"Please, we can get along here. We all can get along. I mean were all stuck here for a while. Let's try to work it out"
(Rodney King, 1992)

Dr. B. Wansink (Utrecht University)

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Who is Bjorn Wansink?

Department of Education and Pedagogy, Utrecht Univer

- **Teaching:**
- Citizenship
- Multicultural education
- History education

- **Research:**
- Multiperspectivity
- Polarization
- Epistemology

- **Other:**
- DOY: change your
- TerInfo
- RAN / Euroclio
- Global Learning Cor
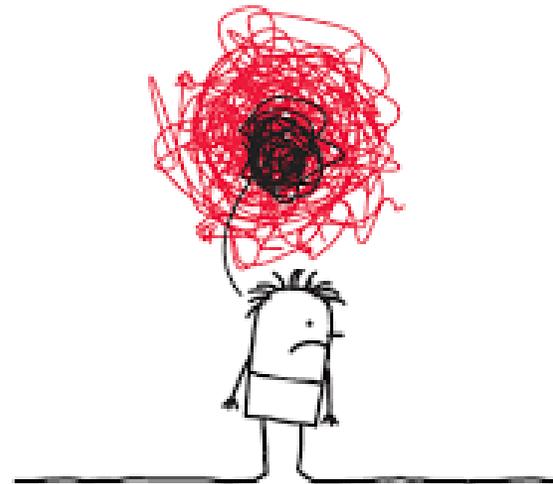
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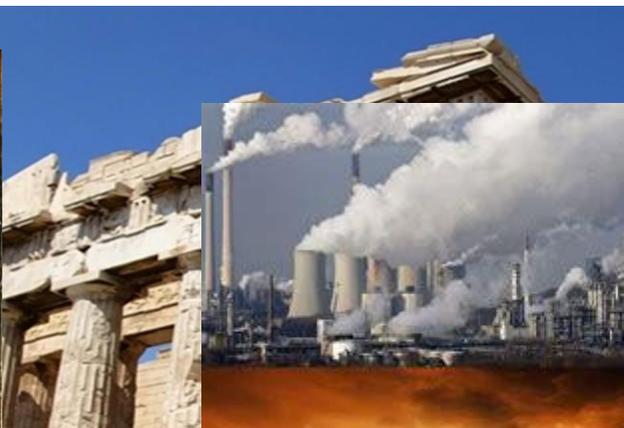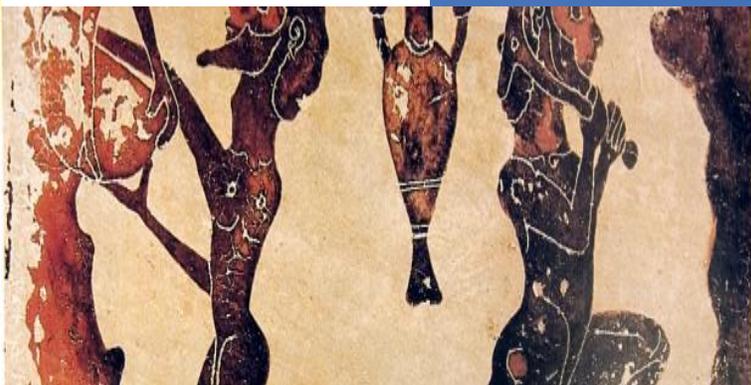
The Global Disinformation Order

2019 Global Inventory of Organised
Social Media Manipulation

Samantha Bradshaw · University of Oxford
Philip N. Howard · University of Oxford

Position(ality)
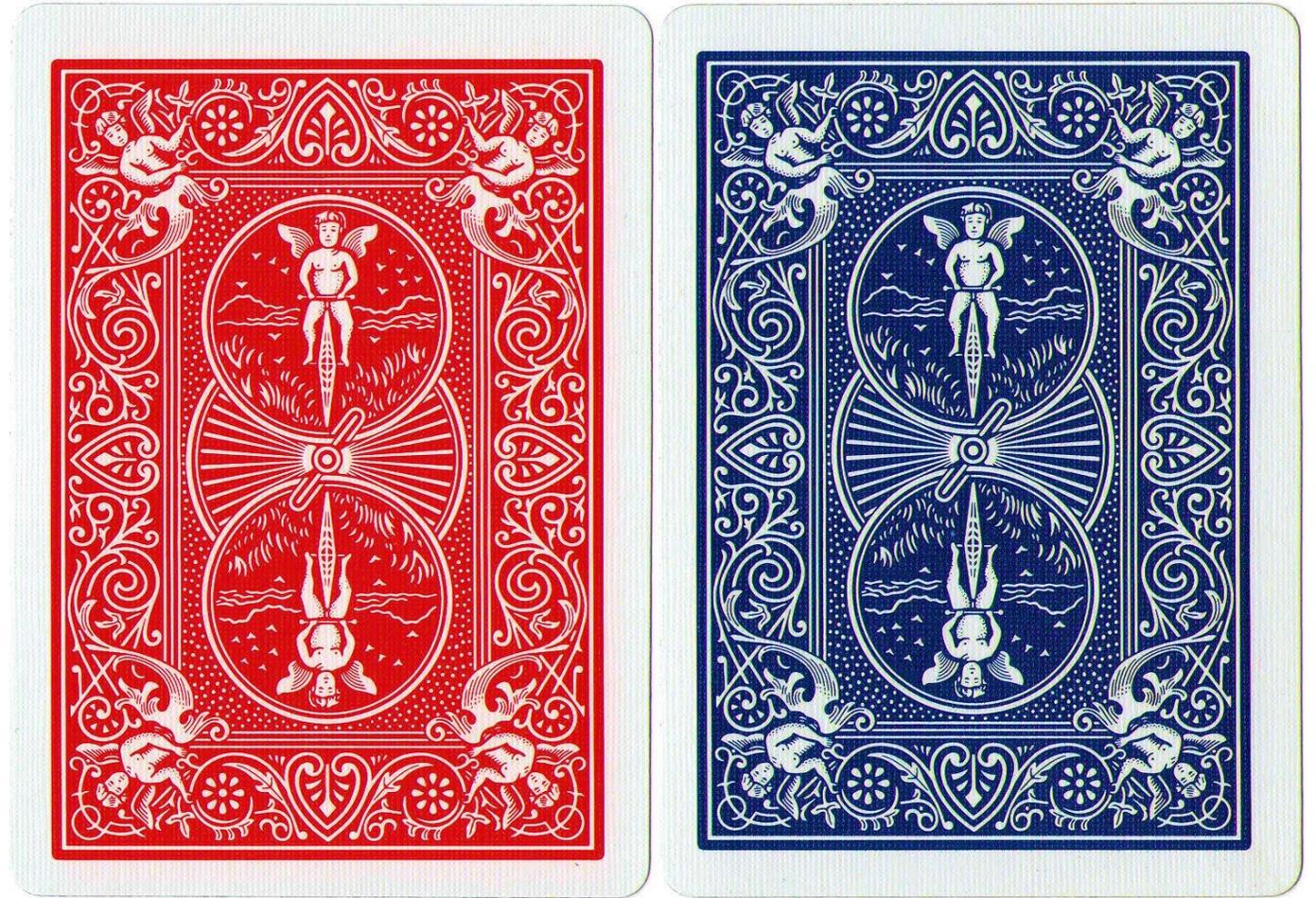
Step 1:
Draw a circle in the middle of the white-board. Pose that the circle represents that which we know.

Step 2:
Point out that from either perspective you can only see half of the bigger circle.

Step 3:
Tell the class that the persons on both sides will perceive his or her view as the 'truth'.

Step 4:
State that in order to see both side of the circle people have to communicate

Step 5:
Ask the class about their perceptions of the topic and write these around the circle.

Position in time and place

'Truth'

Position in time and place

Communication

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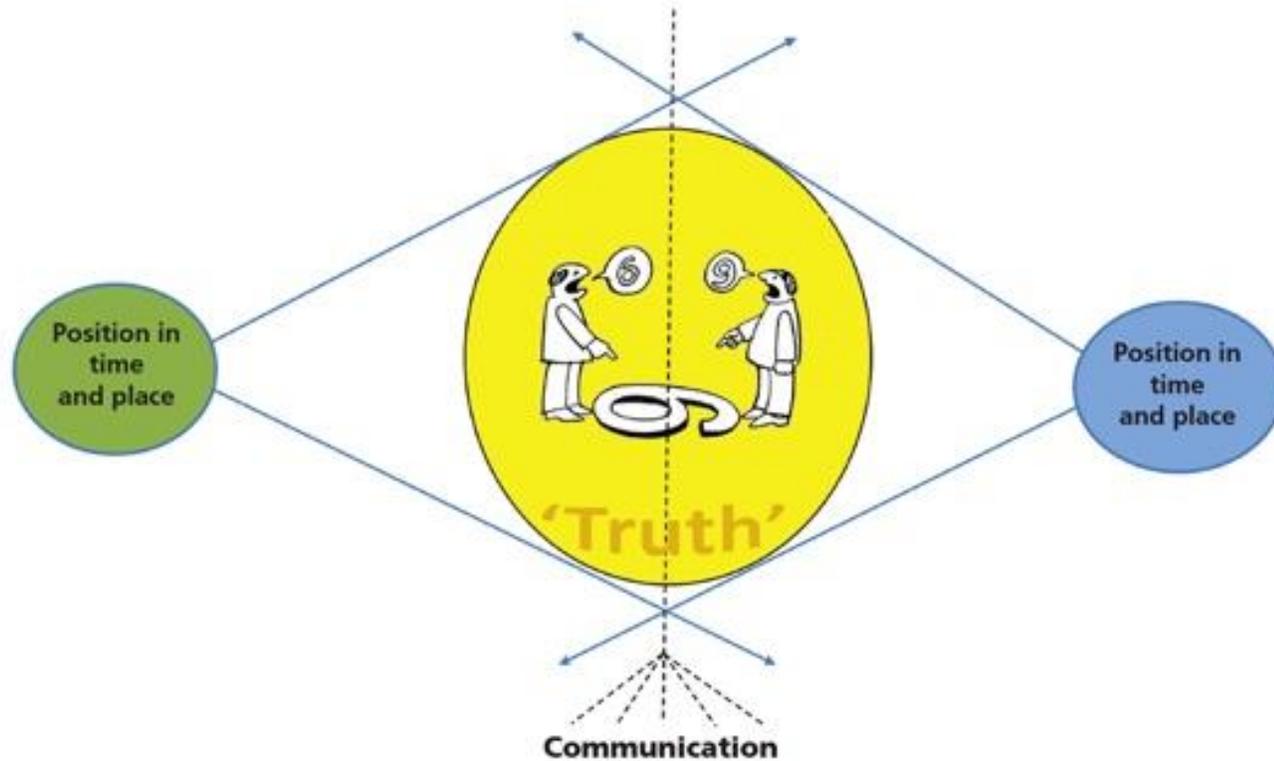
Nobody is neutral.

- Positionality is a term used across disciplines to describe how facets of a person social identity and position shape how the world is perceived.

- A multitude of identities:

- ethnicity, race, gender, SES, ability status, sexuality, age, citizenship, religious beliefs, marital status, education, political ideology, appearance, geographic location

Intuitions (often) come first, strategic / rational reasoning second.
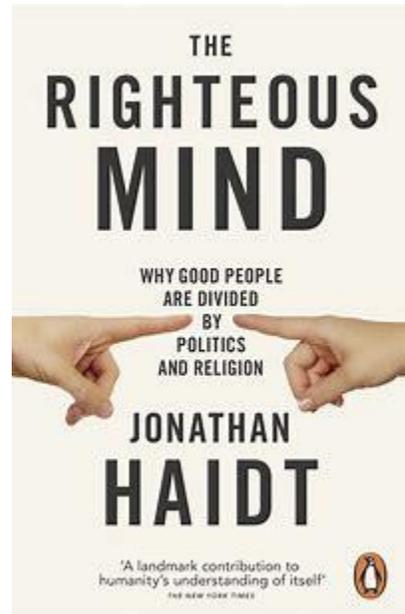
Hume (1739): "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."

Positionality & intuitions

- What is my own opinion about the subject?

- To what extent am I going to share this opinions with my students?

- Which emotions affect me when it comes to this subject?

- How can I regulate these emotions during the discussion?

- What do I know about the different perspectives on the subject?

- Which different perspectives are present among my students?

Be aware of identity threat

- Groups shape historical narratives that represent a positive moral image of the own group (Goldberg, 2017) and silence specific sensitive topics that pose a threat to their social identity (Bar-Tal 2017).

- When discussing controversial topics in class, students may feel that their identity or self-image is under threat.

- Students who experience a threat to their identity / self-image are (compared to students who do not experience this) less open to the perspectives of others.

- Students are mainly focused on defending their current view and are little willing to reflect on it.

- (Wansink et al., in review)

Professionals have multi-identities and responsibilities.

- *You know what the risk is … if you work at such a school for so long … you get split yourself. There are so many things that you know about (i.e. I as historian). Hey, and you want to tell the pupils that. But I also always have a lot of heart for those children who are stuck with their(i.e. I as caring teacher) story, their nationality, the things they hear). And then I think, who am I to completely mess up their entire worldview.*

Wansink, B., Akkerman, S. & Kennedy, B. (2021) How Conflicting Perspectives Lead a History Teacher to Epistemic, Epistemological, Moral and Temporal Switching: a Case Study of the Holocaust. *Intercultural Education*.

Case-study: Covid

- *"I do not trust the government and I believe they are trying to control us. I have seen many on the internet,(for example celebrity/influencer X) who state that the government is not transparent about how deadly the virus is. Also, when looking at the numbers... the effectiveness of the state restrictions does not outweigh the burden for us as young people. I'm still young; I'm totally done with all these restricting rules and will no longer follow up on them. I'll go party with my friends."*

- How do you react?

What would be your first sentence?

What would be your aim with this?

How would you proceed?

What would be your strategy to achieve your aim?

What would be the downside of this approach? Why do you choose for this strategy?

Reaction quadrant (Patist & Wansink, 2016)
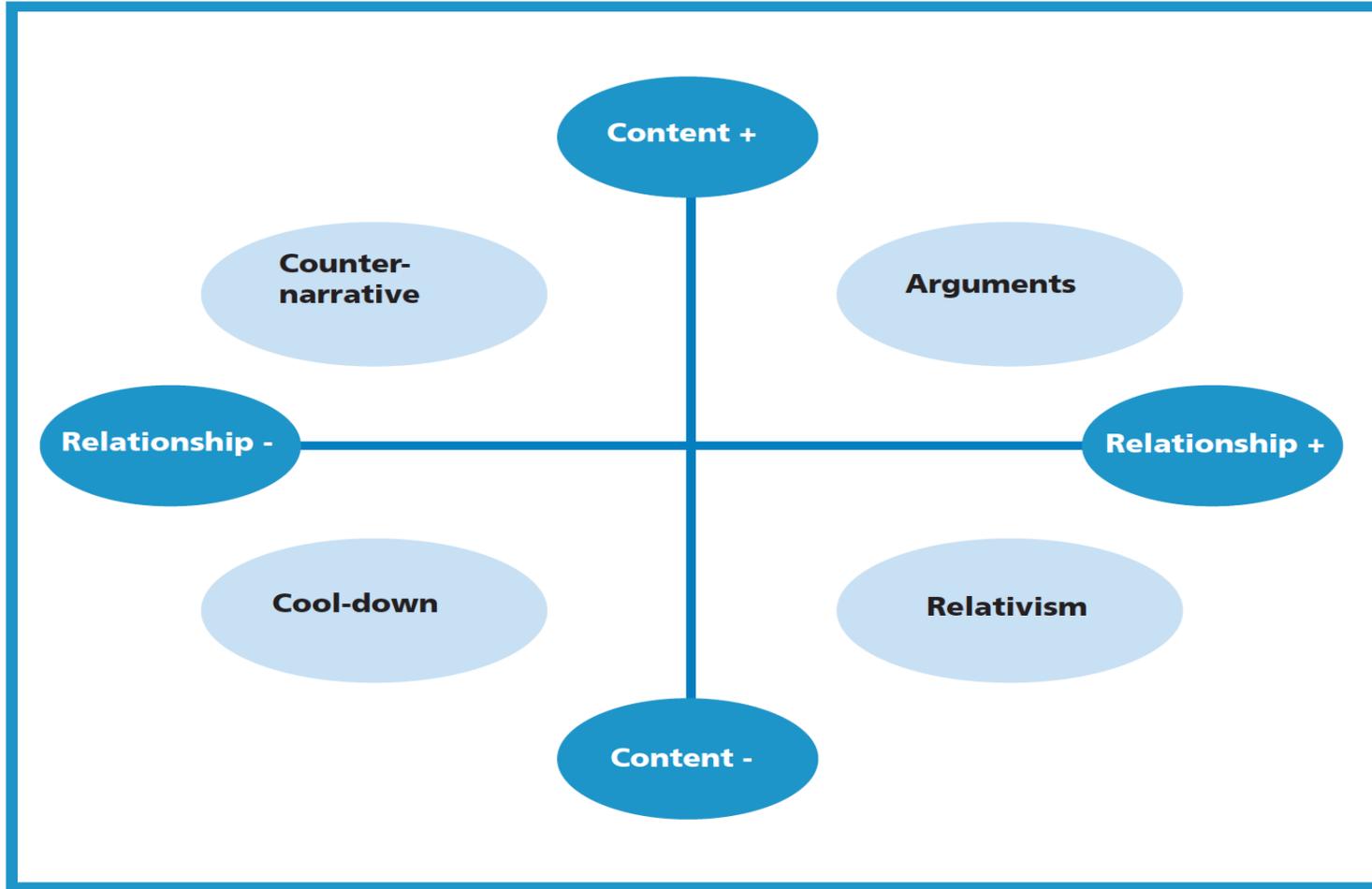
Cool Down

- **Possible benefits:**
- The teacher gains time to think and can prepare a lesson
- The emotions of the Michael and the teacher can be (too) intense and they have time to cool down
- A clear norm is communicated to Michael

- **Possible negatives:**
- The relationship with Michael is likely harmed as there is no possibility to express his ideas and emotions.
- The content is not discussed

Counter-Narrative

- **Possible benefits:**
- The teacher or youth worker will fully control the conversation.
- The rest of the class is less influenced by Michael' ideas.
-

- **Possible negatives:**
- The relationship with Michael might be harmed.
- The perspective of Michael is ignored .
- It is unlikely that Michael directly will be convinced by a counter-narrative.

Relativism

- **Possible benefits**

- Students can express their beliefs and emotions.

- The relationship with Michael and the class will not be harmed.

- The teacher can get a sense of what type of beliefs are present in the classroom.

- **Possible negatives**

- The backing of the different perspectives is not evaluated.

- All perspectives might be seen as equally reliable.

- Other students might be influenced by ideas that are based on misinformation.

Arguments

- **Possible benefits**
- The different arguments of the students are evaluated on reliability
- Critical thinking is stimulated

- **Possible negatives**
- Teachers and students start to convince each other during a discussion instead of listening to another.
- The teacher lacks sufficient subject matter knowledge about the topic.

Media literacy

Four media literacy questions:

1) Who is behind the information and what are the providers' motives?

2) What's the evidence for the content?

3) What does the title say and what does the whole article say?

4) What do other sources say?

An interesting website in relation to media literacy is: https://cor.stanford.edu

Is a discussion always constructive?

A DISCUSSION CAN ALSO REINFORCE POLARIZATION AND BELIEFS IN CONSPIRACIES.

TEACHER MIGHT BETTER ADDRESS CONSPIRACIES THAT ARE SITUATED IN THE PAST. THESE ARE 'COLD' AND DEPERSONALIZED.

DISCUSS UNDERLYING TRIGGERS WHY STUDENTS BELIEF IN CONSPIRACIES RELATED TO COVID-19, FOR EXAMPLE FEAR OR UNCERTAINTY. FOCUS ON COMMON GROUND.

Literature to check:

- Mol, H., Wansink, B. & Mainhard, T. (in progress). The role of identity threat and teacher interpersonal behavior in discussing controverisal issues in the class: Moral defensiveness.

- RAN (2018) Transforming schools into labs for democracy. A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education

- RAN (2017) Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom

- Van Bavel, J. et al. (2020). Using social and behavioural science to support COVID-19 pandemic response. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1-12.

- Van Prooijen, J. W. (2018). *The psychology of conspiracy theories*. Routledge.

- Wansink, B.G.J., Patist, Jaap, Zuiker, I., Savenije, Geerte Maria & Janssenwillen, Paul (01-06-2019). Confronting Conflicts, history teachers' reactions to spontaneous controversial remarks. *Teaching History* (175), (pp. 68-75).

- Kerr, D., & Huddleston, T. (2015). Teaching controversial issues. *Professional Development Pack for the Effective Teaching of Controversial Issues.* Retrieved from: Https://edoc.coe.int/en/human-rights-democratic-citizenship-and-interculturalism/7738-teaching-controversial-issues.html

- Advice for how to deal with conspiracies can be found on: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/identifying-conspiracy-theories_en

- Wansink, B. G. J., & Timmer, B. (2020). *short handbook: COVID-19 Narratives that Polarise*. Radicalisation Awareness Network, European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/publications/short-handbook-conclusions-paper-covid-19-narratives-polarise_en