to split into smaller teams (of 2-3, number depending on availability of video-watching devices). Each team must have a video device available (typically the laptop of one of the participants).
- Teams watch the documentary again (they can easily stop the video on their devices when needed) and take notes of topics they feel need more background information (= **questions** they find should be clarified).
 - Such topics may include (but are of course not limited to):
 - What happened in Hanau in February 2020? (19.2.2020)
 - What happened in Halle in October 2019? (9.10.2019)
 - What happened in Christchurch (NZ) in March 2019? (15.3.2019)
 - Are we aware of similar events in other countries (including our own country)? What events?
 - Who are the TV (or YouTube) personalities that appear in short video segments?
 - What is the "Kalergi Plan", and who was Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi actually?
 - What are the various channels that are speaking about the Great Replacement (Watch out for the tiny notes on video sources top right to the video quotes in the documentary.)



Note 1: So far, the idea is to <u>collect **questions**</u> arising from the video, not yet trying to <u>answer</u> them. This will be done in a later phase.

Note 2: For groups in non-German speaking countries, it is advisable to particularly think about similar phenomena, groups, personalities, publishers, events, and mindsets in their country.

- After about 30 minutes of working in small teams, everybody gets back to the plenary cycle, and the teams present their questions. Trainer (or ad-hoc trainer) helps to put notes (index cards) onto the pinboard and arranges them.
- Once all topics found to be interesting are put on the pinboard, the group decides together which are most urgent or interesting to clarify. (Some could perhaps already be clarified during discussion). Each of the small team gets 2-3 topics assigned for research.

Step IV: Background research in small groups (45 minutes)

• The small teams do the necessary research to clarify the questions assigned to them. They use their laptops (or alternative devices) to search for information ¹⁹. The aim is to compile information that can subsequently be presented in the plenary circle.

Step V: Sharing information (30 minutes)

- Back in the plenary circle, the groups present their research findings.
- Crucial bits of information are attached to the pinboard to form a mind map to provide helpful context to the video documentary.

Step VI: Final discussion

- Trainer-led discussion:
 - o What did we experience?
 - Have we gotten new insights?
 - Has our impression of "Great Replacement" and similar believes changed in some way?
 - What are the consequences for dealing with conspiracy believes?

¹⁹ Any other form of information gathering is acceptable as well; just internet desk research is probably the most accessible in a workshop situation.



Wrap-up 1: Insights received & Questions opened

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Aim	Participants recollect what they experienced today, with regard to two aspects: a) things learned or insights received, and b) new questions that have arisen. These are collected on the pinboard.
Duration	20 minutes
Preparation	A wall paper is needed with a big "I" (insights) and a big "Q" (questions) on top, like this:
	I Q
Materials	 Pinboard Papers slips Pens Needles

Instruction:

- Participants seated in the plenary circle facing a pinboard. Everybody has 6 index cards and a pen.
- Trainer asks participants to recollect what they experienced today. Participants note down on the index cards
 - a. Three things they learned / things that were new to them / topics or notions where they feel they received some new insight / topics where they think they have altered their attitude to or their perception of.
 - b. Three questions that have newly come up for them through the workshop. These might be questions, problems, doubts, unsolved issues, etc.
- Participants have 5 minutes to think it over and prepare their index cards.
- Then the trainer asks for a volunteer who wants to start presenting their new insights and their new questions. While presenting, the volunteer pins them to the pinboard, under the I and Q headlines.
- The other participants follow suit. When topics repeat, they can pin their cards next to already existing ones, and, of course, the pinned cards can be regrouped at any time to create some meaningful order.
- Once all Is and Qs have been discussed, the trainer tries to find some conclusive words for the day.

Day 2

Warm-up 2: 1 - 2 - 4 - all!

A:	Double in the state of the stat
Aim	Participants interact with each other using a group work method called
	1-2-4-all. They quickly generate ideas on how to react to anti-Muslim
	conspiracy theories.
Duration	20 minutes
Preparation	The entire activity requires people moving around and forming
	small groups spontaneously. Hence, it is good to have enough
	space in the venue.
Materials	Paper
	Pens for all participants
	Flipchart, or similar tool for the trainer
	Acoustic object like a gong to indicate the transition to the next
	step in the game
Resources	M3_warm_up_2 - Flipchart design for the trainer to visualise the
	rules of the game for the group

Instruction:

Step I: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Trainer gathers the group around him/her, standing (not seated) to explain what will happen next namely a game called "1-2-4-all".
- To make the rules of the game clear to everybody, it is good to show the steps on a flip chart (M3_warm_up_2)
 - o I will present a question to you. Then, everybody has one minute to think about it.
 - The question is: What opportunities do <u>you</u> see for reacting to anti-Muslim conspiracy claims or anti-Muslim racism.
 - You consider this for one minute for yourself, in quiet self-reflection. You should jot down your ideas on a piece of paper, as this helps you focus.
 - Then you turn around and look out for any other person available. You two form a pair. You briefly discuss your ideas. You have 2 minutes for it.
 - o Then each pair looks out for another pair. They form a foursome and share their ideas with each other. They should try to highlight for themselves the ideas that seemed most convincing to them. You have 4 minutes for this.
 - o Then I will call everybody together again.



Step II: Exchanging ideas in pairs, groups (6 minutes)

• The game starts with a sign of the trainer, with steps as described above (1 minute of self-reflection; 2 minutes of sharing ideas in pairs; 4 minutes of discussing the ideas in foursomes). The trainer keeps track of the exact time and indicates transitions with a bell (or similar object).

Step III: Sharing ideas (5 minutes)

• When the group has gathered, the trainer asks the teams one after the other to share their best (!) ideas – each group only shares 1 or 2. Teams who share their ideas should try to avoid mentioning ideas that were already addressed. The trainer notes down all ideas on a wall paper or a blackboard.

Step IV: Reflection (4 minutes)

• Reflect in a public discussion on the collection of ideas recorded on the flipchart.

Exercise 2.1: Approaching Islam the Playful Way

	pproaching islam the riayrar way
Aim	In this workshop, we can hardly provide a comprehensive introduction to Islam, as Islam is a very broad and multi-facetted historical and cultural phenomenon. This activity is therefore designed to become more aware of Islam as a cultural phenomenon. The activity is designed predominantly for people of typical non-Islamic European background. It will encourage them to recall their basic understanding about Islam and might eventually inspire them to learn more about Islam.
Duration	60 minutes
Preparation	 Trainer needs to be acquainted with the rules of the four games to be able to explain them. Trainer also has to prepare the various sets of cards by printing them from the M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards preferably on paper stronger than usual, and cutting them.
Materials	 Table island for the teams to gather and play - as many as there are teams (typically 4-5) Sets of cards must be printed and cut (4-5 full sets) in preparation of the workshop
Resources	 M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards - Playing cards for Games 1, 2, 3

Instruction:

Spatial setup: Tables in different corners of the room, each to accommodate 3-5 participants. Each table has a set of playing cards (M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards).

Step I: Forming teams and introduction (5 minutes)

- Trainer splits the group into teams of 3-5.
- If there are participants with extensive knowledge of Islam, it is a good idea to make sure each team includes one of them.
- Trainer gives instructions for playing the first game, then lets the teams play for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, the next game will be explained and played. And so forth.

Game 1: Sets of Four

- Sets of four is a simple card game, often played by children (with cards showing cars, ships, or other cool things). Nevertheless, for those who are not fully aware of the rules anymore, the rules are laid out below:
- Cards used: M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards (and herein: "Sets of four")
- Participants form groups of 3-5.
- Each group gets a set of cards.



- Cards are shuffled, then handed out to participants.
- Participants check their cards. The goal is to complete sets of four (there are five sets of four cards, in the categories Pillars of faith, Arabic, Prophets, Mosque, and Prayer. Each card also indicates which other cards of the set are missing.).
- Game starts with the person left to the one who dealt the cards. This person randomly asks another person for a card he/she happens to need. If the person has the card, he/she has to hand it out, and Person 1 continues to ask others for cards. If, however, Person 2 does not have the desired card, Person 2 get the right to ask others for cards.
- When cards are exchanged, participants share their knowledge about the respective topic, thus increasing the knowledge of the entire group about core notions of Islam.
- When a player has a set of four completed cards, he/she will put that set openly on the table.
- The person who has the most complete sets in front of them is the winner.

Game 2: Domino

- Cards used: M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards and herein: "Domino"
- Domino cards are handed out to members of the group in order. There are 22 cards in the game.
- One random card is put openly in the middle of the table
- Participants check if they have a card that fits to one side of the card (in any direction).
- Participants take turns in placing their cards. A player who does not have a fitting card pauses.
- When a card is placed, the group tries to make sure that the topic mentioned on the card is understood, thus sharing their knowledge.
- The person who is out of cards first is the winner.

Game 3: Memory

- Cards to be used: M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards, and herein: "Memory"
- The game has 40 cards. Cards are put on the table, back side up, face (text) down, typically arranged in a square (or two separate squares for Questions and Answers.).
- Now players take turns in lifting a question card and turning it, so that everybody
 can see what is written. Then the player lifts a card from the answers square,
 hoping to pick the corresponding one. If s/he picks the right one, s/he takes both
 cards. If not, cards are flipped again so that they cannot be read. Now it is the next
 player's turn.



• Participants thus will get acquainted with 22 terms that are elementary for Islam.

Topics covered in the game:

 Mekka, Quran, Allah, Alcohol and pork, Minaret, Five times of prayer, Ramadan, Friday, Prophet, Arabic language, Not eating and drinking during daylight, Arch angel Gabriel. Leaving Mecca 622 (Hidzhra), Sure, Muslims, Abraham and Ismail, Kaaba.

Exercise 2.2: Diving into the wicked world of "Great Replacement" on social media

	wing into the wicked world of Great Replacement on Social media
Aim	Conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mindsets are not always clearly visible
	in society. Often, they thrive in more hidden places. YouTube recently
	started to ban conspiracy theory content but other social media
	channels such as Telegram are still often used to promote conspiracy
	theories. The goal of this task is to make use of this "liberal" policy on
	Telegram and use the platform to explore anti-Muslim conspiracy
	beliefs such as the "Great Replacement" there.
Duration	2,5 hours
Preparation	Participants need access to Telegram (app for mobile devices).
	Options for accessing Telegram during the workshop:
	1. Participants already have a Telegram account (on their private
	device), and use this for the workshop.
	2. Participants already have an account but do not want to
	"contaminate" it by searching for conspiracy-myths-related
	content. In this case, they can create a new, separate account
	they later delete.
	3. Participants have their own mobile devices (mobile phone or
	tablet), but do not use Telegram so far. They can install the app
	and create an account. They may later remove the account and
	delete the app.
Materials	 One large pinboard (and pens, Index cards, needles) - for defining search strategies
	Mobile devices with Telegram app operable on them
	Paper and pens for taking notes during group work
	A video screen to present findings from the internet, connected
	to a device that runs Telegram.
	• Sticky paper dots (coin sized) to attach them to paper printouts
	for counting points.
Resources	M3_exercise_2.2_strategies - list of possible search strategies in
	Telegram – just to give an example.

Step I: General introduction by trainer (15 minutes)

• Trainer introduces to the session:

We are now going to explore the world of "Great Replacement" conspiracy thinking. We will try to visit places where beliefs around anti-Muslimism issues are being shared. What we will be doing is, we will be browsing through "Telegram" channels in search for content related to anti-Muslim conspiracy theories.

Why Telegram? Because unlike YouTube and Twitter, Telegram is actually almost without any rules. Almost anything can be posted on Telegram, practically without regard of decency or even the laws of the country.

• Trainer can also add some basic info about Telegram if required: Telegram is a messenger service initially created in Russia²⁰ but now runs from various places around the world²¹, with allegedly several hundred million users worldwide. Telegram is free to use. It allows various forms of communication (chats etc.) One form is "Groups", another is "Channels". Groups can have up to 200 000 members (as compared to WhatsApp where it's only 256). In Groups, all members can share something with all others. - The other form is "Channels". These can be subscribed to by everybody, but it is only the Channel owner who can publish something. Channels are marked by a small megaphone:

Groups are marked by a small group of people:

- 2 Pat Condell Freespeech Reloaded
- The trainer should also warn participants that reading Telegram channels (or joining groups there) with conspiracy theoretical content can become psychologically challenging as participants will most probably see offensive content. The trainer should make people aware that they can stop doing this activity at any time.
- If participants use their own devices (and are not Telegram users already), and thus have to install the app especially for the workshop, the trainer should make participants aware of data protection pitfalls associated with Telegram²².
- Trainer summarizes the Step: The Step is: We will try to find communication about topics inspired by or related to anti-Muslim conspiracy theories in Telegram chats (groups, channels).
- Trainer finally announces:

 But first, let us develop a common strategy for how to search on Telegram for these topics.

²² If the trainer is not sufficiently knowledgeable about this, he/she should update himself/herself beforehand. Information on data protection issues of Telegram is easily available in the internet, e.g., from https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telegram



76

²⁰ Founders Nikolai and Pawel Durow

²¹ For more background: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telegram [June 2021]

Step II: Developing a search strategy (group work) - (30 minutes)

- For this Step, the trainer asks participants to form groups of 3-5.
- The groups should be a mix of people with and without Telegram experience. It is also good for each team to include, if possible, at least one person with some acquaintance with (anti-Muslim) conspiracy peddlers in the given country / language.
 - (Suggestions for strategies see M3_exercise_2.2_strategies)
- Importantly, the idea here is to <u>use the knowledge of the group</u>, not to follow a pre-defined line set by the workshop designers.
- The trainer might want to make participants aware that on Telegram there are also many fake accounts. There is also a blue badge for verified accounts of certain personalities such as politicians and other public figures, although this badge cannot in all cases be fully trusted as well.
- The teams discuss their search strategies for 20 minutes, while taking notes to be able to remember and report. They may also use the time to test their strategies.
- After 20 minutes, the trainer calls everybody back into the plenary circle. The teams present their strategies (approaches / suggestions / good and bad experience).
- Together, the entire group takes notes on the pinboard (or whiteboard), to collect the wisdom of the crowd. (10 minutes)
- As a result, everybody in the room should eventually have some idea for how to proceed when searching for specific content on Telegram.

Step III: Finding content, that can escalate quickly (60 minutes)

- Participants now form new groups of 3-5 (trainer has to decide if the groups stay the same as before, or if he/she prefers them to re-shuffle). Smaller groups are better, but then more devices running Telegram are needed.
- The teams start to search for relevant Telegram content (using the search strategies discussed in the Step before). They should keep note of their Steps (protocol on paper), and especially of "good" finds.
- Depending on what equipment is available, the teams
 - o take screenshots and print them (full A4 sized)
 - o prepare themselves for showing the findings on the large video screen in the room (keep links, or use a collection of screenshots again)
- Teams have 60 minutes for this Step (trainer has to decide).

Step IV: Presenting the findings to the plenum (30 minutes)



- Participants now gather in the plenum, and teams present their findings. They
 display them (on video screen, or by pinning printouts to the pinboard) and explain
 them to the group. They especially explain why they find the post relevant or
 interesting with regard to "anti-Muslim conspiracy theories".
- When all relevant posts are presented, the trainer asks everyone to write down their opinion of the content. In particular, thoughts on why the presented posts could become very dangerous to the Muslim population as well as our democratic values should be written down on sticky notes. All thoughts should be noted on sticky notes and hung up in the classroom.

Step V: Final discussion in the plenary circle (15 minutes)

- What did we learn?
- Imagine you do not read a newspaper or follow "mainstream" news on TV and radio but Telegram channels are your main source of information.
 - What world do you live in? How do you feel?
 - What would be your political opinion / how would you vote?
 - Do you know people who seem to be living in such a world? How do you communicate with them?

Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists

	oncepts for dealing with anti-muslim conspiracy theorists
Aim	This exercise allows participants to get acquainted with a number of
	helpful concepts when dealing with extremist world-views, conspiracy
	mindsets and anti-Muslim conspiracy peddling in particular.
	The participants familiarise themselves with four different concepts
	related to "how to react when facing conspiracy theorists". Teams will
	try to relate the concepts to their personal experience. Then, in a
	process inspired by the World Café method, they start to talk to each
	other about the four concepts so that eventually everybody has had an
	opportunity to get to know them and discuss them.
Duration	2,5 hours
Preparation	Room prepared with four stations: tables, covered with a large paper (in
	what follows called "table cloth") to draw on. (Alternatively, a flipchart or
	wallpaper could be used.) Pens of various colours must be available.
	Each table is also equipped with materials presenting four concepts
	from psychology and social sciences that are helpful in dealing with
	proponents of problematic world views. Each station has the materials
	for one of the four topics.
	Each station also has a name for the four concepts written in large
	letters:
	 Pyramid of human needs (M3_exercise_2.3_needs_pyramid)
	2. Circular model of stakeholders
	(M3_exercise_2.3_circular_model)
	3. Theories about how group-related enmity emerges
	M3_exercise_2.3_causes_enmity)
	4. Options when facing conspiracy peddlers
	(M3_exercise_2.3_catalogue_of_options)
Materials	 Four stations in the room: tables, with large paper ("table cloth")
	to draw on; pens.
	For the final discussion the usual plenary circle of chairs.
Resources	M3_exercise_2.3_circular_model - Circular model of
	stakeholders (text to read)
	• M3_exercise_2.3_causes_enmity - Theories about causes for
	group-related enmity (text to read)
	 M3_exercise_2.3_needs_pyramid- Needs pyramid (text to read)
	M3_exercise_2.3_catalogue_of_options - A catalogue of options
	when meeting right-wing conspiracy believers (text to read)
-	

Step I: Introduction to the method to be used (10 minutes)

• Trainer briefly explains what is going to happen now. Here is an example of what he/she can say:

"The next exercise is about getting acquainted with a number of helpful concepts when dealing with difficult worldviews such as conspiracy theories. It is often helpful to understand a bit of the psychology behind it. We cannot, of course, clarify all psychological aspects of conspiracy thinking in general. What we will do is work a bit with four different concepts that are helpful in any case.

You will get to know the four concepts in a second.

First, we will split into four teams. The four teams will work on the four stations here in the room for 30 minutes, making themselves acquainted with the concepts. Each team will work with one concept. The idea is that you read the materials. Please create some team strategy for yourself to first understand it, think it through, and then also visualise the concept and your thoughts by drawing on the table cloth. You have about half an hour for this.

Once this is done, we will open up the floor for the World-Café. Everybody is free to stroll around and to see what happens at the other stations; join the discussion there; ask questions; contribute; or leave when the topic is not interesting anymore.

Each station should have one person that feels responsible for it and also stays there during the café walk. The idea is that by communicating with each other about the various concepts, everybody gets into contact with all four ideas and has some meaningful exchange about it with others. At the end, we will come together in the plenary circle and discuss."

Step II: Studying the concepts - and being creative with them (45 minutes)

- Trainer asks participants to split up evenly to the four stations.
- Using the materials provided (M3_exercise_2.3_circular_model; causes_enmity; needs_pyramid; catalogue_of_options), each station first tries to develop an understanding of the one concept assigned to them. They should
- a) read the text and then
- b) try to find practical examples, use cases, or arguments for (or against) the model, based on their own experience.
- At each station, teams should try to visualise the concept and their thoughts about
 it using pens to draw on the table cloth. By drawing, writing, doodling and
 sketching, they create a picture, mind map, story board or whatever that will help
 to sort and document their thoughts, and to present this to others later.



(The team on Station 4 "Options when facing conspiracy peddlers" can alternatively choose to present the topic through mini-drama.)

Step III: Sharing thoughts - World-Café (45 minutes)

- After about 45 minutes, the trainer gives a signal.
- At this point each station should have named one "Guardian" for their topic. The Guardian's Step is to stay at the table, even when others leave it to stroll around.
- Everybody else now starts to stroll around to see what's up at the other desks.
 People mingle into the discussions and work processes there and try to join them.
 They can ask people there to present their thoughts and artwork, they can also add their own thoughts, and add their own notes or sketches to the table cloths.
- This café situation lasts for 45 minutes.
- Then everybody gathers in the plenary circle to discuss what they learned and experienced.

Step IV: Plenary discussion – (30 minutes)

- Trainer calls in everybody to sit down in the plenary circle. Trainer gives everybody a chance to share their thoughts and experiences. Possible question to start:
 - What was the most useful take-away of this exercise for you personally?
 - How can we react to people distributing conspiracy theories?
 - o Is this also applicable in our classrooms / courses / seminars?
 - Have we had encounters with conspiracy theorists or hate-speakers that we could not handle well?
 - o Are the concepts discussed here helpful in such cases?

(In case Team 4 decided to create drama pieces (role play) instead of a drawing, they will have a chance to perform this now.)

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

MODULE 4:

Anti-Science Conspiracy Theories



Module 4: Anti-science conspiracy theories

Introduction

Anti-science is the rejection of mainstream scientific views and methods, or their replacement with unproven or deliberately misleading theories. Anti-science conspiracy theories question and reject the validity of facts offered by the scientific community. This attitude has increased in the last decade. For instance, in recent years, conspiracy theorists mistrusting science have claimed that global warming is a hoax, that vaccines are unsafe, and that the Covid-19 virus is being spread via 5G technology. These conspiracy beliefs can lead to serious consequences, for example, for public health, with dropping vaccination rates and an increasing resistance towards environmental policies.²³

Conspiracy theories about global warming, the Covid-19 virus, and vaccines all build on the distrust of science and the tension between personal freedom and the need to protect society as a whole.²⁴ The logic behind these conspiracy theories is to question everything the "establishment" – including the scientific community – says or does. The conspiracy theorists demand immediate, comprehensive, and definite answers to all their questions, and a failure to provide these answers can be interpreted as "proof" that the facts presented are part of a deceiving conspiracy.²⁵

There is a long list of anti-science conspiracy theories, from beliefs that the earth is flat to the claim that vaccinations lead to autism. In this module, the themes that will be discussed within anti-science conspiracy theories are: anti-vaccination conspiracy theories, climate change denial, and Covid-19 related conspiracy theories. Within these categories, there are many different conspiracy theories that sometimes overlap and mix with disinformation and misinformation. The difference between anti-scientific conspiracy theories and scientific disinformation is that conspiracy theories include the belief that a secret and malevolent group is behind the conspiracy, whereas disinformation (purposefully) spreads information that is untrue but not necessarily believed to be driven by secret and malicious forces. For example, claiming that vaccines contain substances that cause harm is disinformation. Instead, if you claim that the government puts dangerous substances into vaccines to secretly harm the population on purpose, then you have an anti-science conspiracy theory.

²⁵ T.Goertzel, 'Conspiracy Theories in Science', EMBO reports, published online 2010 June 11 (vol. 7), p. 493-499.



83

²³ T.Goertzel, 'Conspiracy Theories in Science', EMBO reports, published online 2010 June 11 (vol. 7), p. 493-499.

²⁴ J. Rosen, 'How to Keep Covid-19 Conspiracies Contained', Scientific American, published online 2020 June 6. https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/how-to-keep-covid-19-conspiracies-contained/.



Findings from the TEACH-Survey:

The TEACH survey carried out in 2020, just 4-6 months after the outbreak of Covid-19, showed that many adult educators hear about Covid-19-related conspiracy theories from students "sometimes" to "very often". In Sweden, 14% of educators experienced situations in which students in the classroom expressed Covid-19-related conspiracy theories, in Germany the result was 21%, in Austria 32.8%, and in Bulgaria 70%. The results clearly indicate that Covid-19-related conspiracy theories are something adult educators may face in their classrooms and should be prepared to handle.

Conspiracy theories about climate change, for example proposing that climate change is not man-made (but that the idea of climate change is spread in order to profit from it), were heard "sometimes" to "frequently" by 10% of adult educators in Germany, 12.6% in Austria, 14.5% in Sweden, and 35.7% in Bulgaria.

Anti-vaccination conspiracy theories, for example, claiming that the vaccination causes autism, were heard "sometimes" to "frequently" by 19.6% of adult educators in Germany, 34.3% in Austria, 19.% in Sweden, and 63% in Bulgaria.

The conspiracy theory that adult educators at the time of the survey encountered most is that the coronavirus is believed to be created in a laboratory (Germany: 27.5%, Austria: 43.8%, Sweden: 21.8%, Bulgaria: 84.4%).

Aims of this Module

Overall Aim:

The goal of this module is to closely examine various anti-science conspiracy theories. In addition to presenting basic terminology, this module aims to give insight into various facets of anti-science conspiracy theories. The central aim of the module is to provide adult educators with assistance in dealing with anti-science conspiracy theories.

The overall goal is to empower adult educators in their ability to deal with anti-science conspiracy theories and to develop ideas for dealing with them in their own classrooms.

How to use:

This programme is primarily intended as a training for adult educators. This programme can be used as part of a continuing education course or in combination with other modules (e.g. our module on anti-Semitism) or as a single workshop day unit.



Day 1

Warm-up 1: Get to know me and the conspiracy theories surrounding us

Aim	The aim of this segment is to get familiar with the other participants and
	"break the ice" before starting the training. Furthermore, it aims to
	identify the participants' pre-existing understanding of conspiracy
	theories.
Duration	30- 60 minutes (depending on group size)
Preparation	Forming of pairs: The trainer makes the group form a circle and picks
	a person in the circle to be the "starting point". This person then turns
	to the person to their right, and the two of them form a pair. Pairing
	continues until everyone has a partner. (If participant number is odd,
	the trainer can step in, or let them form one group of three).
Materials	Whiteboard
	 Index cards, or the like, for taking notes.

Instruction:

Step I: Introduction circle (15 minutes):

- The trainer asks the participants to introduce themselves to each other by answering the following questions:
 - o What is your name?
 - o What do you work with?
 - o What country (or city, region, etc.) are you from?
 - Why are you participating in this training?
 - What is a conspiracy theory you have heard about and what do you remember from that conspiracy theory?
 - Have you encountered a conspiracy theory being brought up in your work environment? If yes, tell a little bit about the situation.
- After everyone has finished with the questions, the trainer asks the pairs to introduce each other to the rest of the group by telling what their partner answered to the questions. The pairs might help each other out if they are struggling to remember all the answers.
- While the pairs are introducing each other to the group, the trainer takes notes on the whiteboard about the conspiracy theories (CTs), situations, and/or statements that are being mentioned.

Step II: Familiar conspiracy theories (15 minutes)

- When everyone has introduced each other, the trainer directs the attention to the whiteboard and goes through the conspiracy theories that have been brought up. The trainer goes through each conspiracy theory one by one and asks the participants to raise their hands if they have heard about the conspiracy theory before. The trainer notes down how many people raise their hands for the different conspiracy theories to get an overview of the experience and previous knowledge of the participants.
- Before moving on, the trainer makes a final comment or summary about the turnout of the exercise. The trainer uses these questions as a guide to summarise the outcome:
 - o Did multiple people mention the same conspiracy theories?
 - Had they heard about any conspiracy theories before?
 - o Had anyone encountered a conspiracy theory in their work environment?

Exercise 1.1: Argumentation traps

	igamentation craps
Aim	The aim of this package is to get familiar with different argumentation styles that are frequently used by people who believe in conspiracy theories. Furthermore, the aim is to strengthen the ability to identify situations when people are using deceptive argumentation. By strengthening this skill, people will be able to respond to the argumentation style rather than arguing about "facts" that they might not have a lot of knowledge about.
Duration	4,5 - 6 hours (depending on group size and level of discussion)
Preparation	 Print Appendix 1 - Argumentation traps (PDF-file) and handout for the groups for the presentation during Step 1. Print Appendix 2 - Guide on how to talk to someone who believes in conspiracy theories and handout for the groups for Step 2. Research for videos or (social media / blog) posts that show conspiracy theoretical content (use keywords like "Pandemic is a hoax", "Anti-Vaccination", or research popular conspiracy theorists: Alex Johns, David Icke, Kelly Brogan (any famous personality from your country)).
Materials	Big sheets of paper (posters)
	 Pens Post-it notes or index cards Computer or smartphone with internet connection Projector
Resources	 M4_exercise_1.1_argumentation_traps - Argumentation traps Guide on how to talk to someone who believes in conspiracy theories provided by the EEAS (European External Action Service): click here Search path: www.eeas.europa.eu, Search: "My friend thinks Bill Gates will microchip humanity", pick the article written by Press and information team of the Delegation in Albania (Publication date: 09/11/21).
Anything else	• If you use English videos: the language can be adjusted to your national language with auto-translated subtitles. The speed of the videos can also be reduced if they are talking too fast. All the settings can be made in the bottom right corner of the video on the setting icon.



Step I: Introduction to argumentation traps (20-30 minutes)

- The trainer presents the poster (M4_exercise_1.1_argumentation_traps) with the different argumentation traps that can be used by people trying to convey others about different conspiracy theories or justify their own beliefs.
- The trainer makes sure to describe each argumentation trap and to give examples.
- Before moving on, the trainer asks the participants if they understood all of the examples.

Step II: Studying videos (60-90 minutes)

- The participants are divided into groups of 3 to 4 people and the trainer assigns them a video or post.
- The trainer explains that the materials show conspiracy theories.
- The participants study their assigned materials in the group and identify what arguments are being used. After identifying several arguments (can be written as bullet points), the participants should see if the arguments they found can be matched with any of the argumentation traps from the initial presentation.
- The participants might have to listen to the videos and read the materials a couple of times to identify what arguments the people in the audio recordings are using.

Step III: Discussion (60 minutes)

- The participants discuss in their groups:
 - o What was your initial reaction when watching the video?
 - o Was it easy or hard to identify what arguments were made?
 - o How did you experience the arguments before analysing them?
 - Was it easy or hard to single out what information was correct or incorrect?
 - Have you ever been in a situation where you have struggled to respond to a person expressing arguments for a conspiracy theory or alternative information? If yes, what was hard about it? If not, how do you think you would react?

Step IV: Presentation of results (45 minutes - 60 minutes, depending on group size):

- The trainer asks each group to make a small presentation of maximum 10 minutes each where they
 - 1. present their video/post shortly (what was it about)
 - 2. what are the main arguments the people in the video/post are making and
 - 3. if they were able to identify any of the argumentation traps in the videos/post (explain what arguments can be matched with what argumentation trap and why).



• When everyone finished presenting the video assignment, the trainer initiates the presentations of the discussions. The trainer asks the questions and asks people from the different groups to give a summary of what they discussed.

Step V: Respond to conspiracy theory beliefs (60-90 minutes)

It is not always easy to know how to talk to someone who firmly believes in conspiracy theories. In this Step, the participants are encouraged to discuss what tactics and methods they have used or would use if they were confronted with ideas and arguments like the ones in the videos/posts.

- The participants stay in their groups, and the trainer hands out a big sheet of paper (could be adapted to using online tools like Padlet).
- The group brainstorms and writes down (on the paper or on index cards) ideas/ways/tactics/methods that they think are good to use when talking to someone who believes in conspiracy theories. This could be based on previous knowledge, experience or intuition. All ideas are welcome; this is not the time to criticise. The participants spend about 10-15 minutes doing this.
- Then the group will go through all the things written down, one at a time.
- The person who wrote it explains and then discusses in the group if everyone agrees or not on the method/tactics proposed. The groups spend about 15 minutes doing so.
- The trainer asks the participants to read the following guide provided by the EEAS (European External Action Service): <u>click here</u>
- <u>Search path</u>: <u>www.eeas.europa.eu</u>, Search: "My friend thinks Bill Gates will microchip humanity", pick the article written by Press and information team of the Delegation in Albania (Publication date: 09/11/21).
- After the participants have read the guide, the trainer asks the participants to discuss in their group:
 - Did the six recommendations provided in the guide match with any of the ideas you collected on the paper?
 - What are your thoughts on the guide? Will the recommendations be helpful for you? Can you implement them in your work life?
 - Do you agree with the guide? Is anything missing or did it bring up aspects you have not thought about before?
 - If you had to identify one principle to never forget when talking to someone who believes in conspiracy theories, what would that be?

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

Step VI: Wrapping up (15 minutes)

- Before finishing the exercise, the trainer gives a summary of the discussions. The
 trainer can also share the reflection that it can be hard to argue with someone who is
 very convinced by their own beliefs and has spent hours researching "facts" that
 support their theory. If you do not have a lot of knowledge on the subject, it can be
 hard to respond to those "facts" presented in the arguments.
- The idea of today's exercise was to provide the participants with tools to be able to identify when people are using arguments that are deceptive no matter the content of the arguments. By being able to distinguish when someone is making an argument based on cherry picking science or appealing to ignorance, you can respond to the arguments being faulty without having to get involved in a discussion about "facts".

Wrap-up 1: Give one, Get one.

Aim	The aim of this wrap-up activity is for the participants to reflect on what
	they have learned during the workshop and what they will take from it
	into their working life. Furthermore, the activity provides a chance to
	hear and reflect upon what the other participants take with them from
	the workshop.
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	• Pen
	• Paper

Instruction:

- To conclude the day, the trainer asks all participants to get an A4 paper to write on the one side "Give one" and on the other side "Get one". On the "Give one" side, the participants write down four things they have learned during today's workshop that they will bring with them into their work life.
- The participants will then stand up and mingle with four different people (trying to talk to people they have not been in a group with before).
- In pairs: Person 1 presents one of the four points they wrote on the "Give one" side. Person 2 writes down on the "Get one" side what their partner tells them.
- Then the procedure is repeated in the pair vice versa. When the first pair has exchanged their learning outcomes, the participants find a new partner and repeat the process.
- When the activity is finished, each person should have their own four learning outcomes written down on the "Give one" side, and four learning outcomes from four different participants on the "Get one" side of the paper.



Day 2
Warm-up 2: Conspiracy Theory Memory Game

Aim	The aim of this activity is to familiarise the participants with current conspiracy theories about global warming, anti-vaccination, and Covid-19. Furthermore, the aim is to open up a discussion about the different conspiracy theories presented in the game and to get an overview of the participants' prior knowledge of and experience with conspiracy
	theories.
Duration	45-60 minutes
Preparation	The trainer prints as many Memory games as needed for the group of participants. (Memory is played by a minimum of two players up to 4 or 5; each pair needs one game.) The trainer makes sure to have read the Memory game materials to have a basic idea about all the presented conspiracy theories.
Resources	M4 warm up 2 memory – The CONSPIRACY THEORIES
Resources	memory game

The CT Memory game (CT is short for conspiracy theories) consists of sets of paper cards, half of them with the name of a conspiracy theory, the other half with a short explanation of the conspiracy theory. The cards also have a number in the bottom left corner that indicates which cards match. The players' goal is to match as many names with explanations as possible. The game consists of 20 conspiracy theories.

To create a challenge for the participants, you can play with all the cards but remember that the purpose of the exercise is to get familiar with different conspiracy theories. If it gets too difficult to finish the game, the participants can flip the cards to the right side and match them as a team. Another option is to play with less cards from the beginning and then present the cards that were not played with in the end.

Step I: Playing the memory game (30-45 minutes)

- The participants split into groups of two to five players and the trainer hands out one set of cards to each pair M4_warm_up_2_memory.
- Participants shuffle the cards, then lay them out in the area between them on the table. Cards are upside-down so that the text is hidden.
- The first player selects any two of the cards and turns them over to see what is written.
- Now there are two scenarios:
 - Match: a player makes a match if the two cards match. When a match is made, the player takes both cards and places them in front of him or her.



- That player then takes another turn and continues taking turns until he or she misses.
- Miss: a player misses if the two cards turned over do not match. When a player misses, he or she turns the two cards text-side-down again, in the same place where they were before. That player's turn ends. All players try to remember which cards were turned over, for future matches.
- The game continues until all cards have been matched and removed from the playing area. All players then count their matching pairs. The player with the most matches wins.

Step II: Discussion (15 minutes)

Discussion: after finishing the game, the participants stay in their pairs and go through the conspiracy theories on the card.

- Are there any conspiracy theories on the cards you have not heard about before?
- Have you encountered anyone advocating for any of the conspiracy theories included in the game?

Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector

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Aim	The aim of this exercise is to provide the participants with an analytical
	tool they can use when assessing new information they believe might
	be a conspiracy theory. By using this tool, the participants will be able
	to, in a structured way, go through ten steps that will help them to
	distinguish if the information they encounter is more likely to be true or
	false. Furthermore, the participants will be able to use this tool when
	talking to someone who is a firm believer in conspiracy theories by
	asking the questions listed in the ten steps without being too dismissive.
Duration	4,5 - 5 hours
Preparation	The trainer makes sure to have M4_warm_up_2_memory - The
	CONSPIRACY THEORIES Memory game printed out to have a list of the
	conspiracy theories that are included in the game.
Materials	Computers or mobile phone with internet connection, at least
	one per two people
	Projector for PPT
	Whiteboard/Flipchart (pens)
Resources	M4_warm_up_2_memory - The CONSPIRACY THEORIES memory
	game
	M4_exercise_2.1_PPT_conspiracy_detector - The conspiracy
	theory detector (PPT-presentation)
	• M4_exercise_2.1_list_conspiracy_detector – List of
	CONSPIRACY THEORIES detector (printed for all the participants)
Anything	The trainer can recommend to the participants to search for information
else	about conspiracy theories in incognito mode to avoid algorithms
	sending a lot of information about conspiracy theories later on.
L	

Step I: Dig deeper (60 minutes)

- The trainer divides the group into pairs and asks the pairs to choose one of the CTs from the Memory game they want to learn more about. (If the group has not played the Memory game, the trainer prints it from Appendix 6 and looks at which CTs are included in the game).
- The participants will most likely notice that some of the conspiracy theories overlap in themes and origin. If the participants want to, they can have a look at more than one Conspiracy Theory. (Just avoid selecting the conspiracy theory about Bill Gates microchipping the entire population through Covid-19 vaccines since this will be used as a pedagogical example later).
- The trainer asks the pairs to do some research about the conspiracy theory they chose (using articles, video-clips, podcasts etc. available online) and try to answer the following questions:

- What is the conspiracy theory about?
- o Who is behind the alleged conspiracy? (An individual, country, government etc.)
- Who else needs to be involved in this alleged conspiracy to make it possible to be carried out?
- What are the proofs or arguments the conspiracy theorist highlights to prove why this is "a real conspiracy"?
- What does the conspiracy theorist think the conspiracy is trying to accomplish and why?
- o If the conspiracy theory was successful, what would be the consequences?
- Are there any variations (alternative ideas) to your chosen conspiracy theory?
 Explain.

Step II: Share results (45-60 minutes)

- The trainer asks the participants to share their findings with the group by following the questions and presenting their answers. The trainer makes clear that if the participants were not able to find answers to all of the questions, that's totally fine.
- Each pair should have about 5-10 minutes for their presentation (depending on the overall size of the workshop class).

Step III: The conspiracy theory detector (30-45 minutes)

- The trainer opens the PPT presentation (M4_exercise_2.1_PPT_conspiracy_detector) on a large screen and presents it to the group. The PPT goes through the ten "checkpoints" published by Scientific American (https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-conspiracy-theory-director/) that people can ask themselves when encountering a dubious theory to figure out if the theory could possibly be true or if it is most likely false and conspiracy-minded. The PPT uses the example of the conspiracy theory about Bill Gates microchipping people via vaccinations.
- After the presentation, the trainer leaves the last slide of the PPT visible, as it will be used in the next step.

Step IV: The 10 checkpoints (60 minutes)

- After the PPT has been presented, the trainer asks the participants to go through the 10 checkpoints to see if the conspiracy theory they researched is most likely to be true or false (they might need to do some additional research).
- The trainer hands out the list of checkpoints from Appendix 8 and asks the participants to try to answer all of the ten checkpoints.
- When everyone has finished, the pairs present their results to the plenum, basing their analysis on the ten points of the Conspiracy Theory Detector.



Step V: What other premises are needed (30-45 minutes)

- The trainer opens the last slide of the PPT (M4_exercise_2.1_PPT_conspiracy_detector, slide 15 "What is missing"). The trainer goes through the example on the slide and has a discussion about what other premises would be needed for the conclusion (Bill Gates tries to microchip people) to be correct (see PPT).
- After the discussion in the big group, the trainer asks the pairs to use the same type of analysis on their chosen conspiracy theory:
 - What other premises would be needed to actually make the claims/allegations of the conspiracy theory plausible, and how likely is this?



Wrap-up 2: Take-aways?

Aim	The aim of this exercise is to wrap up the day's activities and discussions
	and connect the learning to the participants' (work) lives.
Duration	15 – 30 minutes

Instruction:

- The participants pair up and ask each other the following questions about what they have learned during today's workshop.
 - o What have you learned today?
 - o Why is this important?
 - What part of today's workshop was especially interesting for you?
 - Do you know more about conspiracy theories and how to handle discussions about conspiracy theories after today's workshop? If not, what are you missing?
 - How can you apply what you have learned today in your work life (or personal life)?
 - After finishing the discussion, the pair rotates and talks to at least one more person going through the same questions.

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

MODULE 5:

Conspiracy Theories and the (Social) Media





Module 5: Conspiracy theories and the (Social) Media

Introduction

Looking back on the elections in the U.S. but also in large parts of Europe, it became clear that a growing number of students stay informed about current political and other civil events through social media channels. Forms of automated communication can have an impact on opinion formation. Important questions are: Who controls the discourse on social media? Does the discussion still take place there at all? Is everything that is accessible online valid information?

The aim of this module is to improve the level of reflection and sensitivity towards conspiracy theories that might spread online as well as to provide trainers and teachers in adult education with resources for preventing and standing up against the spreading of conspiracy theories among the participants in their classes. There is a strong connection between conspiracy theories and social media, as social media are not restricted by rules and contribute massively to the spread of conspiracy theories.

False information and fake news are not new, however, it has become a hot topic a few years ago. Traditionally, people got news from trusted sources, journalists, and media outlets that are required to follow strict codes of practice. However, the internet has enabled a completely new way to publish, share, and consume information and news, with truly little regulation or editorial standards. Many people now get news from social media sites and networks and it often can be difficult to tell whether stories are credible or not. Information overload and the general lack of understanding by people of how the internet works – and how professional journalism in Western societies works – has also contributed to an increase in fake news, hoax stories, and conspiracy theories. Therefore, promoting the sensitivity towards shared videos and photos published on most popular platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, and providing tools for recognising conspiracy theories in video files are some of the ways to equip and sensitise oneself and others to the dangers of the Internet and to consume content critically instead of thoughtlessly believing possibly false information.

Findings from the TEACH-Survey:

According to the survey, between 12.6 and 22.3% of German, Austrian, and Swedish adult educators and 60.8% of Bulgarian adult educators are regularly confronted with opinions of their participants about media such as: "Media are systematically hiding the truth", which is one of the core claims of media-related conspiracy theories.





Aims of this Module

Overall aim:

The aim of this module is to empower adult educators to enrich their media competence by gaining experience in activities to identify the cognitive and emotional reactions underlying conspiratorial thinking and to expand their repertoire of methods and techniques to deal with them.

It comprises methods and techniques for training the trainers how to verify the authenticity of the content and information presented through dynamic or static visualisation and promote their critical thinking, communication, and self-reflection. The reasons that lead to sharing a conspiracy theory are the same as the ones that lead to sharing or liking of content on social media. This once again makes a reference to media literacy in two directions – identification and prevention of conspiracy theories and extremism and management of online communication along these lines.

In particular, the module will enrich the digital media literacy of trainers in using social media and online media, and will improve their awareness towards shared videos and their ability to influence vulnerability towards the negative impact of conspiracy theories.

How to use:

This module can be used as a part of a continuing education course, in combination with other modules from the TEACH handbook. It also can be implemented as a stand-alone workshop. Whoever organizes a workshop with this concept is free to re-arrange the exercises or shorten the workshop from three days to e.g., two days by picking only parts of the activities proposed. Where an activity is based on input from an earlier one, this is indicated in the description.

Day 1

Warm-up 1: Media and conspiracy theories

Aim	The aim of this activity is a first introduction to the nature and main types of social media, social networks, and online media. The simulation game provides insights into the relevant terms for the subject of
	conspiracy theories and the powerful role of the media.
Duration	20 minutes
Materials	Flipchart
	• Pens
	Sheets of paper
Resources	 M5_warm_up_1_glossary (Glossary of terms related to media),
	for reference if needed

Instruction:

The trainer explains to the participants that they are focus group members, formed to generate opinions on the influence of media, online media, and social networks. The special focus is on conspiracy theories. The trainer asks the participants for their assessment on the impact of media and social networks in the dissemination of conspiracy ideas and/or their prevention.

Step I: Personal Opinions (10 minutes)

- The trainer divides the participants into groups of 3 or 4 persons
- The trainer explains:
 - "You know about the formal and scientific separation of powers: legislative, judicial and executive. You may know that there are other assessments and qualifications. For example: Journalism and media are called the fourth power. Public relations are called the fifth power. Social media and social networks are figuratively described as a sixth power." (M5_warm_up_1_glossary, Glossary of terms related to media)
- Participants should write their opinion and assessment to every single question on the paper (5 minutes).
 - Instruction to the groups of participants: Please write down your answers to the questions:
 - I accept or do not accept that media is a fourth power because ... 1-3 arguments/ reasons.
 - I accept or do not accept that social media and networks are a fifth power because ... Give 1-3 arguments, reasons, factors.



Step II: Summary of the results (10 minutes)

- The trainer summarises the results of each question (arguments and counterarguments) of the groups on the flipchart.
- The trainer summarises which opinions dominate in each group and in the whole group. The motives, reasons, and factors for the influence of media and social networks are clarified.

Exercise 1.1: Getting familiar with social media and its role for conspiracy theories

Aim	The goal of this unit is to provide knowledge of social media, social networks, and online media and the specific impact of media on the conspiracy mindset. It is designed to assist trainers with promoting critical thinking and self-reflection of the participants.
Duration	1 hour
Materials	Whiteboard or flipchart
	Pens
	Paper
Resources	 M5_warm_up_1_glossary (Glossary of terms related to media),
	for reference if needed

Step I: The Opening (15 minutes)

- At the beginning of the session, the trainer asks a series of questions about social media in an open discussion, including all participants:
 - What are the social media and social networks you know?
 - How will you introduce the main features of social media (e.g. communication, information, etc.)?
 - What are the similarities and differences between the different kinds of media in your view? (e.g. traditional, social media)?
 - o How comfortable do you feel on social media?
 - o How often do you use them?
 - o What information do you trust or distrust on social media?
 - o What are the reasons for you to trust in information on social media?

<u>Step II: Introduce the similarities and differences between social media and online media (30 minutes)</u>

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups of 2-4 people. The work starts with a round of brainstorming.
- All participants of a group create a mind map together. They can write on the papers / a whiteboard or flip chart. The focus should be on the following terms: media, online media, social media, blogs, cross media, media ecosystem, etc.
- All participants follow the instruction "Based on the general picture we have already outlined, we'll now try to summarise our knowledge and go deeper into the topic of the power of the media. We will proceed again with a group discussion with all of you".
- Participants in the groups should present what kinds of media they know, and which notions are not familiar. All participants should write and prepare the mind map and they should show and present how they understand the terms and how they are related in the specific terminology about media.
- Participants present a poster created by them.

Step III: Reflection (15 minutes)

- The trainer analyses and comments on the teamwork and results. The trainer should explain the specific features of every single notion and terms (based on M5_warm_up_1_glossary, Glossary of terms related to media)
- The aim is to present the connections between media and conspiracy theories. Each key point/result is to be discussed in relation to the power and influence of the media. All participants should also reflect whether they trust the media.
- The final discussion should evolve around the topic whether the media has a role in preventing or in pushing conspiracy theories.

Exercise 1.2: Media, disinformation, conspiracy

Aim	The goal of this exercise is to provide some basic knowledge and insight into the conspiracy theories that one might be confronted with online.
	Participants will search for social media posts online that contain
	conspiracy theories and try to debunk them by themselves.
Duration	1 hour
Materials	Whiteboard
	Flip chart
	Papers
	Markers
	Internet
	Mobile phone with Internet, Laptop or computer
Resources	• M5_exercise_1.2_summarizing - Instructions and table
	template for summarising

Instruction:

Step I: Explaining the exercise (5 minutes)

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-5 people per group).
- The trainer explains the Step: By doing some online research, each group will have
 to find one or two news items with conspiracy theoretical content from the last
 month and observe how they had been presented in electronic media, online
 media, blogs, social media or other networks. The news has to be on a sensitive
 topic (e.g.: anti-vaccination, anti-Semitic or anti-feminist content, Islamophobic
 statements, etc.).



Step II: Presenting the case study (40 minutes)

- Participants should use the method of case study and closely examine the findings.
- The participants therefore should create a table which includes the following information on the findings:
 - o Kind of media
 - Publication type
 - o Author or absence of author
 - o Official sources or absence of institutional information
 - Additional information about the case
 - Criteria that might indicate that the finding presents fake news/ conspiracy content.
- Once they finalised their research, the participants will present their case study.
- In their presentation, participants should not simply present their tables but in the end, also provide a final verdict on how easy/ hard it was to analyse the chosen statement/content and summarise their Steps that led to their judgement that they are looking at conspiracy content.

Step III: Summarising results (15 minutes)

• Trainer summarises the results and explains the role of media and how they can use media to discover a connection between conspiracy theories, misinformation, and disinformation.

Exercise 1.3: False content, false information, fake news

Aim	The aim of this exercise is to form skills for recognising conspiracy
	theories, false content, and false information.
Duration	3 hours
Materials	Whiteboard
	Flip chart
	Paper
	Markers
	• WiFi
	Laptops or computers.
Resources	 M5_exercise_1.3_summarizing (Instructions how to summarise,
	including a table layout for the purpose), for participants to be
	able to prepare presentations and tables summarising the result
	of the individual work and the teamwork.

Step I: The connection of fakes news, post-truth with conspiracy theory (1 hour)

- The trainer can use the following instruction:
 - Does someone in this room always/most of the time check information that he/she receives with a second source? [If people raise their hands, the trainer asks them to go into one corner of the room; everyone else stays where they are].
 - Now the trainer and all participants have an impression on how most people in the room read information (It's normal, that most people do not spend time on using other sources as long as the news they read do not raise any suspicion).
- Afterwards, the trainer invites all participants to discuss (some of) the following questions:
 - How do you find out about news and interesting facts?
 - How do you verify the truth of the information you receive from the Internet?
 - How do you check the sources of websites, blogs, information taken from social networks or online media?
 - o How do you check the authors' information?
 - o Do you look for at least three more sources to find out if this is true?
 - Do you check the links that have been suggested to support or provide additional information about the conspiracy theory you have encountered?
- Now the trainer divides the participants into small groups (2-4 people per group). The work in the groups starts with brainstorming and the creation of mind maps. Participants can write on papers on the table or on a whiteboard or flipchart. The focus of the brainstorming and mind-mapping is on the terms of: *fake news, false news and information, post-truth, echo chambers and fact checking, etc.*

- In each group, participants should present their personal impressions about fake news and conspiracy theories. Participants should give suggestions on all kinds of media influence and manipulations they know (e.g. fear), and with which notions they are not familiar, for example echo chambers or fact checking.
- All participants should write and prepare the mind map. The mind map should also show how they understand the terms and how they are related to each other.
- Participants present their posters (with either systematic information or mind map).
- The trainer analyses and comments on the teamwork and results. He/she should explain the specific features of every single notion and terms and clarify the meaning.

Step II: Analysing local posts in social networks for conspiratorial elements (70 minutes)

- In plenum (10 min)
 - Participants are asked to present news from their region or country from the last week or month, along with their suggestions and argumentation that the news includes or contains conspiratorial elements. In case the conspiratorial elements are shared by public media broadcasters in their country, they are free to take those examples, otherwise they can simply pick from blogposts or social media platforms where e.g., well-known conspiracy theorists from their country share their views.
 - A part of their argumentation should include what criteria they have applied for describing the theory as conspiracy.
 - The trainer summarises (and supplements) the reported criteria, which are written down on the flipchart and used in individual work.
- Individual work (1 hour)
 - In individual work, participants first reflect their understanding of fake news and post-truth as related to the dissemination of conspiracy theories.
 - Then, participants using their internet devices search for news from their region or country from the last week or month, trying to find elements of conspiratorial thinking in them. This could include anti-feminism; antivaccination; coronavirus; pharmacy; corruption; domestic; policy; international events; institutions; individual persons, etc. Participants should try to find evidence or arguments that the news they collected include conspiratorial elements.



Step III: Presentation of findings (20 minutes)

 Participants present the result of the individual work. The trainer summarises and comments on the results, personal contributions, and leads the discussion. He/she should particularly comment on the evidence brought forward for conspiratorial elements of thought that were identified in the news.

Step IV: Analysing the impact of online media and social media in terms of truthchecking and the tendency to publish false information and/or conspiracy theories (1 hour)

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-5 people per group) and asks participants:
 - The participants need to choose one of the conspiracy theories from the activity before that caught their interest
 - o To reflect on the question on where media could possibly act as an echo chamber.
 - o To research tools in order to factcheck online information.
 - To explain how they find additional information and how they verify facts from different sources, including institutional sites, press release, newsletters, papers, etc.
 - To describe how they are able to understand what disinformation or misinformation is, and what is a real fact.
- Participants present the results of their analytical group work as a presentation or as poster or as a table/diagram/infographic.
- The trainer summarises the key points concerning conspiracy and manifestations of conspiracy theories and how it plays a role in modern society through media.



Wrap-up 1: Short reflection

Aim	Participants recapitulate what they learned during the session. They
	reflect on what they can do in order to overcome negative influences
	and messages in the media connected to conspiracy theories.
Duration	30 minutes

Instruction:

Step I: Individual reflection (10 minutes)

• The trainer asks each participant to briefly reflect on what they have learned: How they are able to recognise and help overcoming false information and negative ideas posted and shared on social media connected with the conspiracy theories.

Step II: Reflection in pairs (20 minutes)

- The trainer sets a clock for two minutes. Each of the participants looks for a partner and they work in pairs.
- In the 2 minutes, partner (A) first describes to partner (B) what she/he learned and how she/he is going to implement this in the next month in her/his personal professional practice and private life. Afterwards, A and B change, and B describes this to A. Each participant has to talk to three other participants.

Day 2

Warm-up 2: One truth & two lies

Aim	The aim of this Step is to make participants aware of their information
	gaps regarding various conspiracy theories.
Duration	20 minutes

Instruction:

- The trainer explains to the participants that they will play a game about guessing the truth. Afterwards, the trainer tells the participants three facts or claims related to different conspiracy theories one of them is real and the others are false.
- Example (the example below is for the hot topic of the day. It is helpful to select an example beforehand to have a question that draws attention and is best suited for the group):
 - Vaccination in Europe is mandatory.
 - o In Canada, antivax protesters are beaten by the police.
 - o Malta allows only vaccinated individuals to enter its territory.
- Participants raise one finger for the first statement, two fingers for the second, and three fingers for the third if they consider the statement to be true.
- The trainer asks the participants:
 - o Why did you think this information (or claim) was true?
 - o What helped you decide?
 - o How can you verify the truth of the fact?
- In the end, the trainer summarises the key points related to fact checking.

Exercise 2.1: Improved awareness for shared videos and short movies

Aim	The goal of this exercise is to improve participants' awareness for information presented in videos on topics that are the subject of conspiracy theories, what information is considered correct, what
	verification methods they use.
Duration	130 minutes
Materials	• Laptop
	Internet
	Flipchart
	Marker, pens
Resources	M5_exercise_2.1_PPT_check_videos_images (Presentation)
	slides)
	 Suitable YouTube videos. The videos referred to below are
	samples, you can use other videos for conspiracy theories.
	Keyword search: vaccines, anti-gypsy conspiracy theories, secret
	societies, predictions, mind control, 5G networks, etc.
	 An interesting example could be the video: "<u>Does Wearing a Face</u>
	Covering Really Stop COVID-19? ", or access by going on YouTube
	and inserting the title into the search box.

Instruction:

Step I: Conspiracy example (30 minutes)

- The trainer asks the participants to suggest an example of a YouTube video with true information on a topic that is the subject of conspiracy theories (e.g. coronavirus, vaccines, anti-Roma/Gypsy conspiracy theories, secret societies, predictions, mind control, 5G networks, etc.).
- The trainer asks the groups to answer the following questions:
 - How did you determine that the information in the video was or was not real?
 - How do you verify the authenticity of the information?
 - o What are the sources you use to check?

Step II: Tools for verifying the authenticity of a video (1 hour)

- The trainer shows a YouTube video of a conspiracy theories subject. The trainer is supposed to use a video that is relatively new, so that hopefully none of the participants are familiar with the video.
- Examples:
 - Video: Alex Jones Of 'Infowars,' Conspiracy Theories, And Trump Campaign (Full) | Megyn Kelly | NBC News (8:50 – 11:00 minutes)
 - Video: Does Wearing a Face Covering Really Stop COVID-19? YouTube (3 minutes)



Step III: Presentation of slides 2 - 4 (20 minutes)

- Trainer gives a presentation on how to check for certain types of information (meta data) in visual online materials (photos, videos). Trainer bases her lecture on the presentation slides M5_exercise_2.1_PPT_check_videos_images.
- The trainer asks the participants to answer the following questions:
 - o Which information did you get from this video?
 - o Do you think the clip contains true information on the subject?
 - o How do you know if the information is true or fake?
 - o How did you feel while watching that video?
 - What does your gut feeling say?
- Trainer asks each participant to write down his or her arguments on a sheet and report the arguments afterwards in an open discussion.

Step IV: Encountering counter-arguments (20 minutes)

- The trainer divides the group into teams of 3-5 people depending on the answers.
- Groups are formed by participants with similar opinions. Each team can summarise their arguments in the first column of a flipchart sheet, which is vertically divided into two parts (column A and column B).
- The trainer swaps the flipchart sheet between the groups so that every group gets the sheet of another group with the opposite opinion.
- In the second column, each team reports counter-arguments of the other team's responses, and tries to rebut them with the help of facts. (If all participants unite around one opinion, the trainer asks them to submit their arguments.)
- The decisions are presented and a discussion takes place.
- The trainer asks the participants:
 - o Did you check the source of the video?
 - o Did you check who its author is?
 - Did you search for information about the author on social media or on his/her video channel?
 - Are there any similar videos on the web?
 - Did you check the information on other social networks and online media?
 - o Is there a connection between the different sources?
 - Did you use specialised software or a verification site (e.g. Extract Meta Data (amnestyusa.org), Google Videos, etc.)?
 - o If you haven't used any of the verification tools, please use them.
 - o What additional information did you get from research?



Exercise 2.2: Creating videos

Aim	The goal of this exercise is to let the participants experience how influencing public opinions works and why it works. This is an indirect reflection of what makes information attractive or easily trustable for the public. Participants create short videos (with their mobile phones) on a topic that is also dealt with in conspiracy theories. They choose keywords to attract the attention of the audience and present the topic in a short
	video with false or true information and statements.
Duration	3 hours
Materials	 Stationary (writing paper, coloured paper, pens, felt-tip pens, scissors, glue, paper sheets, pens) Mobile phones (for recording the video) PC / laptop for web search

Instruction:

Step I. Creating videos (1,5 hours)

- The trainer divides the participants into small groups (3-5 people per group).
- The trainer asks each group to write a short script for a video on a topic of their choice. It should be a topic that is a subject of popular conspiracy theories (for example, Covid-19, the 9/11 attacks, secret society, 5G networks, Gypsies, mind control, prophecies, etc.). They should use the alarm words: shock, horror, sensation, extraordinary news, you will not believe it, the truth lies, new revelations, etc. The video should present information related to the subject. The information may be correct or fake, just as the team prefers (e.g. coronavirus, vaccines, anti-gypsy conspiracy theories, secret societies, predictions, mind control, 5G networks, etc.).
- The participants are free to choose a genre: interview, short report, series of images.
- Once the scripts are ready, the participants create a video of the scenario using their mobile phones.

Step II: Presentation of videos (30 minutes)

- Videos are presented to the group on laptops or other devices.
- While watching the videos, all participants record their impressions on a sheet of paper. They should verify the veracity of the facts using the tools they have become familiar with in the previous Step and present their views, supporting them with the relevant arguments for or against.
- The trainer asks the participants to answer the following questions:
 - o What was your impression of the information that was presented by the groups?
 - o Which verification tools would you use if you came across that video?
 - o Has your opinion changed since the inspection?
- In the end, the trainer asks participants to share with the group in 1 minute for each question:
 - o What have you learned?
 - o How are you going to use it for your daily work/ your professional work area?
 - With whom are you going to share it?
 - o Why do you think people believe in such videos?
 - o Do you consider that there are more vulnerable groups?

Step III: Fact checking (1 hour)

- Each team picks one video of another team and starts doing any kind of fact checking that is quickly possible (using the internet).
- The trainer asks the participants:
 - o Did you check the source of the video?
 - o Did you check who its author is?
 - Did you search for information about the author on social media or on his/her video channel?
 - Are there any similar videos on the web?
 - o Did you check the information on other social networks and online media?
 - o Is there a connection between the different sources?
 - Did you use specialised software or a verification site (e.g., Extract Meta Data (amnestyusa.org), Google Videos, etc.)?
 - o If you didn't use any of the verification tools, please use them.
 - o What additional information did you get from research?
- The group discusses the results in the plenary circle.

Exercise 2.3: Information-checking skills

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Aim	It is the aim of this exercise that participants practise their information-
	checking skills in short videos posted or shared on social networks.
Duration	1 hour
Materials	Laptop
	Sheets of paper
	• Pens
	Green and red paper
Resources	Videos:
	You should always work with examples with a high topicality. It could be
	possible that the videos we present will be de-platformed by the date
	you access them. You can always find videos that suit the exercise by
	doing a short online search prior to the activity. Please note, the
	examples we present do not only show conspiratorial content but also
	operate with conformational bias, in order to do some self-reflection on
	the own perception. The videos could be accessed by the link provided,
	or just by typing the title into YouTube:
	 How do Covid-19 vaccines work? Animation.
	 Proof That 5G Is Going To Make Us All Sick?
	Nobel Laureate claims 'vaccinated people will die in 2 years': Fact
	<u>check. Oneinida News</u>
	 The 5G mass-experiment: Big promises, unknown risks

Instruction:

Step I: Fact checking (30 minutes)

- The trainer divides the participants into 4 teams.
- Each group watches a short video posted on a social network. The videos are different but they are all related to a topic that is also a subject of conspiracy theories. Half of them present true information, and the other half contain false information.
- Examples:
 - o True information:
 - How do Covid-19 vaccines work? Animation. YouTube
 - Proof That 5G Is Going To Make Us All Sick? YouTube
 - o False/not completely true information:
 - Nobel Laureate claims 'vaccinated people will die in 2 years': Fact check | Oneindia News – YouTube
 - The 5G mass-experiment: Big promises, unknown risks YouTube
- Trainer asks the teams to check if the video presented to them contains true information. Use the following questions and Steps:

- o What information does this video contain?
- What is the purpose of the video (to inform, entertain, to breed fear or hatred, etc.)?
- o Who is the author of the video?
- Look for information about the author social network account, YouTube channel, blogs, posts, network information, etc.
- o Can this author be trusted? Is he/she an expert on the subject?
- o What is the source of the video?
- Are there similar videos on the web on the same topic?
- Is there a link between the individual videos on this topic a common author, a common source, etc.?

Step II: Presentation (30 minutes)

- Trainer asks participants to use specialised software or a verification site (Extract Meta Data (amnestyusa.org), Google Videos, etc.).
- After the check, the trainer asks the participants to formulate an opinion about the veracity of the information in the video and save it on the laptop/smartphone that is used, along with the arguments to support your claim.
- Each team chooses a spokesperson. The spokesperson presents the video and the team's opinion and arguments to the plenum. Describe the verification tools used by the team.
- After each presentation, the participants of the other teams (excluding those of the presenter's team) vote, with each person having one vote. If they agree with the opinion expressed, they raise a green piece of paper, if they do not agree, they raise a red one.
- Questions to the participants who disagree with the team's opinion:
 - o Why do you disagree?
 - What mistakes do you think were made during the inspection?
 - Do you have any other suggestions?
 - o What else would you do?

Wrap-up 2: Verification of information

Aim	This activity provides the opportunity for self-reflection: to which extent
	have participants mastered the skills to verify the accuracy of
	information, and to deal with the various specialised programs for fact-
	checking.
Duration	30 minutes
Preparation	You will need the outputs from exercises 1, 2 and 3.
Materials	Sheets of paper
	• Pens

Instruction:

- The trainer asks the participants to take their outputs from exercises 1, 3 and 4 and highlight the arguments that they consider most relevant for determining whether the information is true or false.
- For each argument, participants have to specify the verification tools they think are most effective.
- Trainer asks each participant to describe how these tools can be used in order to counteract the beliefs of the participants, trying to support their critical thinking, instead of being inclined just to accept and share conspiracy theories.



Day 3
Warm-up 3: Self-reflection and conspiracy theory management

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Aim	The aim of this Step is the preparation for the unit's self-reflection and
	conspiracy theories management, which takes 1 day and can be
	delivered as a standalone or together with the remaining ones of
	Module 3. The Warm-up is linked to the conclusion part and is a
	preliminary part for the self-assessment and role play.
Duration	25 minutes
Preparation	Print a sufficient number of TEACH questionnaires (see Resources), for
	each participant one.
Materials	Pens for all participants
Resources	M5_warm_up_3_questionnaire (Questionnaire of the TEACH)
	survey), one for each participant has to be printed

Instruction:

M5_warm_up_3_questionnaire (Questionnaire of the TEACH survey), one for each participant has to be printed. The next instructions can be found on the questionnaire.

Exercise 3.1: Presentation of the survey results

Aim	The goal of this unit is two-fold: preparation for the role play (Exercise
	3.2) and providing information and knowledge about conspiracy
	theories, which promotes cognitive reflection.
Duration	1,5 hours
Preparation	Get familiar with the presentation.
Materials	Multimedia
	Laptop
	Flipchart
	Sticky notes
	Marker, pens
Resources	• M5_exercise_3.1_PPT_results_TEACH_survery (Presentation
	with results of the TEACH survey)
	 M5_exercise_3.1_flipchart_layout (Flipchart layouts)

Instruction:

Step I: Presentation (15 minutes)

 The trainer presents the results from the TEACH survey, using presentation M5_exercise_3.1_PPT_results_TEACH_survey, giving a basic idea of conspiracy beliefs and comparing the results of each country for all components of the survey.

Step II: Discussion of the results by the participants (30 minutes)

This Step aims at encouraging participants to think about and find their own answers (emotional reaction and experiences) and find out how they overlap or not with the results of the study. The discussion is related to the experiential learning paradigm.

- The trainer divides the participants into subgroups of 3-5 people.
- Each subgroup makes suggestions about reasons behind the scores in view of the specificities of their own country.
- The issues to be suggested and supplemented by the trainer:
 - o What makes people believe in these theories?
 - Are they suspicious of official information?
 - o Are they inclined to be critical of news and conspiracy claims?
 - o What makes people feel endangered?
 - o Is there some injustice of the world that is perceived?
 - Anything else?
- Each subgroup prepares a summary (15 minutes).
- Afterwards, each subgroup presents its summary. All explanations, suggestions, and findings should be pinned on a wall (or flipchart) by the trainer as generalised suggestions about the factors that give rise to conspiracy beliefs (15 minutes).



- The last 15 minutes are devoted to dividing the findings into two main groups of predictors for the selected 2/-3 most related conspiracy theories
- The trainer asks participants
 - What actions can, in your view, promote critical thinking?
 - What actions can help in the search for emotional security?
 - How can such actions be implemented and addressed for the purposes of preventing the spread of conspiracy theories in your daily practice in the classroom? (using Resource M5_exercise_3.1_PPT_results_TEACH_survery, Results of the TEACH survey).

Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information

Aim	 The aim of this exercise is twofold: Participants understand the problems related to insufficient information and arbitrary, hasty interpretation of situations and events that evoke the birth of stereotypes and prejudices. Participants develop skills for the prevention of uncritical trustand decision-making without having all the information or knowing different points of view.
Duration	2 hours
Materials	PostersFlipchartMarkers
Resources	 M5_exercise_3.2_story - Story about Maria and Peter M5_exercise_3.2_ranking_table - Ranking table M5_exercise_3.2_characters - Characters in the story

Instruction:

The focus of this activity is on learning about the relationship between stereotypes and expectations. Stereotypes and prejudices have adaptive power. They are accepted with ease, even in the absence of objective information. This game shows that people are easily deceived and often do not see the facts and the real reasons.

This also happens when you encounter conspiracy theories, which mislead with easy to grasp but simplistic explanations that many people trust.

We encounter misleading information / misinformation or partial information all the time offline, not only online. What we can do is to try to be more self-reflective and mindful.

The trainer has to provide guidance on how to seek additional information to help us avoid making wrong or bad decisions.

Step I: Introduction (10 minutes)

- Participants are divided into small groups (between 5 and 7).
- Trainer reads out the story (M5_exercise_3.2_story, Text to read).

Step II: Assessing characters in groups (60 minutes)

- After reading the text, the trainer explains to the participants the following Step:
 - Arrange and evaluate the characters by preference, depending on who you consider the most positive or the most negative!
 - o Ratings should not be repeated!



- Each participant assesses the characters independently. After that, they are discussed in small groups. In the discussion, everyone should have at least three arguments as to why they made this choice and ranking.
- Each group makes a common assessment, which is achieved by consensus.
- The group grades are written on a poster on the flipchart.
- Resource M5_exercise_3.2_ranking_table should be used, transferred onto the whiteboard by the trainer
- The following is a discussion of the reasons, paying particular attention to the polar ratings: 1 and 5.

Step III: Revealing the character conceptions and discussion (10 minutes)

- After the discussion, the trainer reads out the additional text (M5 exercise 3.2 characters).
- Participants are given the opportunity to comment on their ratings and say whether they would change anything after hearing the new information.

Wrap-up 3: Take-away benefit

	<u> </u>
Aim	Participants recapitulate their experiential learning and think about real-
	world application of what they have learned for themselves, and about
	management of personal experience and communication with others.
Duration	40 minutes
Materials	Posters
	Flipchart
	Markers
Resources	 M5_warm_up_3_questionnaire (Self-assessment tool from the
	Warm-up, with questions from the TEACH survey)

Instruction:

- Trainer asks participants to reconsider the personal experience from the training:
 - Which one of the theories and topics discussed is mostly related to their daily experience?
 - How, in the next week, are they going to implement their knowledge about the two main topics: cognitive and emotional overcoming of conspiracy thinking; and beliefs and extreme statements?
- Trainer asks each participant to share with the group what have they learned, in 1 minute (max. 3 sentences), and in 1 minute, where / how s(he) will apply this in their field of action (max. 3 sentences).
- Trainer asks each participant to write down these sentences on the selfassessment instrument from the Warm-up exercise, which is supposed to serve as an experiential "anchor".
- Before leaving the room, the participants form a circle and, in turn, each one takes
 the role of orchestra conductor and makes a movement / gesture that shows how
 they feel now in dealing with people who believe in conspiracy theories, which is
 repeated individually by each of the participants.



Appendix



Extra materials Module 1: Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories

Containing extra material for:

Warm-up 1

Exercise 1.1

Warm-up 2

Exercise 2.1

Exercise 3.1

Exercise 3.2

Wrap-up 3



M1_warm_up_1_explanation



The poster "God hate Jews" and "Jews killed Jesus": The myth that Jews collectively murdered Jesus, also referred to as "deicide," has been used to justify violence against Jews for centuries. The Jewish deicide is a historic belief, originally formalized as a theological position in early Christian times, which claimed that the Jewish people were collectively responsible for the death of Jesus. In time, the anti-Judaic accusation that the Jews were Christ-killers fed into Christian antisemitism, and the slur proliferated inciting mobs to use it as a pretext for violence against Jews, contributing to many centuries of pogroms, the murder of Jews during the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition and the Holocaust.



JEWS WILL NOT

REPLACE US

This is a typical neo-nazi statement "Jews will not replace us" — is crafted to cast Jews as foreign interlopers who need to be expunged. The slogan is a reference to the popular white supremacist belief that the white race is in danger of extinction by a rising tide of non-whites who are controlled and manipulated by Jews .



A widespread form of expression of Israel-related anti-Semitism is the accusation that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the state in which they live, and that Israel is therefore their real home by hearth. That "dual loyalty" and the accusation that Jews are not to be trusted because their true allegiance is to their religion (and Israel is the Jewish state), rather than the country in that they live dates back thousands of years.



This is a variant of the belief that Jews want to dominate the world. A famous document that is known as the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' purports to be the minutes of a meeting of Jewish leaders discussing plans for world domination. Even though the protocols quickly turned out to be fake, they remained popular among anti-Semites. The Jewish world conspiracy had a big influence on many people, including Adolf Hitler and other leading Nazis, and eventually paved the way to the genocide of European Jews. Since many people hold lot of prejudices against the financial epi centers such as the wall street the prejudice quickly gained traction here as well, combined with the idea that all jews have deep roots in the financial market (for further information see: Article A in this handbook).



Self-explanatory

[Posters developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

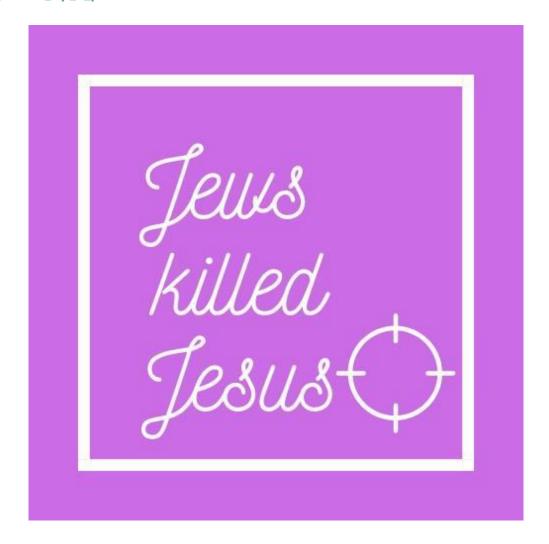
Warm-up 1: The Jewish Conspiracy Gallery Walk

M1_Warm_up_1_pictureA





M1_Warm_up_1_pictureB





M1_Warm_up_1_pictureC





M1_Warm_up_1_pictureD





M1_Warm_up_1_pictureE



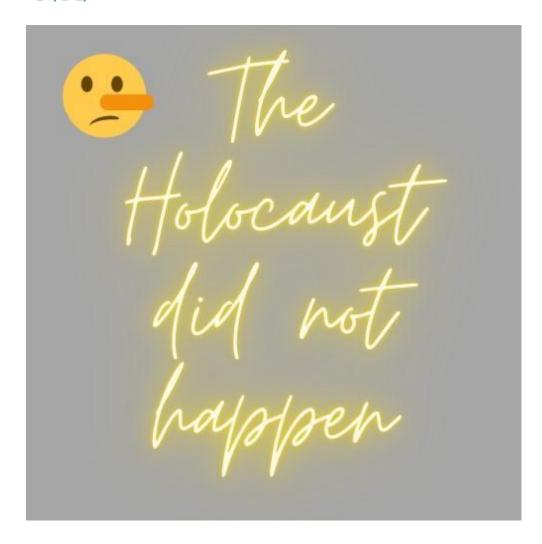


M1_Warm_up_1_pictureF





M1_Warm_up_1_pictureG





Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World Power – Conspiracy Mindset M1 exercise 1.1 overview

Overview: Traction of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory in todays' society

The dramatic changes in the daily life of people across Europe during the coronavirus pandemic gave rise to a surge of conspiratorial thinking which is further supported by the internet and social media. Many of the conspiracy theories that recently gained popularity create connections between the pandemic and Jews. Unfortunately, blaming Jews for widely spread misfortune is not surprising but this tendency reaches back to centuries of antisemitic conspiracy theories. The QAnon conspiracy theory which gained popularity in the 2020 US election and spread over to Europe most notably claims that liberal elites are paedophiles. Herby - in the conspiratorial mindset - the elites are considered as representative the Jewish community. It is one example of a contemporary conspiracy theory that can clearly be categorized as antisemitic because Jews such as George Soros or the Rothschild family are recurrently identified as conspirators. Moreover, the theory makes use of anti-Jewish motives that date back to the Middle Ages. It is important to note that not all conspiracy theories are antisemitic. However, contemporary antisemitism is almost always charged conspiratorially²⁶. Situating the phenomenon in a wider historical context facilitates an understanding of today's interlinkage of conspiracy and antisemitism.

As a religious minority in predominantly Christian Europe, Jews were in the Middle Ages and afterwards made responsible for events that seemed to be inexplicable. The Black Death pandemic (1348-1349) during which half of Europe's population died and the French Revolution (1789-1799) are examples of major historical events for which Jews were blamed. In turn, these accusations resulted in massacres and pogroms against the Jewish minority. One of the key strains of antisemitic conspiracy theories is the blood libel²⁷. According to this legend that was spread by the Benedictine monk Thomas of Monmouth around 1150, Jews murdered a little boy for mysterious ritual purposes. The connection between Jews and the spread of disease is the second strain of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Another major variant is the belief that Jews want to dominate the world²⁸. This latter variant can be linked to tragic consequences in the second World War. A famous document that is known as the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' purports to be

²⁸ Ibid.



²⁶ Butter, M., (2020): Antisemtische Verschwörungstheorien in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Retrieved from: https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antisemitismus/321665/antisemitische-verschwoerungstheorien

²⁷ Gerstenfeld, M., (2020): Anti-Jewish Coronavirus Conspiracy Theories in Historical Context. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

the minutes of a meeting of Jewish leaders discussing plans for world domination. Even though the protocols quickly turned out to be fake, they remained popular among anti-Semites. The Jewish world conspiracy had a big influence on many people, including Adolf Hitler and other leading Nazis, and eventually paved the way to the genocide of European Jews²⁹.

Today's antisemitic conspiracy theories make use of old symbols, stereotypes, and theories, although their antisemitic origin is not always clearly discernible³⁰. However, examples such as QAnon followers storming the Capitol building in Washington DC, the antisemitism in anti-vaccine groups, or last but not least, the recent coronavirus conspiracies underline their ongoing popularity and show their potential for violence also in our today's society.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

²⁹Butter, M.(2020): Antisemtische Verschwörungstheorien in Geschichte und Gegenwart: https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antisemitismus/321665/antisemitische-verschwoerungstheorien ³⁰ Ibid.



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Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World Power - Conspiracy Mindset

M1_exercise_1.1_articleA

Same but Different: Three anti-Semitic conspiracy Theories

The Rothschild - Conspiracy Theory:

Rothschild is the family name of a Jewish family and of a banking dynasty that owned the world's largest bank during the longest periods of the Long 19th Century. By 1860, the firm of N. M. Rothschild & Sons was organized as a group of companies with five independent branches. The name House of Rothschild, used by both family members and their contemporaries in the 19th century, indicates the close connection of the history of the company with the family history.

The Rothschilds were among the major financiers of the emerging railroad companies in the 19th century. Also, the Rothschilds were involved in trading with precious metals, and in foreign exchange transactions and asset management for wealthy private clients.

Since its beginnings as a factor in the European economy, the Rothschild family has been the subject of numerous caricatures and polemical writings, up to and including smear campaigns and conspiracy theories. To this day, the name of the Rothschild family fulfils the function of constructing a supposed Jewish omnipotence over global finance. It was only natural that during the economic crisis the Internet became the ideal dissemination platform for giving free rein to corresponding anti-Semitic fantasies.

These are usually characterized by a sometimes covert, sometimes overt anti-Semitism. The Rothschild name is often as a synonym for Jews and used as a symbol of Zionism and to illustrate the alleged omnipotence of world Jewry over international finance and political A recent example was the conspiracy narrative that became prominent on the internet that Emmanuel Macron's rapid rise to French president was explained by his being a "puppet of the Rothschilds," with the Jewish banking family acting here as a placeholder for "the Jews."

Georg Soros - Conspiracy Theory:

Georg Soros was born in 1930 in Budapest to a Jewish family. Soros survived the Holocaust in hiding in his hometown of Budapest and moved to London and then New York, where he embarked on a successful Wall Street career as a hedge fund owner. In finance, he is known particularly for what is called Black Wednesday, when he successfully bet against, or shorted, the British pound in 1992. Soros' work in finance if often chosen as a target of antisemitic conspiracy theories, while in other conspiracy theories it is falsely claimed that he was a collaborator with the Nazis rather than a survivor of the Holocaust.

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

While Soros is leading a philanthropic life, and best known as a financier who has made billions through investments and currency speculation, and a philanthropist who has tried to spread his vision of a liberal "open society" internationally and has given billions of dollars to an array of progressive causes, has also become the leading target for a standin for the age-old antisemitic trope of the rich Jewish financier who pulls the strings of politicians and political movements from behind the scenes.

But conspiracy theories about Soros and his control have not stopped at the fringes of society. The past few years have seen conspiracies about Soros pushed by public figures like President Donald Trump, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Yair Netanyahu, son of the Israeli prime minister.

In Europe, the myth surrounding the "Soros Plan" was prominent in connection with the refugee crisis in 2015. In Hungary even television spots against Soros were broadcast. One of those spots said something like, "Several million immigrants have come to Europe recently. But the fence that has been built on the Hungarian border stops them. According to George Soros, this should be dismantled, and more millions from Africa and the Middle East should be settled. It is dangerous! That is why the Soros plan should be stopped! Stop Soros! On behalf of the Hungarian government." The background was a text Soros had published in 2015 with the NGO "Project Syndicate". The EU must expect one million asylum seekers annually until further notice and distribute them among the member states, Soros wrote at the time. If the Hungarian government is to be believed, however, Soros' influence is so far-reaching that he would control virtually all of its critics: Refugee activists, Hungarian opposition politicians, European courts - all allegedly accomplices of the so-called "Soros Plan" of 2015³¹.

The Jewish "Missing Loyalty"

A widespread form of expression of Israel-related anti-Semitism is the accusation that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the state in which they live, and that Israel is therefore their real home by hearth. That "dual loyalty" and the accusation that Jews are not to be trusted because their true allegiance is to their religion (and Israel is the Jewish state), rather than the country in that they live dates back thousands of years.

Why that statement shows a hostility towards Jews will be shortly explained in the following.

The Jewish diaspora³² dates back to the year of 587 before Christ. Since that date, Jews have lived in different places among different communities. The charge of a "dual loyalty"

³² The Jewish Diaspora is the dispersion of Jews that continues to this day. It began with the first Babylonian conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 587 B.C., during which many Judeans were exiled to Babylon.



³¹ Gevedarica, S. (2020). Verschwörungsmythen statt Glückwünsche. Retrieved from https://www.tagesschau.de/faktenfinder/soros-ungarn-orban-101.html

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

was born in the Middle Ages, where Jews were tagged in their communities as inherently untrustworthy and suspect, incapable of being loyal to their ruler because of their ties to other Jews around the world³³.

Since those times the stereotype that Jews are nor loyal to the government, nor to the majority community around them sticked:

E.g.: Stalin played on the same notion by attacking Jewish writers as "rootless cosmopolitans" who were not fully loyal to the Soviet Union. It animated the Nazis in 1930s Germany, when they accused Jewish people of being traitors and used charges of disloyalty to justify their arrests, persecutions and mass killings. The same notion was used by all other countries that were involved in the persecution of Jews. In an Interview by New York Times history the American History and Holocaust researcher Professor Deborah Lipstadt stated that when the Nazis began denigrating Jews, falsely accusing them of having betrayed their country and undermined its security, people were willing to believe it. "The dual loyalty canard that has plagued Jews is the fertile soil in which centuries of these stereotypes have taken root and grown," she said³⁴.

After the founding of Israel, the charge was that Jews were more loyal to Israel, the Jewish state, than to their own countries. The smear persists in various forms to this day: It is a common refrain of white supremacists who claim there is a secret plot orchestrated by Jews to replace white people through mass migration and racial integration.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

³³ Davis, J.H. (2019) The Toxic Back Story to the Charge That Jews Have a Dual Loyalty. New York Times. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/21/us/politics/jews-disloyal-trump.html ³⁴ Ibid.





Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World Power - Conspiracy Mindset

M1_exercise_1.1_articleB

Why believing in Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories

Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are usually in Europe closely associated with the targeted spread of anti-Semitic myths and accusations during the times National socialism. In which Anti-Semitism served the National Socialists as an explanatory pattern for all the national, social, and economic misfortunes Germans had suffered since losing World War I. The so-called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", a lengthy publication, spreads false allegations about a fictitious meeting of Jewish leaders deciding on how to gain world power this conspiracy theory became also famous when it was picked up by Adolf Hitler in his "Mein Kampf".

But do not get mislead by the impression, that Anti-Semitism and Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are something that got extinguished with the Nazi era and that it's nowadays just a phenomenon of the fringes of the 21st century society.

As an Interview series by NBC News with Jewish Teen - TikTokers points out Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories did not vanish with the Nazi regime, but are still very popular among all age groups. A half-dozen Jewish teens on TikTok said they experience anti-Semitism nearly every time they post content to the platform, regardless of whether or not the content is about their Judaism. Sometimes it takes the form of denying the existence or the severity of the Holocaust; at other moments, it takes the shape of equating Jews as a people with the actions of the government of Israel³⁵.

According to the COMPACT research group³⁶ Conspiracy theories in general fulfil an important role in the lives of the "believers":

- Conspiracy theories satisfy the need for a simple explanation in times of complex realities, requiring the denial of many facts in order to sustain their internal logic and consistency. They exclude chaos, coincidence and provide simplistic, accessible explanations. They are a strategy for dealing with uncertainty and resolving ambiguity.
- Conspiracy theories blame people rather than abstract forces for political events and developments in society. The "they" vs. "us" dynamic is a typical form of "othering": drawing a line between an ingroup and an outgroup, association the outgroup with all evils of society.

³⁶ COMPACT Education Group. (2020). *Guide To Conspiracy Theories*. Cost.



³⁵ NBC News. (2020): Jewish teens say life on TikTok comes with anti-Semitism. Retrieved from: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/jewish-teens-say-life-tiktok-comes-anti-semitism-n1241033

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

- Conspiracy theories relieve those who believe in them of responsibility. Since powerful conspirators are blamed for everything that happens, the believers themselves cannot have had any impact on events and developments.
- Conspiracy theories allow those who believe in them to distinguish themselves from the mass of people. People adhering to such theories often try to gain respect that they may be unable to gain in other ways.

Some conspiracy theories blame "the Jews" for secretly controlling different sectors of society and for steering those towards their particular interests rather than the common good, thus harming society in a corrosive way. Jews are also scapegoated for disasters and blamed for things that go wrong³⁷, only recently seem during the Covid-Pandemic, where allegations against Jews and Zionists (supposedly having an interest in the mass death of the non-Jewish society) that were made in anti-vaxxer and corona sceptics groups.

The accusations of Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are a central characteristic of the separation precision between anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.

In comparison to other minorities, Jews are not perceived as submissive or undominant but as powerful and influential. This what legitimized for Anti-Semites the despite against Jews, since they are not the once that need help, but are considered as a controlling force. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories often contain some of the following elements:

- Jews are portrayed as a threat to society;
- Jews are accused of deploying hidden and nasty methods;
- Jews are defined as a foreign body ("The Other") striving for influence and trying to cause harm;
- Jews' loyalty to their own state and people of other religions is questioned³⁸. (This also includes the accusation, that Jews are more loyal to the state of Israel than to the countries that they actually life in).
- All forms of Holocaust revision and Holocaust denial

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in cooperation with the Vad Vashem Museum pointed out the reason by it is so important to take anti-Semitic conspiracy theories seriously and to address them in educational settings:

"One reason to respond to conspiracy theories is that they harm not only those who are held responsible for the conspiracy, but they also have a negative impact on those who

³⁷ ODIHR/Vad Vashem. (2007): Addressing Anti-Semitism: Why and How? Retrieved from https://www.jewishedproject.org/sites/default/files/2017-01/Addressing%20Anti-Semitism%20-%20Guide%20for%20Educators.pdf
³⁸ Ibid.



TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

believe in them: conspiracy theories feed off a sense of alienation and tend to emphasize the individual's powerlessness. By providing simplistic answers, conspiracy theories discourage people from grappling with complex issues. At the root of many conspiracy theories lie fears of the unknown and powerful, the inability to understand larger events, and a sense that things are beyond one's control. Conspiracy theories can be interpreted as a psychological strategy to regain control over a frightening reality that defies understanding, and they are also a way of giving voice to the frustration of feeling overwhelmed. All these frustrations, fears, and needs should be taken seriously."³⁹

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

³⁹ Ibid.



<u>Exercise 1.1: Getting to know the Jewish World Power - Conspiracy Mindset M1_exercise_1.1_soros</u>



⁴⁰ Courtesy of ADL: https://www.adl.org/blog/the-antisemitism-lurking-behind-george-soros-conspiracy-theories (The TEACH Team has the permission to use the graphic)





Warm-up 2: The Twitter-break

M1_warm_up_2_tweet



ALERT! JEW WORLD ORDER AHEAD: Rothschild Behind Disappearance of Flight MH370?

alertjewworldorderahead.com/2017/06/roths

C ...

1:38 PM - 30 Nov 2017

⁴¹ Adapted from: ADL (2018): Quantifying Hate – A year of Anti-Semtism on Twitter. Retrieved from: https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/quantifying-hate-a-year-of-anti-semitism-on-twitter





Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" ... What?

M1_exercise_2.1_characteristics

Characteristics of Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories

1. There is always someone conspiring behind your back!

Conspiracy theories claim that a group of people or an organization are secretly plotting together to deceive and possibly harm the "ignorant" public, and the alleged plot is of some political or societal relevance.

<u>Example</u>: Popular examples for conspiracy theories like this are claims that the attack on the World Trade Center and other buildings in the United States in September 2001 (known as 9/11) was somehow orchestrated by the U.S. government, or committed by Mossad, the foreign intelligence service of Israel.

2. The Good vs. the Evil

Conspiracy theorists present a seemingly closed view of the world, the one-sided treatment of facts and contradictions, the construction of groups of oneself and others, and the linking to existing resentments and prejudices.

<u>Example</u>: A typical example for that are conspiracy theories evolving around the "mainstream media" aka public broadcasters. By framing them as the evil fake news media that do not report credible about public events going on the conspiracy theorists create the them (media) vs. us (the citizens) enmity.

3. Easy explanation for a complex world and the feeling being among the 'knowing' A special attractiveness and function of such theories consists, among other things, in the

A special attractiveness and function of such theories consists, among other things, in the fact that they can seemingly explain events and connections that are not understood or difficult to see through, and thus give them meaning. The feeling of having seen through what is hidden and now belonging to the circle of the 'knowing' leads to a revaluation of one's own person and provides the individual with a supposed sense of security.

<u>Example</u>: This phenomenon was most recently presented in the corona pandemic. The pandemic, the rising and falling numbers of infections as well as the vaccination process was complicated, frightening and complex. Instead, the "the Coronavirus is no more dangerous than the seasonal flu" – explanation offered some safety, a "well known" and non-frightening disease pattern in times of a big crisis.





Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" ... What?

M1_exercise_2.1_conspiracy_tickets

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Bermuda Triangle	Climate Change	YouTube
Kanye West	Bee mortality	What App
Schools	Highways	Freddy Mercury
Wikipedia	Masks	Feed





Exercise 2.1: "Barbara Streisand is responsible for the immense bee mortality!" ... What?

M1_exercise_2.1_conspiracy_tickets

JEWS	MOSSAD (Israeli Intelligence Service)
Jewish Elites	A prominent Jewish public Figure (a politician, an actor/actress, a writer, a singer)



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesA

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For your research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and search for *the* painting "Le roi Rothschild" by Charles Lucien Léandre.
- 2. Each group member should see the painting and study it closely for a while.
- 3. Analyse the caricature with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesB

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For you research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and enter the words "David Dees, prison" into a search engine.
- 2. You should find an illustration by the American artist "David Dees" on which several prison cells and prisoners are displayed. The turnkeys wear a uniform with the Star of David and the letter 'Z' printed on it. Each group member should see the illustration and study it closely for a while.
 - Alternatively, if you cannot find the illustration, you can search *for "David Dees, antisemitic"* and observe some of the illustrations. Then, continue with the following Step.
- 3. Analyse the illustration with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesC

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For you research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and enter the words "David Dees Mossad, Rothschild, Paris" into a search engine.
- 2. You should find an illustration by the American artist "David Dees" on which the attacks 'Syria 2015' and Paris 11/13' are displayed. Above them is a group with black-masked people who seem to be controlled by someone in the background. Each group member should see the illustration and study it closely for a while.
 - Alternatively, if you cannot find the illustration, you can search for "David Dees, antisemitic" and study some of the illustrations. Then, continue with the following Step.
- 3. Analyse the illustration with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesD

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For you research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and enter the words "Antisemitic, Conspiracy theory, caricature, corona" into a search engine.
- 2. You should find many illustrations that claim that the Jews are responsible for the Corona virus. Each group member study these illustrations closely for a while.
- 3. Analyse the illustrations (you might choose one or two) with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesE

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For you research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and enter the words *"The wire puler, poster, antisemitic"* into a search engine.
- 2. You should find a poster that depicts an anti-Semitic caricature of a Jew with a manipulative personality, urging workers to vote for the Nationalist Party. Each group member should study it closely for a while.
- 3. Analyse the illustration with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_caricaturesF

Analysing caricatures displaying antisemitic conspiracy theories

Steps:

- 1. For you research Step: Take your phones (or a laptop etc.) and enter the words "David Dees, Pacman, Europe" into a search engine.
- 2. You should find an illustration by the American artist "David Dees" on which a giant monster tries to swallow the European continent. Each group member should see the illustration and study it closely for a while.
 - Alternatively, if you cannot find the illustration, you can search *for "David Dees, antisemitic"* and study some of the illustrations. Then, continue with the following Step.
- 3. Analyse the illustration with respect to the questions below. Note down your results on the provided index cards. Use one index card per bullet point.

Lead-Question for the analysis:

- 1. Which items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews?
- 2. What kind of mechanisms of conspiracy theories are displayed in the caricature?
- 3. How does the caricature make you feel?
- 4. Which anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative is expressed in the caricature?
- 5. What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?



M1_Exercise_3.1_characteristics

Characteristics of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories

Why are they so appealing?⁴²

- They offer easy solutions for complex problems and satisfy the need for an accessible explanation pattern.
- They can seemingly explain events and connections that are not understood or difficult to see through, and thus give them meaning.
- The feeling of having seen through what is hidden and now belonging to the circle of the 'knowing' leads to a revaluation of one's own person and provides the individual with a supposed sense of security.

<u>Which common items, figures or symbols are used to make references to Jews in context of anti-</u> <u>Semitic conspiracy theories?</u>⁴³

- Animals such as an octopus, a rat, or bugs
- Religious symbols, such as the Star of David
- A hooked nose
- The Eye of Providence: A symbol that depicts an eye, often enclosed in a triangle and surrounded by rays of light (depicted on the U.S. one-dollar bill)
- Codes or puns such as: 'I hate juice' or ZOG (Zionist Occupied Government)
- References to prominent and rich Jewish families or people such as the Rothschild family, George Soros etc.

What are the mechanisms of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?⁴⁴

- 1. They divide the world into two groups: The manipulators (The Jews) and the manipulated. The vast majority of people does not know that they are manipulated, unlike the secret minority that knows.
- 2. They simplify complex problems immensely and offer a solution for every problem.
- 3. The Jews are responsible for all evil and rather pursuit their interests than the common good.
- 4. The Jews are secretly controlling different sectors of society and following a secret plan. The conspiracy theories reveal those secrets.
- 5. The Jews purposely manipulate and mislead the public.

⁴⁴ Ibid.



⁴² Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (Hg.): No World Order. Wie antisemitische Verschwörungsideologien die Welt verklären. Berlin 2015, p.6.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 46ff.

- 6. The Jews have henchmen to carry out their 'evil plans'.
- 7. The conspiracy theories give the appearance of being 'scientifically' proven. People use lots of sources to prove the conspiracy.

What are popular examples for anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?⁴⁵

- Jews dominate international financial institutions.
- The Jews secretly control the entire planet.
- The Jews are involved into 9/11.
- The state of Israel is responsible for secretly killing and eating children.
- The holocaust did not happen.

Which sentiments towards Jews are promoted through anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?

• Many extremely negative connotated emotions: Fear, reluctance, hate, anger etc.

What is dangerous about anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?⁴⁶

- Anti-Semitic conspiracies are unfounded allegations against a group in our society.
- Anti-Semitic conspiracies are a threat to Jews by increasing anti-Semitic attitudes and the risk for discrimination.
- Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories can be used to justify acts of violence against Jews.
- The denial of the holocaust is illegal according to European right.

⁴⁶ Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (2021.): No World Order. Wie antisemitische Verschwörungsideologien die Welt verklären. Berlin 2015, 6f.



 $^{^{45}}$ Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (2021). "Ich habe ja nichts gegen Juden, aber…". Retrieved from: https://nichtsgegen-juden.de/



M1_Exercise_3.1_quiz

Quiz: Detect the Conspiracy!

1. Imagine the following situation:

You are walking on the street and spot a person that walks in front of you and is wearing a black band sweater. On it is a guy who drinks a glass of beer. Below is a slogan stating: "I love beer, I hate juice".

Does something attract your attention?

2. Imagine the following situation:

You are walking through the city and suddenly you notice that a demonstration takes place. Many people wear a bandage around their upper arm with the following illustration on it:



Does something attract your attention?⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Created by the TEACH consortium with paint.



3. 48



Does something on this one-dollar bill attract your attention?

4. Imagine the following situation:

You are listening to the radio and hear the line of a song. It sounds like: "My body is more defined than those of Auschwitz inmates." (line taken from the song "0815" from the German rappers Kollegah and Farid Bang) What do you think about this?

5. Imagine the following situation:

You are listening to Jay-Z's new song "The Story of O.J.".

He raps "You wanna know what's more important than throwin' away money at a strip club? Credit/ You ever wonder why Jewish people own all the property in America? This how they did it."

What do you think about this?

⁴⁸ From: Pixabay. Retrieved from https://pixabay.com/de/photos/dollar-banknote-usa-1-januar-dollar-1161782/





M1_Exercise_3.1_solutions_quiz

Solutions for the Quiz

- **1.** This slogan "I hate juice" is a homophone for "I hate Jews". It is not a conspiracy, but clearly antisemitic. Very often the borders between antisemitism, right-wing radicalism and anti-Semitic conspiracies are not clear cut. A right-winged rock band printed this slogan on their merchandise.⁴⁹
- **2.** This icon is clearly anti-Semitic and links antisemitism, Covid-19 conspiracies, and vaccine conspiracies. Similar icons are seen on demonstrations against Covid-19 actions from the government in Germany. People wear the Star of David on a bandage wrapped around their upper arm. During the Nazi era Jews had to wear the Jewish Badge (a bandage with the Star of David). It was used to stigmatize, humiliate, and segregate Jews and to watch and control the movements. The badge also facilitated deportation. Nowadays, people who wear this bandage in the context of anti-Covid-19 demonstrations draw a comparison between the situation of the stigmatized Jews and people who do not want to be vaccinated. This comparison derides the crimes committed against Jews during the Nazi era.⁵⁰
- **3.**This is an image of the US-one-dollar bill. No references to anti-Semitic conspiracies are being made. However, the 'Eye of Providence' symbol is often associated with the Illuminati and Freemasonry (further groups associated with conspiracies). Racist conspiracy theorists also long claimed that Jews are in control of the Freemason network. Therefore, in some contexts the Eye of Providence might be used for anti-Semitic conspiracies.⁵¹
- **4.**That line does not include an anti-Semitic conspiracy, but it is antisemitic. The two rappers got criticized a lot for comparing themselves to prisoners of the Nazi

⁵¹ Segalov, M. (2018): If you can't see antisemitism, it's time to open your eyes, Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/28/antisemitism-open-your-eyes-jeremy-corbyn-labour, 12.05.2021.



Das Versteckspiel (2021): Antisemitische Verschlüsselungen. Retrieved from https://dasversteckspiel.de/die-symbolwelt/antisemitismus/antisemitische-verschluesselungen-133.html Rafael, S. (2020): Warum ist es Antisemitisch, wenn sich "Impfgegner*innen" einen Davidstern mit "ungeimpft" an die Brust stecken? Retrieved from:, https://www.belltower.news/erklaert-warum-ist-esantisemitisch-wenn-sich-impfgegnerinnen-einen-davidstern-mit-ungeimpft-an-die-brust-stecken-99575/, 12.05.2021.

concentration camp Auschwitz. In a newspaper article the author claims that "Jewish groups have strongly condemned the lyric as anti-Semitic. "Auschwitz survivors feel that the lyric [...] is not just crude and undignified, but that it also disparages them and their murdered relatives," Christoph Heubner from the International Auschwitz Committee told the German daily Bild. "Compassion and empathy are apparently alien to the world of battle rap. They also do not increase sales." 52

5.

This excerpt from Jay-Z's song is under discussion as well. Some people argue that the entire song is about exaggerated stereotypes and that it was not Jay-Z's intent to promote anti-Semitism. However, the lyrics refers to anti-Semitic stereotypes about the 'Jewish' wealth and power. In certain circles it is believed that Jews 'own all property' in the US and have used credit to financially get ahead.⁵³

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

⁵³Rubin, R. (2021): Anti-Defamation League Criticizes Jay-Z Over 'Story of O.J.' Lyrics. Retrieved from: https://variety.com/2017/music/news/anti-defamation-league-condemns-jay-z-anti-semitic-444-lyrics-1202489018/



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⁵² Ott, S. (2018): Auschwitz lyrics triggers anti-Semitism outcry in Germany, Retrieved from: https://www.handelsblatt.com/english/politics/rap-battle-auschwitz-lyric-triggers-anti-semitism-outcry-ingermany/23581798.html?ticket=ST-2535766-P7bVYYLjx4verEenKUF1-ap4

Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_scenario

Bloody floods flood the planet!? - The Conspiracy Manufactory

54



Scenario:

It is the year 2050 and it is the rainy season in Indonesia. This year however, the amount of water is unnaturally huge. Big floods swamp small Indonesian islands. But the most striking and horrifying fact is that the floods are red and resemble blood. A few people have died already, but one cannot tell if it was simply due to the huge floods or if the red colour of the water has something to do with it. First, the scenario was reported on Java. Now, it is not an isolated case anymore. Within two weeks bloody floods were reported on neighbouring islands in Indonesia: Bali, Lombok, Sumatra, Sulawesi... What at first appeared to be only a local problem seems to spread around Indonesia.

Therefore, the government is alarmed and convened a special meeting with the parties who are in the parliament. Each party is supposed to investigate the strange situation and to come up with an explanation and a possible solution. At the meeting, the parties should present their explanations and discuss each other's ideas. In the end, the government must decide



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

⁵⁴ from: Googlemaps, edited by the TEACH-Team.





which explanation and strategy is the most logical and convenient one and realize it.

Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_partyA

The floods:



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

- 1. Come up with a *name* for your party.
- 2. Use the given information (below) about your party to *generate* a proper *conspiracy theory*. You can be very creative. The given information should form the basis of your conspiracy and can be seen as a starting point for your own conspiracy theory. The more absurd your theory is, the better. You can either write and create your own sources or use the internet to come up with material that proves your conspiracy theory. You may use the handout from exercise 1 (*M2: Characteristics of Antisemitic* Be prepared to defend your theory in the upcoming special meeting. Anticipate critical questions and try to develop convincing arguments. 1hour

Attention: Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.

- 3. Prepare *a press statement* in order to present your theory to the other parties and to the government. Try to be very convincing. You may design a poster or a slogan to increase your credibility. The presentation of your conspiracy theory should not take more than *three minutes*. You can use the time to develop your theory further and to come up with an 'emergency strategy'. 1 hour
- 4. Present your press statement. The government will inform you when it is time for that.

- 5. After all the parties have presented their theories, it is the government's duty to begin and lead the special meeting. The parties should discuss critically each other's emergency strategies and try to debunk the other theories. 45 minutes
- 6. After the time is up, the government must agree on a theory. 5 min

Your Conspiracy Basis:

You believe that the red floods are a foreign attack on Indonesia. The red colour is toxic and will kill the entire population after some time if nobody reacts. Only a small group, consisting of the 'chosen' people will survive this attack.



From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/sport-freizeit-tauchen-



Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_partyB

The floods



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

- 1. Come up with a *name* for your party.
- 2. Use the given information (below) about your party to *generate* a proper *conspiracy theory*. You can be very creative. The given information should form the basis of your conspiracy and can be seen as a starting point for your own conspiracy theory. The more absurd your theory is, the better. You can either write and create your own sources or use the internet to come up with material that proves your conspiracy theory. You may use the handout from exercise 1 (*M2: Characteristics of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories*) as a guideline to create your conspiracy theory.

Be prepared to defend your theory in the upcoming special meeting. Anticipate critical questions and try to develop convincing arguments. 1hour

Attention: Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.

3. Prepare *a press statement* in order to present your theory to the other parties and to the government. Try to be very convincing. You may design a poster or a slogan to increase your credibility. The presentation of your conspiracy theory should not take more than *three minutes*. You can use the time to develop your theory further and to come up with an 'emergency strategy'. 1 hour

- 4. Present your press statement. The government will inform you when it is time for that.
- 5. After all the parties have presented their theories, it is the government's duty to begin and lead the special meeting. The parties should discuss critically each other's emergency strategies and try to debunk the other theories. 45 minutes
- 6. After the time is up, the government must agree on a theory. 5 min

Your Conspiracy Basis:

You believe in a scientific explanation for the red floods and in an unfavourable chain of events. The amount of rain was unusually high this year and caused the floods. The water is red due to the high iron content in the grounds which the water has washed out.



From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photo s/wissenschaftwissenschaftler-1336664/



Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_partyC

The floods:



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

- 1. Come up with a *name* for your party.
- 2. Use the given information (below) about your party to *generate* a proper *conspiracy theory*. You can be very creative. The given information should form the basis of your conspiracy and can be seen as a starting point for your own conspiracy theory. The more absurd your theory is, the better. You can either write and create your own sources or use the internet to come up with material that proves your conspiracy theory. You may use the handout from exercise 1 (*M2: Characteristics of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories*) as a guideline to create your conspiracy theory. Be prepared to defend your theory in the upcoming special meeting. Anticipate critical questions and try to develop convincing arguments. 1hour

Attention: Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.

- 3. Prepare *a press statement* in order to present your theory to the other parties and to the government. Try to be very convincing. You may design a poster or a slogan to increase your credibility. The presentation of your conspiracy theory should not take more than *three minutes*. You can use the time to develop your theory further and to come up with an 'emergency strategy'. 1 hour
- 4. Present your press statement. The government will inform you when it is time for that.

- 5. After all the parties have presented their theories, it is the government's duty to begin and lead the special meeting. The parties should critically discuss each other's emergency strategies and try to debunk the other theories. 45 minutes
- 6. After the time is up, the government must agree on a theory. 5 min

Your Conspiracy Basis:

You believe the red floods to be red herrings. The textile industry has access to great amounts of red dye and coloured the water on purpose. It should provoke a state of emergency and this should lead to government to resignation.



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Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_partyD

The floods:



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

- 1. Come up with a *name* for your party.
- 2. Use the given information (below) about your party to *generate* a proper *conspiracy theory*. You can be very creative. The given information should form the basis of your conspiracy and can be seen as a starting point for your own conspiracy theory. The more absurd your theory is, the better. You can either write and create your own sources or use the internet to come up with material that proves your conspiracy theory. You may use the handout from exercise 1 (*M2: Characteristics of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories*) as a guideline to create your conspiracy theory. Be prepared to defend your theory in the upcoming special meeting. Anticipate critical questions and try to develop convincing arguments. 1hour

Attention: Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.

- 3. Prepare *a press statement* in order to present your theory to the other parties and to the government. Try to be very convincing. You may design a poster or a slogan to increase your credibility. The presentation of your conspiracy theory should not take more than *three minutes*. You can use the time to develop your theory further and to come up with an 'emergency strategy'. 1 hour
- 4. Present your press statement. The government will inform you when it is time for that.

- 5. After all the parties have presented their theories, it is the government's duty to begin and lead the special meeting. The parties should discuss critically each other's emergency strategies and try to debunk the other theories. 45 minutes
- 6. After the time is up, the government must agree on a theory. 5 min

Your Conspiracy Basis:

You believe the red floods to be a complot against the Indonesian economic system. Due to the emergency state the economy (shops, factories etc.) will be shut down. This is the chance to eliminate Indonesia's economy and thus to eliminate one powerful competitor.



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Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_partyE

The floods:



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

- 1. Come up with a *name* for your party.
- 2. Use the given information (below) about your party to *generate* a proper *conspiracy theory*. You can be very creative. The given information should form the basis of your conspiracy and can be seen as a starting point for your own conspiracy theory. The more absurd your theory is, the better. You can either write and create your own sources or use the internet to come up with material that proves your conspiracy theory. You may use the handout from exercise 1 (*M2: Characteristics of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories*) as a guideline to create your conspiracy theory. Be prepared to defend your theory in the upcoming special meeting. Anticipate critical questions and try to develop convincing arguments. 1hour

Attention: Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that your conspiracy theory is too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.

- 3. Prepare *a press statement* in order to present your theory to the other parties and to the government. Try to be very convincing. You may design a poster or a slogan to increase your credibility. The presentation of your conspiracy theory should not take more than *three minutes*. You can use the time to develop your theory further and to come up with an 'emergency strategy'. 1 hour
- 4. Present your press statement. The government will inform you when it is time for that.

- 5. After all the parties have presented their theories, it is the government's duty to begin and lead the special meeting. The parties should discuss critically each other's emergency strategies and try to debunk the other theories. 45 minutes
- 6. After the time is up, the government must agree on a theory. 5 min

Your Conspiracy Basis:

You believe that the red floods are a holy message from heaven. The end of the world has come. It is perceived as a great honour to be the first country receiving this message.



From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/fantasie-licht-stimmung-himmel-2861107/



Exercise 3.2: Scenario Game: Conspiracy Theory Manufactory

M1_exercise_3.2_government

The floods:



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From: pixabay. Link: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/das-flache-meer-das-wasser-schuppen-2261726/ further edited by the author

Steps:

1. You do not have to come up with a conspiracy theory, but it is your responsibility to organize and

lead the special meeting. First of all, you must think about the *general structure* of the meeting. Each party has got two hours to develop a conspiracy theory, an emergency strategy and to prepare a press statement. After that, the special meeting will run for 45 minutes during which the most convincing conspiracy theory shall be found.

In order to do so, talk to the other groups separately while they are working on their conspiracy theories to gain an impression about what you will face during the discussion. Think about tricky questions to ask the parties later during the meeting.

You can split up for this Step and appoint each member of the government as an expert on one party. Do some research on the internet to gain more knowledge and be able to ask critical questions. It is up to you to find out which party's theory is only a conspiracy theory and which party might be right. 1:45h

- 2. Think about how the decision will be made. Are the parties also allowed to vote or only the government? 5min
- 3. Prepare the room for the special meeting. Arrange chairs, tables etc. 10min

Attention:

Because you are the leader of today's special meeting it also in your responsibility to watch the time. Remind the parties when it is time for the press statements and make sure that they do not overstretch their speaking time.

Although this seminar deals with conspiracy theories, no Anti-Semitic or other forms of racist, sexist etc. conspiracy theories shall be created. Make sure that the conspiracy theories are too far from reality to harm anybody in real life.



Wrap-up 3: Silent conversation

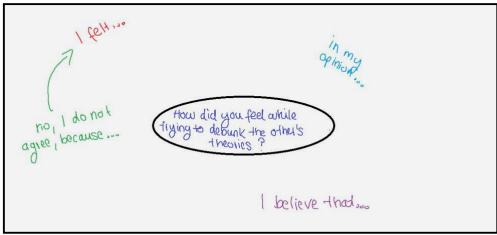
M1_wrap_up_3_silent_conversation

M7: Silent Conversation

Step:

Chose 4-6 questions (depending on the group size, you need on question per group) and write each question on a single piece of paper. Here is a variety of different questions, but you can also come up with your own for the reflection.

- Did you notice any similarities between the exercise and the real life?
- Of which Anti-Semitic theories did the made-up conspiracies remind you and why?
- How did you feel while trying to debunk the others' theories? Which strategies went well / which did not work out?
- Which useful strategies can you implement into your work-life?
- How did you feel in the role of the debunker/conspirator?
- Why are Anti-Semitic conspiracies so attractive to some people?
- Why are Anti-Semitic conspiracies still so widespread?
- Why are Anti-Semitic conspiracies dangerous?



Example /created with: paint/



Extra materials Module 2: Anti-Feminist conspiracy theories

Containing extra material for:

Warm-up 1

Exercise 1.1

Exercise 1.2

Exercise 1.3

Warm-up 2

Exercise 2.2

Exercise 2.3



Introduction: Presenting the module and the terminology

M2_introduction_presentation

Accessible as presentation through <u>www.teach-erasmus.eu</u> ("results") and available on Canva: <u>click here</u>



M2_warm_up_1_characteristics

Characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories

Anti-feminist conspiracy theories combine conspiracy-theoretical and anti-feminist aspects. Central to any conspiracy theory is that the conspiracy theorists assume a secret conspiracy. The conspirators are pursuing a plan to enforce their own interests - to the disadvantage of the general public. According to anti-feminist conspiracy theories, either (popular) feminists are the conspirators, or the feminist movement is instrumentalized by certain institutions or groups (e.g. Jews, politicians) to achieve their own goals.

Belief in a secret conspiracy distinguishes anti-feminist conspiracy theorists from anti-feminists. Anti-feminist conspiracy theorists often assume that feminists want to suppress men in order to pursue their own interests. This is to be achieved through a radical change in society that only suits the interests of women or a group of secret rulers. Anti-feminist conspiracy theories often overlap with other forms of conspiracy theories. This corresponds to an important characteristic of conspiracy theories: everything is connected to everything.

For example: some anti-feminist conspiracy theorists fear that feminism and the emancipation of women will lead to lower birth rates. It is believed that as the birth rate declines, the native population will be replaced by Muslim people (overlapping with Islamophobic conspiracy theories).

In particular right-wing extremists seem to spread conspiracy theories like this in order to pursue their own agenda and attract like-minded people or new voters. They often dispense constructive criticism. Instead, a disadvantage for men, for example, is seen in every goal of feminism. Anti-feminist conspiracy theorists not only criticize feminism, which - like any social issue - can make sense. In every feminist endeavor they suspect the goal of suppressing others - especially men. Because of this imagined enemy image, a constructive discussion is often not possible.

Summarized:

- Feminists as conspirators or feminism as tools for other conspiratorial groups
- Often overlaps with other conspiracy theories
- Oppression of men
- Conspiracy theorists: different, especially right-wing extremists



Warm-up 1: Wait... what are antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_warm_up_1_pictures1





M2_warm_up_1_pictures2



M2_warm_up_1_pictures3



M2_warm_up_1_pictures4



Warm-up 1: Wait... what are antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_warm_up_1_pictures5



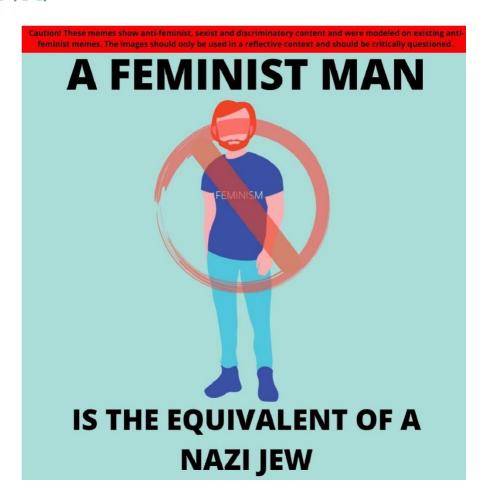


M2_warm_up_1_pictures6



Warm-up 1: Wait... what are antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_warm_up_1_pictueres7



Warm-up 1: Wait... what are antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_warm_up_1_pictures8

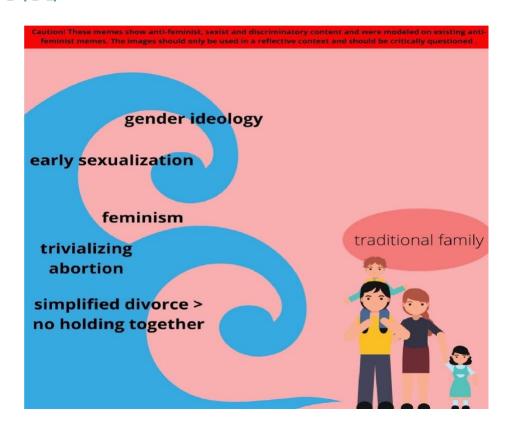


M2_warm_up_1_pictures9





M2_warm_up_1_pictures10

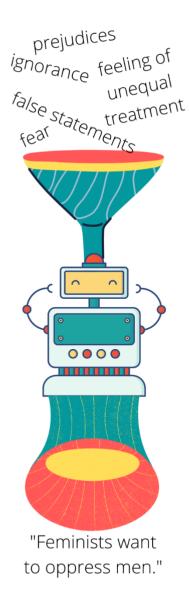




M2_warm_up_1_pictures11



Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories? M2_exercise_1.1_machine

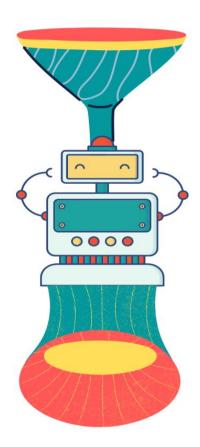


[created by the TEACH-consortium], can be also downloaded here: Link to picture



Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_exercise_1.1_machine



[created by the TEACH-consortium], can be also downloaded here: Link to picture



Exercise 1.1: Do you know the characteristics of antifeminist conspiracy theories?

M2_exercise_1.1_statements

Worksheet "Anti-feminist Statements"

Is it a conspiracy-theorie or "only" an anti-feminist/discriminating or unreflected statement?

Statement	Conspiracy theory? Yes/No	Why is this a conspiracy theory (or why not)?
The current political efforts are aimed at actively weakening the position of men.		
Women belong at the stove and are responsible for raising children.		
Jews try to promote feminism for their own interests.		
Women should be restrained/reticent, men should be dominant.		
The current discourses in [insert your country] regarding gender are getting out of hand.		
Feminism leads to fewer births, which leads to mass immigration from Muslim countries.		
Feminists control the media, other opinions are censored or not printed.		
Feminists want to destroy the traditional family.		
Feminists want to oppress men.		



In the 21st century there is no longer any need for feminism. Women already have the same rights as men.	
Quotas for women are unnecessary and not fair.	

Sometimes it is very hard/impossible to intervene, sometimes it might be useful to ask higher authorities how to deal with a situation, each case is individual, but it is important that you are aware of risks/pitfalls and on statements that cross the line.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]



Exercise 1.2: How to analyse antifeminist conspiracy theories – in your class!

M2_exercise_1.2_overview_history_text

Overview Antifeminism

Feminist movements in the west can be broken down into three waves. The first wave took place around 1900. A particular focus was on equal voting rights for everyone, because in many countries around the world women were only allowed to vote from the first half of the 20th century – in some countries later or still not. The second wave took place from the 1960s through the 1980s. This movement was primarily committed to equal legal and social rights. Women increasingly resisted the assumption that women can only find their fulfillment in raising children and housekeeping. The third wave began in the 1990s and follows on from the second wave of feminism. This wave is also a response to the backlash that arose in the course of the second wave. Some aspects of the second wave were criticized, because it was strongly aimed at upper-middle-class white women. The third wave also takes into account intersectionality. Intersectionality covers overlapping forms of discrimination based on gender, race and/or religion. ⁵⁵

In the course of the second wave of feminism, the movement split into two parts, as there were different views on some points about sexuality. Among other things, this disagreement led some people, such as right-wing politicians, to think (or just claim) that feminism is against heterosexuality, men and sex.⁵⁶

Antifeminist backlash has so far mainly emerged when feminist rights could be enforced (more women in male-dominated professions, laws to protect rape victims, etc.). For every new right and change that has been won, anti-feminist criticism and attempts to restrict women's rights follow. In this way, anti-feminists pursue the goal of legally and biologically discriminating and restricting women.⁵⁷

There are various reasons and approaches used by anti-feminist conspiracy theorists. Different argumentation strategies emerge. Some important ones are presented below:

⁵⁶ Snyder-Hall, R. C. (2008): The Ideology of Wifely Submission: A Challenge for Feminism? In: Politics & Gender. ⁵⁷ Van Wormer, K. (2008): Anti-Feminist Backlash and Violence against Women Worldwide. In: Social Work & Society 6/2, 324-337, p. 324-325.



⁵⁵ Drucker, S.A. (2018): Betty Friedan: The Three Waves of Feminism, Retrieved from: http://www.ohiohumanities.org/betty-friedan-the-three-waves-of-feminism/.

TARGETING CONSPIRACY THEORIES

- 1. Gender is rejected and not recognized as socially constructed: Gender mainstreaming is understood as an ideology that is imposed on others. Gender policy is to be promoted through gender mainstreaming.⁵⁸
- 2. Sexual diversity is rejected, only heterosexuality is recognized.
- 3. Equality discourse is seen as a conspiracy and ideology: The "elite" forms a conspiracy and pursues their own goals through feminism to the disadvantage of the population. In this context there is often the speech of a "new world order" the mighty of the world are pursuing. (Here we find an overlap with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of the "new world order".)
- 4. Danger to child welfare: early sexualization, fear of "making gay", bullying in school when encouraging kids if they want to act against gender roles (e.g. playing with "atypical" toys)⁵⁹
- 5. Interrelations: A connection is seen between supranational organizations (e.g. the EU), global companies and the spread of gender ideologies. It is assumed that organizations and instances from different areas would work together to benefit from it. This also fulfills a central feature of conspiracy theories: Everything is connected with everything.⁶⁰
- 6. Indoctrination through feminism, which forces society to use a new language and thus "mutilate" the language.61

This motive is not pursued in all countries and languages, but it is discussed e.g. in Sweden, Germany and Austria. Feminists advocate a gender sensitive language. In some languages (as German), only the masculine plural is used for a group of both men and women - although there is also a feminine plural form. Feminists are using both masculine and feminine terms to talk about these groups - or they use a merged form of the feminine and masculine term.

These argumentation structures can be assigned to different variants of anti-feminism. The German sociologist Rebekka Blum names the following variants:

⁶¹ Bergert, I./Rasskopf, A./Neurath, L./Schmidt, K. (2018): Antifeminismus in der Wissenschaft. Eine vergleichende Diskursanalyse zu Ulrich Kutschera, Axel Meyer, Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz und Manfred Spieker. Retrieved from https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/genderzukunft/publikationen/onlinepublikationen/diskursanalyse-antifeminismus-in-der-wissenschaft.pdf, p. 77.



193

⁵⁸ Kovats, E. (2018): Conservative Counter-Movements? Overcoming Culturalising Interpretations of Right-Wing Mobilizations Against 'Gender Ideology'. In: Femina Politica 1, p. 79.

⁵⁹ Bergert, I./Rasskopf, A./Neurath, L./Schmidt, K. (2018): Antifeminismus in der Wissenschaft. Eine vergleichende Diskursanalyse zu Ulrich Kutschera, Axel Meyer, Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz und Manfred Spieker. Retrieved from https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/genderzukunft/publikationen/onlinepublikationen/diskursanalyse-antifeminismus-in-der-wissenschaft.pdf, p. 84.

⁶⁰ Kovats, E. (2018): Conservative Counter-Movements? Overcoming Culturalising Interpretations of Right-Wing Mobilizations Against 'Gender Ideology'. In: Femina Politica 1, p. 81.

- Anti-Political Correctness
- Male-centered anti-feminism
- "family" centered anti-feminism
- Anti-gender anti-feminism

Anti-feminists are not a homogeneous group. They have different approaches, goals and argumentation strategies. Rebekka Blum tries to categorize anti-feminists according to the following classification:

- Christian rights: often oppose abortion and thus the woman's right to selfdetermination
- Extreme right: fear the "great exchange", strive for the ideal of a national community
- Masculinism: often by pick-up artists or men who refer to themselves as incel

Anti-feminist conspiracy theories often have in common that they express the desire for retraditionalization. This wish seems to gain in importance, especially in times of crisis. This can also be seen, for example, from the times of the corona pandemic.

A dangerous property of anti-feminist ideologies and conspiracy theories is that they often function as "door opener ideology" and make them susceptible to other conspiracy theories (e.g. racist or anti-Semitic ideologies). Furthermore, anti-feminists follow a binary way of thinking (man – woman, natural – unnatural etc.), which enormously reduces the actual complexity of gender and our reality of life. The desire for simplification and clarity can be found in many conspiracy theorists. They often find clear and simple answers in conspiracy theories and scientific knowledge and facts are ignored or denounced. These aspects are also very common in right-wing extremist conspiracy theories.⁶²

What is... an Incel?

The term Incel means "involuntary celibate". A characteristic of Incels is the pronounced misogyny. Women and birth control are accused of some men failing to get sex, implying that women "owe" it to men. In Incels' online forums, fantasies that glorify violence are often voiced. There are some similarities to white supremacism, since they have similar hate figures (women, especially attractive women, and attractive men). Some of the rightwing extremist mass shootings around the world have been based on this specific type of misgony and antifeminism.⁶³

⁶³ Williams, Z. (2018): 'Raw hatred': why the 'incel' movement targets and terrorizes women. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/25/raw-hatred-why-incel-movement-targets-terrorises-



⁶² Blum, R. (2019): Angst um die Vormachtstellung: Zum Begriff und zur Geschichte des deutschen Antifeminismus. Hamburg: Marta Press.



Exercise 1.2: How to analyse antifeminist conspiracy theories – in your class! M2_exercise_1.2_methods_debunking

Methods you can use in order to debunk a conspiracy theory

Google Reverse Image Search: By using the Google Reverse Image Search you can check whether the picture was taken out of its original context, if it is just an image detail cut out of a bigger photograph or if it is photoshopped in any kind of way. An alternative to Google Reverse Image Search is the Website TinEye.

Type of Language: Try to question the type of language that was used to describe a matter. If the language is emotionally charged this might give you a reason to analyse whether the content of the text is presented objectively. Furthermore, it might be helpful to check if any figures of speech are used in order to create a certain kind of picture. Be attentive of what adjectives are used to describe the matter.

Debunking websites: There are a couple of websites you can use in order to debunk a conspiracy theory, e.g., Mimikama (German language), SOMA (Social Observatory for Disinformation and Social Media Analysis; EU), factcheck.org, RAND (an online database which provides information about tools to target online disinformation), etc. These sites pursue the goal to expose false reports, identify disinformation and point out manipulation. The participants can research a debunking website of their country.

Background check: If you are confronted with a text, photo or video and you are not sure about the credibility of its content, try to investigate the content creator and the site it is published on. Figure out what other outputs the content creator has published. Is he/she an expert in the field? Is there a profile of the author (LinkedIn, Facebook, any CV, etc.)? Where is the domain of the website registered? On what outlet was the content originally posted? Check the imprint of the source. For the experts: If you find an address in the imprint, you can search for it via google maps street view. Sometimes it turns out that the address or office building doesn't exist.

Double check the content: If you are still unsure about the content, try to doublecheck the information you are confronted with on credible websites. What are credible websites? To ensure that you are on a trustworthy website you can background check the author and website itself (see background check). Are there any references made in the output? If so, find the original source of the reference, it might be taken out of a different



women



context. Additionally, it might be helpful to check the information on more than one site. Thereby, you can make sure that the information from several sources is congruent.

What about the copyright? If you are confronted with a video, picture, text or post, make sure to find out who published it originally. Only if you have this information you are equipped to background check the originator and output. If a video is posted on YouTube, you can use Amnesty International YouTube Data Viewer to verify the time and date of a video. Furthermore, the Data Viewer creates thumbnails you can run through a reverse image search.

Enemies: Be attentive of what images of enemies are used and what they suggest or imply. Is there any form of discrimination or are there any prejudices used as part of the logic the author tries to convey? Antisemitic, islamophobic or anti-feminist statements could give you a hint that it is necessary to pursue some further research.

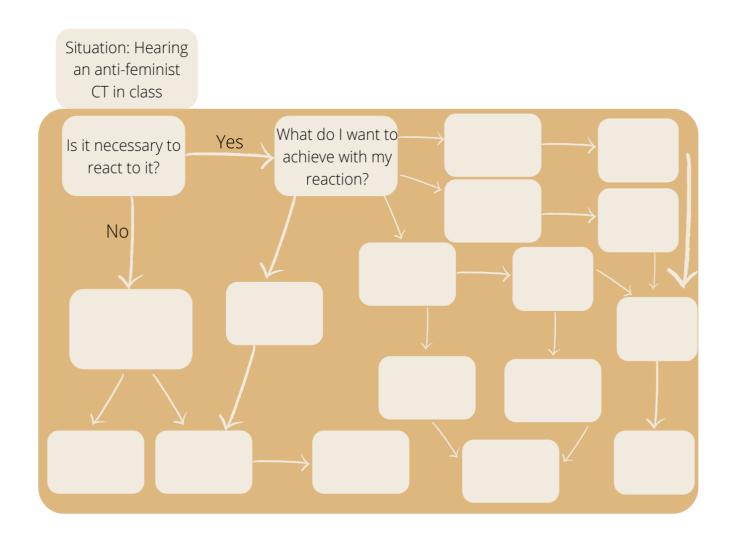
Geolocation: Concerning pictures and videos, it can also be helpful to use geolocation tools, like Google Maps. By using the 3D mode on Google Maps, you can check whether a location or building resembles the one depicted in the video/picture you are confronted with.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]



Exercise 1.3: Dealing with conspiracy theories – a difficult Step for everyone M2_exercise_1.3_template_guideline

Template for guideline



[created by the TEACH-Consortium], can be also downloaded here: Link to picture



Warm-up 2: Let's get started and find associations

M2_warm_up_2_bingo

Terms for Bingo game

Fake News (Exchange (of European peoples)	Gender r mainstreamin r g	Mossad r	Jews
Conspiracy	Baiting	mainstream media	Indoctrinatio n	Oppression
the powerful	elite	Gender roles	Governmen t	Globalizatio n
Wake up!	mutilation of language	men who aren't real men	Implausible	Think of the children!
unfeminine	Lobbyists	targeted	Unnatural	covering/hu shing up
Influencing	Fake-News Media	it is in the nature of women	Stir up fear	Secret service

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]





Exercise 2.2: Antifeminist conspiracy theories – A threat for democracy? (The answer is yes.)

M2_exercise_2.2_antifeminism_democracy_text

Democracy and antifeminist conspiracy theories"

An important aspect of democratic societies is to reduce inequalities and to give all people equal opportunities in different areas of life. This is not only anchored in the national constitutions, but is also required in the European Convention on Human Rights.

A big problem of anti-feminist conspiracy theories and thus also an important reason why civic education should devote itself to this topic is that conspiracy theories often question the basis of democracy and human rights and thus endanger efforts to achieve equality between women and men which is important for democracy.

This questioning or rejection of the democratic order and human rights has extremist aspects and is extremely problematic in view of the principles of a democratic society. In order to be able to solve the problems of the 21st century together and so that our society can develop, unequal treatment must be recognized and solutions must be sought.

The goal of further training for citizens in the context of personality and competence development and the associated active and self-determined participation in political, cultural and social life is a basic requirement of a democratic society. However, this development of competencies can be seriously endangered by conspiracy-theoretical discourses.

Conspiracy theories often create a distrust in conventional "mainstream media" and those affected often only believe in alternative media. Media skepticism is often related to different types of conspiracy theories, including anti-feminist ideologies and anti-feminist conspiracy theories.

"Alternative media", however, often do not follow journalistic quality criteria, but often contain false reports or are presented very one-sidedly in order to stir up emotions and thus generate more reach. And this misinformation stands in the way of a constructive discussion and also paves the way for conspiracy theories.

As a result, unequal treatment is ignored and denied or feminist aspirations for equality are delegitimized.



Exercise 2.3: Argumentation strategies and options for action

M2_exercise_2.3_argumentation_strategies

Cards with argumentation/communication strategies

Authority Appeal to generally recognized personalities, experts	Logic Appeal to "laws" of thought (causality, finality, etc.)	Experience Appeal to personal experience
Frequent use of the word "no" if you respond to an argument from the other person, start with "no" to make it clear that you are opposed to it	Insulting ("nasty effect") Try to denounce the interlocutor and exalt yourself	Norms Appeal to prevailing values in society, laws (norms)
Facts Appeal to verifiable research results, statistics	Make fun of the other person Delegitimizes the opinion of the other person, deny his/her seriousness	Repeat the other person's statements in own words Making sure you understand the other person. The other person has the opportunity to make corrections.
Appreciation Convey to the other person that you appreciate them even though you disagree with them.	Ignoring Ignore statements that you disagree with.	Emphasize similarities Point out similar values or goals. Communicate that you are not the other person's enemy just because you have a different opinion.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]



Exercise 2.3: Argumentation strategies and options for action

M2_exercise_2.3_antifeminist_statements

Suggestions for anti-feminist conspiracy theoretic statements

The current political efforts are aimed at actively weakening the position of men.	Women belong at the stove and are responsible for raising children.	Feminists control the media, other opinions are censored or not printed.
Feminists want to destroy the traditional family.	Jews try to promote feminism for their own interests.	Quotas for women are unnecessary and not fair.
Feminists want to oppress men.	Women should be restrained/reticent, men should be dominant.	Feminism leads to fewer births, which leads to mass immigration from Muslim countries.
In the 21st century there is no longer any need for feminism. Women already have the same rights as men.	The current discourses in [insert your country] regarding gender are getting out of hand.	

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]



Extra materials Module 3: Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories

Containing extra material for:

Exercise 1.1

Exercise 1.2

Exercise 1.3

Warm-up 2

Exercise 2.1

Exercise 2.2

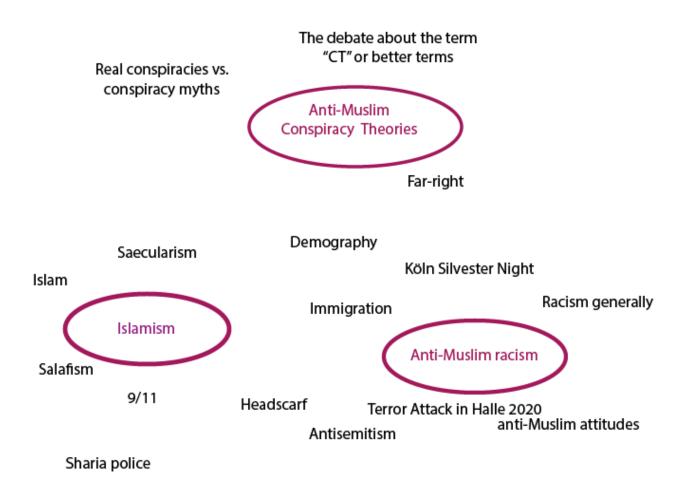
Exercise 2.3

Additional/optional exercise



Exercise 1.1: Exploration: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories and Neighbouring Concepts

M3_exercise_1.1_sample_whiteboard



[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

Exercise 1.1: Exploration: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories and Neighbouring Concepts

M3_exercise_1.1_essay

Theory, Myth, Narrative, Mindset... what is it?

The term "conspiracy theories" is not undisputed. There is an ongoing discussion if other terms would be more appropriate for the phenomenon. The answers differs in various countries and language communities.

We cannot offer an exhaustive discussion of the terminology question here, and much less a final answer. But in order to help readers (and workshop trainers) enter into this part of the discussion, we present here the views of a well-renowned conspiracy theory expert from German, Pia Lamberty. The text is a section from her booklet "Verschwörungserzählungen".⁶⁴ Below you find a slightly shortened translation made by the TEACH team.

Please note that Lamberty's opinion is only this: an opinion. Other people have other opinions that are equally well-supported by arguments. And you are fully entitled to find your own position on the topic with your own arguments.

Please also note that Lamberty wrote her remarks with the German use of the term "conspiracy theories" (Verschwörungstheorien) in mind. The usage and connotation of the term and its alternatives may be different in other languages. Still, you can use her remarks for starting a discussion.

Between theories and myths: a brief conceptual classification

For a long time, the phenomenon was predominantly treated as a **conspiracy theory**. But in recent years, science and society have increasingly debated whether the term is so accurate. According to the Duden dictionary of German, a theory is a "system of scientifically founded statements to explain certain facts or phenomena and the laws on which they are based". Such a theory is put forward by scientists (usually after years of research) and then tested against reality. For example, if someone theorises that pizza is always round, but then discovers that there are also square pizzas, the theory must be changed or even discarded.

But this is exactly what does not happen with "conspiracy theories". Their followers often continue to hold on to their ideas even when they could actually get enough counter-

⁶⁴ Lamberty, Pia (2020): *Verschwörungserzählungen.* Informationen zur politischen Bildung aktuell: 35. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: Bonn. (16 pp.)



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evidence to make them rethink. Let's take the example of flat earth. People who want to believe that Earth is flat want to prove again and again that it cannot be a globe.

For their experiment to prove the alleged flat earth, they use for example laser beams and objects (like poles) set on a defined altitude (e.g. 5 metres) above the surface of a large, calm body of water (e.g. a very long canal). Experiments like this (not with lasers, but with telescopes) have been made since the 1830s. When correctly done they all reveal that Earth indeed has a curvature. Ever since, the proof that Earth were flat has failed (when experiments were set up properly) again and again. But instead of revising their own opinion and accepting that Earth is not flat after all, the followers of flat earth continue to cling to their idea. And this is exactly the difference to scientific theorising, which has to be substantiated or revised by corresponding findings.

Of myths, mentalities and other concepts

Experts are currently discussing different terms as an alternative to "conspiracy theory". The sociologist Armin Pfahl-Traughber, for example, distinguishes between conspiracy ideologies, conspiracy myths and conspiracy theories, while the religious scholar Michael Blume speaks only of conspiracy myths. The terms are also defined differently in each case and do not always mean the same thing.

Another option is to distinguish between conspiracy myths, narratives and the conspiracy mentality. A **myth** is a story that people believe to be true and that is often deeply and long-lasting anchored in the respective society. A myth thus describes how people interpret and understand the world around them. A conspiracy myth is not so much the concrete assumption that, for example, Hitler lived on the dark side of the moon. Rather, it is about a fundamental narrative that unites many individual conspiracy narratives.

A **conspiracy narrative**, on the other hand, refers to a concrete account of things that happen in the world. Often, however, such conspiracy narratives do not arise out of thin air, but are historically and culturally embedded. Many conspiracy narratives are therefore fed by rather abstract myths, such as the myth of a Jewish world conspiracy. Echoes of this can be found, for example, in conspiracy narratives about the US businessman and philanthropist George Soros.

Other conspiracy narratives in this context revolve around the annual Bilderberg conferences of influential people from industry, politics, finance, the military and the media, which take place in relative seclusion, allegedly with the intention of establishing a world dictatorship. Or the Illuminati, often regarded as the forerunner of the Bilderbergers, a secret society of the 18th century that is still said to have been





responsible for decisive events in world history, such as the French Revolution, and whose continued existence is disputed in the scene.

For psychologists, a conspiracy narrative is an assumption that individuals or groups perceived as powerful are influencing important events in the world and thus purposefully harming people while keeping the population in the dark about their goals.

In psychological research, the focus is less on the concrete conspiracy narrative than on the personality trait behind it, the **conspiracy mentality** or **conspiracy ideology**. This provides information about how much people generally believe in conspiracies. People with a strong conspiracy mentality are prejudiced against all those they perceive as powerful. In psychology, this worldview is understood as a stable personality trait, a way of interpreting the world. It is thus a fundamental characteristic of a person that can change over time (for example, due to drastic events), but is fundamentally relatively resistant to change.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_introduction

Introduction to Module 4

Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories

Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories is a complex topic. Other than the more emblematic and mostly harmless conspiracy theories such as flat earth, the fake moon landing, or reptiloids, anti-Muslim conspiracy theories deal with history, international relations and the manifestations of Islam as a religion and cultural background of 1.8 billion people on the planet, and are thus more challenging to deal with. Moreover, they are deeply entrenched in the thinking of the political far-right.

This introduction was written in order to help those who prepare a workshop on the topic have some basic information on conspiracy-minded anti-Muslim narratives.

Relevance of the topic

In 2019 and 2020, two terrorist attacks motivated by radical right ideology were carried out in Germany.

On October 9, 2019 a young man called Stephan B. attempted unsuccessfully to get access to a synagogue in Halle and execute a mass shooting with improvised weapons, livestreamed online. As the door to the synagogue held firm, he instead killed a random passer-by and a man having his lunch in a Turkish fast-food restaurant. B. – clearly inspired by the Christchurch attack in March of the same year – motivated his act of terrorism with a manifesto saturated with anti-Semitic positions, in which he blamed the "Zionist Occupation Government" for the demise of Germany and the white race in general⁶⁵.

On February 19, 2020, another man, Tobias R., killed ten people in two Shisha-bars in the town of Hanau, Germany, later taking his own and his mother's life. Tobias R. was convinced that Germany and Europe were exposed to evil machinations of a secret organization and that racially inferior segments of society had poisoned humanity and its ability to civilizational advance. His manifesto, a bricolage of auto-biographical accounts, sci-fi fantasies and outright racism, shares the conspiratorial worldview of his predecessor

⁶⁵ Bundeszentrale politische Bildung. (2020). Der Anschlag von Halle. Retrieved from https://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/316638/der-anschlag-von-halle



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in terror: evil forces are about to replace the German people intentionally, thus, resistance (and in extension lethal violence) is motivated.⁶⁶

The terrorist manifestos of Halle and Hanau are both inspired by the idea of the Great Replacement conspiracy theory.

Only a few years before the attacks, members of the Identitarian movement outlined their strategy that the term the Great Replacement fulfilled a number of criteria for successful mobilization online and offline. In 2016, the works of Renaud Camus, its French creator, were introduced to the German-speaking readers by the radical right publishing house Antaios with the book *Revolte gegen den Großen Austausch* ("Revolt against the Great Replacement"), which makes a quasi-philosophical case for the existence of 'white genocide', and reversed colonization.

At the same time, Antaios also released a pocket book which successfully hit the shelves: Umvolkung: *Wie die Deutschen still und leise ausgetauscht werden* ("Re-population: how the Germans quietly are replaced") targeting another less-picky audience used to bold, unsubstantiated claims and rude language. Its author was Akif Pirinçci, a German citizen of Turkish family background who previously had become popular for a series of criminal novels featuring cats as detectives.⁶⁷

The relationship between such outlets of cognitive radicalization and actual radicalized terrorist violence in Germany in 2019 and 2020 has not yet been explored in detail⁶⁸. However, in the eyes of Swedish sociologist Anders Önnerfors who has become an expert in analysing texts of the far right, reading Pirinçci's book "Umvolkung" can explain how the mental ground was prepared for these terrorist attacks. Indeed, there are indications that Pirinçcis book was instrumentalized in the murder of Walter Lübcke, a German political who was murdered by right-wing extremists who saw a threat by the liberal politics of Lübcke.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Iskander, K/ Schwan, H./ Steppat, T. (2020). Wie Stephan E. sich jahrelang radikalisierte. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Retrieved from: https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/thema/akif-pirincci



⁶⁶ The manifestos are not regularly available in public, not least in order to not inspire followers. Also, they are erratically structured and difficult to read. We base our introduction her on the work of Andreas Önnerfors of Upsala university how published academic studies on those and other terrorist manifestos. Parts of the wording here is also his.

⁶⁷ This introduction, is inspired by (and follows the texts of) Andreas Önnerfors' (2021 yet unpublished) article on right wing manifestos. The text was partly revised, shorted, and some information was added where appropriate for the purpose here.

⁶⁸ Says Önnerfors 2021.

The terror attacks of Halle and Hanau, but also the mass murder of Christchurch (New Zealand) in March 2019 and the assassination of the politician Walter Lübcke in Germany in June 2019 are all concrete practical underpinnings of the topic of Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories.

Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories in the TEACH Survey

Amongst the various conspiracy theories that became notorious in Europe in recent years, one type focusses on making claims about Islam, and presenting Islam – or Muslims – as a threat to Western civilisation purposefully orchestrated.

In the TEACH survey⁷⁰ we coved the topic of Islamophobic conspiracy theories with statements such as:

- "Orchestrated Muslim immigration leads to the extinction of the European people."
- "Mainstream Western politicians are responsible for the fact that Europe is increasingly becoming a Muslim continent."
- "A great exchange of the native population and Muslim immigrants is going on in Europe."

These are statements as they can be found in public discourse, in private conversations, certainly in publications of the far-right, etc. in practically all European countries.

Some of these statements were adjusted to the countries participating in the survey as during preparation we found that certain claims about Islam were more relevant in some countries, and other claims in other countries. For example:

- "Germany [or: Austria, Sweden, etc] is in danger of becoming an Islamic state."
- "Swedes [or: Austrians, Germans, etc.] are at risk at becoming second class citizens."
- "Muslims islamize [my country] through high numbers of childbirth. "
- "Islam is the largest threat against [my country] today. "
- "Sweden is being colonized by Muslims through the financial support of rich Muslim countries."

As we see, the claim is about ongoing replacement of "European" population by "Muslim" population, and conspiracy theories vary in terms of whom they present as driving force behind the development. Alleged culprits are either "the Muslims", hostile third countries who send Muslims to Europe to subdue it, or certain powerful and wealthy elites who organise the Islamization of Europe for their own purposes. (The step to explicitly blaming "lews" is sometimes taken, sometimes not.)

Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories are a broad phenomenon, and they develop differently in different countries depending on local circumstances such as what experience does

⁷⁰ See TEACH Consortium (2021): <u>Manual for Managers of Adult Education Institutions</u>.(Visit: www.teacherasmus.eu)



local population have with actual Muslims, what history has immigration had in the country (Germany with Gastarbeiter from Turkey invited into the country in the 1960s, France with people from former colonies granted citizenship), or has there for example been an autochthonous Muslim population as in Bulgaria with its about 10 per cent traditional Muslims today (and even more in the times prior to World War I.

Typology of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories with specific anti-Muslim background come in a variety of shapes. A good overview of the most prominent conspiracy theories evolving around Islam are presented in the extra materials: M3_exercise_1.2.

Anti-Muslim conspiracy theories as expression of anti-Muslim racism⁷¹

The topic of anti-Muslim conspiracy myths cannot be seen without reference to the broader phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism. That's why we give a short introduction into anti-Muslim racism here. It must not necessarily be discussed with the participants of the workshop (although it can), but it should underpin the general attitude taken in the workshop, especially concerning views of "otherness".

Anti-Muslim Racism means forms of racism directed against people categorised as Muslim. As a rule, it does not matter whether those so marked do actually be Muslims, or describe themselves as such. The categorisation as "Muslim" is an attribution from the outside, usually along external characteristics such as a family's countries of origin. Thus, a perceived group is being constructed, and homogenising images of 'Islam' are applied to it that are presented as unchangeable.

In the stereotype view of anti-Islamism, Islam is constructed as the opposite of 'the West': Islam is seen as retrograde, archaic and violent, patriarchal and misogynistic, and its members are presented as being subject to restrictive religious rules. "The West" in contrast is presented as progressive, enlightened, liberal and gender-equal, a society where autonomous and emancipated subjects make decisions on their own responsibility, in brief, a mirror-image how Islam is perceived.

This social 'knowledge' about 'the others', about 'the Muslims' is extremely powerful. Because it is widely disseminated and shared as the dominant 'knowledge' in discourses and debates, it appears as self-evident and thus as 'true'. It is always available to interpret situations or legitimise actions. It permeates the whole of society.

⁷¹ Section inspired by the preface to: Bressau et al (2016): Pädagogischer Umgang mit antimuslimischem Rassimus", Sersheim. Larger parts of this preface have been used here with little changes but for the translation to English.



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Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_great_replacement

The Great Replacement

The **Great Replacement** is a conspiracy theory claiming that some "elites" try to replace traditional population in Europe by non-European, especially Muslim from the Middle East, and from other part of the world. The theory is popular with far-right-inclined parts of the population in many countries.

The term "Great Replacement" as such is older, but one author who contributed especially to its popularisation was French writer Renaud Camus (*1947) in his 2011 book "Le Grand Remplacement" where he draws a picture of ongoing destruction of French culture. Camus however is only one especially prominent figure to spread the idea. An influential author was also the US-American Neo-Nazi David Lane with his 1995 White Genocide Manifesto. Much more prominence in the German public got Thilo Sarrazin, an (oddly) social democratic politician from Berlin wo published in 2010 a book "Germany Abolishes Itself" (Deutschland schafft sich ab) which became a best seller on the market (1,2 million copies by 2012) and was bought by a considerably large general public.

Sarrazin tried to repeat his huge economic success by publishing in 2018 a follow-up book "Hostile Takeover" (Feindliche Übernahme) which indeed reached best-seller status in September 2018. The phenomenon is however not restricted to Germany. French writer Michel Houllebecq became famous with his 2015 dystopian novel "Submission", contributing to the popularisation of an "Islamic threat" sentiment in broader society. The thesis of a creeping "Islamisation" of Europe through the "demographic factor" (constant increase of Muslim population in European countries) was also advocated in 2004 by the Italian-Lebanese bestselling author Oriana Fallaci in her book The Power of Reason. The book had a circulation of over 800,000 copies in Italy and caused much controversy.

The idea of "Great Replacement" is especially popular by the so called Identitarian movement, a far-right movement initially having emerged in France, and now also very strong in Germany and Austria. Identitarians propagate what they call "ethonopluralism", a concept that others have called "racism without races". The idea is to keep "ethnic" groups apart, for their wellbeing. The idea of a "Great Replacement" (Großer Austausch) is also an important part of Identitarian ideology, as Identitarians imaginate themselves as a "resistance" movement.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series, 2021]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_eurabia

Eurabia

Another strand of conspiratorial thinking is known by the term **Eurabia**. The populartiy of the terms can be traced back to a book published 2005 by author Gisèle Littman (pen name Bat Ye'or), Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis. Some people believe her book was inspired Renaud Camus (see above). The core claim of the book Eurabia is that for various reasons European and Arab state leaders are conspiring to create a politically, economically and culturally uniform region "Eurabia" by bringing together the regions north and south of the Mediterranean Sea. In Littman's view this will lead to the extinction of Christian culture in Europe through immigration, higher birth rates of Muslims, and the willingness of Europeans to give up their culture. Littman argues that Islam, anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism hold sway over European culture and politics as a result of collaboration between radical Arabs and Muslims on one hand, and fascists, socialists, Nazis, and antisemitic rulers of Europe on the other.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series, 2021]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_kalegri_plan

The Kalergi Plan

Popular amongst the far-right is the conspiracy belief of a so called **Kalergi Plan** to – allegedly – replace European population by a mixed "race" (Europeans and Africans).

Richard Nikolaus Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) was an Austrian cosmopolite and intellectual, raised in an aristocratic family of Habsburg statesmen (his father was Habsburg's ambassador to Japan and spoke 16 languages). Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi was an early and very active proponent of the idea of European cooperation. Under the impression of the WW I, he popularized the idea of a European federation in a 1922 book Pan-Europa; he founded in 1923 the Paneuropa-Union, an association of high-ranking (mostly conservative) personalities from across Europe, and started issuing a journal by the same name. He spent the times of the Nationalists ruling in Europe in exile, mostly in the USA where he worked as a professor of history. After WWII he became one of the drivers to create both the European Council and the organisations that later led to the European Union. He was consultant to European statesmen such as Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou and Konrad Adenauer, and was decorated with multiple high honours, amongst which the Charelmagne Prize whose first bearer he became in 1950.

Decades later, national-socialist propaganda against Coudenhove-Kalergi and his desire for free, tolerant coexistence in Europe formed a racist conspiracy theory known by the name of the "Kalergi Plan". It is a far-right, anti-Semitic, white-nationalist conspiracy theory that claims that there is a plot to mix white Europeans with other "races" through immigration. The conspiracy theory claims that such plans were engineered by Coudenhove-Kalergi and promoted in aristocratic European circles. The conspiracy theory is most popular with right-wing groups and parties in Europe but has also spread to the USA. An important role in distributing the conspiracy theory had Austrian writer and neo-Nazi Gerd Honsik (1941-2018) with his book "Kalergi Plan" (2005).

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series, 2021]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_love_jihad

Love Jihad

Jihad is a core concept in Islam. The Arabic word means literally simply "to strive" or "to be dedicated", but the term has a large number of additional and more specific meanings. In popular Western perception, especially in the media, the most prominent interpretation is that of a "Holy War" of Muslims against non-Muslims. This, however, if taken as the sole or main meaning of the word, is an unfair representation of Islamic thought where Jihad also means things as abstract and neutral as general commitment to the ideals of Islam.

Still, for most people in the West who are only average-level acquainted with Islam, Jihad has just this meaning of religious warfare. And that's the point to start from when speaking about **Love Jihad**, another prominent idea of Muslim-hating conspiracy ideology. Love Jihad is a conspiracy theory that has been used to invoke prejudice against Muslims by purporting that Muslim men target women of other religious groups for conversion to Islam by means such as seduction, feigning love, deception, kidnapping, and marriage, as part of a broader "war" by Muslims to conquer the world and also an organised international conspiracy, for domination through demographic growth and replacement.

Most authors trace back the idea of Love Jihad to India and its Hindu nationalism (Hindutva) movement where the idea of Love Jihad was massively brought to the attention of the Hindu public in 2009 through various Hindu nationalist publications. It has since spread to various other East Asian countries (with partly Muslim population), not least Myanmar where it played a role in the military operations against the Rohingya minority. In 2018, allegations of similar nature appeared in the United Kingdom concerning the alleged exploitation of young Sikh women for the purpose of conversion, based on a longer tradition of "forced conversion theories" in the British Sikh diaspora. Reports like this are usually quickly debunked. – The concept of Love Jihad should not be confused with Sex Jihad which is a term for the idea that Sunni Muslim women sympathetic to Salafi Jihadism travel to warzones such as Syria to offer themselves to get "married" to jihadist militia, often repeatedly and in temporary marriages, to boost the fighter's morale.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series 2021]



Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3 exercise 1.2 sharia

Sharia conspiracy

The **Sharia conspiracy theory** is a claim that Muslims do not obey secular law but "only" sharia law and that "their" aim is to make sharia law the single law applicable in any given country. It ignores the fact that Muslims in practically all countries obey secular laws, and that Sharia law has a very secondary function, more related to religious practice.

There are two cases in the world where authoritarian regimes have chosen to use elements of Sharia law traditions to be implemented also into the laws of the state: Saudia Arabia, and Iran. But claiming that doing this is the "purpose" of Muslims everywhere would be wrong. Quite to the contrary, studies show that for example faithful Muslims in Western countries are even more supportive of democracy as the form of government than non-religious Muslims.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series 2021]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3 exercise 1.2 secret muslims

Secret Muslims

A less important category of anti-Muslim conspiratorial thinking in Europe, but prominent in the US, is the idea of people being "secret Muslims", with special respect to former president of the USA, Barack Obama. The claim that Obama secretly was a Muslim was – and is still in 2021 – standard stock in what far-right websites, chatrooms and video channels peddle. Studies found, for example, in 2012 that 30 per cent of US-Republicans (and 8 per cent of US-Democrats) believed that Barack Obama was a Muslim. The figure of thought behind the concept of "secret Muslims" is that of essentialism: being a Muslim is not a thing a person can choose or change. Once a Muslim, always a Muslim, even if you distance yourself from it.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series 2021]

Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_islamophobia

Islamophobia

The phenomenon of **Islamophobia** in general describes the negative attitude towards Islam and Muslims, or more precisely: fear, hatred of, or prejudice towards Muslims or Islam. The term Islamophobia as such is problematic for two reasons: first, with phobia it mentions fear, whereas often there is not fear but hatred or other negative or aggressive attitudes. Second, the negative attitude is not necessarily against Islam, it may also well be against Muslims, which is a difference. Some scholars – especially in other languages such as German – have therefore proposed to use other terms for the phenomenon, each of them with its own specific nuance of meaning. That's why there are in many languages entire lists of terms for various forms of hostility or reserve towards Islam, translating to e.g. hostility to Islam, hostility to Muslims, anti-Muslim racism (again a difficult term as "race" is hardly a category that can be applied to humans), repudiation of Muslims, denigration of Muslims, criticism of Islam, criticism of Muslims. Other terms in use also in English is anti-Muslim prejudice, anti-Muslim bigotry, demonisation of Muslims, intolerance against Muslims, etc. Each of these has its advantages and disadvantages.

From a historical perspective it is interesting that the phenomenon of "Islamophobia" appears massively in central Europa first in the middle of the 15th century, in close relation to both the first siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Sultan, and to the popularisation of the printing press.

One broadly accepted definition of "Islamophobia" was coined in a 1997 report by a commission to study the phenomenon in the UK, the Runnymede Trust. There, Islamophobia is defined as "an outlook or world-view involving an unfounded dread and dislike of Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion and discrimination."

The question is, should we try to differentiate Islamophobia from anti-Muslim racism? Racism is an attitude to ascribe to people certain group characteristics, usually in order to present them as less valuable. The argument that a term such also "anti-Muslim racism" is a breach of logic because "being Muslim" is not a race, is true at the one hand; at the other hand, the concept of "race" as such is not applicable to humans. There are no distinct "races" in humans. We can, of course, try to use the word "racism" in an abstract way, defining it also "group-related hatred", and see the hatred here directed towards Muslims.

[Text written for the TEACH workshop series 2021]



Exercise 1.2: Anti-Muslim Conspiracy Theories – a Tour d'Horizon

M3_exercise_1.2_counterjihad

Counterjihad

Counter-jihad, also spelled counterjihad and known as the counter-jihad movement, is a self-titled political current loosely consisting of authors, bloggers, think tanks, street movements and campaign organisations all linked by apocalyptic beliefs that view Islam not as a religion but as a worldview that constitutes an existential threat to Western civilization. Consequently, Counter-jihadists consider all Muslims as a potential threat, especially when they are already living within Western boundaries. Western Muslims accordingly are portrayed as "fifth column", collectively seeking to destabilize Western nations' identity and values for the benefit of an international Islamic movement intent on the establishment of a caliphate in Western countries. The counter-jihad movement has been variously described as anti-Islamic,Islamophobic, inciting hatred against Muslims, and far-right. Influential figures in the movement include the far-right anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer.

While the roots of the movement go back to the 1980s, it did not gain significant momentum until after the September 11 attacks in 2001 in the USA and the 7 July 2005 London bombings. The movement received considerable attention following the lone wolf attacks by right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik whose manifesto extensively reproduced the writings of prominent counter-jihad bloggers, and following the emergence of prominent street movements such as the English Defence League (EDL). The movement has adherents both in Europe and in North America. The European wing is more focused on the alleged cultural threat to European traditions stemming from immigrant Muslim populations, while the American wing emphasizes an alleged external threat, essentially terrorist in nature.

The "counter-jihad scene" can be described as one where "Europe and the United States are under threat from an aggressive and politicized Islamic world that is attempting to take over Europe through a process of "Islamification" with the eventual aim of imposing Sharia law. In this process, the threat is characterized by the perceived removal of Christian or Jewish symbols, the imposition of Islamic traditions, and the creation of nogo areas for non-Muslims. The construction of mosques in particular is seen as continued reinforcement of the separation of the Muslim population from the wider populous. As strong as the threatening practices of Muslims in descriptions of the counter jihad are images of a powerless Europe in decline and sliding into decadence, unable to resist Islamic takeover. The idea that European culture in particular is in a state of decline, while

a spiritually vigorous East represented by Islam is in the ascendancy in civil society, is a common sentiment in some circles." 72

[Text is based on a Wikipedia article⁷³, with various edits by the TEACH team]

⁷³ Wikipedia (2021). Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-jihad, last accessed 2021-07-09



⁷² Lee, B. J. (2015): "A Day in the "Swamp": Understanding Discourse in the Online Counter-Jihad Nebula, in: Democracy and Security. 11. Jg., 248–274.

Exercise 1.3: Great Replacement believers in practice

M3_exercise_1.3_video

TV documentary "Austausch" - on the "Great Replacement" Theory - General info

This is a TV documentary by Carla Reveland & Tobias Zwior, published in March 2020. The video is available on Youtube (2021).

STRG-F is a Youtube channel publishing professional journalistic documentaries from Germany, mostly investigative journalism.

Records

- Video online: Geheimplan "Bevölkerungsaustausch": Was ist dran? | STRG_F (click here) (or go on YouTube and search for the title).
- If you want to watch the documentary with subtitles set subtitles in your preferred language.



Warm-up 2: 1 - 2 - 4 - all!

M3_warm_up_2

Flipchart design for introducing the 1-2-4-all method

1-2-4-all

Self-reflection 1 min.

Pairs 2 min.

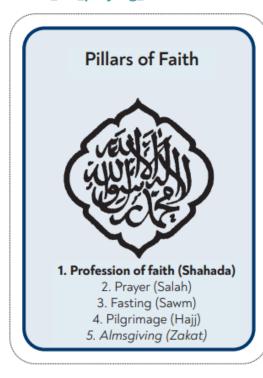
Fours 4 min.

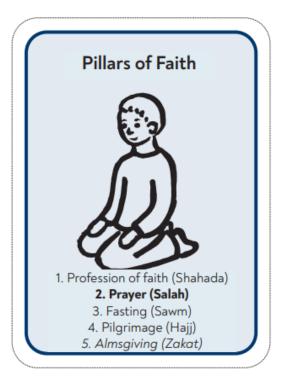
All 5 min.

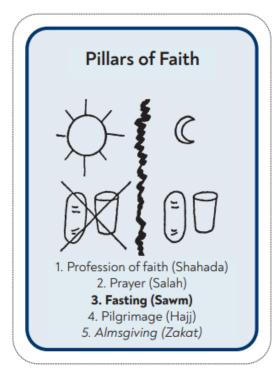
[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

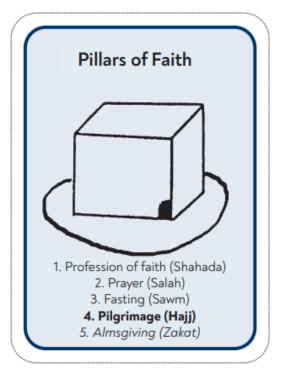
Exercise 2.1: Approaching Islam the Playful way

M3_exercise_2.1_playing_cards⁷⁴



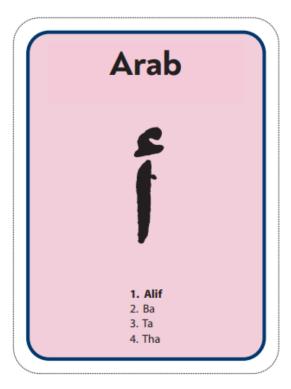


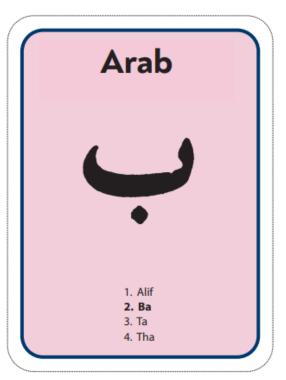


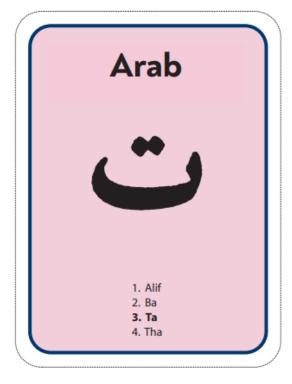


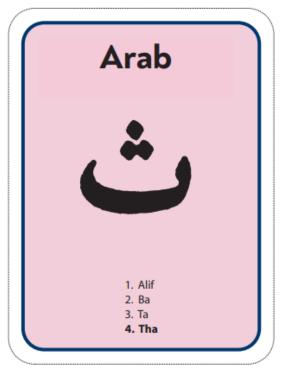
⁷⁴ Playing cards adapted from a version published in Islam. Politische Bildung und interreligiöses Leben by Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn 2005. Published with their consent. Translation to English by the TEACH project 2021.

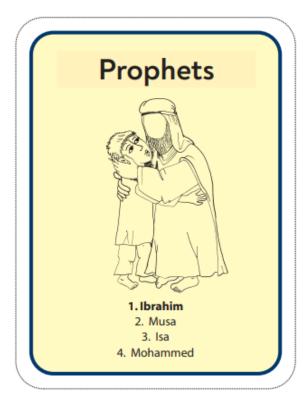


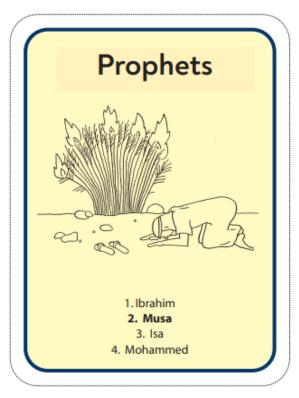


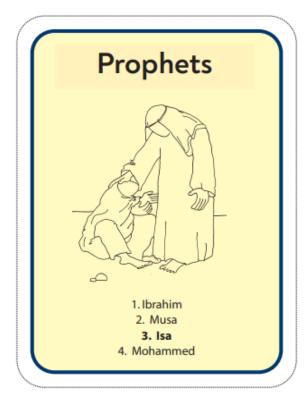


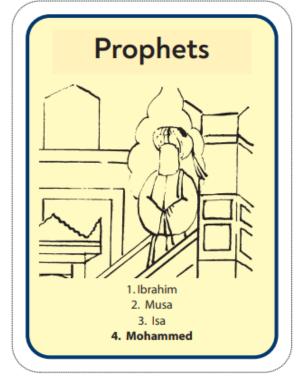








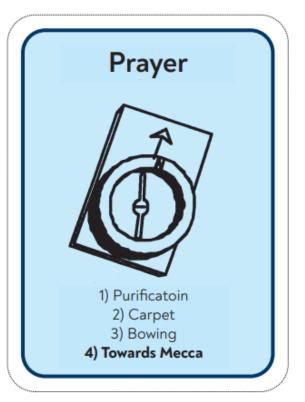


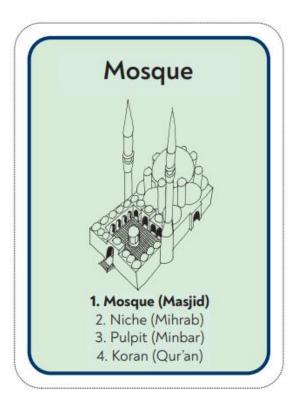


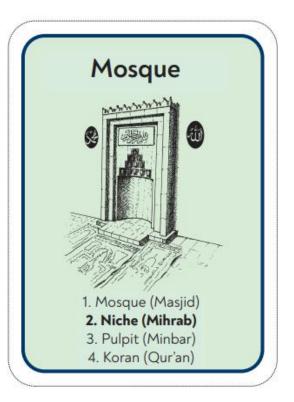


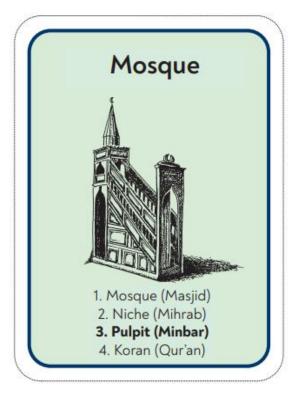


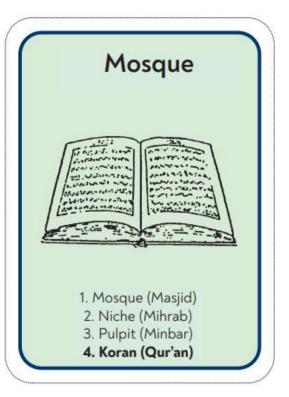


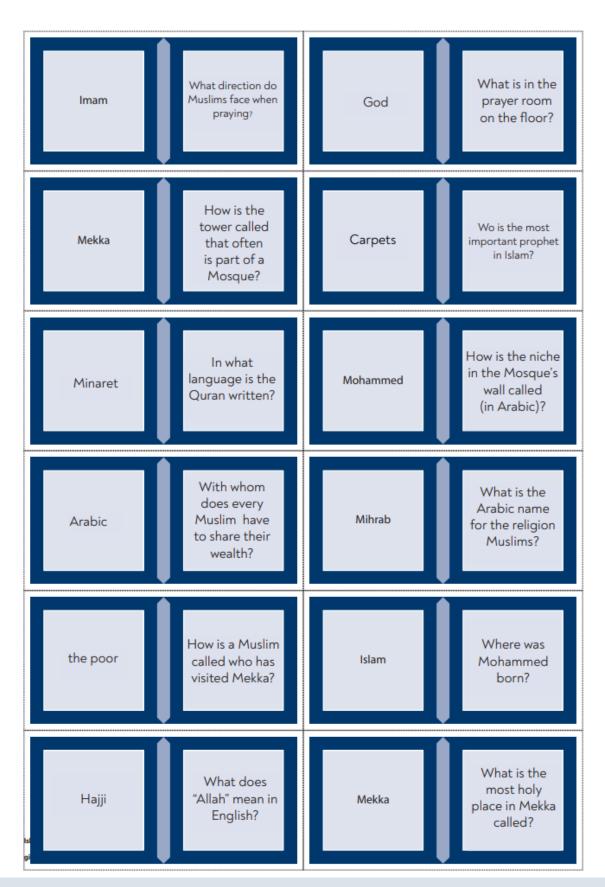


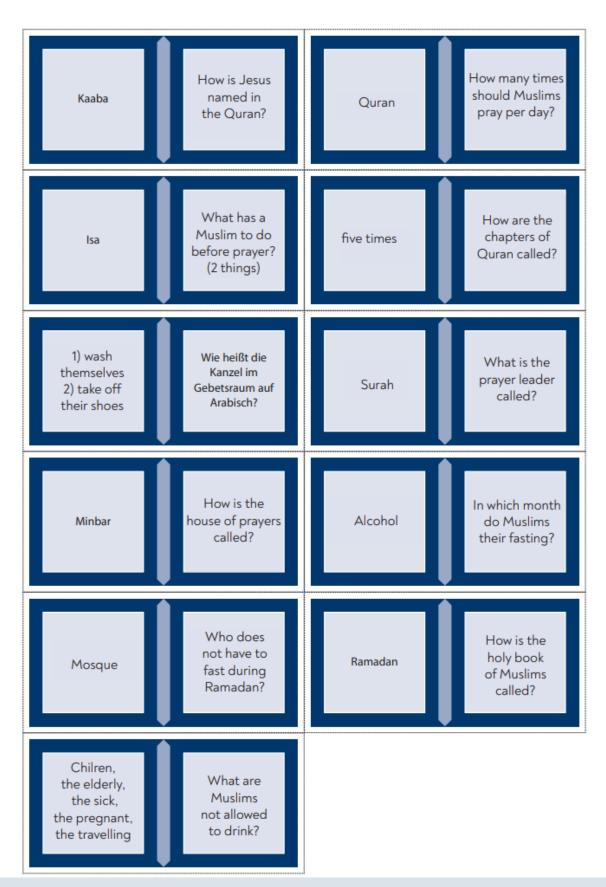












	9	ζ ,	ζ ,	ζ
	Where was Mohammed born?	What is Mohammed for Muslims?	What does "God" mean in Arabic?	What is the name of the holy place in Mekka?
	Mecca	Prophet	Allah	Kaaba
*	Wo spoke to Mohammed on Mount Hira?	What is the holy book of Islam called?	With which event does the calendar of Islam begin?	In what language is the Quran written?
	Archangel Gabriel	Quran	Emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622	Arabic ->
	How are the followers of Islam called?	How many duties are there in Islam?	Where do Muslims pray, learn, and celebrate?	Who built the Kaaba?
	Moslems	Five	Mosque	Abraham and Ismail
~				
	In which direction do Muslims pray?	What should Muslims avoid when eating and drinking?	How are the chapters of Quran called?	How often do Muslims pray a day?
		avoid when eating and		
	Muslims pray?	avoid when eating and drinking?	of Quran called?	Muslims pray a day?

Exercise 2.2: Diving into the wicked world of "Great Replacement" on social media M3_exercise_2.2_strategies

Search strategies in Telegram

The Step is, for the teams, to develop strategies how to find Telegram channels or groups with anti-Muslim conspiracy theories.

Such strategies can be, just for example:

- Use search terms such as "Eurabia", "Great Replacement". (The problems with this is: not too many hits will appear.)⁷⁵
- Think of popular proponents of anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs (conspiracy peddlers), and subscribe to their Telegram channels/groups. Such personalities / search terms could e.g. (for the English speaking world) Alex Jones, QAnon, David Icke, Marjorie Taylor Greene, etc.
- Create a list of promising topical search terms to try, such as "Muslim", "NoMuslim",
 "Jihad", "Immigration", etc. that might perhaps lead to conspiracy-peddling channels.
- Start with a Channel that has anti-Muslim content and see whose posts they forward. Subscribe to those channels.
- Do pay attention also to comments underneath the posts. Often the offensive content is rather in the comments.
- Etc.

⁷⁵ One small but usable account is "Opposing the Great Replacement "



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Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists

M3_exercise_2.3_circular_model

Circular model of stakeholders

Whom are you dealing with?⁷⁶



Circular model of stakeholders in ideological beliefs. Whom does it make sense to debate with? (Model following Gundlach 2020 p. 56)

If even experienced, well-prepared journalists and politicians cut their teeth on some people in ideological debates (e.g., on conspiracy ideologies) – why should you do any better, especially in an unprepared situation? Discussions on content (here: conspiracy claims) are all the more pointless the further your counterpart is in the inner circle of their belief system (see illustration). You can hardly argue democratically with people who have a closed mind, who represent and spread an openly right-wing extremist ideology or a conspiracy theory, who are active, high-ranking members in such groups or parties. Ideologies cannot be refuted with arguments; their supporters have no arguments, only assertions. If you engage in a debate with fanatics, you are mostly just giving them a platform, especially if third parties are present. But that doesn't mean you can't do anything. (Think of methods to distance yourself, and to exclude or marginalize conspiracy

 $^{^{76}}$ The text is an adapted section of Gundlach 2020, p. 56-57. H. B. Gundlach is an experienced trainer for anti-discrimination awareness.



peddlers). It is not your responsibility to bring every fanatical follower of an ideology or conspiracy belief back into the centre of society.

However, if your counterpart is further out, you are more likely to be able to reach them as regards content. These people are often insecure, with low self-esteem, and are impressed by people who appear clear and decisive. And that is exactly what representatives of conspiracy ideologies do: they offer simple answers to complex (real or imagined) problems and questions. Be clear and decisive, ask about needs (their hidden psychological motives) and have arguments up your sleeve.

In contact with your counterpart, remember that also bystanders could belong to this undecided group. You reach them indirectly through your positioning, through your arguments, through your behaviour – even if you do not speak to them directly.

The question "Whom are you dealing with?" can also be turned around. You will often hear discriminatory slogans in situations when "the others" who are being badgered are not themselves present. Take a conscious look around to see who is actually there. The aim is not to talk to those engaging in hate speech, to overcome prejudices, to get to know each other, etc., but to find potential comrades-in-arms against those. If, on the other hand, representatives of the group targeted by hate speech are themselves present, speakers often hold back and can appear friendly or say that it is not about those present: They often say: "These individuals are okay. But..." This is supposed to be a compliment. In fact, it is presumptuous to judge who belongs to the "good guys" as an exception and who does not.

Anyone who is known for a resolutely democratic stance and clearly represents this in public or among acquaintances is also in the middle of a circle with his or her convictions. Such a person is usually less likely to be confronted with discriminatory or hateful slogans, as it is too obvious that they cannot be "turned". Instead, these people often become victims of anonymous shitstorms or other forms of violence.

Questions for the group

The following questions can help you discuss the model in your working group.

- Do you agree with the model?
- Can you think of situations in which you yourself have had to deal with conspiracy theories? Does the model help you in such situations?
- Do you find any weaknesses in the model?
- How can you use it in confronting Muslim hostility?

Visualize your thoughts and discussions on posters!

Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists

M3_exercise_2.3_causes_enmity

Where do anti-Muslim mindsets come from?

A number of theories from social psychology⁷⁷

For years, researchers have been looking at the causes of group-related hate ideas (which include anti-Muslim conspiracy theories). Various theories have been developed. Here is a brief overview on some of them:

Deprivation theory links perceived and actual economic disadvantage (deprivation) to xenophobic, racist attitudes. It is assumed that competition between natives and immigrants for material and socio-economic resources (jobs, education, etc.) can lead to an increasing devaluation of immigrants by the natives, as immigration increases. A disadvantage on the part of natives may exist or be felt individually (own unemployment or fear of losing one's job) or collectively (the individual may be doing well economically, but is concerned about the community, the well-being of which is perceived to be endangered by immigration).

Authoritarianism thesis assumes that people with low self-esteem (caused, for example, by an upbringing that suppresses personality development, a lack of education or poor career prospects) tend to support authoritarian leaders or parties representing such opinions and attitudes in order to be able to share in the power they feel they are entitled to but are denied. By growing up in an authoritarian environment (parental home, political system), authoritarian structures can be internalised at an early age and then all the more easily endorsed later on.

Theories on the formation of groups and the conscious separation of in-groups and out-groups (own and foreign groups) state that other groups are devalued in order to enhance the value of oneself and one's own group.

Theories of terrorism assume that the belief in "higher goals" is suitable for promoting exclusionary attitudes towards people who do not belong to one's own group. At the same time, this belief can be instrumentalised by oneself and others to legitimise resentment and, as a consequence, increasingly radical attitudes and action as a form of perceived justified "defensive behaviour". This includes, for example, advocating violence to "defend Christian values", even if one is otherwise not particularly Christian.

⁷⁷ This material is based (but not solely) on Gundlach 2020, p. 20 ff.



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Contact hypothesis addresses the phenomenon that it is not uncommon for those who are particularly vehement in their opposition to immigrants do actually not know immigrants directly. They lack personal contacts and experiences, and they also avoid them, so that there is no "habituation effect".

Theory of social contagion means that people tend to adapt their attitudes and behaviour to the patterns and norms that prevail around them, i.e., to become like their fellow human beings, like the system that surrounds them. Those who work and, above all, live, think, talk, act and vote in a right-wing, Muslim-averse environment are more likely to do the same. The behaviour is transferred as a group norm.

Media theories point to the role of the media, especially social media. These media suggest a reality of their own, but also contribute to loneliness and a decline in real interpersonal contacts, as well as to the formation of homogeneous "filter bubbles". At the same time, out of anonymity, they serve as a mouthpiece for everyone while guaranteeing high levels of public attention and thus high levels of (self-)confirmation.

However, caution is also recommended: just as a person does not inevitably have to follow right-wing politicians because he or she grew up in an authoritarian home, for example, the other theories mentioned above, which describe a primal logic between fears, needs or precarious social situations and the emergence of right-wing (and anti-Muslim) ideas, do not have to apply like automatisms.

One problem is that sometimes more attention is paid to understanding the behaviour of right-wing thinkers and xenophobes than to the causes of, for example, precarious socioeconomic situations. Moreover, supporters of right-wing (and anti-Muslim) ideas can be found in all strata of society. By no means all of them are uneducated and only interested in conspiracy theories for the sake of easy solutions. In a concrete situation, it can be helpful to try to recognise the motives of slogan speakers, but without accepting their ideas as a quasi-logical consequence of specific life circumstances. On the other hand, if we dismiss justified (or even only imagined) fears as exaggerated, irrelevant or unobjective and declare someone with such fears to be a naïve, perhaps even stupid crank – i.e. if we do not take them seriously – it is understandable that these people end up looking for someone who takes them seriously.

Questions for your group work:

- What do you think about the different theories?
- Is the list complete? Do you have suggestion for additional theories to explain anti-Muslim mindsets?



- Think of cases where you concretely meet anti-Muslim mindsets / anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Can you apply the theories to these cases? Are the theories helpful?
- Try to draw bar graphs to indicate how much (percentage) you think the various theories are plausible in your concrete cases of anti-Muslim attitudes.



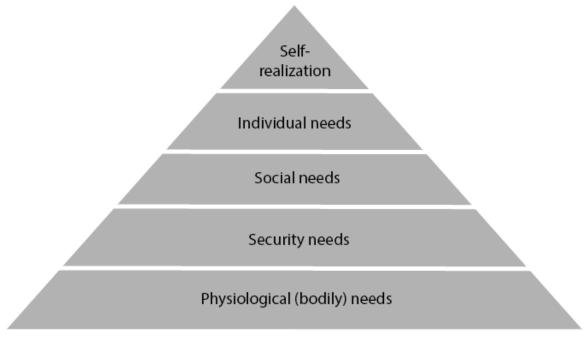
Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists

M3_exercise_2.3_needs_pyramid

Pyramid of Needs

Especially if you work as a coach or therapist, you will know that the problems expressed as well as the behaviour shown by your clients are often an expression of other subliminal "disorders" such as unfulfilled needs. Thus, voicing anti-Muslim (or otherwise misanthropic and radical right-wing) slogans may also have other causes than explicitly right-wing or anti-Muslim attitudes. Reflecting on one's own needs and identifying and naming those of the other person can have a de-escalating effect, and in the best case even get to the heart of the matter.

A popular model for the structure and hierarchy of needs is the so-called Pyramid of Needs (see figure).



Pyramid model of human needs

Stage 1: physiological needs

Is your counterpart lacking sleep? Then postpone the conversation if possible. Or has your counterpart not eaten for a while? Then offer something. As banal as it sounds, you will immediately have a different atmosphere that can make a conversation easier.

Stage 2: Need for security

Fear for security, for example due to allegedly increasing crime by immigrants, is often self-expressed and serves as a legitimisation for one's own thoughts and actions. This is where you can start: ask about personal concern, check facts, etc.

Stage 3: Social needs

Perhaps your counterpart is not looking for an argumentative exchange at all, but for community, i.e., someone to be solidary with him in getting upset about a topic. If you contradict, this need will not be fulfilled. (This is another reason why some people only visit websites that confirm their own expectations – so-called confirmation bias). It would therefore be conceivable to start by shifting to a common topic, for example: "Do you know what is upsetting me even more at the moment? The lousy football match at the weekend" (if your counterpart is a football enthusiast), before you take a position on his right-wing or anti-Muslim statements in whatever form.

Stage 4: Individual needs

Make sure that your counterpart feels valued and is not exposed, especially to or in the presence of third parties.

Needs must be asked for and expressed precisely in the respective context. Generalisations such as "I want my peace!" do not help, because everyone defines peace differently. (Your counterpart: peace without immigrants. You: peace together with immigrants). Responding to needs and showing empathy does not mean that you agree on the matter. This is important for one's own clarification, but also for the other person: "I understand/share your need, but your strategy worries me/I don't share your approach. "

Questions for the work in the small group

- Do you think the Pyramid model of human needs is realistic? Is there anything missing? Is it too simplistic? Why?
- Think of situations where you are confronted in real life with theories like "The Great Replacement." Would the model have helped you to deal with these situation?
- Write down some such situations on a poster (perhaps as a drawing) so that you can later report to others visiting your station.

Exercise 2.3: Concepts for dealing with anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists

M3_exercise_2.3_catalogue_of_options

Facing conspiracy peddlers - what are your options? Suggestions by anti-discrimination coach Helga B. Gundlach

Imagine a conspiracy believer approaching you and starting talking to you with all the enthusiasm of a missionary. What are you going to do? Directly starting to argue with them? Don't! Especially if your counterpart is a trained propagandist of a conspiracy theory, and you are taken by surprise, you are practically meant to lose.

Therefore, the first thing to do is considering your options. "What do I really want to do?" On the following pages we discuss some options you have.

These are not recipes for clever reaction to conspiracy theories. But it is useful to be aware of them in order to see the situation in a broader perspective.⁷⁸

1) Pay attention to the four levels of a message

From communication psychology you probably know the "Four-sides model of communication"⁷⁹:

- (1) Factual information: direct contents: data, facts, news...
- (2) **Self-revelation (or self-disclosure**): what the speaker tells about himself, his motives, values, desires...
- (3) **Relationship:** how the sender gets along with the receiver and what they think of them.
- (4) **Appeal:** what the sender wants the receiver to do; advice, instruction, effects...

You can try to guess what your counterpart actually wants when talking to you. Is it the desire to be accepted (relationship)? To be important (self-disclosure)? Does s/he want you to further distribute the conspiracy theory (appeal)?

2) Observe vs. judge

When observing something, we always judge, usually even without being aware of it. Observation is: "What is happening." Judgment is: "What do I think or feel about it." You will not be able to stop judging. But you can at least be aware.

⁷⁹ As popularized by Friedemann Schulz von Thun, and extended version of the tree-sided Organon model by Karl Bühler.



⁷⁸ This is a summary of the recommendations of Helga B. Gundlach (diversity coach): Gundlach, H.B. (2020). Rechten Parolen kompetent begegnen", Chapter 1.3.

Try to not confront your counterpart with your judgement. If you say: "You are very aggressive", you are judging. Your counterpart may answer: "I am not aggressive!" But if you rather offer your observation: "I experience that you are tapping the table with your fingers", you make him aware of his behaviour.

3) Make hypotheses

When observing, we always build hypotheses. For example: "My counterpart utters anti-Muslim paroles because at the end of the day he is fearful of losing his job."

We cannot stop building hypotheses, but we can bring ourselves to another level with it by asking ourselves why we come to this specific hypothesis, and not a different one.

We also can reveal our hypothesis to the counterpart. This can be helpful if we indeed decide to discuss the topic in question with him.

4) Listen

Listening is key. As a teacher or trainer, you know this. Only with honest interest and honest appreciation of your counterpart you can find out what are their true motives and needs. But when you are facing conspiracy theories, this is often difficult to accomplish. Still, you should try. Try to be an active listener, by asking your counterpart if you understood their thesis correctly, not only in terms of "factual" content but also in terms of how they feel about it.

In turn, you can require from your counterpart to listen calmy to what you say.

If your counterpart misinterprets your words (perhaps even on purpose), interrupt them in a friendly manner and clarify what you actually said.

In conversations, be aware that there are two kinds of interruptions: interruptions to clarify content or attitude, and interruptions merely to obstruct.

5) Ask

It is also simple as effective: When a person catches you off-guard with conspiracy theoretical content, you may respond with questions.

Ask "why" or "how did you come to this opinion", and thus force your counterpart to be more precise on their positions. This alone might hamper them. Anyway, it wins you time. When they quote alleged facts, ask for details: "Where did you read that?", "Where can I find more information on this?"

If s/he usesed phrases like "They do xyz", or "We want xyz", ask who is "they" and "we". When claims are very broad, you may want to make your counterpart speak about themselves being affected (or not): "What is your own personal experience with this?" When you are having an actual conversation, you may use a circular question technique: "What do you think your colleague X felt today when you spoke about Muslims trying to conquer Europe"(X being a Muslim).

6) Gain time

You want to react, but you need time to develop your strategy, as your counterpart is well-prepared and you aren't. You can postpone the discussion politely:

Prise the topic, but then postpone it! This is a technique much used by politicians in TV talks. "What you said is extremely interesting; this indeed is about the big picture. Still before we come to that I would like to speak with you about our current project."

Cut off the situation: "What you are saying is interesting, but before we continue: I just wanted to get me a coffee. May I bring one for you too?"

Gain time by asking questions for details.

Postpone for a long time: "This indeed is a huge topic. I think it is best to speak about it next Friday when I have the time for it? "

7) Delimitation / marginalization / exclusion

If a topic is very problematic you can also give a clear signal that you do not want to discuss it: For example, say – clearly audible also for bystanders: "Sorry, you have met the wrong person. What you state is clearly against our shared democratic values and also a conspiracy theory. I do not want to have any further discussion on that subject ." Or more mildly: "I have completely different views on this. Let us please change the subject. Now let's continue to discuss our project." Or simply make clear where your limits are: "I would like to ask you to refrain from such statements in the future. Otherwise I have to end our cooperation."

8) Use personal references

It can be helpful to speak about personal experiences. Your counterparts' rants about Muslims? You may speak about your positive experience with Muslims you know, but first of all, explain in I-messages, something about yourself: How it was for you when you came to the city years ago, how it was when you started your new job, that many things were new to you, who and what helped you to reduce prejudices.

9) Little helpers with your attitude

You probably know these, but in tense situation you usually do not remember them. Therefore, here a list to remind you:

- Take a deep breath, and pay attention especially to exhaling.
- Think the "om"-syllable you know from meditation.
- Mind your posture. Stay or sit upright, with both feet firmly to the floor. This also stabilizes your voice. Or you may want to signal serenity and sovereignty by leaning back and stretching out your legs.



- Check your facial expression. Look at your counterpart firmly and friendly, even if it is difficult for you.
- Speak calmer, clearer, and possibly in lower voice and more slowly than your counterpart.
- Try to stay objective. Do not lower yourself to the level of your counterpart. Avoid lecturing your counterpart. Stay at eye level. Stay polite.
- Don't expect too much of yourself. Don't forget: demagogues and conspiracy peddlers try to appear convincing through constant repetition. But this does work also for you: it will have effect if you remain constant in your behaviour and take repeated attempts to reach someone. Every tiny action counts, and your conversation, especially when remaining peaceful, will have emotional effects.

9) Irritations

Conspiracy peddlers usually expect you to react with a rebuttal on substance. Sometimes it may be helpful to throw the other person off track. Do something your counterpart does not expect. Do something irritating, use humour and paradox interventions:

- Start smiling and nodding your head ever so slightly signalling compassion.
- Ask for the time, and complain about your broken watch
- Yawn repeatedly
- Get up and make a coffee for the two of you with dedication
- Begin to rub an imaginary stain out of your shirt with great concentration.
- Be silent and fix your gaze on the person you are talking to.
- Start moving the table. Ask your counterpart to help out.
- Praise the satirical talent of your counterpart. Say you really enjoyed the act. Have they thought about going on stage with it? You could listen for hours, but now the two of you have to do some work first.

All these things show your counterpart that you are not interested in the topic they are spouting. You should pay attention that, even if you interrupt rudely, at the end you should separate with keeping face.

10) Fact checking

If you enter into discussing the substance of conspiracy theories, fact-checking is an important part. Conspiracy peddlers make all sorts of claims, and usually they can be proven wrong relatively easily, but the problem is that this is time consuming unless you are an expert of the topic. You also should be aware that conspiracy peddlers use topic hopping a lot.

11) Arguing

If the setting is okay for you, you may want to engage in a discussion of the subject matter. However, be aware of the "Circle of stakeholders". Core proponents of a conspiracy theory will not be willing to listen to your arguments, and it does not make much sense to debate them - unless you do it for bystanders who are undecided and will be impressed by your firm attitude, or your arguments.

Start your argumentation with a core statement: "Peaceful coexistence of all people is the most important thing". Repeat this often, especially when your counterpart tries to twist your words around.

Don't use to many arguments, as this overburdens your counterpart and rather creates resistance. Order your arguments by starting with the second strongest, then the weakest, and last the strongest. (Like in a concert: when you leave, you remember the finale.)

Be aware that your counterpart will ignore your arguments, twist around, or trim them because what you say causes cognitive dissonance in him.

Be prepared for a sentence to finalize the conversation politely: "It is okay for me when we do not agree in all points. "

12) Use available backing

If your encounter with conspiracy theorists takes place e.g. on the workplace, there is usually various forms of institutional support you should be aware of: educational institutions usually have mission and vision statements, company agreements, house rules, diversity principles, etc. You should know them. They will support your efforts to oppose conspiracy mindsets.

Your institution may have a worker's council. You may get help from management. When preparing events, you can coordinate with your colleagues how to react to problematic members of the public. Be aware that the institution has the authority to exercise the house rules and remove people from events who not break the rules.

Steps for group work

- Go through the 12 options and try to find examples where you can use them.
- Perhaps you already used them in your everyday life?
- Try to illustrate the 16 options on the table cloth (with sketches, words, story boards...)
- Alternatively, try to enact 1-2 of options in little sketches you can then present to others.





Extra materials Module 4: Anti-science conspiracy theories

Containing extra material for:

Exercise 1.1

Warm-up 2

Exercise 2.1

Exercise 1.1: Argumentation Traps

M4_exercise_1.1_argumentation_traps

Argumentation traps



The slippery slope

If something is going in a certain direction you think it will continue and become more and more extreme.

For example:

"Now that Covid-19 vaccinations has started we will soon be vaccinated against every small flu virus out there".



Argumentum ad populum Populum = the people

Since so many people believe in one thing it must be true.

For example:

"So many countries are stopping the vaccinations with the Astra Zenica vaccine - it must be really dangerous".



Argumentum ad hominem

Homienem = person Personal attack,

someone rejects or criticizes another person's view on the basis of personal characteristics, background, physical appearance, or other features irrelevant to

the argument at issue. **For example:**

"Bill Gates is a multi millionaire, clearly he wants to control everyone with the vaccinations to make more money".



Post hoc ergo propter hoc

It happend afterwards therefore it must be the reason of..

For example:

"My son got the MMR vaccination and shortly after got the diagnosis autism - it must be related".



Appeal to ignorance

Arguments about something being true because it has not yet been proven false or vice versa - false because it has not yet been proven true.

For example:

"You can not say with certainty that the Covid-19 virus was not man made in a laboratory in Wuhan".

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

Argumentation traps



Hasty Generalizations
Making to big
generalizations and
conclusions from a
situation or event.
For example:
"It was a record cold
winter this year,
obviously there is no
global warming".



False dichotomy
Posing something as
only having two options
even though there are
more.
For example:
"One person got an

For example:
"One person got an
allergic reaction from
the vaccination vaccinations are
unsafe".



False analogy

If something appears similar you believe it works in the same way. For example:
"The vaccination against the swine flu caused people to get narcolepsy. Surely we will see some terrible

side effects of the

Covid-19 vaccinations ".



Cheery picking

Only choosing to present scientific findings/texts that support your claim even if the majority of scientist argue on the contrary.

contrary.

For example:

"Andrew Mortens phD in economics proves that climate change is a hoax".

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

Warm-up 2: Conspiracy theory memory game

M4_warm_up_2_memory. [Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]

Climategate

1

In late November 2009, more than 1,000 e-mails between scientists at the Climate Research Unit of the U.K.'s University of East Anglia were stolen and made public by an hacker. Climate skeptics are claiming that they show scientific misconduct that amounts to the complete fabrication of manage global warming

Green scam

2

that because many people have invested in renewable-energy companies, they stand to lose a lot of money if global warming is shown to be a myth. According to this theory, environmental groups therefore bribe climate scientists to doctor their data so that they are able to secure their financial

Chemtrails

airplanes release pollutant chemicals that can be seen by the white lines after airplanes in the sky. There are many different CTs about why the so called chemtrails are being released. One explanation is that chemtrails control the weather



A photo from 1898 of a girl that resemblance the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg. Conspiracy theories sees this photo as proof that she in fact is a time traveler Increasing global temperature is the result of the "little-ice-age" ending

the conspiracy theory claims that recent global warming trends are just continuations o the natural process that ended the "little ice age" that lasted

Climate change is not man made

6

that recent global warming trends are not the effect of carbon-dioxide emission and pollution from humans but are instead part of a natural fluctuation that has always happens with warmer periods followed by colder periods.

Climate change denial

warming denial is denial, dismissal, or unwarranted doubt that contradicts the scientific consensus on climate change, including the extent to which it is caused by humans, its effects on nature and human society, or the potential of adaptation to global warming by human actions



Anti-vaxxers

8

In 1998, Andrew Wakefield, a former medical doctor, suggested a possible link between the MMR vaccination and autism in children. It was later shown that this study had deliberate frauds. Despite this, the scandal led to a drop in MMR vaccinations that remains today. There is still no scientific study showing a link between MMR and autism.

A reluctance or refusal to be vaccinated or to have one's children vaccinated against contagious diseases. Stretches from outright refusal to vaccinate, delaying vaccines, accepting vaccines bu remaining uncertain about their use, or using certain vaccines but not others. Arguments against vaccination are contradicted by overwhelming scientific consensus about the safety and efficacy

Vaccines cause autism

C

Vaccine overload

10

Conspiracy theories using this non-medical term and claims that giving many vaccines at once may overwhelm or weaken a child's immature immune system

10

Bill Gates microchipping people

11

that pharmaceutical companies can't be trusted. It is believed that pharmaceutical companies only want to sell their products, regardless of the impact on the people who use them. Vaccination campaigns are seen as a way for big pharma to make huge money and therefore should not be trusted.

Ingredients in vaccines are harmful

13

Big Pharma pushes vaccines for monetary gain

12

The conspiracy theory claiming that vaccines contains dangerous ingredients such as "antifreeze" which is intent to harm the population. Other ideas is that some ingredients that sometimes are in vaccines, such as small doses of aluminum, are harmful even though it has no impact on booth in such small doses.

"Natural immunity"

4

There are many different conspiracy theories claiming that we do not need vaccinations. One such myth claims that vaccination suppress our natural immune system and if we would let people be exposed to the viruses we vaccinate against the immune system would become resilient and stronger.

5G and Covid-19

15

There are a couple of conspiracy theories that link the 5G technology to the Coronavirus. Some argue that the Coronavirus was created to ensure people stayed in their homes while the 5G technology was rolled out, while others state that radiation waves emitted from 5G weakens people's immune systems – making them more vulnerable to infection. Other theorists claim that 5G directly transmitted the virus

Covid-19 was created in a laboratory in China

16

Because the Coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan, China, President Donald Trump and others have claimed, without evidence, that it started in a lab there, and some conspiracy neorists believe it was engineered as a bioweapon.

Covid-19 is not worse than a regular flu

Covid-19 virus in not worse than a regular seasonal flu and that the pandemic is a hoax. It is further believed that there are not more people dying from Covid-19 than from the seasonal flu

-17

Covid-19 does not exist

18

Is the conspiracy theory that the vaccine against Covid-19 has been developed "too fast" and using new techniques that are unsafe and will permanently change and damage your DNA.

19

According to some conspiracy theorists like InfoWars' far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, COVID-19 doesn't actually exist at all. They claim that the pandemic is merely a ploy by governments to rob citizens of their freedoms.

18

Alternative treatments for Covid-19

20

Covid-19 vaccines change DNA

19

There has been a lot of suggestions of alternative "treatments" for Covid-19 such as injecting hand sanitizer in the blood stream and using hydroxychloroquine and colloidal silver. Conspiracy theorist sometimes argues that the government and/or big pharma is on purpose holding back "useful" treatments from the population.





Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector Presentation

M4_exercise_2.1_PPT_conspiracy_detector

Accessible as presentation through www.teach-erasmus.eu ("results")

Exercise 2.1: Conspiracy Theory Detector

M4_exercise_2.1_list_conspiracy_detector

THE CONSPIRACY THEORY DETECTOR Proof of the conspiracy supposedly emerges from a pattern of "connecting the dots" between events that need not be causally connected. When no evidence supports these connections except the allegation of the conspiracy or when the evidence fits equally well to other causal connections-or to randomness-the conspiracy theory is likely to be false. The agents behind the pattern of the conspiracy would need nearly superhuman power to pull it off. People are usually not nearly so powerful as we think they are The conspiracy is complex, and its successful completion demands a large number of elements. Similarly, the conspiracy involves large numbers of people who would all need to keep silent about their secrets. The more people involved, the less realistic it becomes. The conspiracy encompasses a grand ambition for control over a nation, economy or political system. If it suggests world domination, the theory is even less likely to be true. The conspiracy theory ratchets up from small events that might be true to much larger, much less probable events. The conspiracy theory assigns portentous, sinister meanings to what are most likely innocuous, insignificant events. The theory tends to commingle facts and speculations without distinguishing between the two and without assigning degrees of probability or of factuality. The theorist is indiscriminately suspicious of all government agencies or private groups, which suggests an inability to nuance differences between true and false conspiracies. The conspiracy theorist refuses to consider alternative explanations, rejecting all disconfirming evidence and blatantly seeking only confirmatory evidence to support what he or she has a prior determination to be the truth.

[Developed by the TEACH team for the project purpose]





Extra materials Module 5: Conspiracy theories and the (Social) Media

Containing extra material for:

Warm-up 1

Exercise 1.2

Exercise 1.3

Warm-up 3

Exercise 3.1

Exercise 3.2

Exercise 3.3

Exercise 3.4



Warm-up 1: Media and conspiracy theories

M5_warm_up_1_glossary

Media and conspiracy Media

The term media refers to new manifestations concerning the information and broadcasting of news. Here is one definition of "media": "What is media? Definition and meaning

The term media, which is the plural of medium, refers to the communication channels through which we disseminate news, music, movies, education, promotional messages, and other data. It includes physical and online newspapers and magazines, television, radio, telephone, the Internet, fax, and billboards.

It describes the various ways through which we communicate in society. Because it refers to all means of communication, everything ranging from a telephone call to the evening news on television can be called media.

When talking about reaching an exceptionally large number of people we say mass media. Local media refers to, for example, your local newspaper, or local/regional TV/radio channels." ⁸⁰

Media ecosystem

"For our purposes, a media ecosystem is local in its level of analysis, encompasses institutional (typically newspapers, radio, and television), meso (communication across interconnected peer-to-peer networks, across neighbourhoods, and broader community segments), and micro forms (e.g., social media, interpersonal networks) of communication, and is the primary context in which citizens are affected by politics, day to day events, community issues and events such as natural disasters. Further, a media ecosystem can be defined by clear independent and dependent variables, allowing us to answer questions such as how the availability and quality of local news correlates with levels of knowledge about local politics, civic engagement, homeownership or feelings of belonging. Crucially, a media ecosystem, when defined by clear independent variables, may bcompared with other media ecosystems, such that the relative importance of the independent variables to the desired outcomes may be assessed. "81

Cross media

Rutgers School of Communication and Information (2021). Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: http://wp.comminfo.rutgers.edu/mpii-new/the-parameters-of-ecosystem-analysis/



⁸⁰ MBN (2021): What is Media? Definition and meaning. Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/media-definition-meaning/



Definitions of Cross media:

The term "Cross-Media" is often explained as something that includes the distribution of content (e.g., music, text, pictures, video etc.) amongst different media. One frequently used combination is television, newspapers/magazines, mobile devices, and Internet.

Cross media is usually seen as the use of traditional media along each other in an innovative way. However, the term can be used in a variety of ways; cross-media concepts are not only formed by means of a commercial purpose (including marketing campaigns and broadcasting arrangements) but also depend on the personal lives of consumers. In the current media-landscape consumers control the use of media; they decide when and where they wish to access specific media and content. The cross-media sector itself defines the term as follows:

"The cross media-sector provides multimedia products and services by using radio, television, Internet, mobile devices, print and events simultaneously along each other."

This implies that the cooperation between companies and specialists is part of the concept of cross media as wel⁸²l.

Online media

The term online media refers to modern manifestation of media. There is a terminological diversity, but we agree with the following definition:

"Online *media* is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation. Often the development of media is divided into two different ages, the broadcast age and the interactive age. In the broadcast age, media were almost exclusively centralized where one entity – such as a radio or television station, newspaper company, or a movie production studio – distributed messages to many people. Feedback to media outlets was often indirect, delayed, and impersonal. Mediated communication between individuals typically happened on a much smaller level, usually via personal letters, telephone calls, or sometimes on a slightly larger scale through means such as photocopied family newsletters."⁸³

⁸³ Manning, J. (2014): Definition and Classes of Social Media. In: Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics. Sage Publications.



⁸² Sam (2021): What is Cross Media? Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://cmidm4.wordpress.com/research-2/what-is-cross-media/



Social Media

The term social media refers to different manifestation: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, TikTok, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc. Social media includes sites, design as well as a navigation and content.

"Social networking sites. Facebook and other social networking sites are almost ubiquitous features in contemporary culture. Even those who choose not to create an online profile and participate will often hear from others information gained from such social platforms. A key distinguishing feature that makes a social networking site is the fellow list of users that one connects with, usually based upon friendship, family, work relationships, or even weak tie relationships. Initially social networking sites were great ways to meet new people, and although that is still a possibility many social networking sites now discourage people from adding connections they do not know. The public nature of information posted to social networking sites often allow a space for social or political viewpoints to be displayed, although research suggests much of this political activity reinforces pre-existing beliefs – especially because people tend to be online friends with those that are most like them."

What is social media?

Social media is a collective of online communication channels where communities interact, share content, and collaborate. Websites and apps dedicated to social networking, microblogging, forums, social bookmarking, wikis, and social curation are examples of some types of social media. The most famous social networking companies are Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram."⁸⁵

Media as a fourth power

The concept of the media as a fourth power originated about 200 years ago in the Anglo-Saxon world - "Fourth Estate", "Fourth Branch of Government". In other cultures, the importance and understanding of the media as a necessary factor of power is transferred from these democracies. The metaphor of the information power as the fourth, is charged with the functions to watch (independent) over the other three authorities - judicial, legislative, and executive. As such, it guarantees their independence from each other and their potency, their functionality. In democratic constitutions, this role is laid down in the formula for guaranteeing freedom of the press and opinion. The term "fourth power" was

⁸⁵ MBN (2021): What is Media? Definition and meaning. Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/media-definition-meaning/



⁸⁴ Ibid. P. 1160

TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

used in France in the Dreyfus affair. After the war between France and Germany in 1870-1871, the French high-ranking officer Alfred Dreyfus was accused of being a German spy and of passing secret information to the Germans from the General Staff, thus contributing to the loss of France. Dreyfus was hastily convicted, expelled from the army and exiled to Guyana. Only thanks to journalistic investigations and the media campaign against the trial, organized and paid for by French intellectuals and members of the public, was Dreyfus found innocent. There is only one reason for the staged hysteria and trial: Dreyfus is a Jew. The media are the ones who reveal this case. "Fortunately, there is a fourth power," writes Emil Zola, "which is able to detect and correct the mistakes made by the three secular authorities ...". 86

Blog

The term blog is presented by researchers and practitioners as social media:

"Blogs. The word *blog* is derived from the word *weblog*. A blog is a webpage where an individual or group can share information or ideas with a large group of people via the internet. It is not uncommon for a person to start a blog and then never update it again. Some of the most successful blogs are updated on a regular basis so the followers of the blog can know when to expect new entries. Blogs cover a wide range of topics, including political issues of all kinds. A common feature to blogs is a feedback forum where, after reading an entry, people can interact with both the blog author and others who have commented. Many traditional media outlets have adopted blog-like features online to entice readers to continue sticking with their news or entertainment offerings. For example, many newspaper stories end with the opportunity for readers to share their thoughts or comments about a current issue. These news stories - especially when about hot or particularly partisan political issues – can lead to serious debates."⁸⁷

False content, false information, fake news

Basic terms

News

Definition of news: The term "news" has been defined differently by different experts. Some of the definitions are given below:

News is anything out of the ordinary

News is the unusual picture of life.

News is anything that people talk about; the more it excites the greater its value.

⁸⁷ Manning, J. (2014): Definition and Classes of Social Media. In: Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics. Sage Publications. P. 1159-1160



⁸⁶ See: https://svobodazavseki.com



News comprises all current activities which are of general human interest and the best news is that which interests most of the reader.

Anything that enough people want to read is news provided it does not violate the canons of good taste and the law of libel.

News is the report of an event that is fresh, unusual and which is interesting to a greater number of people."

A definition of news can be found here: <u>click here</u> (Mass Communication Talk (2011): Definition of News)

False content – False information – Fake news False Information v Fake News

Experts now recommend avoiding the term 'fake news', or at least limit its use, as the term 'fake news' is strongly associated with politics, and this association can unhelpfully narrow the focus of the issue. The term 'false information' is preferable as it can refer to a diverse range of disinformation covering topics such as health, environmental and economics across all platforms and genres, while 'fake news' is more narrowly understood as political news stories.

What is False Information?

False information is news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers. Usually, these stories are created to either influence people's views, push a political agenda or cause confusion and can often be a profitable business for online publishers. False information can deceive people by looking like trusted websites or using similar names and web addresses to reputable news organisations.

According to Martina Chapman (Media Literacy Expert), there are three elements to fake news; 'Mistrust, misinformation and manipulation'.

The Rise of False Information

False information is not new; however, it has become a hot topic since 2017. Traditionally we got our news from trusted sources, journalists and media outlets that are required to follow strict codes of practice. However, the internet has enabled a whole new way to publish, share and consume information and news with very little regulation or editorial standards.

Many people now get news from social media sites and networks and often it can be difficult to tell whether stories are credible or not. Information overload and a general lack of understanding about how the internet works by people has also contributed to an increase in fake news or hoax stories. Social media sites can play a big part in increasing the reach of these type of stories."



TARGETING
EXTREMISM
AND
CONSPIRACY
THEORIES

A definition of Fake News can be found here: <u>click here</u> (Webwise.ie (2021). Explained: What is False Information?)

Post-truth

Post-truth communication - a catchword that has gone viral so quickly surely deserves careful attention and crisper definition, especially if we are not to be thrown off balance by a global phenomenon that sets out to precisely do that.

We can say that "post-truth" is not simply the opposite of truth, however that is defined; it is more complicated. It is better described as an omnibus term, a word for communication comprising or assemblage of different but interconnected phenomena. Its troubling potency in public life flows from its hybrid qualities, its combination of different elements in ways that defy expectations and confuse its recipients.

Post-truth has recombinant qualities. For a start, it is a type of communication that includes old-fashioned lying, where speakers say things about themselves and their world that are at odds with impressions and convictions that they harbour in their mind's."⁸⁸

Echo chambers

One definition of echo chamber is:

"An echo chamber is an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own. Echo chambers can create misinformation and distort a person's perspective so they have difficulty considering opposing viewpoints and discussing complicated topics."⁸⁹

Fact checking

One definition of fact checking is:

"Fact checking is the process of attempting to verify or disprove assertions made in speech, print media or online content. The practice is essential for integrity in any area where claims are made, including government, journalism, and business.

Inaccurate statements can take several different forms. A vendor may, for example, make false claims about their own product or attempt to undermine confidence in a competing technology by spreading fear, uncertainty and doubt (FUD) about it. The misinformation could be an exaggeration of the benefits offered by the vendor's own product or unfounded speculation about risks associated with the competitor's product. Fact

⁸⁹ GCF Global (2021). What is an echo chamber? Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/digital-media-literacy/what-is-an-echo-chamber/1/



258

⁸⁸ The Conversation (2018). Post-truth politics and why the antidote isn't simply 'fact-checking' and truth. Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://theconversation.com/post-truth-politics-and-why-the-antidote-isnt-simply-fact-checking-and-truth-87364



checking, in this context, involves seeking support or guarantees to back up any claims before making a decision." 90

⁹⁰ Wigmore I. (2017). Fact Checking. Retrieved on 30.11.2021 from: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/digital-medialiteracy/what-is-an-echo-chamber/1/





Exercise 1.2: Media, disinformation, conspiracy

M5_exercise_1.2_summarizing

HOW TO SUMMARISE THE RESULTS OF YOUR WORK

Follow these steps.

Step One: Find a post of an article on social media or on a homepage/ blog etc. Important is, that you have a strong feeling, that the information is not presenting correct information, but information with conspiracy theoretical content.

Step two. Answer the first and second row of the table.

Step three. Answer the third row in the table. Find proofs or evidence that media news contains elements of conspirative theory. Please select news which include the information evaluated by you as conspirative theory (vaccine, pandemic, economic crisis, conflicts between countries, agenda setting, role of NGOs in a policy, shadow business, corruption, finance, start-up business, regional conflict etc.). Show the author of the publication or if you cannot find the author inform about this. The participant should find the answers to the questions: Why media avoid to show the author? If media cite the official source or prefer fluid or general information? If media present different stand pints to use only one source and official position? If media show the source of the information published online or inform that is the Internet news?

Step four: Answer the fourth question. Tools how to persuade that it is a conspirative theory. The participant could find main conspiracy theory as well as they can find the theories in the national context. They should present very briefly who initiate the information, who is official sources or speaker. They should find additional sources and compare facts presented in different sources. The next step includes the analyses and conclusion that the information related to well-known conspiracy theories or others which have manifestations in the national context.



Media	Title, genre, author of media news	Topic and content of media news	Proofs that media news contains elements of conspiracy theory	Tools how to persuade that it is a conspiracy theory
Online media				
Blog				
Facebook				
Twitter				



Exercise 1.3: False content, false information, fake news

M5_exercise_1.3_summarizing

SUMMARISING THE RESULTS

Follow these steps.

Step One: Start to discussing the table that is presented to you.

Step two. Answer the first and second row.

Step three. Answer the third question. Compare the answers and write a summary of 2-3 sentences at the end in view of conspiracy theories. Choose one of the two positions. Please provide arguments in support of the claim for Connection between fake news and conspirative theory. Please provide arguments in support of the claim that there is no Connection between fake news and conspirative theory.

Step five: Answer the fourth question. Compare the answers and write a summary of 2-3 sentences at the end in view of conspiracy theories. Evaluate the role of social media in the dissemination of conspiracy theories.



Media	Do media play the role of an echo chamber?	Do media use methods or digital tools of fact checking?	Connection between fake news and conspiracy theory	Connection between post- truth and conspiracy theory
Online media				
Blog				
Faceboo k				
Twitter				



Exercise 2.1: Presentation on how to check videos and images

M5_exercise_2.1_PPT_check_videos_images

Accessible as presentation through www.teach-erasmus.eu ("results")



Warm-up 3: Self-reflection and conspiracy theory management

M5_warm_up_3_questionnaire

Dear participants,

Your replies will be only for your personal consideration. You are not going to share them with the group. Please, think about your daily experience and answer all questions truthfully.

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometim	Seldo	Never
				es	m	
1	The genocide of the European Jews never happened.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2	The influence of the Jews on the economy is too big.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3	Jews dominate international financial institutions.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4	Jews have too much power in world politics.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5	Jews knew beforehand about the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 9/11.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometime	Seldo	Never
				S	m	
1	Our country faces the danger of	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	becoming an Islamic state soon.					
2	Orchestrated immigration leads to	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	the extinction of European people.					
3	A great exchange of the native	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	population and Muslim immigrants					
	is going on in Europe.					
4	Mainstream Western politicians are	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	responsible for the fact that Europe					
	is increasingly becoming a Muslim					
	continent.					

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometime	Seld	Never
				S	om	
1	The media are deceiving the public on purpose.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2	The media do not report credibly on the terrorist threat in your country.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3	The media systematically conceal the crimes committed by refugees.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4	Mainstream political parties push for a more open migration policy to strengthen their electoral base.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5	The media do not report credible numbers of refugees coming to your country.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Someti	Seldo	Never
				mes	m	
1	The current political efforts are aimed	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	at actively weakening the position of					
	men.					
2	The current discourse in your country	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	regarding gender is getting out of					
	control.					
3	Feminism leads to fewer births, which	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	leads to mass immigration from					
	Muslim countries.					
4	Feminists want to destroy the	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	traditional family.					

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very	Frequently	Sometime	Seldom	Never
		often		S		
1	People are not the cause of climate	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	change.					
3	Global warming is not real.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4	Climate activism is the product of	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	economic interests.					



Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometime	Seldo	Never
				S	m	
1	The effectiveness of vaccinations	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	has never been proven.					
2	Vaccines cause allergies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3	Vaccines have serious risks,	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	including dangerous side effects.					
4	The main driving forces behind	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	vaccinations are the business					
	interests of the pharma industry.					

Looking back on the last year, how often have you heard the following statements from participants of your class?"

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometime	Seldom	Never
				S		
1	The U.S. government staged the moon landing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2	Chemicals are released by airplanes to harm the population.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5	The U.S. government was involved in 9/11.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

We would like to know if the participants of your courses have recently confronted you with the following statements?

Nr.		Very often	Frequently	Sometim	Seldom	Never
				es		
1	The SARS-CoV-2-Virus (COVID-19)	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	was created in a laboratory.					
2	Bill Gates is using SARS-CoV-2-Virus	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	(COVID-19) to microship people.					
3	The SARS-CoV-2-Virus (COVID-19) is	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	used in order to force us all to get					
	a mandatory vaccination.					



Please indicate how much you would personally agree with the following statements:

Nr.		Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The media is deceiving the public on purpose.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2	The current political efforts are aimed at actively weakening the position of men.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3	Jews have too much power in world politics.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4	Politicians from Western countries are helping to Islamize Europe.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Thank you for answering. Please, take a few minutes and go through the replies a from the position of bystander. Think about the general picture of your own experience – are there some "hot" topics or more vulnerable issues?

Afterwards you can put the questionnaire in your bag.



Exercise 3.1: Presentation on the TEACH-Survey Results

M5_exercise_3.1_PPT_results_TEACH_survey

Accessible as presentation through www.teach-erasmus.eu ("results")



Exercise 3.1: Presentation of the survey results

M5_exercise_3.1_flipchart_layout

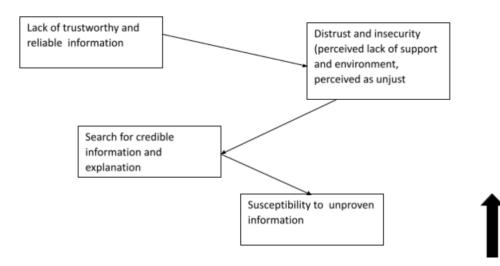
Summary of group suggestions (flipchart)

Flipchart design

Distrust in official authorities and media	Emotional insecurity

New flipchart (or slide)

New flipchart (or slide)





Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information

M5_exercise_3.2_story

Story

Maria lives on the banks of a river that has come from the torrential rains and can only be crossed by boat. She is a 17-year-old girl and is desperately in love with Peter, who lives on the other side of the river.

Maria is determined to visit the man who gained her heart and therefore she wants to go to. Although Tom has time and a boat, he does not want to transport Maria across the river. But she does not give up and goes to Hassan and asks him to take her to the other side of the river. Hassan agrees, but says he will not do it until the next morning if she spends the night with him.

And so, it happened. Maria wanted to visit Peter at all costs, so she spent the night with Hassan and in the morning, he transported her to the other side of the river. Maria rushed to her lover, to whom she told what difficulties she had to come to him, but Peter repulsed her.

Maria walked miserably along the river, barely holding back her tears until she came upon John. John asked her why she was sad, and Maria told him her story. John went to Peter and slapped him twice in the face without saying a word.



Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information

M5_exercise_3.2_ranking_table

Ranking table

1 2 3 4 5 The worst The best

	Maria	Peter	Tom	Hassan	John
I group					
II group					
III group					
IV group					



Exercise 3.2: Evaluating people and their behaviour in case of insufficient information

M5_exercise_3.2_characters

Additional information about the characters

Maria is a 17-year-old high school student in love with Peter, who is her geography teacher, happily married with two children.

Tom teaches at the same school and is a colleague of Peter.

Hassan is Maria's grandfather, who has not seen his beloved granddaughter in a long time, and with whom she drinks tea and talks all night.

John is a recidivist with mental disorders and a tendency to violence. He was recently released from prison. The real luck is that he only slapped Peter in the face.





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