



Chapter

Fighting disinformation

Evidence for policy making

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Book [Disinformation Debunked](#)

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, “fake news” has become a buzzword, often weaponised for various purposes. A very abundant literature addressing many facets of the phenomenon has flourished in the last years covering topics related to definitions and classifications of “fake news”, its negative effects, and the technological facilitators associated with it, etc. However, literature focusing on ordinary people’s understanding of “fake news” is rather scarce. By means of two focus groups (N = 8) conducted in four countries (France, Romania, Spain, and Sweden), one with teachers and one with ordinary people (N = 64), we investigated the audience’s perspectives on “fake news” definitions, possible effects, and potential measures to address them. Findings show that there is an almost general consensus about strategic intentions as key to defining “fake news”. The perceived impact of “fake news” is very high among participants, with concern about democratic consequences, especially in the public health sector. Finally, differences between the two types of groups and across countries are further discussed, with a focus on implications for evidence-based policymaking.