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How a German soap opera was used as far-right Islamophobic propaganda

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A month or so ago, a video on Raheem Kassam's Facebook page was brought to my attention. I've embedded the video below. In it, a young women speaking German converts to Islam in front of her son and insists to him, that as he is a child, he is also Muslim. Kassam's caption was "Oh. My. God. This is what German TV channels are "teaching" kids..."





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German TV promotes Islam, Allah, Mohamma...

The subtitles are accurate, with the exception of the offensive "blah, blah, blah" translation while the woman recites the Shahada, the declaration of Muslim faith. Many far-right groups claimed this video was created so the German government could convince the population to be more accepting of Muslims or even brainwash them into converting to Islam itself.

The comments on the Kassam video are all very negative towards the issue. Paraphrasing, most of them talk about how Germany is a doomed country and is destined to destroy itself. Comments on YouTube videos are much the same, about how the narrative is that Germans are nothing unless they adopt Islam and Merkel's government are pure evil. There's a load of Islamophobia too.

The names of the organisations credited at the end of the video seem far from impartial names alone. In fact, they all contained content that many would consider Islamophobic.



However, when I watched this video, quite a lot of things did not support this hypothesis. There is quite eerie music for a start and the young boy looks rather confused and alarmed. Certainly, there's no reason to be alarmed by this video alone. After all, if this is an educational clip like some are suggesting, isn't a good thing to learn about other religions?



Certainly, the clip seems incomplete and thus needs to be further investigated.

When I did it became quite clear that the clip was taken out of [context](#). It is from Lindenstrasse, a long-running German soap opera on the German equivalent of BBC One, the episode, number 1084 was aired in 2006, not after 2017's federal elections like some had suggested.

The woman is Lisa Hoffmeister, a character who has led a troubled life. She was abused and neglected as a child and even killed someone in self-defence. She is engaged to Murat, from a Turkish immigrant family. Her fiancé is not particularly serious about his religion and comes from a fairly secular and moderate family.

Yet Lisa gets obsessed and convinces herself that she needs to convert in order to be accepted by the family. Her overzealousness in this and future episodes actually annoys Murat a fair bit and his aunt takes Lisa aside and tells her efforts are unnecessary.

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If anything is to be learned from this plotline, it is that people shouldn't rush into things and also shouldn't do things to please others but be comfortable with themselves and their own identity.

The network is publicly owned, but the government has no control over broadcasting. The claims made by far-right groups are far off the mark.

And they are very dangerous. It would be taken as confirmation to those on the far right spectrum and those flirting with extreme politics, that there is some sort of conspiracy going on involving the establishment and Muslim minorities. This fosters further Islamophobic



thinking and also encourages voting for far-right parties, who will have no issue with treating minorities like they do not matter.

This should all be avoided with a simple bit of verification. It didn't take me too long to find out the truth. But some people will have got carried away with viewing the material and would not bother to check, meaning that false information is what they take from the viewing.

This has a very alarming snowball effect. People will use this as evidence of some sort of conspiracy theory or go on an angry rant, this is picked up by more and more people until tension reaches a breaking point.

People should be taught in schools, basic ways of verifying information. This will prevent manipulation of this kind from having a strong impact and also benefit the democratic process. People will then have the current information they need to make a decision rather than basing decisions that will have far-reaching political consequences on fake news. This will result in politicians being forced to be more honest, and this should hopefully encourage more trust from voters to elected officials.



Because forcing a religion onto the masses is a very serious thing that should not be tolerated, thankfully, in this case, it is basically lies, but these lies still have a very worrying

It's that lack of trust that actually enables situations like this to occur. Voters have so little trust that they are willing to believe stuff like this could be possible and that would make them more likely to believe in conspiracy theories like this, especially if they play on existing prejudices. It all creates a rather vicious circle and the people who lose out the most are the minorities that propaganda like this attacks.

I wrote in [my previous opinion piece](#) that Poland's treatment of Jewish people should not be tolerated and neither should the spreading of false information suggested that the German government is trying to brainwash the country to convert to Islam.

It just encourages the racists and harms people who have done nothing to warrant it.

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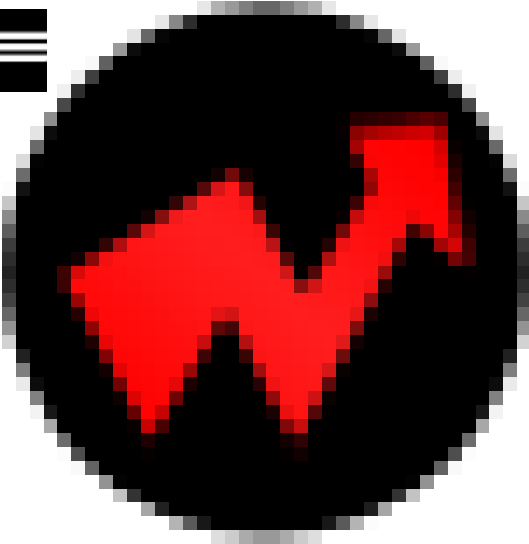
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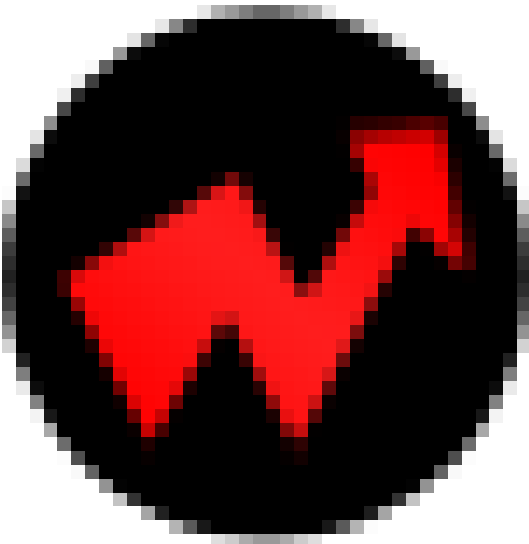


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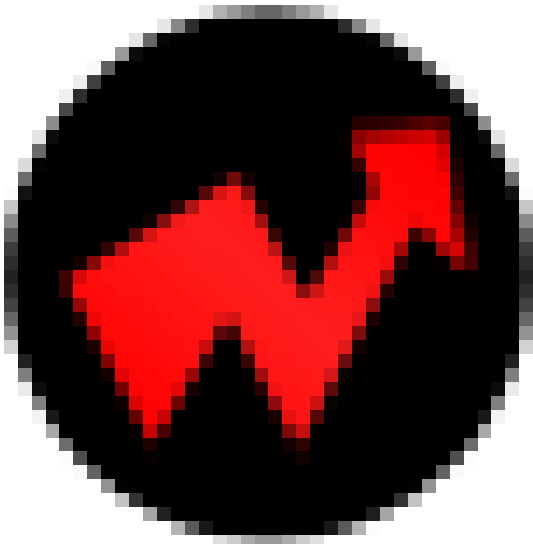




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