smartvote

Report on Social Media Disinformation in Spanish, Portuguese and EU Elections and Detection tools

May 2025

Dissemination level	Public
Title	An Iberian Outlook: Report on Social Media Disinformation in Spanish, Portuguese and EU Elections and Detection tools
Date	May 2025
Work Package	WP2 - Analysis and refinement of existing AI tools to prevent misinformation in the scope of elections
Scientific Coordination	*OberCom – Observatório da Comunicação* Miguel Paisana, António Vasconcelos, Paulo Couraceiro, Pedro Pais, Gustavo Cardoso and Vania Baldi
Contributing Authors by organisation / institution	*OberCom* – António Vasconcelos, Gustavo Cardoso, Miguel Paisana, Paulo Couraceiro, Pedro Caldeira Pais and Vania Baldi. *Fundación Cibervoluntarios* – Octavio Barriuso Varela, Ernestina Álvarez Corona, Óscar Espiritusanto and Inès Dinant. *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid* – Raúl Magallon Rosa, Carolina Fernández Castrillo, Eva Herrero Curiel and Juan Pedro Molina. *Universidade Politécnica de Madrid* – David Camacho, Sergio D'Antonio, Javier Huertas Tato, Adrián Girón and Alejandro Martin. *CENJOR* – Miguel Crespo. *CLABE* – Juan Zafra, Lola Bonilla and Marisol Sales
Recommended citation	Paisana, M., et al. (2025). *Report on Social Media Disinformation in Spanish, Portuguese and EU elections and detection tools*. SmartVote, Cibervoluntarios. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15305356

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Executive Summary

Resumen Ejecutivo

Sumário Executivo

Executive Summary

In this inaugural report for the SmartVote project, we establish the groundwork for the projects' intervention, aiming to provide access, knowledge and skills that allow for technology to enable autonomy and social participation in wider society. We specifically aim to tackle the issue of disinformation and its impact during electoral processes and referendums as a threat to democracy, and the role of news and journalism and technology in the process. On the technology side we will create technological resources which allow for the identification and mitigation of disinformation. In this report we include a thorough list of AI initiatives aimed at combating disinformation in Europe and abroad (n=125).

Despite the aim to stimulate positive impacts in wider society, the project will directly work with young people aged 18 to 25 in Spain and Portugal. The Iberian dimension of the project implies an added level of complexity in terms of our intervention, as despite the historical familiarity both countries are quite different at a social, territorial, political and in terms of their media ecosystem and relationship with news and journalism. Of the findings contained in this report, we highlight the following:

- Spain and Portugal share similar democratic roots, but differ significantly in their political structures, levels of decentralization, and electoral dynamics —elements that shape distinct vulnerabilities and patterns in the spread of electoral disinformation.

- While Spain faces higher political polarization and a stronger institutional response to disinformation, Portugal remains less polarized, but increasingly exposed to political instability and digital misinformation, with softer regulatory approaches. Over the past few years, snap elections have become more common in Portugal, leading to shorter government cycles and higher political instability.

- Both Spain and Portugal face low electoral participation among young people, driven by political disaffection, economic insecurity, and identity-related aspects, with extremist parties often being the only forces capable of mobilizing these voters; in Spain, this is further marked by rising antifeminist narratives and authoritarian nostalgia among the youth.

- Social media is the primary news source for Spaniards, closely followed by TV, while in Portugal TV still leads over social media. Younger audiences in both countries prefer social media, with notable differences in the platforms used. In Portugal, instagram is the leading social media platform for news among younger users, while in Spain these audiences display more diverse preferences, splitting their attention between Instagram, TikTok and X.

- Trust in news is significantly higher in Portugal (56% say they trust the news) compared to Spain (33%), with a sharp decline in trust among Spanish youth (19%). Interest in news has decreased in both countries since 2015, with younger generations showing much lower levels of interest and higher rates of news avoidance compared to the general population.

- Both countries show high concern about disinformation online, with about 70% of the general population expressing worry. However, concern is notably lower among the 18-24 demographic in both nations, with Spain showing even more skepticism towards the news.

- Youth activism in Spain and Portugal mirrors broader EU trends, with a focus on social issues such as gender equality, human rights, and mental health. However, political participation is influenced by national and regional identities, with varying degrees of attachment to European identity between the two countries.

- Both Spain and Portugal have seen a rise in electoral misinformation and disinformation, particularly during major elections, with social media playing a central role in the dissemination of false or manipulated content. Key topics include electoral fraud, corruption, and immigration, with the far-right parties in both countries, particularly Chega in Portugal and Vox in Spain, being the major sources of disinformation.

- Misinformation and disinformation in both countries often targets political candidates, electoral systems, and specific policy proposals, with common tactics including fake images, manipulated videos, and misleading polls. The amplification of false or misleading content by political parties is a key factor in its spread and perceived credibility.

- The disinformation landscape in Spain and Portugal shows both similarities and differences, with a notable increase in cross-border narrative sharing, especially around issues like immigration. Both countries face significant challenges in distinguishing between political propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation, underscoring the need for coordinated efforts to combat these trends.

- A growing percentage of young people (60% in Spain, 62% in Portugal) are using AI-based applications, primarily for academic, professional, and creative tasks, reflecting AI's increasing role in the daily life. Young people are more comfortable with AI-assisted news compared to the general population, especially in Spain.

- Despite a higher comfort level with AI-assisted news, trust in AI-generated news, particularly in sensitive areas like politics, remains low in both countries. While 31% of young Portuguese adults are comfortable with AI-generated news, this drops significantly to 18% for political news, indicating a general skepticism toward AI's role in producing reliable political content.

- AI is increasingly being utilized in the fight against disinformation, with tools developed to either identify and combat disinformation after publication (downstream) or proactively prevent its spread (upstream). While AI shows promise in automating content detection, its use raises ethical concerns regarding transparency, free speech, and privacy.

- A survey of 125 projects, including 52 using AI and machine learning (Chapter 4 of this report), reveals a growing trend of integrating AI into disinformation efforts, often with a combination of human supervision. European initiatives, such as AI4Trust and AI-CODE, demonstrate the effectiveness of combining AI tools with human fact-checking, aiming to improve the quality of information and support media professionals in their work.

Resumen Ejecutivo

En este primer informe del proyecto SmartVote, establecemos las bases para su desarrollo con el objetivo de proporcionar acceso, conocimientos y habilidades que permitan que la tecnología favorezca la autonomía y la participación social y política de la sociedad.

Nuestro enfoque específico pretende abordar el problema de la desinformación y su impacto durante los procesos electorales y los referéndums como una amenaza para la democracia, así como el papel de las noticias, el periodismo y la tecnología en este proceso. En relación con la tecnología, crearemos recursos tecnológicos que permitan la identificación y mitigación de la desinformación. Este informe incluye una lista exhaustiva de iniciativas de IA dirigidas a combatir la desinformación en Europa y en el extranjero (hasta un total de 125).

A pesar de la intención de generar impactos positivos en la sociedad en general, el proyecto trabajará directamente con jóvenes de entre 18 y 25 años en España y Portugal. La dimensión ibérica del proyecto implica un nivel adicional de complejidad en términos de nuestra participación e intervención ya que, a pesar de la familiaridad histórica, ambos países son bastante diferentes difieren en términos sociales, territoriales, políticos y en relación con su ecosistema mediático, el consumo de noticias y el periodismo. De los hallazgos contenidos en este informe, destacamos lo siguiente:

- España y Portugal comparten raíces democráticas similares, pero difieren significativamente en sus presentan estructuras políticas, niveles de descentralización y dinámicas electorales diferentes., Estos factores que configuran vulnerabilidades y patrones distintos en la propagación de la desinformación electoral.

- Mientras que España enfrenta una mayor polarización política y una respuesta institucional más fuerte ante la desinformación, Portugal sigue siendo menos polarizado pero cada vez más expuesto a la inestabilidad política y la desinformación digital, con enfoques regulatorios más suaves. En los últimos años, las elecciones anticipadas se han vuelto más comunes en los dos países, lo que conduce a ciclos gubernamentales más cortos y mayor inestabilidad política.

- Tanto España como Portugal se enfrentan a una baja participación electoral entre los jóvenes, impulsada por el desinterés político, la inseguridad económica y factores relacionados con la identidad, siendo. Llos partidos más extremos a menudo son las principales fuerzas capaces de que movilizan movilizar a estos votantes; en España, esteo fenómeno se ve acentuado por el auge de narrativas antifeministas y la nostalgia autoritaria entre los grupos más jóvenes.

- Las redes sociales son la principal fuente de noticias para los españoles, seguidas de cerca por la televisión, mientras que en Portugal la televisión lidera sobre las redes sociales como fuente de información. El público más joven de ambos países prefiere las redes sociales, con diferencias notables en las plataformas utilizadas, como Instagram, que es la red social más popular para las noticias entre los jóvenes en España.

- La confianza en las noticias es significativamente más alta en Portugal (56% confían en las noticias) en comparación con España (33%), con una fuerte caída en la confianza entre los jóvenes españoles (19%). El interés por las noticias ha disminuido en ambos países desde 2015, con las generaciones más jóvenes mostrando niveles de interés mucho más bajos y mayores tasas de evasión informativa en comparación con la población general.

- Ambos países muestran una gran preocupación por la desinformación digital, con aproximadamente el 70% de la población general expresando preocupación. Sin embargo, la preocupación es notablemente menor entre la población de 18 a 24 años en ambos países, siendo aún más escépticos los jóvenes en España.

- El activismo juvenil en España y Portugal refleja las tendencias más amplias de la UE, con un enfoque en temas sociales como la igualdad de género, los derechos humanos y la salud mental. Sin embargo, la participación política está influida por las identidades nacionales y regionales, con diferentes grados de apego a la identidad europea entre los dos países.

- Tanto España como Portugal han visto un aumento de la desinformación electoral, particularmente durante las elecciones más relevantes, con las redes sociales jugando un papel central en la difusión de contenidos falsos. Los temas clave incluyen el fraude electoral, la corrupción o la inmigración, siendo los partidos más a la derecha en ambos países, particularmente Chega en Portugal y Vox en España, las principales fuentes de desinformación.

- La desinformación en ambos países suele dirigirse a los candidatos políticos, los sistemas electorales y hacia propuestas políticas específicas, con tácticas comunes que incluyen imágenes falsas, videos manipulados y encuestas engañosas. La amplificación de la desinformación por parte de los partidos políticos es un factor clave en su propagación y en la credibilidad percibida.

- El panorama de la desinformación en España y Portugal muestra tanto similitudes como diferencias, con un aumento notable a la hora de compartir narrativas transfronterizas, especialmente en torno a temas como la inmigración. Ambos países se enfrentan desafíos significativos para distinguir entre propaganda política, desinformación y noticias o informaciones erróneas, lo que subraya la necesidad de esfuerzos coordinados para combatir estas tendencias.

- Un porcentaje creciente de jóvenes (60% en España, 62% en Portugal) está utilizando aplicaciones basadas en IA, principalmente para tareas académicas, profesionales y creativas, lo que refleja el creciente papel de la IA en la vida diaria. Los jóvenes están más cómodos con las noticias asistidas por IA en comparación con la población general, especialmente en España.

- A pesar de una mayor comodidad con las noticias asistidas por IA, la confianza en las noticias generadas por IA, especialmente en áreas sensibles como la política, sigue siendo baja en ambos países. Mientras que el 31% de los jóvenes portugueses se sienten cómodos con las noticias generadas por IA, este porcentaje cae significativamente al 18% en noticias de carácter político, lo que indica un escepticismo general hacia el papel de la IA en la producción de contenido político confiable.

- La IA se está utilizando cada vez más en la lucha contra la desinformación, con herramientas desarrolladas para identificar y combatir la desinformación después de su publicación (lógica downstream) o prevenir proactivamente su difusión (lógica upstream). Aunque la IA muestra su potencial para automatizar la detección de contenido, su uso plantea preocupaciones éticas sobre la transparencia, la libertad de expresión y la privacidad.

- Un análisis de 125 proyectos, incluidos 52 que utilizan IA y aprendizaje automático (Capítulo 4 de este informe), revela una tendencia creciente a integrar la IA en los esfuerzos contra la desinformación, a menudo con una combinación de supervisión humana. Las iniciativas europeas, como *AI4Trust* y *AI-CODE*, demuestran la eficacia de combinar herramientas de IA con la verificación humana, con el objetivo de mejorar la calidad de la información y apoyar a los profesionales de los medios en su trabajo.

- Finalmente, en el Capítulo 5 de este informe se sugieren recomendaciones y buenas prácticas, fusionando las diferentes problemáticas resumidas anteriormente y con el objetivo de proporcionar una base sólida para el trabajo futuro en el contexto de SmartVote.

Sumário Executivo

Neste relatório inaugural para o projeto SmartVote, estabelecemos as bases para a intervenção do projeto, com o objetivo de fornecer acesso, conhecimento e habilidades que permitam que a tecnologia favoreça a autonomia e a participação política na sociedade em geral.

O nosso foco específico é abordar o problema da desinformação e o seu impacto durante os processos eleitorais e os referendos como uma ameaça à democracia, assim como o papel das notícias, do jornalismo e da tecnologia neste processo. Em termos tecnológicos, criaremos recursos que permitam a identificação e mitigação da desinformação. Este relatório inclui um levantamento exaustivo de iniciativas de IA direcionadas ao combate da desinformação na Europa e no estrangeiro (n=125).

Apesar de o objetivo ser gerar impactos positivos na sociedade em geral, o projeto trabalhará diretamente com jovens de 18 a 25 anos em Espanha e Portugal. A dimensão ibérica do projeto implica um nível adicional de complexidade em termos da nossa intervenção, já que, apesar da familiaridade histórica, ambos os países são bastante diferentes em termos sociais, territoriais, políticos e no que diz respeito ao seu ecossistema mediático e à relação com as notícias e o jornalismo. Das conclusões deste relatório, destacamos as seguintes:

- Espanha e Portugal partilham raízes democráticas semelhantes, mas diferem significativamente nas suas estruturas políticas, níveis de descentralização e dinâmicas eleitorais, fatores que moldam vulnerabilidades distintas e padrões diferentes na propagação da desinformação eleitoral.

- Enquanto Espanha enfrenta uma maior polarização política e uma resposta institucional mais forte à desinformação, Portugal continua a ser menos polarizado, mas cada vez mais exposto à instabilidade política e à desinformação digital, com abordagens regulatórias mais suaves. Nos últimos anos, as eleições antecipadas tornaram-se mais comuns nos dois países, levando a ciclos de governação mais curtos e maior instabilidade política.

- Tanto Espanha como Portugal se caracterizam por uma baixa participação eleitoral entre os jovens, impulsionada pelo desinteresse político, pela insegurança económica e por fatores relacionados com a identidade, sendo os partidos situados nos extremos frequentemente as únicas forças capazes de mobilizar estes eleitores; em Espanha, isto é ainda mais acentuado pelo aumento de narrativas antifeministas e nostalgia autoritária entre os jovens.

- As redes sociais são a principal fonte de notícias para os espanhóis, seguidas de perto pela televisão, enquanto em Portugal a televisão lidera sobre as redes sociais como fonte de informação. O público mais jovem em ambos os países prefere as redes sociais, com diferenças notáveis nas plataformas utilizadas, como o Instagram, que é a rede social mais popular para notícias entre os jovens em Espanha.

- A confiança nas notícias é significativamente mais alta em Portugal (56% confiam nas notícias) em comparação com a Espanha (33%), com uma forte queda na confiança entre os jovens espanhóis (19%). O interesse pelas notícias diminuiu em ambos os países desde 2015, com as gerações mais jovens a mostrarem níveis de interesse muito mais baixos e taxas mais elevadas de evasão de notícias, em comparação com a população geral.

- Em ambos os países as populações demonstram uma grande preocupação com a desinformação online, com cerca de 70% da população geral a expressar preocupação. No entanto, a preocupação é notavelmente mais baixa entre a faixa etária dos 18-24 anos em ambos os países, sendo ainda mais céticos os jovens em Espanha.

- O ativismo jovem em Espanha e Portugal reflete as tendências mais amplas da UE, com um foco em questões sociais como a igualdade de género, os direitos humanos e a saúde mental. No entanto, a participação política é influenciada pelas identidades nacionais e regionais, com diferentes graus de apego à identidade europeia entre os dois países, e com maior preponderância da identidade regional e autonómica em Espanha.

- Tanto Espanha como Portugal assistiram a um aumento da desinformação eleitoral, particularmente durante as eleições legislativas, com as redes sociais a desempenharem um papel central na disseminação de conteúdos falsos. Os temas-chave incluem fraude eleitoral, corrupção e imigração, sendo os partidos de extrema-direita em ambos os países, particularmente o Chega em Portugal e o Vox em Espanha, as principais fontes de desinformação.

- A desinformação em ambos os países costuma dirigir-se a candidatos políticos, sistemas eleitorais e propostas políticas específicas, com táticas comuns que incluem imagens falsas, vídeos manipulados e sondagens enganosas. A amplificação da desinformação por parte dos partidos políticos é um fator-chave na sua propagação e na credibilidade percebida.

- O panorama da desinformação em Espanha e Portugal apresenta tanto semelhanças como diferenças, com um aumento notável na partilha de narrativas transfronteiriças, especialmente em torno de questões como a imigração. Ambos os países enfrentam desafios significativos em distinguir entre propaganda política, desinformação e notícias erradas, o que sublinha a necessidade de esforços coordenados para combater essas tendências.

- Um número crescente de jovens (60% em Espanha, 62% em Portugal) utiliza aplicações baseadas em IA, principalmente para tarefas académicas, profissionais e criativas, refletindo o papel crescente da IA na vida diária. Os jovens estão mais confortáveis com as notícias assistidas por IA em comparação com a população geral, especialmente em Espanha.

- Apesar de um maior nível de conforto com as notícias assistidas por IA, a confiança nas notícias geradas por IA, especialmente em áreas sensíveis como a política, continua baixa em ambos os países. Enquanto 31% dos jovens portugueses se sentem confortáveis com as notícias geradas por IA, esse número cai significativamente para 18% nas notícias políticas, indicando um ceticismo geral quanto ao papel da IA na produção de conteúdo político fiável.

- A IA está a ser cada vez mais utilizada na luta contra a desinformação, com ferramentas desenvolvidas para identificar e combater a desinformação após a sua publicação (lógica downstream) ou prevenir proativamente a sua disseminação (lógica upstream). Embora a IA mostre potencial para automatizar a deteção de conteúdo, o seu uso levanta preocupações éticas sobre a transparência, a liberdade de expressão e a privacidade.

- Um levantamento exaustivo sobre 125 projetos, incluindo 52 que utilizam IA e aprendizagem automática (Capítulo 4 deste relatório), revela uma tendência crescente de integrar a IA nos esforços contra a desinformação, muitas vezes com uma combinação de supervisão humana. Iniciativas europeias, como o AI4Trust e o AI-CODE, demonstram a eficácia de combinar ferramentas de IA com a verificação humana, com o objetivo de melhorar a qualidade da informação e apoiar os profissionais dos meios de comunicação no seu trabalho.

- Finalmente, no Capítulo 5 deste relatório, são sugeridas recomendações e boas práticas, fundindo os diferentes tópicos acima resumidos e com o objetivo de fornecer uma base sólida para o trabalho futuro no contexto do SmartVote.

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Regarding SmartVote

The overall objective of the SmartVote project is to ensure that all people have access to, learn about, and use technology to promote their autonomy, increasing their opportunities, strengthening their rights, and encouraging their social participation. More specifically, it addresses the phenomenon of disinformation, especially during referendums and electoral periods, as it distorts the process, values, and purposes of democratic political systems.

With a duration of 3 years and an international consortium led by Fundación Cibervoluntarios, the goal of SmartVote is to develop critical thinking, especially among the youth, combining the development of digital literacy materials with the improvement of an artificial intelligence-based tool to identify disinformation. On the one hand, training programs will be developed for media professionals, educators, and others. On the other hand, a deep learning-based tool with multimodal and multilingual capabilities will analyze social media and provide its users with valuable information for informed decision-making. Approximately halfway through the project's total duration, around spring 2026, the first versions of the materials and the tool will have been developed.

Although everyone is susceptible to being affected by online disinformation, some individuals and groups are especially vulnerable. As this phenomenon is closely linked to the distribution and consumption of information online, particularly on social media, young people between the ages of 18 and 25 meet a triple vulnerability:

- First, they are digital natives. That is, typically more intensive users of social media than the general population.
- Furthermore, they are young voters, so providing adequate tools to combat disinformation represents a democratizing effort in the immediate present, but also in the future.
- Finally, and in line with the above, this is not only a problem that affects potential voters but, from another perspective, journalism students are a special group to consider, since they also represent the role of future journalists as an independent fourth power, reinforcing their key role in our political architecture.

Along with the previously mentioned, there are two cross-cutting considerations of utmost importance. The first is the gender aspect of disinformation, which concerns both issues of sexist content and how men and women typically differ regarding disinformation, whether due to their beliefs, values, or practices. The second consideration points to the territorial context, since disinformation is often specifically related to the specificities of rural or regional contexts.

With this objective in mind, this report constitutes the first milestone of the project. All subsequent work depends on studying the phenomenon of disinformation and how it impacts the youth in its context. The general justification for the importance of young people in the dynamics of contemporary disinformation has already been presented in general terms, and will be expanded and elaborated upon in subsequent sections. Anyways, it is important to highlight that individuals aged 18 to 25 —often considered novice voters— constitute a crucial segment in electoral processes. This group is particularly vulnerable to disinformation campaigns due to their immersion in a digital media environment, where disinformation spreads rapidly, making them vulnerable to tailored swing voting actions.

It is their cognitive and socio-psychological traits that increase that vulnerability: despite being digital natives, many of them demonstrate being affected by emotionally resonant content, asides of a lower political and media literacy that hampers their ability to properly assess the quality of the information. Confirmation bias is further exacerbated by socio-technological reinforcement, like algorithmically curated echo-chambers. Platform-specific message design, for example political memes, can reinforce polarization and reduce skepticism by appealing to humor, identity, or entertainment values.

The awareness of the problem among the youth usually depends on socioeconomic factors such as age, sex, and educational level. It is also noted that the urban or rural nature of the municipality of residence, as well as political alignment, are determining factors in the practices of verifying the information received.

Finally, it is also noted that, beyond being the target of disinformation campaigns, there is less evidence regarding their role as distributors of disinformation. Along with this, although they express awareness of the importance of the phenomenon for democracies, young voters believe they have sufficient capacity to distinguish disinformation despite lacking the appropriate tools. It is also noteworthy that although they recognize the importance of receiving specific training, they ignore its availability or avoid it, due to a lack of time or interest. These considerations justify its treatment as a key group within this project.

Thus, the content of this document will be broken down in the following sections. First, it addresses the phenomenon of disinformation in Spain and Portugal, assessing the connection between disinformation and political mobilization, focusing on young people's usual information channels and associated values and practices in terms of trust, interest, and news avoidance. It will analyze the commonalities and differences between disinformation narratives in Spain and Portugal. Second, it will address the uses and perceptions of AI in news production and reception. Third, it will present a succinct analysis of an extensive catalog of counter-disinformation initiatives, whether or not they are IA-driven. Finally, we will outline the main recommendations and best practices, especially those related to developing media literacy among young people.

1.2. Considering the Iberian context

Spain and Portugal are considered relatively young democracies in the European context, due to their transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic models of governance in the mid-1970's (Cerezales & Soriano, 2023, Badillo-Matos et al., 2023). The constitutional documents for both countries were drafted and approved in 1978 and 1976, respectively, and in both cases principles of press freedom and universal suffrage were enshrined, guaranteeing equal access to vote to all citizens in free and fair elections.

Notwithstanding the similarities in terms of how democracy was established (which, by the way, also extends to Southern European countries such as Greece), both countries developed into significantly different democracies in terms of their political and territorial organisation.

While Spain was established as a democracy in the form of a parliamentary monarchy, Portugal became a parliamentary republic, headed by an elected president.

The structure of both countries is a reflection of internal identity structures, which are much more pronounced in the Spanish case: the country operates in a quasi-federal model based in strong regional governments and, in the case of regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, very active nationalist movements, whereas Portugal is a unitary state, with very limited decentralisation and much more diluted regional identities and frameworks.

As such, regional and autonomic elections in both countries are very different in terms of their impacts and consequences. An additional layer of complexity and diversity is added in Spain by the strong identitarian fragmentation: In addition to Spanish as the official language throughout the territory, there are several co-official languages in different regions (Catalán, Galician, Basque, Valencian).

Table 1. Main aspects of political and territorial organisation in Spain and Portugal

Aspect	Spain	Portugal
State Model	**Decentralized** – Composed of Autonomous regions	**Unitary** – central government with 2 autonomous administrative regions
Subnational Units	17 Autonomous Regions + 2 Autonomous Cities	18 Districts (Distritos) and 2 Autonomous Regions (Azores, Madeira)
Degree of Autonomy	High – own parliaments, regional governments, broad autonomy in areas like health and education	Low to Moderate – Azores and Madeira have regional governments with legislative and political independence, mainland is centrally governed
Constitutional Recognition	Autonomous regions are constitutionally foreseen and protected (1978 Constitution)	Only Azores and Madeira have constitutionally established special status.

Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote.

Therefore, the level of autonomy allowed to Autonomous / Regional governments is very different. While all Spanish autonomous regions have their own governments and legislative parliaments, in the Portuguese case only Azores and Madeira have regional parliaments, with limited autonomy —the heads of the regional governments respond directly to an official appointed by the President of the Republic (Representative of the Republic for the Autonomous of Azores and Madeira— one appointee for each).

The differences in independence levels are quite clear when it comes to aspects such as fiscal policy, for example: in Spain fiscal autonomy is limited, except in some cases, like the Basque Country and Navarra, which have special tax regimes; and in Portugal it is very limited, with slight adaptations. Due to the different political and territorial structures, the amount of elections happening overtime are quite different and with higher impact for regional populations due to Spain's decentralized nature.

Taking a closer look at recent years, and considering only nationwide elections, which normally happen every four years in both countries, we find that while Spain held three general elections (two in 2019 and one in 2023), Portugal held four general elections.

Over the past six years, elections in Portugal have become much more frequent due to rising political instability and the inability for elected parties to form stable governments. More recently, the rise of the right-wing populist party Chega has also significantly changed the distribution of power in the March 10th General Elections of 2024.

The two-party system (PS - Partido Socialista, and PSD - Partido Social Democrata, center-left and center-right, respectively) was disrupted in 2015 when, for the first time, the party that won the elections (PSD) was not able to form a government, and PS governed on the basis of a parliamentary agreement with political forces to its left, thus breaking the traditional arc of governance.

In 2019, new political forces entered the parliament - Livre, Iniciativa Liberal, and Chega, far-left, liberal-right and far-right, respectively - and the so-called Portuguese exceptionalism came to an end, with the election of a member of a populist right-wing party (Chega) to the parliament. Ever since, political instability in national and regional elections has led to successive elections (in the case of the 2019, 2022, 2024 and 2025 legislative elections), which have resulted both from the minority governments difficulties to approve their policies in the parliament, and the association of government members with judicial cases or questions about their ethical (mis)conduct.

In 2024, by electing 50 members in a 230-seat parliament, Chega has announced the end of bipartisanship in Portugal, increasing uncertainty about stable governance solutions in the future, and objectively becoming part of the equation for governability, even if at a speculative level, as Chega as not yet been part of any national government.

In Spain, the political system was also affected by the initial arrival of two new parties in the 2015 general elections (Ciudadanos and Podemos), which changed the traditional two-party system. In the new scenario, repeating elections became more common, due to the difficulty of forming parliamentary majorities.

Table 2. List of elections in Spain and Portugal, 2019 to 2027

	Spain	Portugal
2019	General elections- April 28th Regional elections: Aragón, Asturias, Canarias, Cantabria, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, Extremadura, Baleares, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra, La Rioja – April 28th European elections - May 26th Regional elections: Aragón, Madrid, Ceuta, Melilla - May 26th Municipal elections -May 26th General elections - November 10th	European elections - May 25th Regional elections (Madeira) September 22nd General elections - October 6th
2020	Regional elections: Euskadi - July 12nd	Regional elections (Azores) October 25th
2021	Regional elections: Cataluña February 14th Regional elections: Madrid - May 4th	Presidential elections - January 24th Municipal / Local elections - September 26th
2022	Regional elections: Castilla y León - February 13th Regional elections: Andalucia - June 19th	General elections - January 30th
2023	Regional elections: Aragón, Asturias, Baleares, Canarias, Cantabria, Castilla La Mancha, Extremadura, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra, Valencia, Ceuta and Melilla - May 28 Municipal elections - May 28th General slections - July 23	Regional elections (Madeira) September 24th
2024	Regional elections: Galicia - February 18th Regional elections: Euskadi - April 21st Regional elections: Cataluña - May 12th European elections - June 9	Regional elections (Azores) - February 4th General elections - March 10th Regional elections (Madeira) May 26th European elections - June 9
2025	None (at the date of publication of this report)	General elections - May 18th Municipal / Local elections – October 12th
2026	Regional elections: Andalucia, Castilla y León*	Presidential elections – January*
2027	Regional and local elections. * General elections.*	None (at the date of publication of this report)

Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. * Election date to be determined.

Otherwise, the turning point in terms of disinformation began with the 2018 Andalusian elections. On election night, December 2, turnout radically changed the Andalusian political landscape. For the second time since 1982, turnout in the Andalusian Parliament elections fell below 60%. The PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) recorded its worst result in a regional election in this region, surpassing the million-vote barrier by just 9,000 votes.

Meanwhile, the Popular Party (PP) got 749,000 votes; Ciudadanos got 660,000; Adelante Andalucía got 584,000; and Vox, the big surprise, got 396,000. The combined PP, Ciudadanos, and Vox achieved an absolute majority in the Andalusian Parliament, and the PSOE lost the Andalusian government after 37 years (Magallón-Rosa et al, 2019).

Although each electoral process has its own dynamics linked to current events and current debate topics, electoral disinformation narratives are increasingly global and they adapt themselves to different elections, combining local stories and protagonists.

From this point of view, there are several factors that explain the relevance that electoral campaigns have acquired, but the most important is the strategic culmination of permanent campaigns around a final moment of emotional saturation, the voting decision (Magallón-Rosa, 2023).

Furthermore, the Spanish general elections of April 28, 2019 —which preceded the European elections by a month— seem to be a worthy case regarding disinformation evolution, given that they were held in a climate of maximum alertness regarding the potential persuasiveness of false information (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020).

Overall, Spain displays higher levels of polarisation, magnified by social media, affecting electoral disinformation and fostering negative behaviors towards news, whereas Portugal, while less polarised, also shows increasing saturation, selective exposure and news avoidance, particularly among younger people (Badillo-Matos et al., 2023, Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024, Cardoso et al., 2024).

Negative behaviors towards politics, elections, and participation are also common among young people in both countries, with voter turnout being lower in this demographic. In the 2009 European elections in Spain, approximately 65% of young people abstained from voting (Bouza, 2014) although in other instances spaniards below 25 have been known to mobilise in particularly sensitive moments - in the 2019 European elections voter turnout increased by 14 pp. compared to previous elections (European Parliament, 2023).

In Portugal, researchers highlight that absenteeism is becoming a habit among young people below 35, in particular in the 18-24 demographic (Durães, 2024), and that extremist parties on the left and right are the only ones able to mobilise young or inactive voters (Pequito et al., 2024). While this trend may be identified in both countries, in Spain there have been significant shifts among the Spanish youth, with rising antifeminism speech and nostalgia for authoritarianism (Jones, 2025).

In both countries, and despite above and aforementioned differences, factors influencing youth electoral participation can be summed in: the feeling that politics does not represent their interests, decreased interest in politics at all, economic insecurity, unemployment and low job security than previous generations, and differences in territorial perceived identity (much more pronounced in Spain, where regional identity often shadows national and European identity).

Both countries have gone and are going through drastic digitalisation via platformisation in recent years. Portuguese people consecutively display high levels of trust in news but trust in news rates drop considerably in digital environments, and Spanish media operate in a more polarised environment, with growing presence of partisan digital ecosystems. Albeit less polarised, and with more moderate political discourse, there is increased concern regarding echo-chambers associated with the rise of far-right political relevance.

Considering the response to disinformation at a governmental and political level, Spain has developed a more solid response structure, like the Forum Against Disinformation Campaigns, an interministerial working group in alignment with European security strategies (Vicente, 2023).[1] Portugal, on the other hand, has taken a softer approach based on the guarantee of rights and freedoms with a strong emphasis on freedom of expression with less centralised actions against disinformation (Assembleia da República, 2021, Pardal & Narciso, 2023).

These ongoing dynamics happen in a very specific context in 2025, with heightened political shifts at a global level and the development of AI at a rapid pace, with fears of it being used as a disinformation amplifier, with higher potential for microtargeting voters, a regulatory framework that is still lacking, and a media ecosystem still learning to maximise the opportunities of AI in fact-checking and content moderation.

[1] See: https://www.dsn.gob.es/foro-desinfo

2. State of electoral disinformation in Spain and Portugal

2. State of electoral disinformation in Spain and Portugal

2.1. Gauging the relationship to news, political mobilization and disinformation

2.1.1. Sources of news and political information

In Spain, social media is the top source for information on political and social issues (42%) with TV running a close second (39%). About one in four respondents access news via online media and / or news platforms (26%), friends, family or colleagues (25%) and video platforms (European Parliament, 2025). While data for Spain follows a closer pattern to the one displayed by other Europeans, prioritizing social media over TV (49% over 44%). Flash Eurobarometer data for Portugal points in the same direction as other sources, such as the Digital News Report, with TV prevailing over social media by 13 pp. —53% against 40% (European Parliament, 2025).

Figure 1. Main sources for news, Spain and Portugal, 2024
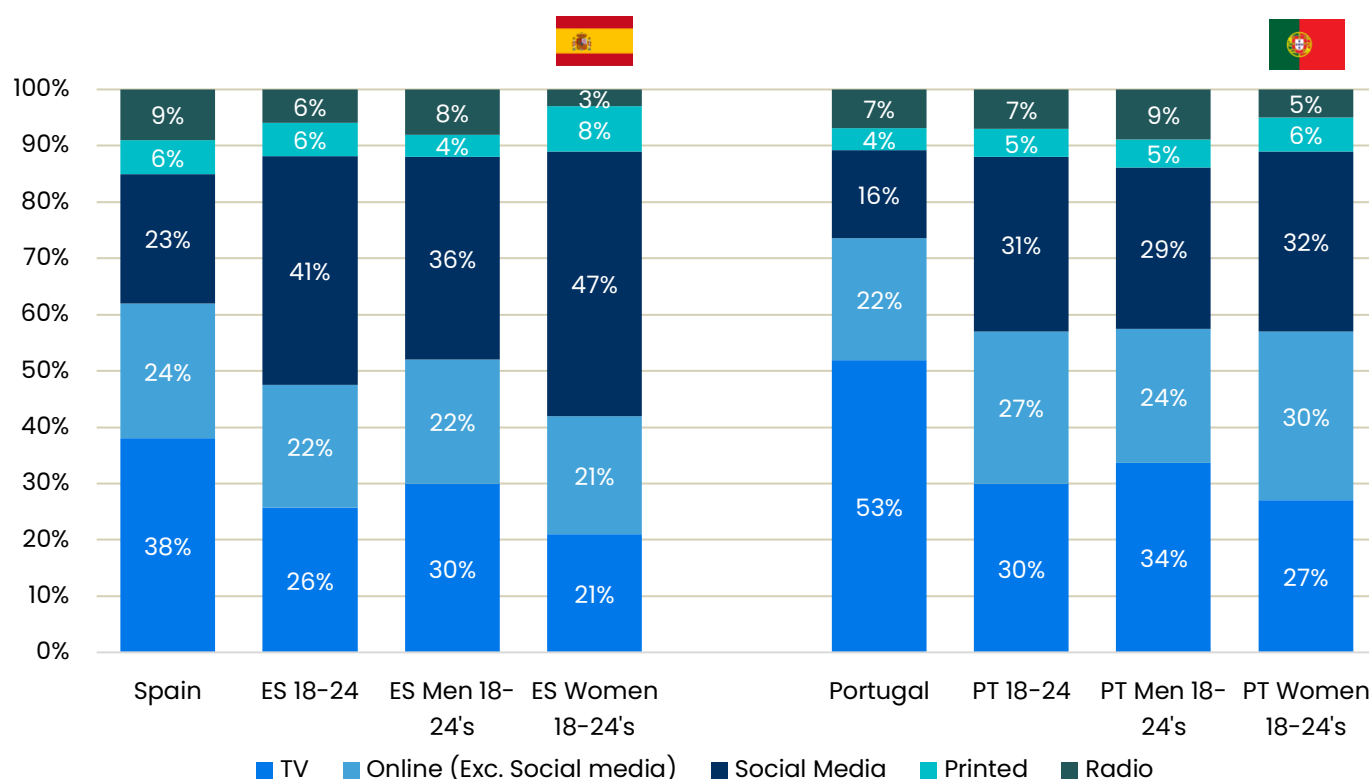
Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024 Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries.

Digital News Report data also points towards these trends although with added nuance (Figure 1). In the case of Portugal, the proportion of 18-24's who rely primarily on TV for news is about the same as those who prefer social media (30% and 31%, respectively) while in the case of Spain the differences are considerable, of 41% against 26%, as seen in Figure 1 (Cardoso, et al., 2024, Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024).

In line with the general trends regarding news sources, the majority of young people (56%) use social media to stay informed about the European Union, specifically, although about half the sample of the Youth and Democracy report also use TV to stay on top of EU related news (European Commission, 2024). Interestingly, there is also a significant proportion of people (33%) using either online media, podcasts and / or news platforms, which suggests that this particular demographic resorts to multiple sources to stay up-to-date in regards to Europe related news.

Although there are methodological aspects to consider, such as the difference in age of analyzed respondents (Flash Eurobarometer reports covers 16-30's and DNR 18-24's) or the difference in questioning (first asks about what sources people use, the second one asks respondents to point out the main one), the Digital News Report data allows for a slightly more detailed view of the 18-24 age bracket.

Spanish young women are much more likely to use social media over TV than the general sample or than men – 47% use mainly social media against 21% who prefer TV. In the Portuguese case, it is the male 18-24 bracket that stands out, as seen in the general sample, young men prefer TV over social media. In Portugal's case, despite the higher adoption rates of social media in general and for news by younger people, the preference for TV is the same as that identified among older individuals (Cardoso et al., 2024).

Access to digital news in both countries is different in some aspects (Figure 2, next page). Direct access to news websites is at an all-time low, with only 15% and 16% of access to online news in Spain and Portugal happening directly. The importance of search also appears to be similar, with about one third of accesses in Spain, and slightly less in Portugal, happening via search engines (either by searching for a brand or a keyword associated with the news) (Cardoso et al., 2024, Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024).

However, we do find some differences when it comes to social media, which is more prevalent in Spain (28% of accesses) than in Portugal (20%). The Portuguese have more fragmented habits in this instance, opting in larger proportion to other forms of access to digital news content such as e-mail newsletters (9% vs. 5% in Spain) or mobile alerts (17% against 8%, respectively).

Figure 2. Main gateway to online news, Spain and Portugal, 2024
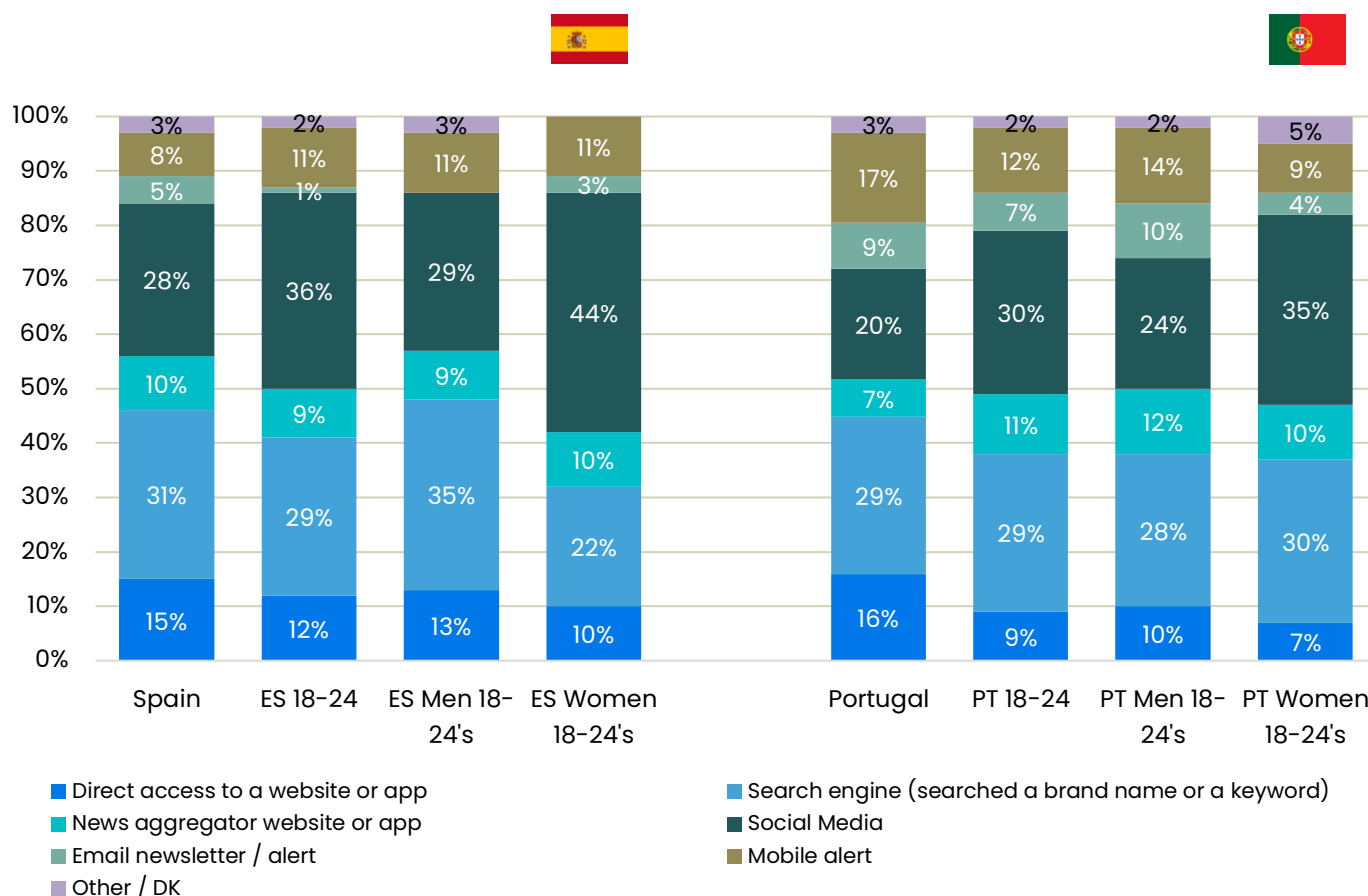
Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries.

Looking at the habits of 18-24's in both countries, it is visible that younger women are much keener on social media for news (44%) than men (29%), the latter preferring either search entries or direct access (35% and 13%, against 22% and 10% in women).

Differences in the proportion between young women and men using social media as the main gateway for news are as pronounced in Portugal as in Spain (35% and 44%, respectively).

As for the fragmentation among lateral forms of access, we find that this is truer in younger men than women, as male 18-24's are more likely to access news using e-mail newsletters or mobile alerts (10% and 14% against 4% and 9%). (Cardoso et al., 2024, Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024).

Figure 3. Use of algorithmic tools as the main gateway to news, Spain and Portugal, 2024
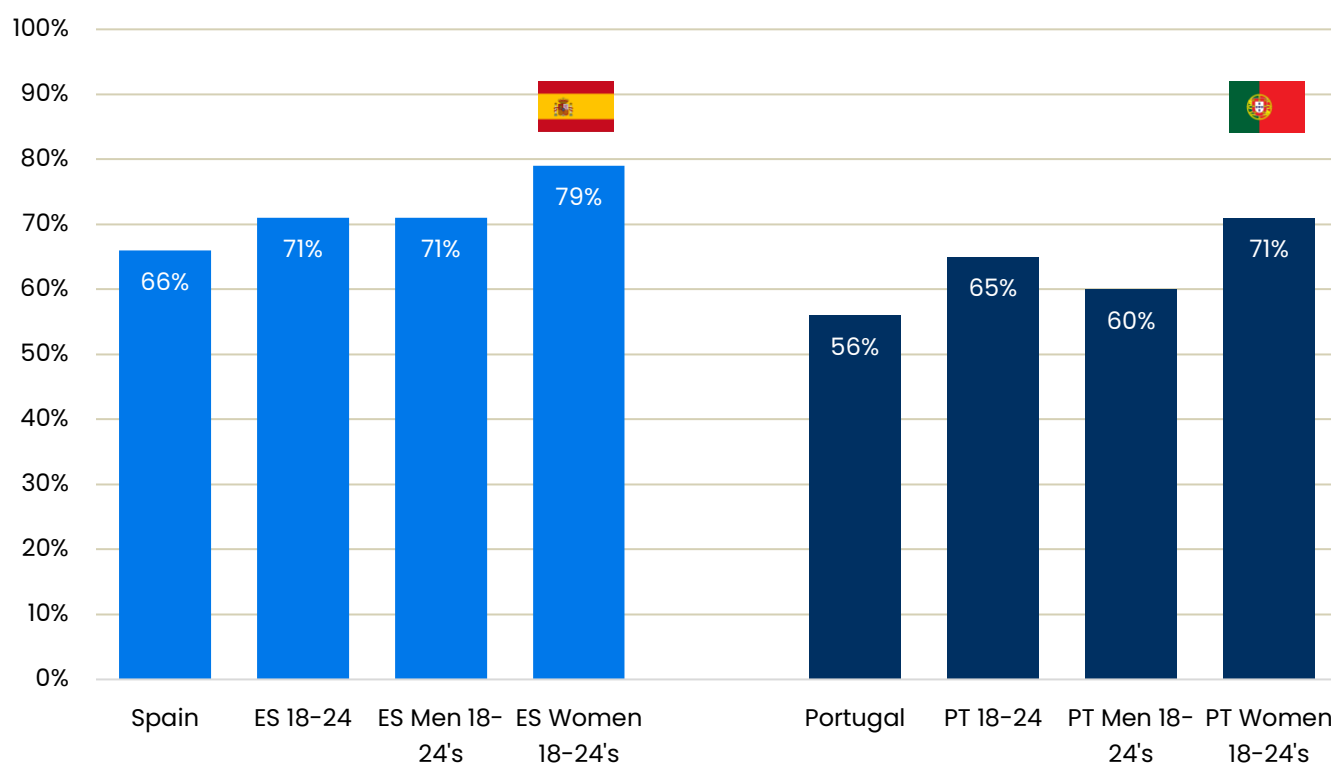
Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries.

Looking at an aggregation of all algorithmic tools which may be used to access online news, it is visible that these tools are more common in Spain than in Portugal and, also, that 18-24's are more likely to rely on these than the overall population.

However, this is particularly true when it comes to young women, who rely more on gateways such as social media for news gathering than men —44% against 29% in Spain and 35% against 24% in Portugal.

The composition of social media diets is also distinct in both countries, notwithstanding the fact that both the Spanish and Portuguese societies are pronouncedly multi-network when it comes to using social media as a way of accessing news.

Figure 4. Social Media usage for news, 18-24's, Spain and Portugal, 2024

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries.

Instagram is now the most common source of news regarding political and social issues (47%) followed by TikTok (39%) and YouTube (37%) in Europe. X and WhatsApp are used by lower proportions of young people – 21% and 16% (European Parliament, 2024).

Other research covering Portugal suggests a higher prevalence of Instagram as well, but of YouTube and X ranking considerably lower. Data for Spain shows a much more fragmented social media landscape among young people, with Instagram, X, and YouTube having similar weight in news consumption.

2.1.2. Trust, interest and avoidance

Analyzed in parallel, data on trust, interest in news, and news avoidance for Spain and Portugal highlight both similarities and differences. When it comes to the objective evaluation of the state of the information and journalistic ecosystem, Portugal ranks historically high in the Press Freedom Index (6th out of 180 countries), whereas Spain is ranked 30th, due to the contamination of media environments by political polarization and lower trust in journalism. Portugal, on the other hand, is less polarized, but journalists and media brands face economic, legal, and security challenges (Reporters Without Borders, 2024).

Figure 5. Trust in news in general, Spain and Portugal, 2015 to 2024

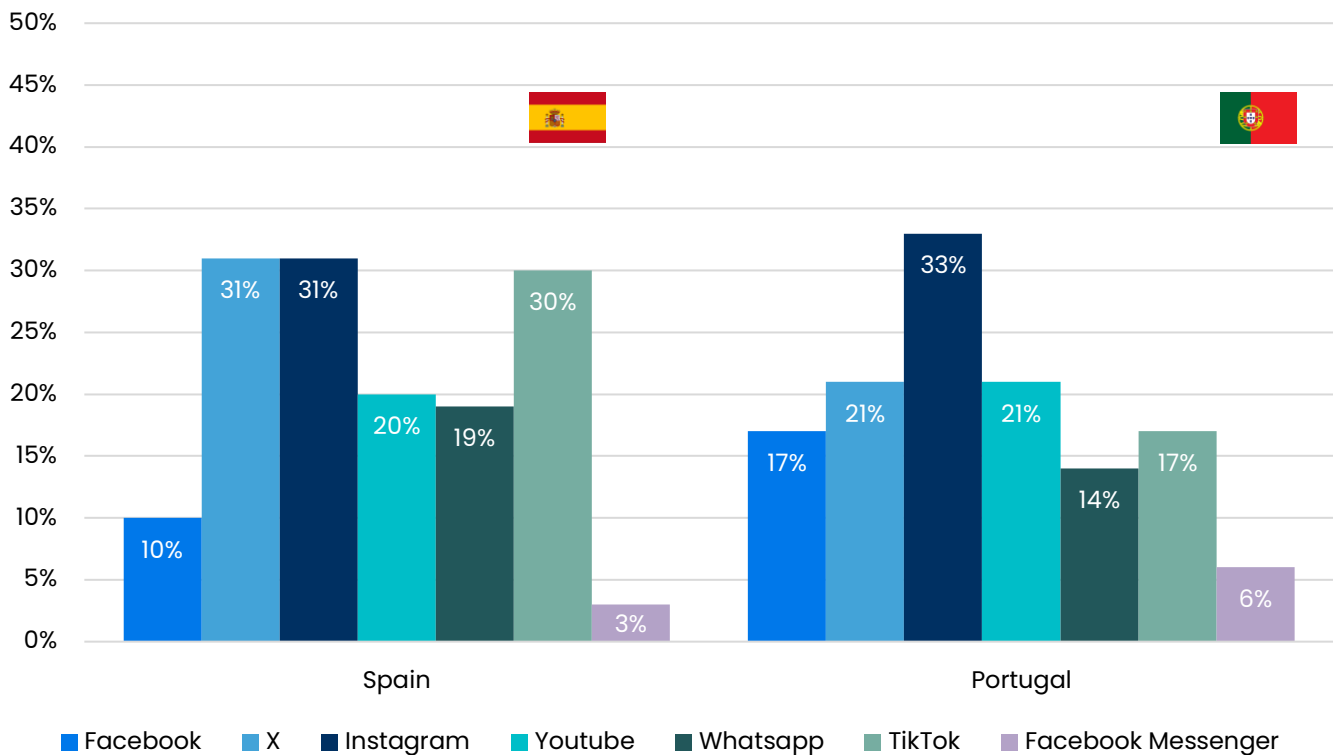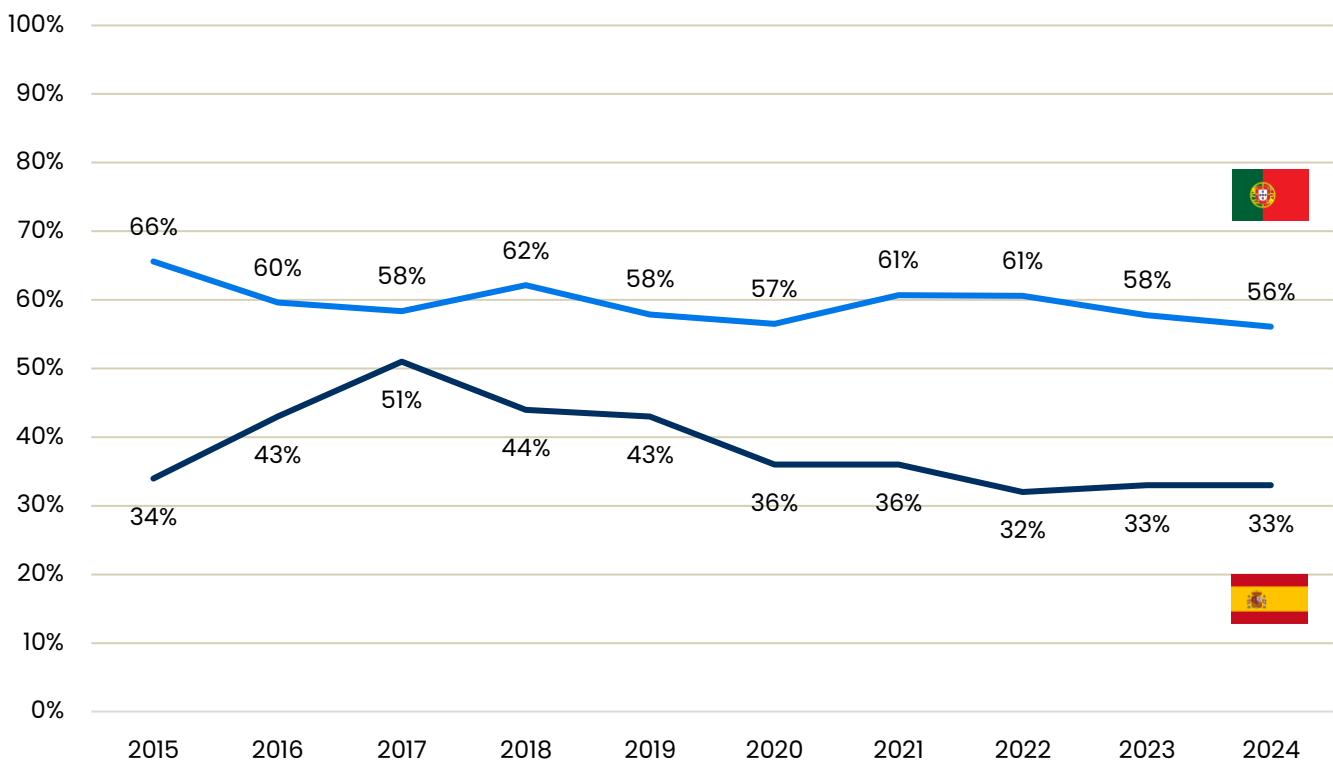Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who agree or totally agree with the statement "I think you can trust most news most of the time".

Digital News Report data underlines the stark difference between both countries, trust-wise. 56% of Portuguese people say they trust the news, compared to a third of the Spanish respondents in the same report (Cardoso et al., 2024, Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024). The trust rate for Spain fell considerably from the 51% reported in 2017. As for Portugal, over the past ten years they have witnessed a 10 pp. decline from the 66% in 2015.

Focusing attention on the 18-24's demographic, the picture is bleak for Spain, as only one-fifth of these respondents (19%) claim to trust the news, while in Portugal trust rates are much higher and similar between the overall population and younger citizens (53%).

Trust figures have been known to vary widely from country to country, and for different reasons, although one overall trend is that since 2015 —especially in the aftermath of Brexit and the 2016 US presidential election— trust has become a much more complex and nuanced indicator to read and interpret, as it has become much more volatile to the overlap with fields such as politics, economics and with disinformation topics related to the pandemic or the Ukraine War.

Figure 6. Trust in news in general - 18 to 24, Spain and Portugal, 2015 to 2024

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who agree or totally agree with the statement "I think you can trust most news most of the time".
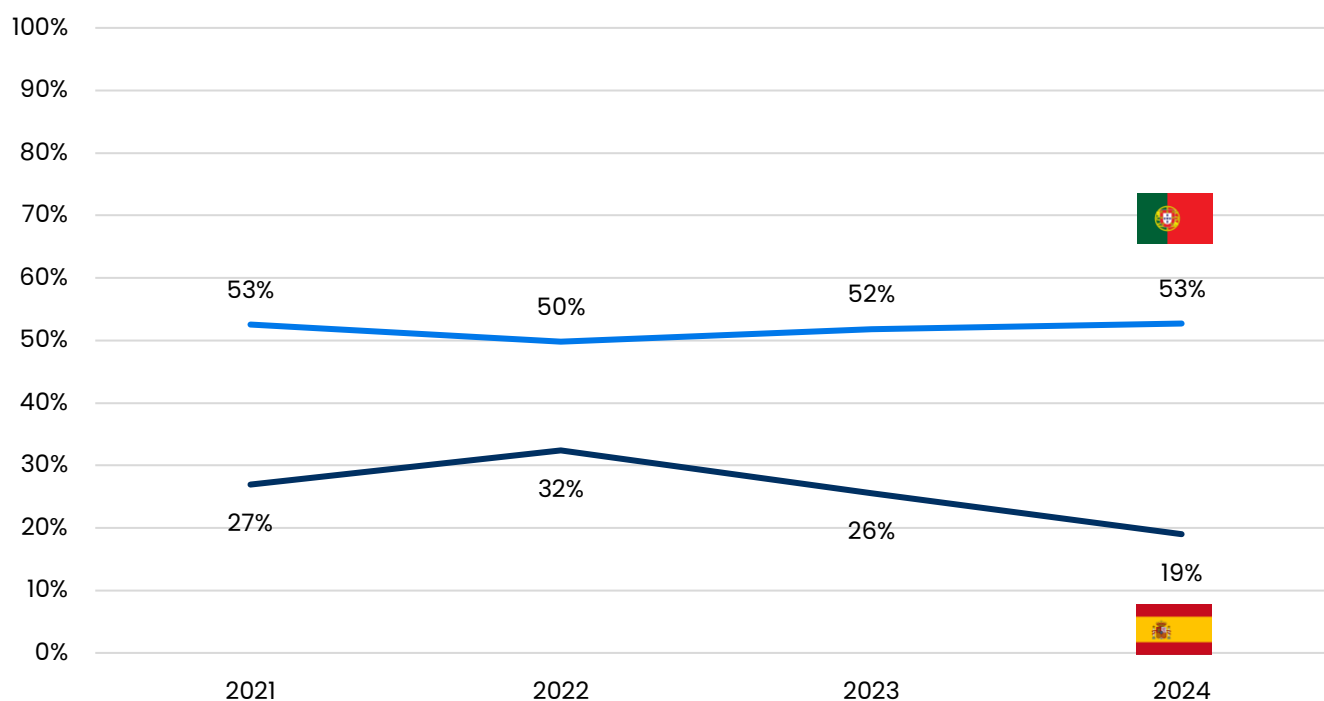
A closer look at the aftermath of the pandemic, 2021 to 2024, shows diverging trends among Spanish and Portuguese 18-24's: whereas trust levels have been stable /slightly rising in Portugal, in Spain trust figures have dropped 13 pp. since 2022. The country ranks particularly low in the international outlook, and the authors of the Digital News Report 2024 state that Spain is one of 15 countries in 47 with negative net trust, i.e., the proportion of people distrusting the news is 6 pp. higher than the proportion of people who trust. Among 18-24's this net trust is even worse, with 56% saying that you cannot trust most news most of the time —a difference of 37 pp. (Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024).

Considering the interest in news, rates are quite similar for both countries in 2024, with about half of the population declaring to be interested in news (52% for Spain and 51% for Portugal). However, longitudinal analysis points out that interest has dipped in both countries compared to 2015, when more than 8 out of 10 Spanish and 7 out of 10 Portuguese respondents claimed to trust news —85% and 70%, respectively, meaning a 33 pp. and a 19 pp. drop in each country, also respectively.

Figure 7. Interest in news, Spain and Portugal, 2015 to 2024

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are extremely and very interested in news.

The 18-24 age group displays considerably lower interest rates compared to the national samples for both countries, with about one-third of younger individuals claiming to be interested in news (34% for Spain and 32% for Portugal). As in the overall sample, Spanish and Portuguese 18-24's display very close interest levels, and in both cases, there is a considerable dip in interest in the aftermath of the pandemic.

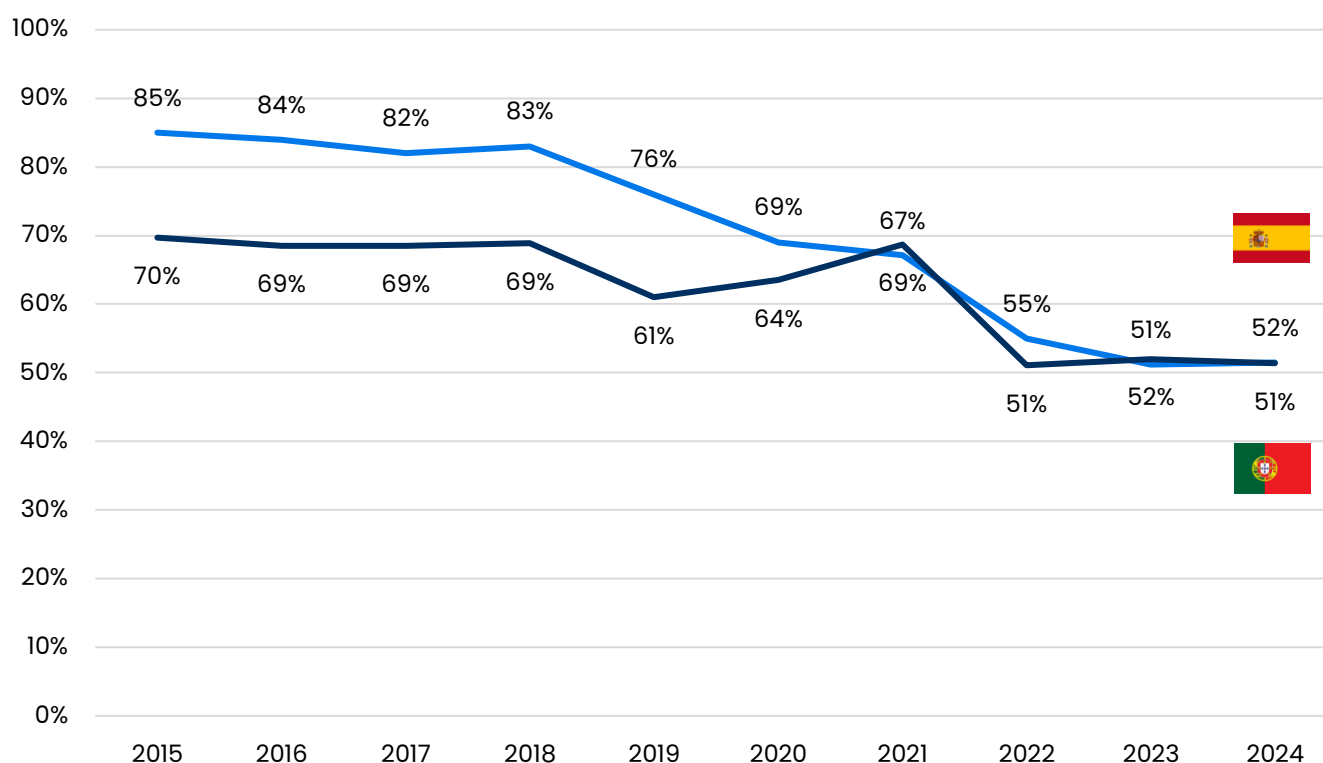**Figure 8. Interest in news - 18 to 24, Spain and Portugal, 2015 to 2024**

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are extremely and very interested in news.

News avoidance has been on the rise in several European countries, with different societies displaying diverging avoidance patterns: countries in Eastern Europe are more likely to avoid news altogether because of the prevalence of Ukraine war-related content, and the geographical proximity to the area where the conflict is taking place. Avoidance patterns in Western Europe tend to be more selective, with people opting to spend less time with news or avoiding specific topics such as pandemic related information and politics (particularly around electoral when people tend to become more saturated with the monothematic coverage) (Newman et al., 2023, Newman et al., 2024).

![smartvote logo]

Figure 9. News avoiders, Spain and Portugal, 2024

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who often / sometimes avoid the news.

Avoidance rates for Spain and Portugal are quite close, at 37% and 38%, respectively, but looking at the 18-24 demographic, we come across different scenarios: younger news users in Spain are more likely to avoid news more often (43%) while in Portugal it's the exact opposite (35%). Adding the gender variable to the analysis, it is visible that in the case of Spain, men and women aged 18 to 24 avoid news in about the same proportion, whereas in Portugal, men are considerably more likely to display avoidance behaviors (38% compared to 31% of women).

2.1.3. Perceptions and attitudes towards disinformation

Perceptions and attitudes towards disinformation are particularly complex to gauge, as they are highly volatile and permeable to subjective interpretations and the differences between knowledge systems, beliefs, and perceptions of wider social and political phenomena. As such, country comparisons based on perceived disinformation, its volume, range, and topics must always be equated with the specific national context. As mentioned in the introduction, in the Iberian case, there are stark differences in terms of politics, territorial organization, and administration, and also at a cultural, social and historical level.

Figure 10. Concern about what is real or fake online, Portugal and Spain, 2020 to 2024
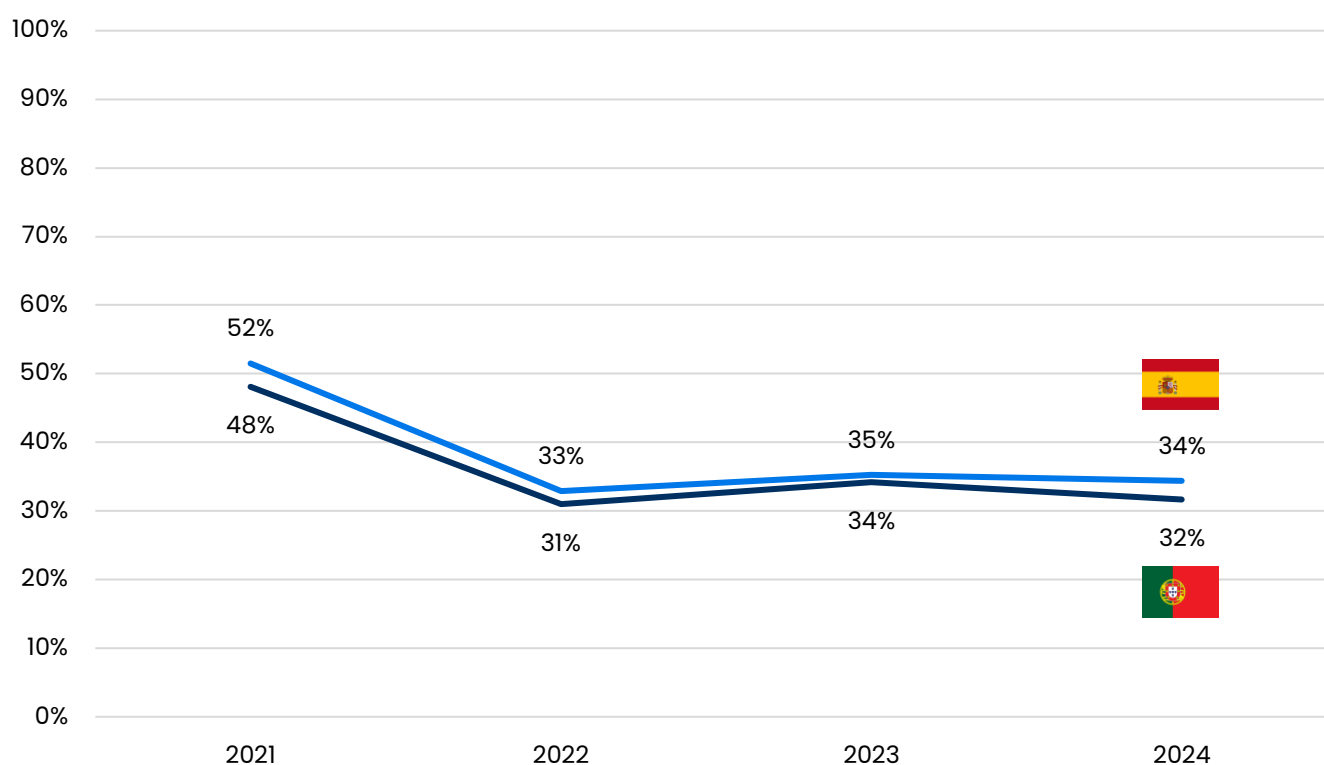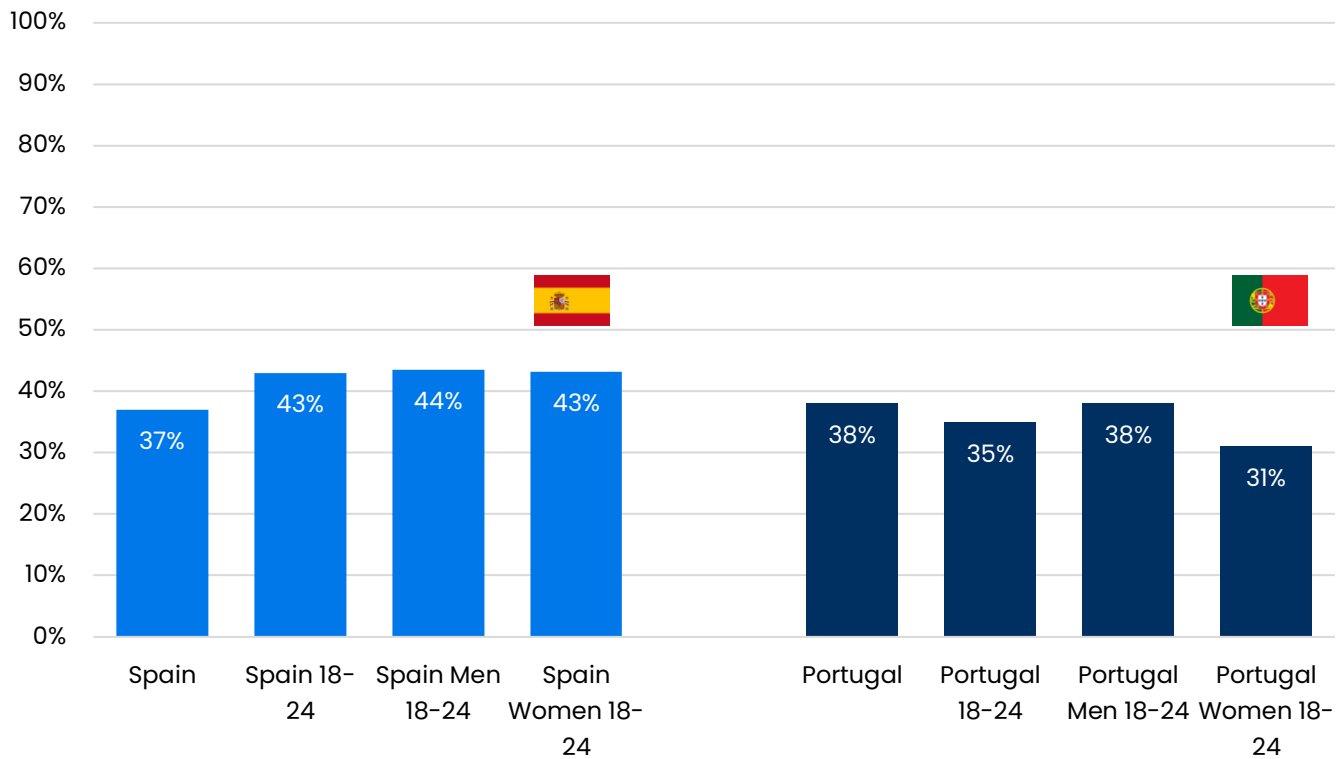

Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who strongly agree or tend to agree that they are concerned about what is real and what is fake on the internet.

Despite these differences, a similar trend is observed on the perception of disinformation measured by the concern about online disinformation, with the wider national samples revealing higher concern compared to their younger subsets of respondents: about 7 out of 10 people in Spain and Portugal (70% and 72%) are concerned about what is real and fake online whereas concern rates for 18-24's is at 63% and 60%, respectively. European Commission data (2018) mentions that about 80% of Spaniards often find news that distorts reality or is false, and the same proportion says that disinformation is a problem in Spain, and 83% believe disinformation is a problem for democracy. As for Portugal, 75% claim to encounter disinformation frequently, a proportion similar to the one in Digital News Report data.

Figure 11. Concern about what is real or fake online , 18-24, Portugal and Spain, 2020 to 2024

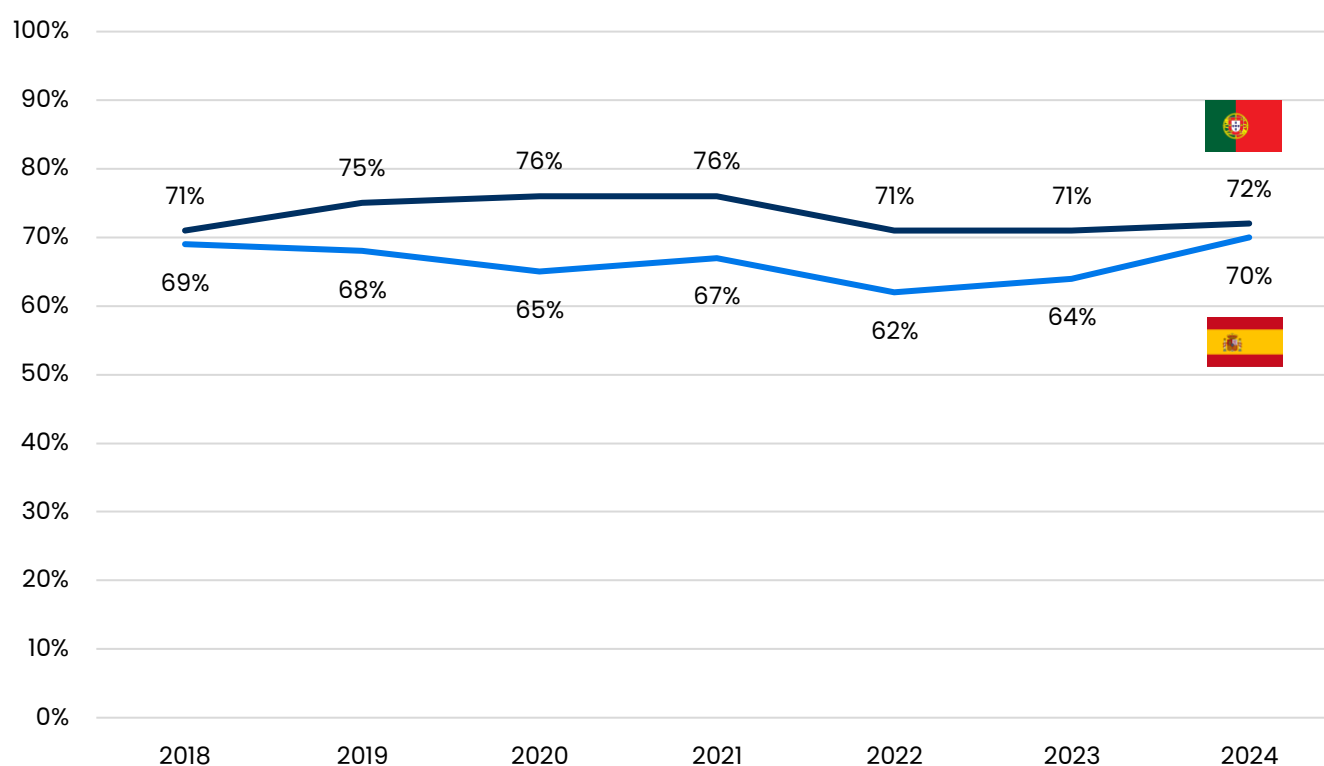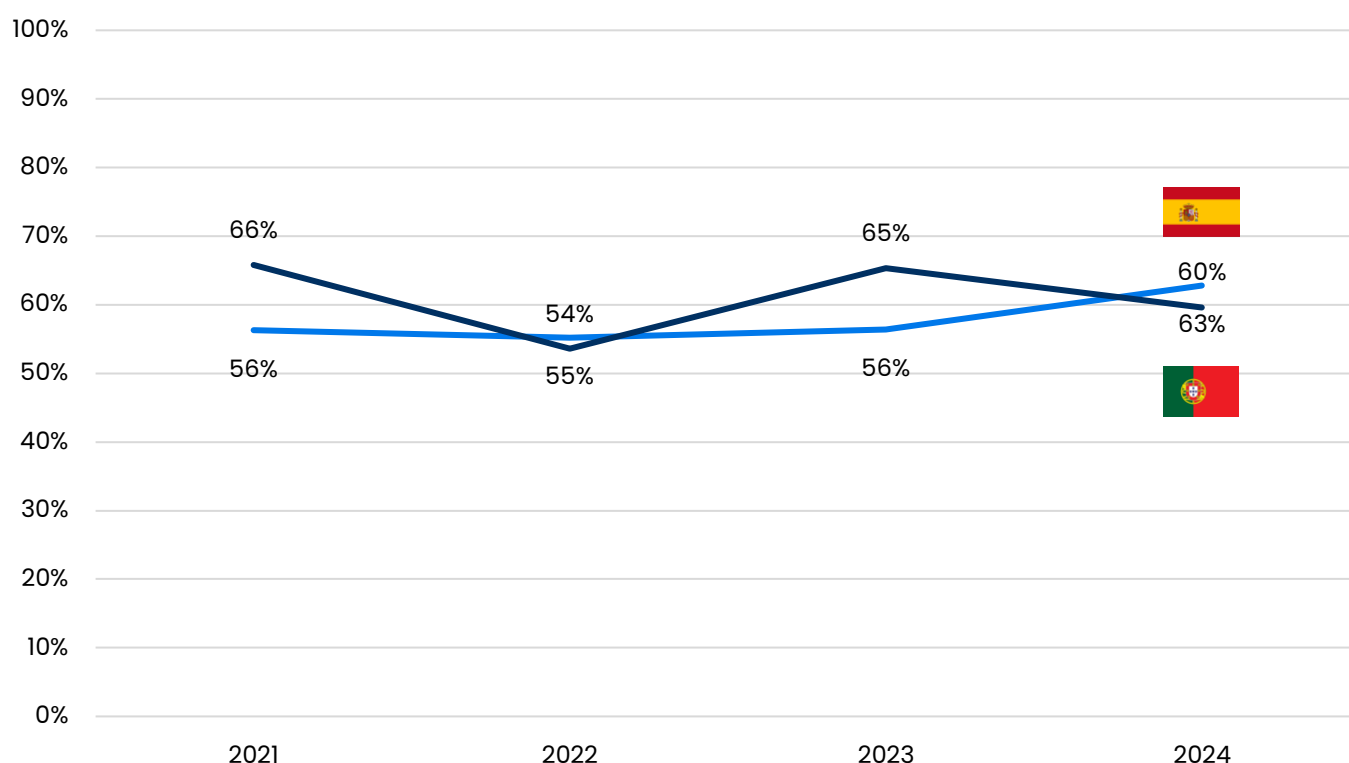Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≃2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who strongly agree or tend to agree that they are concerned about what is real and what is fake on the internet.

Concern about disinformation is lower among younger individuals in both countries, and younger people also tend to state, in a higher proportion, to not be worried about online disinformation. Concern also tends to be higher among those with higher education and wages. Despite the weight of sociodemographic factors in explaining concern about disinformation, a set of other factors appears to be determinant: high interest and high trust in news, especially when combined, are among the stronger predictors of awareness regarding disinformation (Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024, Cardoso et al., 2024).

2.1.4. Activism and mobilisation

Unlike most EU countries, Spanish and Portuguese young people value freedom of speech and thought higher than the protection of human rights, democracy, and peace – EU 41% vs. 45%, Spain 46% vs. 44%, and Portugal 49% vs. 51%. European young women are more likely than their male counterparts to value the protection of human rights, democracy and peace, gender equality, tolerance and respect for diversity in society, the fight against discrimination, and the protection of minorities (European Parliament, 2025).

Although young people are very active in participating in a wide range of organizations, participation in societal change actions is slightly lower – 64% have engaged in activities in at least one organization, whereas 48% have mobilized in actions to change society. These include signing petitions, participating in rallies, or contacting politicians (European Commission, 2024). European Parliament data (2025) also highlights the importance of human rights and climate change as triggers for activism among younger Europeans.

Although these rank close to issues such as health/well-being or rights equality in gender, race or sexuality highlighting the fragmented concerns across different topics, complementary European Commission data (2024) suggests that young people are also concerned about topics such as inflation, the economy (namely employment) and social protection, even if these particular issues are not sufficient to trigger effective action and social or political participation.

In Spain and Portugal, data on young activism follows EU trends closely, both in terms of the size of said participation and the causes which motivate it. However, there are slight differences between both: while Portugal stands closer to the EU averages, in Spain the issues related to equality, either of gender, race or sexuality, are at the top of mind among the Spanish youth, outranking themes such as human rights or climate change – close to one in every four young people in Spain claim to be motivated to action by equalitarian causes (38%), about the same proportion in Portugal are mobilized by human rights (39%).

It should be noticed that despite having their social and political interests divided among several issues, some topics may be more influential in shaping youth activism and/or political participation such as mental health, an issue that has personally impacted more than 46% of young people in the recent past (European Commission, 2024), and public debate and attention is also growing.

The dynamics surrounding overall interest in politics point towards considerably higher interest in young 18 to 24 men compared to the overall age group and women: in Spain, 33% of young men claim to be interested in politics, against 16% of women, and in Portugal we find a similar situation, in proportions of 28% and 15%, respectively.

Figure 12. Interest in politics, Spain and Portugal, 2015 to 2024
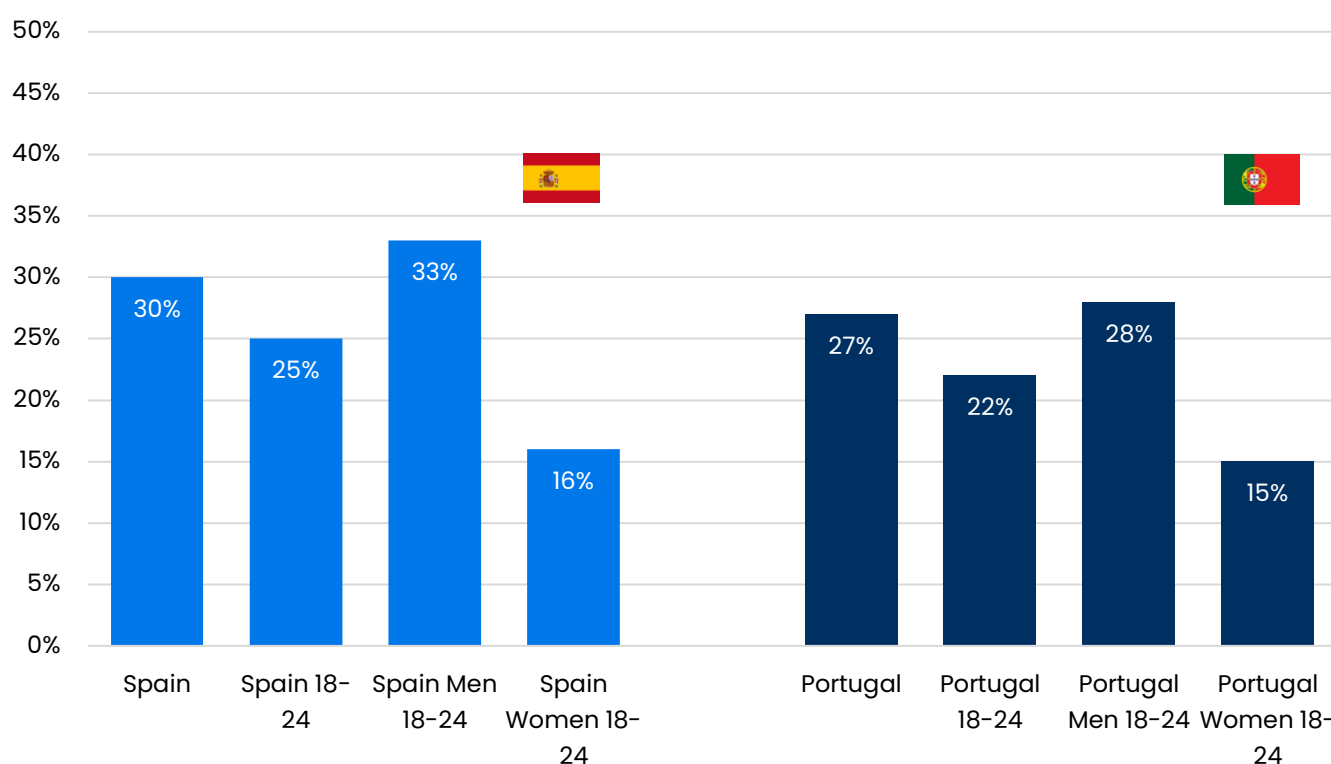
Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are extremely and very interested in politics.

Historical analysis of voter turnout suggests that in most countries women have lower voter turnout compared to men (Portugal is a particularly representative case for this), even though in some specific cases, such as Sweden in particular, and Scandinavia in general, women tend to largely outperform men in electoral turnout (Rapp & Schweizer, 2024).

As the influence of identity and belonging becomes more complex, so does the ability to identify the motivations for mobilization and voting, as these depend not only on personal characteristics but also on social, cultural, historical, and economic factors that influence context and are changed by it.

For instance, despite being recognizably favorable towards the European Union (64% say they are), 32% of young people argue that despite being favorable, they do not agree with the way Europe works presently, and evidence suggests that national and country identity remains the key factor for personal attachment (32%), and European identity are less strong in these terms (15% say they are attached to Europe).

Geographical and political aspects also matter. Despite having joined the European Union at the same time, in 1986, and having about the same proportion of young people declaring to feel attached to Europe – 14% in Spain and 15% in Portugal – the feeling of belonging to the local and regional community is much higher in Spain (26% against 18%) and the attachment to national identity stronger in Portugal (37% compared to 28%).

Regardless of whatever aspects lead to mobilization, the most common forms of participation are voting in any election (39%), followed by creating or signing petitions (on paper or online) (26%). Actions such as volunteering for a charity or campaign, sharing your opinion online, or boycotting certain products are less common, mentioned by about 1 in every 5 individuals.

A percentage of 15% are total absentees, claiming to not engage in any way with any of the activities, and specific data on absenteeism during the June 2024 European election shows that having other commitments is the most common reason to have skipped the vote (16%), followed by the lack of information to support a choice (16%) and the absence of a candidate that reflects their views (15%). Also, 15% display general distrust or dissatisfaction with politicians and politics (European Parliament, 2024).

2.2. Disinformation narratives in Portuguese and Spanish elections

The topic of disinformation in election campaigns has become increasingly important, especially after the 2016 presidential election in the United States (Faris et al., 2017), where it was suspected that foreign disinformation may have influenced the election result (Bovet & Makse, 2019). Since 2016, disinformation in elections has been described as a recurring phenomenon (Bader, 2018), with studies pointing to incidents in the Brexit referendum (Cervi & Carrillo-Andrade, 2019), during the Covid-19 pandemic (European Commission, 2020), but also in various elections in several European countries, including the UK (Vaccari et al., 2023), Italy (Pierri et al., 2020) France (Ferrara, 2017), Germany (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2020) and also Spain (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Cano-Óron et al., 2021; Maldita,, 2023) and Portugal (Cardoso et al., 2020; Baptista & Gradim, 2022; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Casquinho et al., 2024b).

In an electoral context, disinformation campaigns usually involve the repetition of false information, the manipulation of news, studies, and polls, as well as the general discrediting of political opponents (Bader, 2018; Bendiek & Schulze, 2019). When disinformation directly targets political candidates, it often involves fabricated statements, personal relationships, and policies, while stories about parties tend to revolve around proposals, secret alliances, and supposed beneficiaries of policies (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019). As Paniagua-Rojano et al. (2020) note, stories about electoral disinformation are sometimes reproduced across multiple elections and in different countries.

Contextually, as Zimmermann & Kohring (2020) have shown, the less people trust the news media and politics in election campaigns, the more they tend to believe in disinformative content. It has also been observed that receiving campaign news from professional news organizations correlates with the ability to distinguish true from false information (Vaccari et al., 2023). Overall, it is important to emphasize the danger that disinformation can have in elections by influencing results, but also by inflicting several structural effects, such as "(…) the polarization of society or distrust in and delegitimization of democratic processes and institutions." (Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, 2022, pp.5-6.)

From a conceptual point of view, the study of disinformation in election campaigns requires a clear definition of disinformation. In this report, we follow the definition proposed by the European Union's High-Level Group of Experts (HLEG), which defines disinformation as "the creation, presentation and dissemination of verifiably false or misleading information for the purposes of economic gain or intentionally deceiving the public, and which may cause public harm".

Despite the general adaptability of the definition proposed by the HLEG, we believe it is important to also consider the categorization proposed by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), which specifies that misinformation is shared without the intention to cause harm; disinformation is deliberately created and disseminated with the intention to deceive; and malinformation is based on reality but decontextualized to cause harm.

Furthermore, in this report, we tend to avoid terms such as "fake news" as they are generally ambiguous and lack conceptual development. Many authors have approached this term (Tandoc et al., 2018; Coady, 2019 Dentith, 2017; Gelfort, 2018, Lilleker, 2017, Meinert et al., 2018) and generally conclude that it is somewhat convoluted, used as a "catch-all term" (Lilleker, 2017) and often employed by political actors and their supporters as a means to suppress opinions that contradict them and to degrade their opposition, as well as media organizations.

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, this chapter will mainly focus on electoral disinformation studies conducted online. Overall, interest in social media, particularly Twitter/X, in the analysis of political campaigns increased after the Obama campaign in the 2008 presidential election in the United States, which was recognized for its success in mobilizing voters (Maarek, 2014). Despite the possibilities of social media, it is often observed that political representatives do not employ these platforms to interact directly with their supporters but rather pursue a general informational strategy (López-Garcia et al., 2016; Waisbord & Amado, 2017, Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019). Regardless of this, the online activities of politicians during political campaigns generally increase as the campaign draws to a close (Maarek, 2014, López-Garcia et al., 2016).

Studies on disinformation on the Internet during elections have shown that identifying false narratives is not always an easy process. As Casquinho et al. (2024a) note, the distinction between what is disinformation and merely freedom of expression can be difficult to access and may be conditioned by an individual's political preference. Additionally, Cano-Óron et al. (2021) conclude that distinguishing between advertising, propaganda, and disinformation on social media can be a difficult exercise.

Previously, it has been suggested that disinformation, especially in relation to politics, spreads more quickly on social media (Vosoughi et al., 2018) and that these platforms can contribute to the development of echo chambers and filter bubbles (Colleoni et al., 2014; Saurwein & Spencer-Smith, 2021). Furthermore, the use of social media platforms as a source of political campaign news seems to be related to the difficulty of distinguishing between true and false information (Vaccari et al., 2023). This conjecture makes social media platforms a fundamental object of study to understand and prevent the spread of disinformation, especially during elections.

In the following subsections, we will present different studies that analyze disinformation in elections in the Portuguese context and then in the Spanish context. After these first separate analyses, we will offer a comparative perspective to understand the differences and similarities regarding electoral disinformation in both countries.

2.2.1. Spain

In Spain, the number of studies on elections in social media has increased since the 2010's, with Twitter in particular being a frequent object of study because of the former access to Twitter Api (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2022). As far as political communication on social media during elections is concerned, we mainly find studies on general elections, but also some on regional elections and municipal elections. Overall, European elections tend to be a less prominent object of study (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2022).

In the 2019 elections, the main Spanish fact-checkers, Maldita and Newtral, established themselves as sources for verifying claims made by the candidates and as agents against rumors and hoaxes that spread on social media during the campaign. Otherwise, it is measurable that, in terms of verifications carried out by fact-checking organizations, the number of hoaxes and misinformation narratives circulating in the July 2023 general elections was much higher than in the 2019 elections.

According to Maldita (2023), Spain has a history of disinformation during electoral seasons, particularly targeting the integrity of elections. Following a recommendation of the EU, in 2020, the Spanish Department of National Security set up a group of experts from civil society to work with representatives of public administration to combat and prevent disinformation, in order to ensure the protection and preservation of democratic values (Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, 2022). Overall, since around 2015, there has been an increase in studies that approached disinformation online (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2022), especially during general elections (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Cano-Óron et al., 2021; Maldita, 2023).

Studies on online political communication have shown that the volume of publications by both political and media agents tends to increase over the course of the election campaign, especially in the later stages. This applies to both general elections (López-Garcia et al., 2016; Maldita, 2023) and regional elections (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019).

Television debates were also identified as a focus of discussion on Twitter in various elections (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019; Marcos-García, 2016; Rivas-de-Roca, 2021; Córdoba-Cabús et al., 2021). In fact, in the 2021 regional elections in Madrid, media coverage on Twitter focused mainly on campaign events and electoral debates (Córdoba-Cabús et al., 2021).

As Marcos-García (2016) mentions, this reinforces the idea of convergence between media. However, in Rivas-de-Roca's study on the regional elections in Galicia in 2020, the author highlights that the issues raised online by politicians do not always coincide with the issues raised in televised debates. Furthermore, despite the importance of televised debates, Magallón-Rosa et al. (2019) observed that discussions intensified even more on election day.

Zamora-Medina & Zurutuza-Muñoz argued in 2014 that "(…) Spanish politicians have not yet understood that Twitter/X is a tool focused on the candidate as a person rather than as part of a political institution". However, it is important to understand that, as mentioned by López-Garcia et al. (2016), there tends to be a difference between the way emerging and established parties use social media.

As the authors pointed out during the 2015 general election, Podemos and its then leader Pablo Iglesias took a more conversational and interactive approach, in contrast to PP and PSOE, which used Twitter/X more institutionally.

In this sense, it is also important to highlight that some studies have focused specifically on the way in which emerging parties use Twitter/X. Casero-Ripollés et al. (2017) also studied Podemos during the 2016 general elections and emphasized a complementary approach between the party and Pablo Iglesias.

According to the authors, Iglesias focused mainly on relating to the people and building his image through personal topics, while the party's Twitter account addressed more ideological and political aspects. Aladro-Vico & Requeijo-Rey (2020) examined Vox's online communication during the 2019 general elections and concluded that Vox uses "cult of law, nativism and closed group thinking" as its main strategies. Furthermore, the authors highlight how Vox's strategies encourage polarization, at times adopting simplistic language and engaging in talks about a corrupt media ecosystem.

Overall, online political communication in Spain during elections appears to be rapidly developing. As Calvo et al. (2019) point out, different campaign teams in Spain have confirmed that they are using new tools and strategies based on data extraction and automated messages during the elections. In this new ecosystem, it is fundamental to consistently study the patterns of political communication and keep up to date on potential problems, including disinformation practices.

In relation to online disinformation campaigns during the Spanish elections, Paniagua-Rojano et al. (2020) examined 37 hoaxes identified by fact-checkers Maldita and Newtral during the 2019 general elections and concluded that the electoral system was the main target of disinformation narratives. According to the authors, most of these hoaxes warned people about rigged ballots that would result in votes being declared invalid. The most common type of hoax was the false attribution of actions. However, there were also cases where images were misattributed, photos were manipulated and in one case a political candidate was impersonated.

In the same election, Cano-Óron et al. (2021) examined disinformation in Facebook ads placed by political parties. The authors emphasize that while disinformation was unusual, it was not negligible. Moreover, it was mainly parties such as Ciudadanos and Vox that were behind the few ads that contained elements of disinformation.

On the other hand, disinformation was only found to a small extent in the PP ads and not at all in the PSOE and IU ads. In this sense, the authors believe that, as already mentioned by Lopez-Garcia et al. (2016) in relation to political communication, there is also a difference in disinformation practices between established and new parties.

With regard to the 2023 general elections, Maldita (2023) investigated the patterns of disinformation on social media platforms by analyzing 741 posts containing disinformation claims that were debunked in the course of the election. As in 2019 (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020), the electoral process was again a target of disinformation, with one in four posts (24%) relating to this topic.

However, the authors highlight that this tendency increased to 40% in the week of the elections and 74% on the day of the elections, in a consolidated effort to discourage people from going to the polls. This time, postal voting was the main target of disinformation and not the ballot papers as in 2019.

Maldita (2023) also conducted an analysis of hate speech in disinformation posts and found that 32% of these posts met the criteria for hate speech. As mentioned by the authors, 78% of the hate speech was related to racist content and mainly targeted racialized people and migrants, accusing them of taking advantage of government welfare, committing crimes, and imposing their views on others.

Interestingly, Maldita (2023) also found that many of the disinformation narratives were amplified by political actors, which not only gave them greater reach but also enhanced their appearance of credibility. The authors conclude that PSOE, PP, Vox, and Sumar all contributed to the amplification of stories with disinformation elements.

In Spanish electoral processes, we find three main axes on which disinformation circulates: axis candidates and proposals, axis electoral campaigns, and axis institutions linked to the State.

Table 3. Main frameworks and narratives linked to electoral disinformation during general elections in Spain between 2019 and 2024

Axis Candidates and proposals	Axis electoral campaign	Axis: Institutions linked to the State
Fake images and videos.	Fake videos circulating on social media.	Disinformation related to public companies like Correos, Renfe, etc.
Deepfakes and slowed-down videos.	False statements and endorsements by international personalities, influencers, and celebrities.	Postal voting.
Possible party agreements.	False polls and information not published by the media.	Disinformation related to the act of voting.
Measures in case of governing.	Trolls, bots, and WhatsApp chains.	Disinformation about the vote counting process.
False statements and fake post or tweets.	False information related to rallies and/or demonstrations.	Overseas voting.
Candidates' links.	Non-political actors participating in campaigns: billboards, NGOs, etc.	Dissemination of false information about electoral legislation.
False electoral program content.	Consequences of the results (e.g., stock market crash).	

Source: Magallon-Rosa (2024). Edition: OberCom / SmartVote.

In the first case, we find fake images and videos, possible party agreements, measures in case of governing, etc. In the second axis, false statements and endorsements by international personalities, influencers, and celebrities, or false polls and information not published by the media.

Finally, the third axis is linked to the role of the State and public companies regarding postal voting or disinformation related to the act of voting or the vote counting process. In any case, the most significant trend is the rise of misinformation related to postal voting.

2.2.2. Portugal

In recent years, there has been an increase in studies in Portugal dealing with disinformation in elections. Rivas-de-Roca et al. emphasized in 2022 that electoral studies in Portugal tend to focus on traditional media, especially television, and that there are few studies dedicated to disinformation, especially in the online sphere.

However, this is gradually changing, particularly due to studies conducted by or in collaboration with MediaLab Iscte, dedicated to the study of online disinformation during elections (Cardoso et al., 2020; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Casquinho et al., 2024b; Vasconcelos et al., 2024; Cardoso & Moreno, 2025).

From a contextual perspective, general elections tend to receive more attention from citizens (Casquinho et al., 2024b), but also from academics (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2022). The tendency for European elections to be seen as "second-order" (Reif & Schmitt, 1980) and to receive less attention overall also seems to be confirmed in Portugal (Freire e Santana-Pereira, 2018).

However, there are relatively more studies than in other European countries, mainly due to the intervention of Troika in the country in 2011, which, as Rivas-de-Roca et al. (2022) mention, appears to have contributed to an increase in studies (i.e. Magalhães, 2014; Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2018). In addition, since 2020, there appears to have been an increase in studies dealing with populism, the new far-right, and also disinformation (Figueira & Santos, 2019; Salgado et al., 2021; Baptista et al., 2021; Chamusca, 2024).

During electoral campaigns, citizens tend to behave differently depending on the social media platforms they use. On Facebook, content and news related to politics and elections are not very present, as topics such as sports, entertainment, and personalities receive the most attention (Casquinho et al., 2024a). Conversely, on Twitter/X, discussions about politics and elections are frequent, but tend to generate a low number of interactions (likes, comments, and shares) (Casquinho et al., 2024a).

It is important to understand that Twitter/X in Portugal has a relatively small number of users and tends to be used mainly by people interested in politics (Cardoso et al., 2024). Despite these differences, new actors such as political influencers have a growing relevance on both platforms (Casquinho et al., 2024a). Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram in particular are becoming increasingly important for the consumption of content related to political communication. From a quantitative perspective, media outlets tend to publish the most in social media, collecting a large number of interactions in some publications where political candidates are mentioned. Moreover, the periods with the most attention tend to coincide with television debates or when politicians appear in entertainment programs (Casquinho et al., 2024a & Casquinho et al., 2024b).

Regarding the activities of political candidates on social media during elections, Casquinho et al. (2024a; 2024b) highlight that posts with an emotional element tend to generate the most interactions, as well as posts related to their participation in entertainment programs. In addition, the authors emphasize that while Facebook and Twitter/X are the platforms on which political actors post the most, it is on Instagram that they gather the most interactions, showing the growing importance and relevance of this social media platform. In both the General and European elections in 2024, Chega, a conservative and populist right-wing political party currently led by André Ventura, distinguished itself by gathering the most interactions by large.

In terms of online disinformation in elections, corruption was identified as the main topic of false content on social media in 2019 (Cardoso et al., 2020; Baptista & Gradim, 2022). As Cardoso & Moreno (2025) note, narratives about corruption have long been used in Portugal with the intention of changing the current regime. In the 2019 elections, it was observed that while disinformation did not have a greater reach than real news, it was more likely to be shared (Baptista & Gradim, 2022). In addition, the main targets of these false narratives were the political left, especially the government and the then Prime Minister and current President of the European Council, António Costa (Cardoso et al., 2020; Baptista & Gradim, 2022).

It was also found that disinformation was mainly spread by accounts linked to the far-right of the political spectrum (Baptista & Gradim, 2022). Interestingly, studies also show that Portuguese individuals who identify as right-wing are more likely to believe in disinformation themselves, regardless of it being pro-left or pro-right (Baptista et al., 2021).

As Baptista & Gradim (2022) point out, false narratives about immigration were not prominent on social media at the time. In this sense, Portugal seemed to be an exception in Europe, where immigration was one of the main topics of disinformation approached by the far-right (Culloty & Suiter, 2021). According to Cardoso & Moreno (2025), Portugal was closer to Brazil than to Europe in terms of the narratives used to spread disinformation.

In 2024, when two elections took place in Portugal, the General Elections in March and the European elections in June, Casquinho et al. (2024a; 2024b), who analyzed disinformation on social media platforms during this period, noticed a change in the scenery. Starting in March, but intensifying in the midst of the European elections, it was found that immigration had become the main topic of disinformation, with content related to Islam in particular generating a very large number of interactions.

It is important to understand that while anti-immigration discourse has long been associated with right-wing populist political forces in Portugal, it is only recently that it has become a prominent topic that has been instrumentalized for disinformation purposes (Vasconcelos et al., 2024). Casquinho et al. (2024b) emphasize that immigration was the only consistent theme between Portugal and other European countries, while other themes, such as electoral fraud, Covid-19 and LGBTQ+, were not as relevant in the national context. They also point out that, just as in 2019, the far-right was still the biggest source of online disinformation.

Interestingly, Casquinho et al. (2024a; 2024b) also conclude that disinformation in Portugal usually requires some kind of "amplification" by political actors in order to spread effectively. In both the General and European elections, the authors found several cases that only became prominent on social media platforms after they had been exploited by political actors. Unlike in Spain, where several political forces were involved in these practices, the conclusion in Portugal was that André Ventura and the Chega party were generally the ones responsible for this amplification.

While immigration was the main topic of disinformation throughout 2024, corruption has recently become, once again, a relevant topic for disinformative narratives in Portugal (Cardoso & Moreno, 2025). The recent controversial events surrounding the now former Prime Minister Luís Montenegro and the start of the trial of former Prime Minister José Sócrates, on grounds of corruption, have revived the narrative of "all politicians being corrupt" on social media. Cardoso & Moreno (2025) conclude that the use of corruption or immigration as a disinformation topic depends on whether we are in the midst of General or European elections and on the overall media agenda.

2.2.3. Iberian outlook on disinformation trends

As we have seen in the previous sections, Portugal and Spain show both similarities and differences when it comes to online political communication and disinformation patterns during elections. If we focus on online discussions, it is clear that the overall progression is similar in both countries, with a clear increase in interest as the campaign progresses, especially during televised debates. (Marcos-García, 2016; Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019; Maldita, 2023; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Casquinho et al., 2024b). These are periods in which the volume of online discussions tends to increase significantly and therefore, we believe that it is essential to be especially cautious to prevent the spread of false narratives.

Despite the similar course of online discussions during elections, it is important to understand that Portugal and Spain have several historical and geographical characteristics that influence the studies conducted in both countries. For example, Spain, with its regional organisation, has a whole section of academic publications on online regional electoral communication (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2019; Calvo et al., 2019; Córdoba-Cabús et al., 2021; Rivas-de-Roca, 2021), that is not present in Portugal. On the other hand, Portugal, due to its difficult history with Troika, focuses more on the European elections (Magalhães, 2014; Freire e Santana-Pereira, 2018; Casquinho et al., 2024b), something that is not verified in Spain (Rivas-de-Roca, 2022).

In this sense, comparative analysis is fundamental to better understanding disinformation practices and to try to design coherent strategies to curb false narratives that address the specificities of both countries. In this context, we also believe it is important to highlight the work carried out in the Iberifier (Iberian Digital Media Observatory project). According to its website, "Iberifier is a digital media observatory for Spain and Portugal, supported by the European Commission and linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). Coordinated by the University of Navarra, it includes twelve universities, five fact-checking organizations and news agencies, and six multidisciplinary research centers".

In particular, we recommend consulting the report pertaining to the "analysis of the impact of disinformation on political, economic, social and security issues, governance models and good practices: the cases of Spain and Portugal" (Badillo-Matos et al., 2023). In this report, the authors approach six case studies on disinformation in Portugal and Spain (3 for each country), including a case study on Covid-19 disinformation in each country.

Before approaching the patterns of online disinformation in elections, we consider it fundamental to present contextual comparative data between Portugal and Spain. Data from the 2024 Digital News Report shows that within a global sample, the most common disinformation topics that users believe to have come across are politics, Covid-19, economics (cost of living), and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

While Spain follows a similar distribution of topics, by importance – with significantly higher rates of people saying they have seen disinformation on immigrations and significantly lower ones when it comes to the War in Ukraine (Novoa-Jaso et al., 2024), Portugal stands out with much lower perception of disinformation regarding any of these topics. 28% claim to have encountered disinformation about politics last week, and the remaining topics were identified by about a fifth, or less, of the samples (Cardoso et al., 2024).

Table 4. Disinformation topics: "Have you seen false or misleading information about any of the following topics, in the last week?" (Multiple choice), Global, Portugal and Spain, 2024

	Global	Spain	Portugal
Politics	36%	37%	28%
Economics, cost of living	28%	28%	19%
Israel-Palestine conflict	27%	24%	19%
War in Ukraine	24%	16%	17%
Immigration	21%	27%	17%
Other health issues	18%	19%	15%
Coronavirus (Covid-19)	30%	29%	15%
Climate change or the environment	23%	23%	13%

Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024, Digital News Report España 2024 & Digital News Report Portugal 2024.
Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. nGlobal≈96.000, n≈2000 for Spain and Portugal.

However, as seen below, there are significant differences between both country samples and the younger 18-24 subsample, and even more so between younger men and younger women. In both countries, young men state in higher proportion to have encountered more disinformation on any of the topics, but that is particularly visible on politics and Covid-19 in Spain and on immigration, Coronavirus, and economics (cost of living) in Portugal.

In this sense, young women are much less prone to claim to have encountered disinformation content on topics such as the War in Ukraine, in Spain, and the Israel-Palestine conflict, War in Ukraine, and climate change, in Portugal.

Regarding online disinformation during elections in Portugal and Spain, it is clear that the parties/candidates currently in power or with a better chance of winning tend to be the biggest targets of disinformation. This was found to be the case in Spain (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Maldita, 2023) and Portugal (Cardoso et al., 2020; Baptista & Gradim, 2020; Casquinho et al., 2024a).

However, while in Portugal the far-right was identified as the main source of disinformation (Baptista & Gradim, 2022; Cardoso et al., 2020; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Baptista et al., 2021), in Spain, Cano-Óron et al. (2021) concludes that political forces from different sides of the spectrum sometimes engage in these practices, especially those associated with emerging parties.

Table 5. Disinformation topics: "Have you seen false or misleading information about any of the following topics, in the last week?
" (Multiple choice) - Country samples and 18-24, Portugal and Spain, 2024

	Spain				Portugal			
	Spain	Spain 18-24	Spain Men 18-24's	Spain Women 18-24's	Portugal	Portugal 18-24's	Portugal Men 18-24's	Portugal Women 18-24's
Politics	37%	35%	40%	29%	28%	28%	31%	24%
Economics, cost of living	28%	25%	30%	19%	19%	19%	24%	14%
Israel-Palestine conflict	24%	26%	30%	21%	19%	15%	22%	8%
War in Ukraine	16%	15%	19%	10%	17%	15%	21%	8%
Immigration	27%	26%	32%	20%	17%	21%	25%	16%
Other health issues	19%	21%	22%	19%	17%	14%	16%	15%
Coronavirus (Covid-19)	29%	35%	42%	28%	15%	15%	24%	17%
Climate change or the environment	23%	23%	28%	18%	13%	14%	19%	7%

Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024, Digital News Report España 2024 & Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. nGlobal≈96.000, n≈2000 for Spain and Portugal.

In thematic terms, immigration has become an important topic of disinformation in Portugal since the 2024 European elections (Casquinho et al., 2024b). In Spain, the same was found in the 2023 general elections, with most hate speech in disinformation content targeting migrants, especially those whose religion is Islam (Maldita, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that electoral fraud, which has been identified as a primary disinformation topic during elections in Spain (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2020; Maldita, 2023), is not present in Portugal. Although corruption is an important disinformation topic in Portugal, it is directed against politicians (Cardoso et al., 2020; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Cardoso & Moreno, 2025) and not against the electoral system itself.

From a strategic perspective, it has been observed in both Spain and Portugal that disinformation in elections tends to be amplified by political actors, with this amplification giving visibility and credibility to disinformation content (Maldita, 2023; Casquinho et al., 2024a; Casquinho et al., 2024a). Overall, it appears that political parties choose to reinforce narratives that fit their agenda, regardless of whether they are true or false. While in Portugal, Casquinho et al. (2024a; 2024b) identified that the Chega party was usually behind this amplification.

in Spain, Maldita (2023) observed that several political forces engage in these practices. In this sense, Maldita (2023) directly emphasizes in their recommendations addressed to the government and political parties that political actors should be extremely careful not to partake in these practices.

In addition to the strategies employed, it is also important to highlight that in the last European elections, similarities were also found in terms of disinformative content used by political forces. In Figure 13., we can find two very similar publications utilized by Vox in Spain and Chega in Portugal, published on the same day, just a few hours apart.

In their work, Casquinho et al. (2024b) considered these publications decontextualized because they allude to a wave of Islamic migration and a general change in the legislation of European society that cannot be substantiated with factual data.

Figure 13. Instagram posts by Portugal's Chega party and Spain's Vox party on the Islamisation of Europe, 2024

Previously, Belim (2020) had pointed out similarities between the online communication of Vox and Chega. Both parties present in-group favoritism to explore feelings of inclusion, with these types of posts receiving the most attention on social media (Belim, 2020).

These publications by Vox and Chega appear to have similar objectives. Overall, this consensus suggests that narratives are increasingly shared between countries, leading to cohesion at a European and international level. This factor, once again, underlines the importance of coordinated efforts to stop the spread of disinformation beyond national borders.

3. AI uses and perceptions

3. AI uses and perceptions

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the media and communication sector is rapidly evolving, transforming many aspects of the industry. Since the public launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, the focus has increasingly shifted toward generative AI (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Diakopoulos et al., 2024). However, the application of AI in journalism predates this shift and has been discussed under terms such as robot journalism (Clerwall, 2014), algorithmic journalism (Anderson, 2013), automated media (Napoli, 2014), and computational journalism (Carlson, 2015). These earlier forms of AI integration often focused on automating news production and distribution, improving big data analysis, and identifying online patterns and trends that are not easily visible to human journalists.

The rise of generative AI in media and communication, however, brings renewed attention to ethical challenges (Pavlik, 2023; Forja-Peña et al., 2023), particularly around transparency, accountability, and the risk of algorithmic bias. In response to these heightened risks, international initiatives such as the Paris Charter on AI and Journalism[2] have proposed guidelines on AI use in newsrooms, while many media organizations have begun adopting their own ethical frameworks and editorial policies (Sánchez-García et al., 2025).

From the audience's perspective, the distinction between human-written and AI-generated content is often minimal in terms of perceived quality and credibility (Peña-Fernández et al., 2023). Current research suggests that for soft news, such as sports or weather, audiences tend to be more receptive to AI-generated content, while hard news, especially politics, is faced with greater skepticism (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2024). This blurring between human and machine authorship reflects a broader trend in which younger audiences increasingly rely on algorithmically driven platforms that are integrated into their daily routines, particularly social media (Vasquez-Herrero et al., 2022).

In this context, even though news consumption through generative AI applications is still in its early stages, their use is expected to expand, much like what happened with social media, at least because even when seeking general information, the results might be related to news.

Over the past year, according to 2024 Eurobarometer data, 57% of young Europeans, aged 16 to 30 years old, have used AI-based applications for text, images, or video. Spain and Portugal follow a similar trend, with adoption rates slightly above the European average.

In Spain, 60% of young people confirmed having used AI-based applications, while in Portugal, this percentage rises to 62%. However, a notable share of young individuals (around one-third) have not engaged with these tools, highlighting potential gaps in digital literacy or awareness regarding generative AI applications.

---

[2] RSF, November 10th 2023, Carta de Paris sobre la IA y el Periodismo

Figure 14. "Have you used Artificial Intelligence (AI) based applications for text, image or video in the past 12 months?", Spain and Portugal, 2024
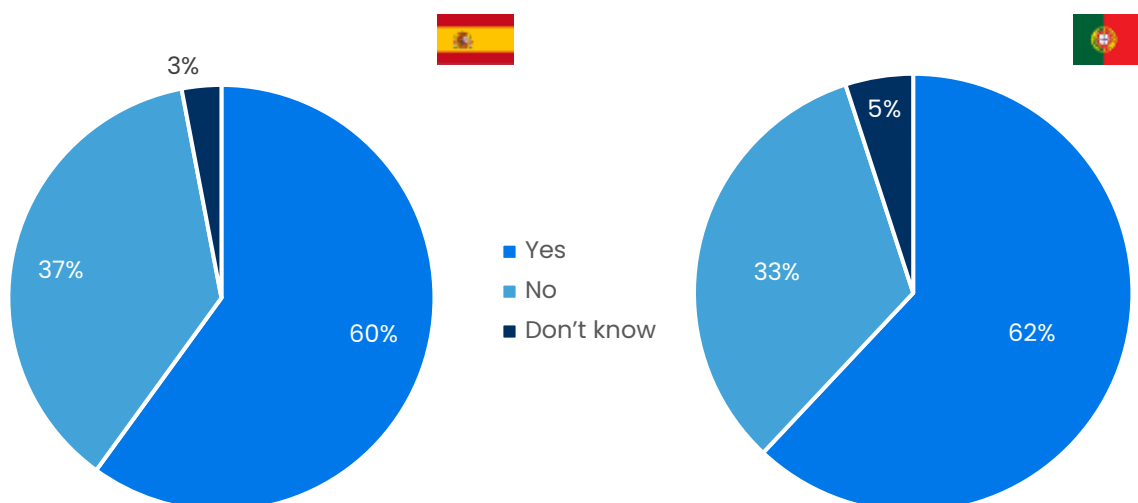
Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer – Youth survey 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote.

The versatility of AI applications in the daily lives of young individuals demonstrates their integration into academic and professional environments, as well as in leisure and creative activities. Young people mainly use AI for studying and research, with 40% in Portugal and 45% in Spain relying on these tools for those purposes. AI is also commonly used for work, with 34% of Portuguese and 30% of Spanish youth using it for professional tasks.

Other popular uses include school work help (29% in Spain, 28% in Portugal), entertainment (28% in Spain, 25% in Portugal), and creative work (27% in Spain, 26% in Portugal). AI tools also support personal organization (27% in Spain, 24% in Portugal) and communication (used by 21% in both countries).

Figure 15. "What did you use Artificial Intelligence (AI) based applications for in the past 12 months?" (Multiple choice), Spain and Portugal, 2024
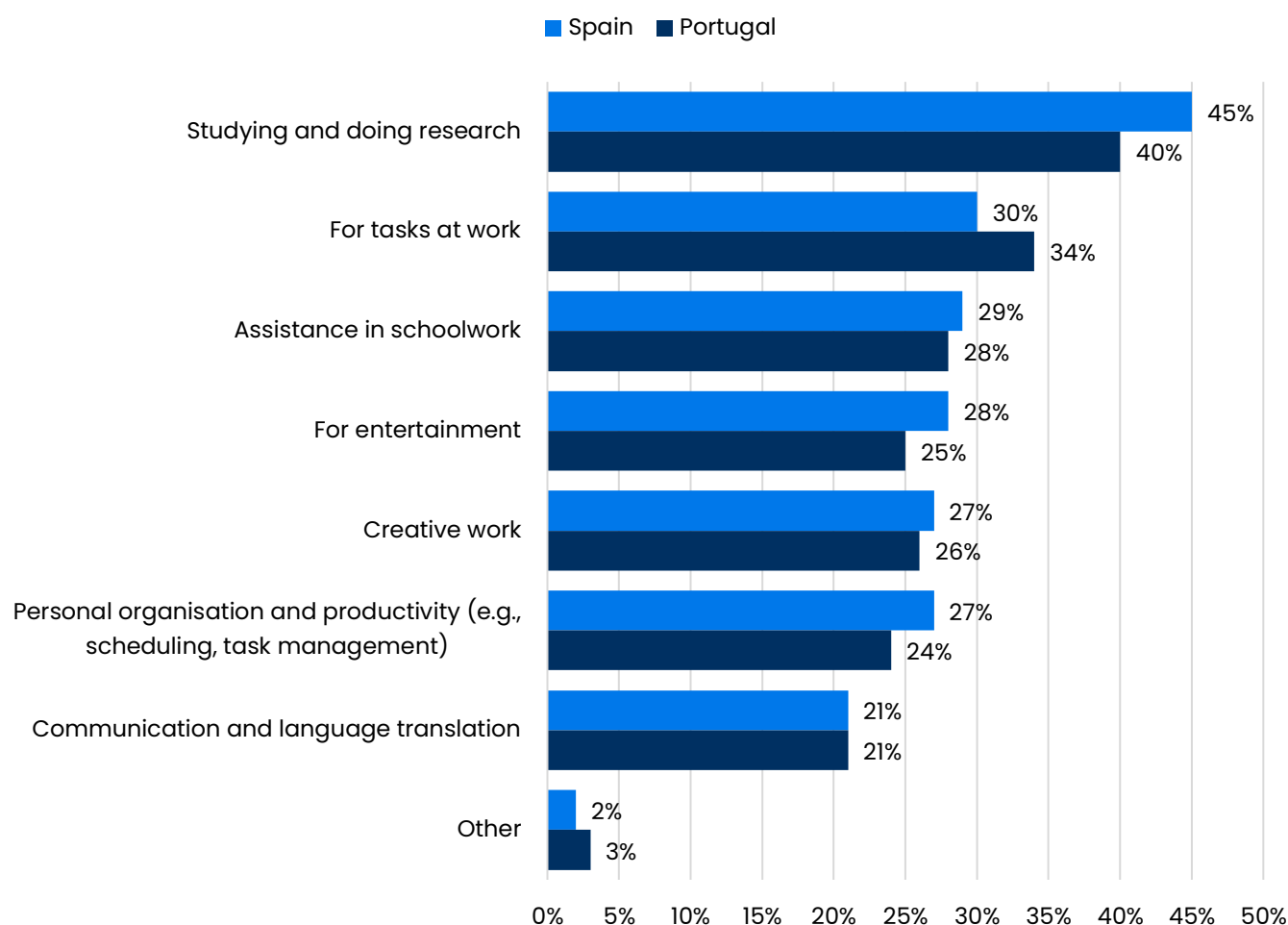
Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer – Youth survey 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote.

Young people in both Spain and Portugal are more comfortable with AI-assisted news compared to the general population. This means they are more open to news made mostly by a human journalist with some help from artificial intelligence (AI).

In Spain, only 27% of the general population feels comfortable with this kind of news. But among young people aged 18 to 24, that number goes up to 39%. Looking closer, 42% of young men and 37% of young women in this age group are comfortable with AI-assisted news. In Portugal, the general comfort level is higher at 36%, and it rises to 48% among youth aged 18 to 24. The difference between young men and women is larger, with 53% of young men feeling comfortable with AI-assisted news, compared to 43% of young women.

Figure 16. Comfort with using AI assisted news, Spain and Portugal, 2024
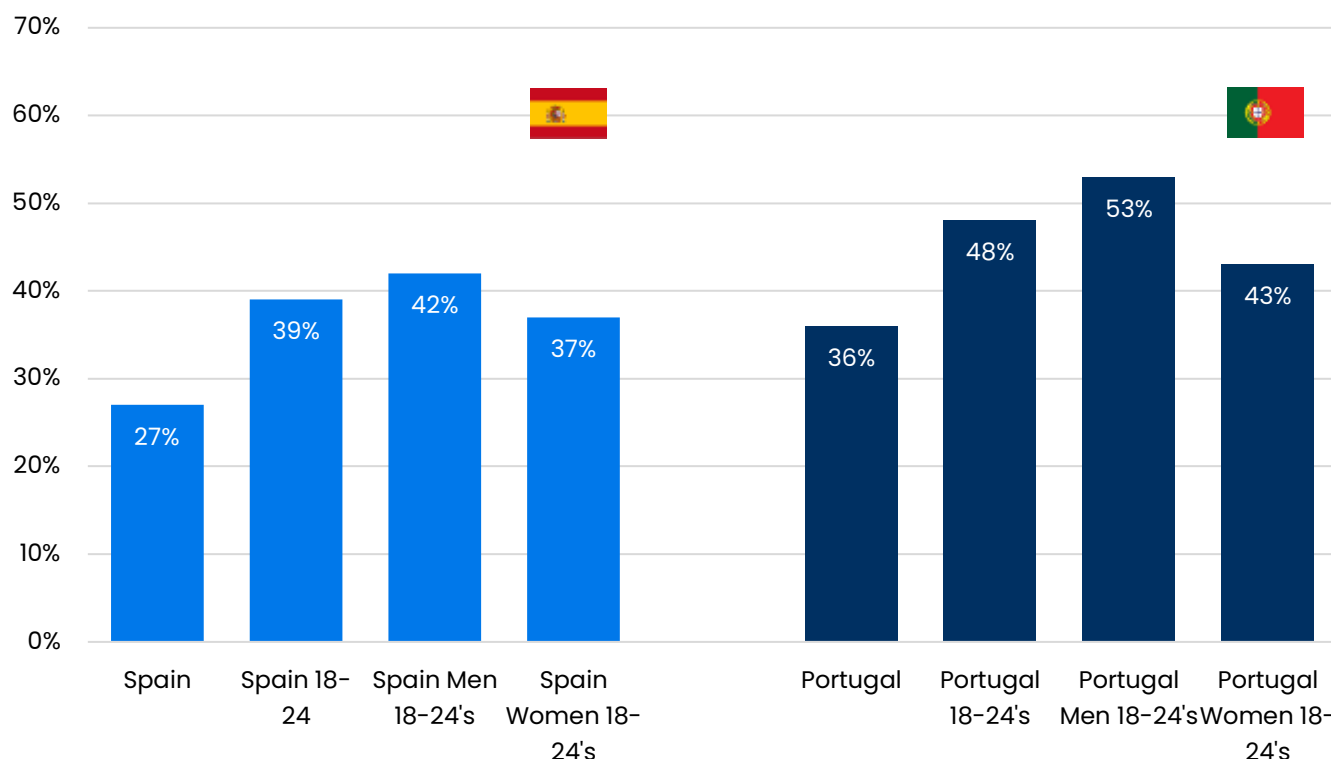
Note: AI-assisted news are news made mostly by a human journalist with some help from artificial intelligence (AI). Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are somewhat or very comfortable with AI assisted news.

Compared to AI-assisted news – where a human journalist does most of the work – people are less comfortable with AI-generated news, which is made mostly by AI with some human oversight. This shows that most people prefer AI to play a supporting role rather than being the main tool for content creation.

In Spain, comfort with AI-generated news is very low. Only 14% of the general population is okay with it, compared to 27% for AI-assisted news. Among young people, 21% feel comfortable with AI-generated news. Within this age group, 25% of young men and 18% of young women are comfortable, showing a wider gender gap compared to AI-assisted news.

Figure 17. Comfort with using AI generated news, Spain and Portugal, 2024
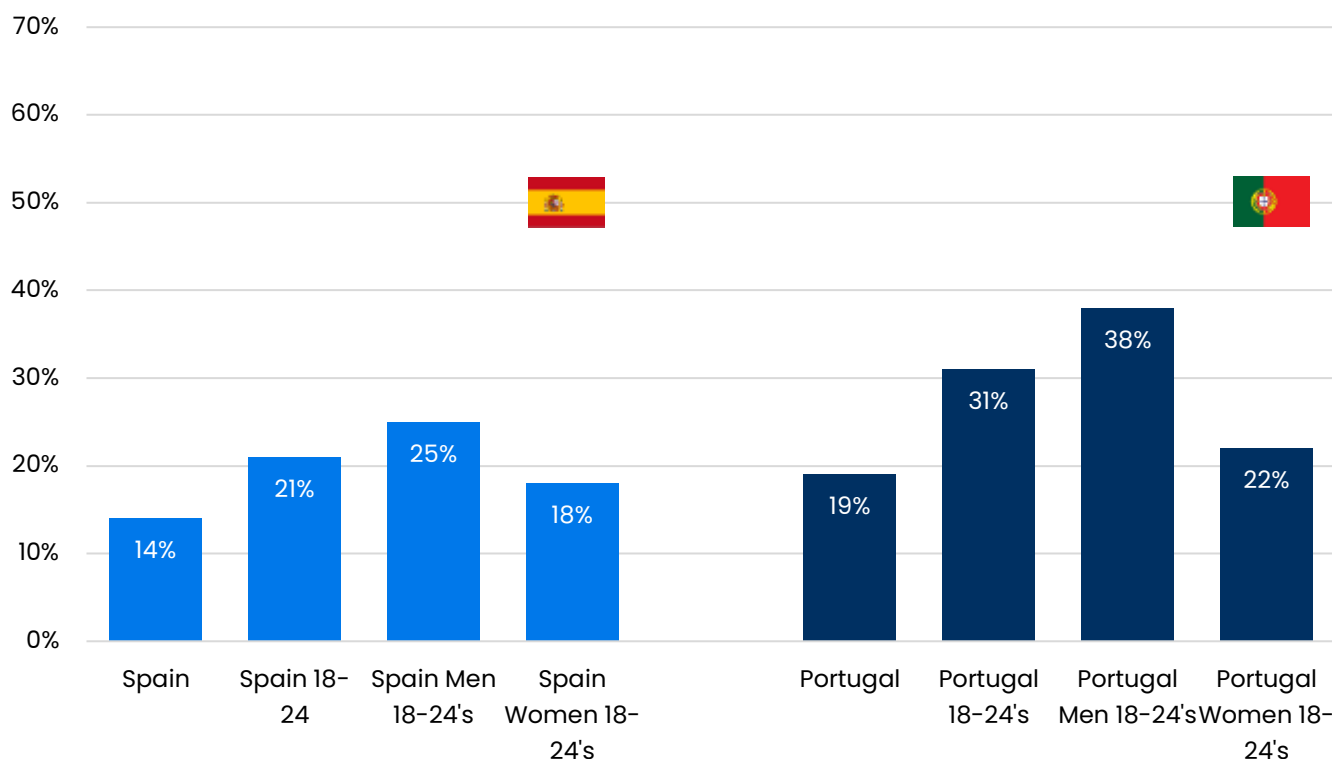
Note: AI generated news are news made mostly by artificial intelligence (AI) with some human oversight. Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are somewhat or very comfortable with AI generated news.

In Portugal, the trend is even more pronounced. Only 19% of the general population is comfortable with AI-generated news, compared to 36% for AI-assisted news. However, among young people, 31% feel comfortable with AI-generated news, a much higher number than in Spain. The gender gap in Portugal is also more notable, with young men (38%) showing almost twice the level of comfort as young women (22%).

When it comes to AI-generated news about politics, people are even less comfortable than with general AI-generated news. This drop suggests that trust in AI decreases even further when it comes to sensitive or important topics like politics.

Figure 18. Comfort with using AI generated news about politics, Spain and Portugal, 2024
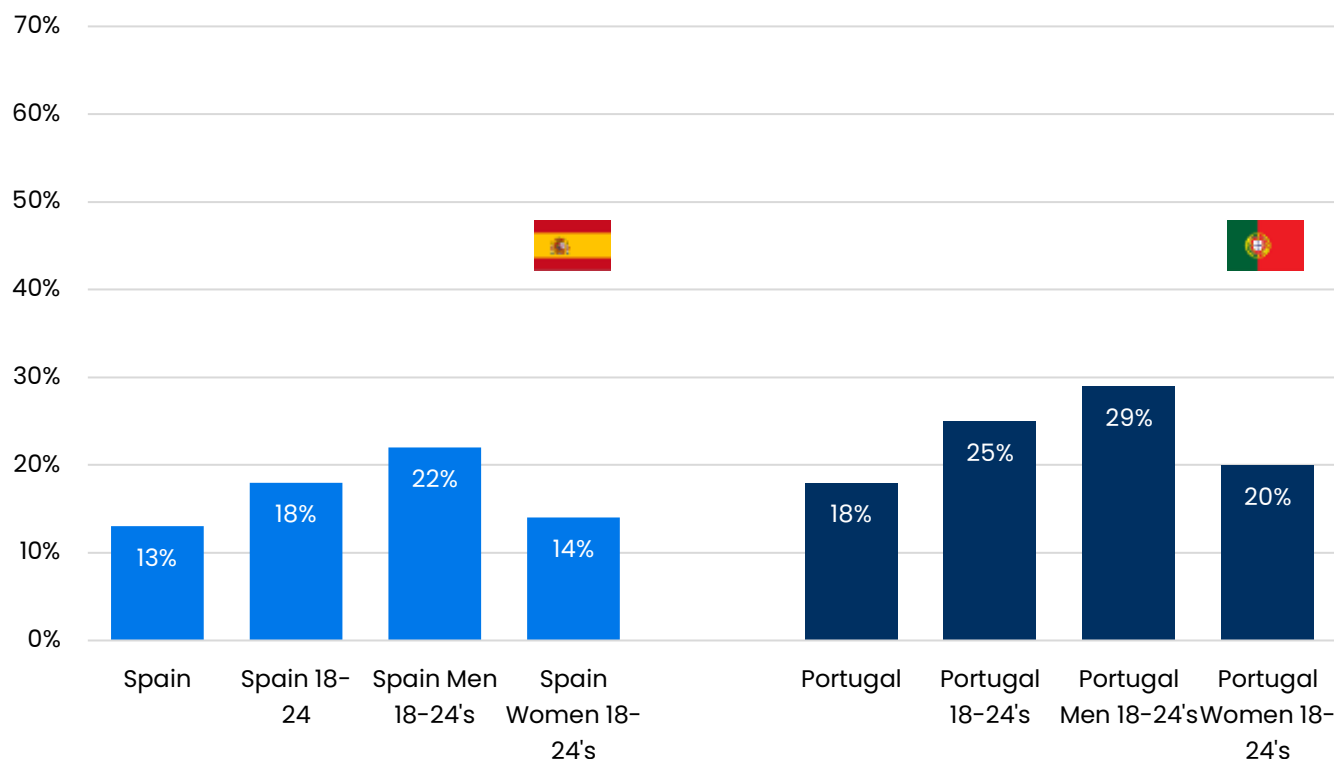
Note: AI generated news are news made mostly by artificial intelligence (AI) with some human oversight. Source: Digital News Report España 2024, Digital News Report Portugal 2024. Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n≈2000 in both countries. Note: % values represent people who say they are somewhat or very comfortable with AI generated news.

In Spain, only 13% of the general population is comfortable with AI-generated political news, close to the already low 14% for general AI-generated news. Among young people, 18% are comfortable, 22% of young men, and just 14% of young women.

In Portugal, overall comfort is also quite limited, with only 18% of the general population comfortable with political news created by AI, a number similar to that for general AI-generated news (19%). Although young Portuguese men are relatively more open, the topic of politics brings comfort levels more pronouncedly down, with 29% of young men and 20% of young women expressing acceptance of AI-generated news about politics.

4. AI Initiative / Detection tools directory

4. AI Initiative / Detection tools directory

4.1. AI in the fight against disinformation: a brief context

With traditional practices finding it increasingly difficult to efficiently address the issue of problematic information in digital media and social networks (Vosoughi et al., 2018; Alemanno, 2018; Marsden et al., 2020), AI is increasingly being seen as a useful tool in the fight against disinformation (Graves, 2018; Pilati & Venturini, 2024).

It is in this sense that more AI tools linked to disinformation have been developed in recent years, due to their potential to automate and identify problematic information. These advances —in which machine learning is proving to be fundamental in recognizing information patterns, without the need for explicit programming (Santos, 2023) — are related to automated multimodal detection, in which the system integrates clues from text and images to identify disinformation (Singh et al., 2021; Santos, 2023).

The tools have been used in two ways: firstly, in a 'downstream' logic, identifying disinformation content and combating it often with the help of fact-checking platforms —after it has been published; secondly, working 'upstream', proactively, preventing the spread of disinformation content by signaling or even removing it before it is disseminated (Bontridder & Poullet, 2021; Pilati & Venturini, 2024; Bontcheva et al., 2024).

In this way, the potential of AI, while not expected to completely solve the problems of disinformation, can nevertheless help to mitigate its impact on the lives of individuals (Kertysova, 2018). For this reason, and as we shall see, there has been a proliferation of this type of project, both publicly funded (particularly by the European Union) and privately funded, in which large companies linked to online networks have promoted the development of their own AI to combat false content on social platforms (Pilati & Venturini, 2024).

On the other hand, and as already mentioned in this report, the more ubiquitous use of this type of tool, both 'downstream' and 'upstream', raises questions regarding transparency and its different types of implementations, which ultimately can, as Bontridder & Poullet (2021) point out, pose dangers to free speech and raise issues regarding surveillance and the privacy of individuals.

We therefore consider it important to carry out a survey of projects linked to disinformation, particularly those linked to AI. This could help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the use of this type of tool, while also shedding some light on the differences that make up the different projects.

4.2. Mapping and highlighting projects with and without AI: analysis of methods and complementation, target audiences and funding

This directory[3] includes 52 projects that have been identified as using AI, plus another 73 related to disinformation and that have a highly visible technological component, for a total of 125 projects. We analyze the institution in charge and/or founding institution, if it uses machine learning, the date of creation and ending (if not active), the kind of sphere (public, private or hybrid) and the target audience.

Of the 52 projects that use machine learning and AI, 39 are active in some way, with 8 no longer in operation, either because the research project has ended or because a particular website has been rendered unusable. In 5 cases, it was not possible to identify if they are still in operation. In any case, even though not all the projects and tools are currently fully operational, they all provide insights into what has been done in the area of disinformation with regard to the use of AI, and in several cases the know-how obtained in some projects (as in the case of European Union initiatives) may in some way be useful in future initiatives.

However, before continuing with the analysis, it is important to emphasize a few points. Firstly, the list is limited to Western projects, particularly in the USA and Europe, with a search carried out using web browsers and bibliographical references[4]. Similarly, the restriction to projects with information available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese also means that other projects may be left out. In this way, this is not intended to be an exhaustive mapping, but to have more of an exploratory nature, bearing in mind that, in some cases, it is not possible to have complete information on some project or tool data, such as where the funding comes from.

Furthermore, although a project presents itself as using an AI tool, it's not always possible to verify how it was used, and ultimately, the use of this tool may not even have occurred. This possibility, based on the sometimes-sparse public information on the results of a given tool and project, may in any case indicate the growing importance and presence of AI in projects linked to disinformation. In other words, the association between combating disinformation and AI tools seems to be becoming increasingly ubiquitous in the presentation and design of this type of project.

Naturally, disinformation projects that don't use machine learning and AI methods are also much more common. Therefore, the following table, with the ratio between projects with and without AI, is not intended to represent the universe of the fight against disinformation, but partly to reflect this increasingly growing trend.

---

[3] SmartVote - AI Initiative / Detection tools directory. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15305386

[4] In particular, two sources can be highlighted, the first with european projects, and the second with other tools and projects:

    a) https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/funded-projects-fight-against-disinformation_en;

    b) https://www.rand.org/research/projects/truth-decay/fighting-disinformation/search.html

Figure 19. Disinformation projects and tools with and without Machine Learning and AI
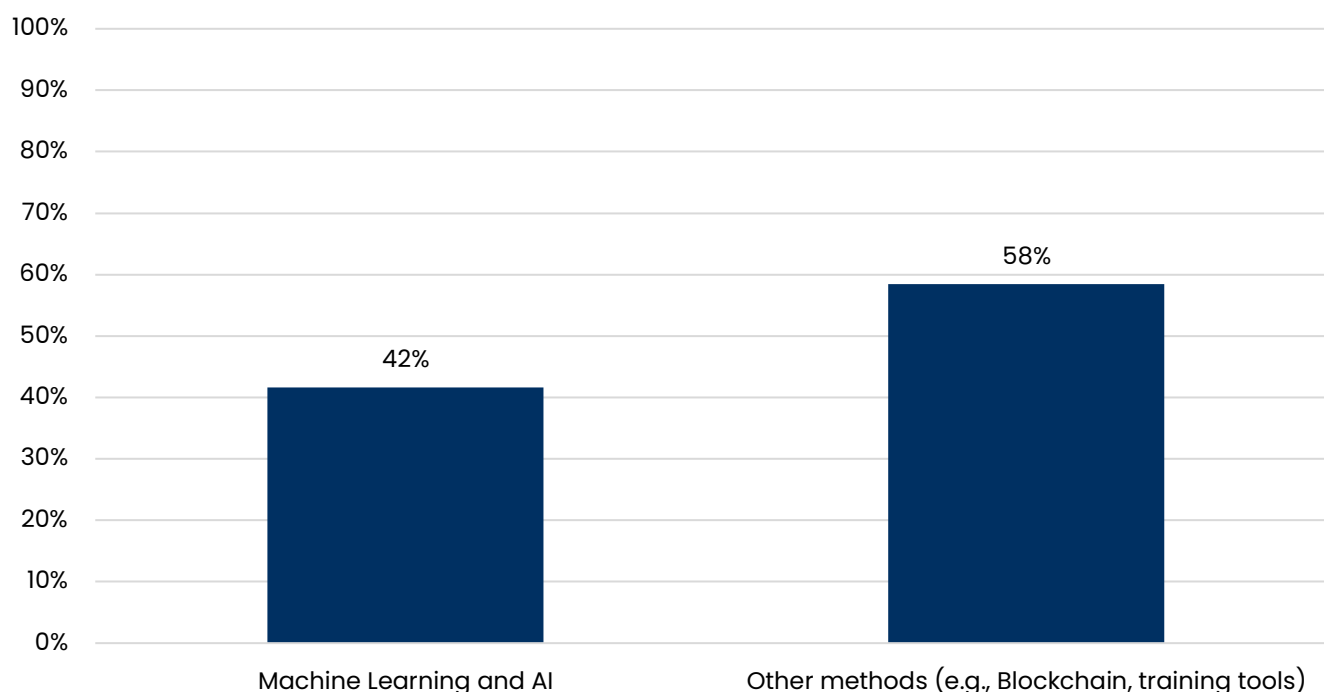
Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote.. n=125.

Other methods include blockchain, crowdsourcing, educational tools, or tools that require a more human implementation. On the other hand, many of these methods are combined in a logic of complementation, both in the combination of technology (e.g., blockchain and AI) (Santos, 2023; Buțincu & Alexandrescu, 2023; Kayıkçı & Khoshgoftaar, 2024) and in the value placed on human supervision and complementation (Pilati & Venturini, 2024).

This last aspect is particularly visible in the description of projects such as *Hybrids* (2023-2027), *AI4Trust* (2023-2026) and *AI-CODE* (2023-2026), all funded by the European Union. The first, aimed at the public and researchers, promotes a constant informational reciprocity between AI tools and human scientific knowledge, integrating structured knowledge (from the social sciences) into automated algorithms, and therefore enabling researchers to be more efficient in combating disinformation.

AI4Trust —aimed at the public and journalists— monitors various online social platforms in near real time, analyzing multimodal content in various European languages (up to 70% EU languages) with new AI algorithms, while cooperating in an automated way with an international network of human fact-checkers. In turn, this human factor —with the task of fact-checking— promotes the validation of new data that helps develop these same algorithms. The *AI-CODE* project, also aimed at journalists, develops technological tools based on machine learning, but also focuses on developing know-how and training for journalists so that they are better prepared to use this type of tool in their work.

Therefore, these projects demonstrate the integration of AI into various sectors, whether for the benefit of the public, researchers, or media professionals. At the same time, it reflects on the use of AI as a useful complement to the fight against disinformation, such as assisting journalists and fact-checkers in verifying news, speeding up and making the whole process more effective (Bontcheva et al., 2024), rather than being used in isolation, where the lack of human control can entail a series of risks and diminish its effectiveness (Pilati & Venturini, 2024).

In fact, as far as human supervision is concerned, the European Union, particularly in a report published in 2019 on the regulation of AI in the fight against disinformation[5], explicitly mentions the position of advising against regulation that encourages the use of AI for content moderation purposes if it does not have any relevant type of human supervision —in other words, if it is completely automated. Thus, the positions and research in this European field are already based on a logic of complementation, although the list drawn up for this document shows an increasing tendency towards automation, even if restricted to certain areas and aspects (e.g. automation in the identification of false content but subsequently verified by fact-checkers).

Figure 20. Target audience for Machine Learning and AI disinformation projects
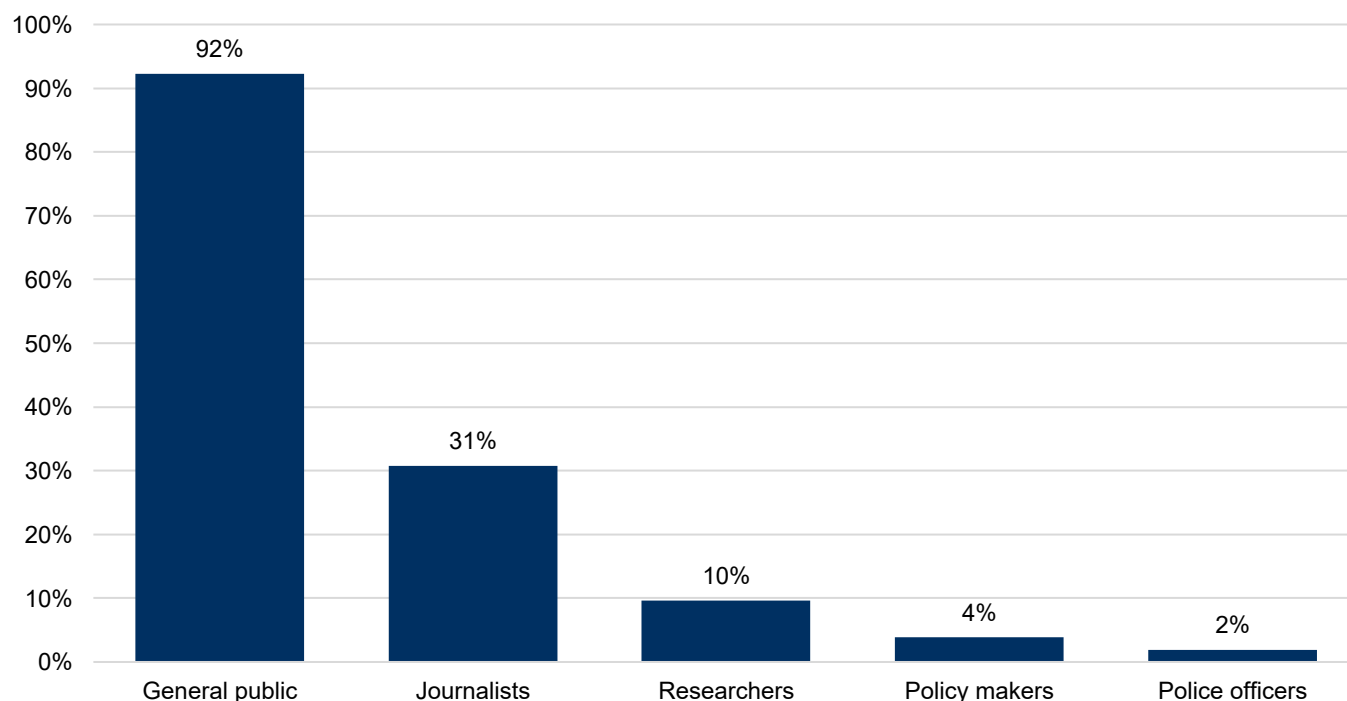
Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n=52.

---

[5] European Parliament. Directorate General for Parliamentary Research Services. (2019). *Regulating disinformation with artificial intelligence: effects of disinformation initiatives on freedom of expression and media pluralism.* Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/003689

Continuing the analysis, Figure 20 considers the target audience of the projects that make up the list and that use machine learning and AI, and it may be the case that some research has more than one target.

Most projects are aimed at the public (92%), demonstrating the trend towards developing comprehensive platforms that can be used intuitively by anyone. The presence of several projects dedicated to journalists (31%, corresponding to 16 initiatives) reflects the importance of finding mechanisms to help journalists identify content that is in some way false.

In some cases, the target audience is broader, including the general public, as in the aforementioned *AI4Trust*, or *InVid* (2016)[6], a plug-in that assists fact-checking and contextualizes videos or images; in others, it is media professionals who benefit most directly, as in the aforementioned *AI-CODE* or in the case of *ClaimBuster* (2015)[7], a project linked to the University of Texas and which has an automated service for detecting disinformation content.

As far as projects emphasizing researchers as beneficiaries are concerned, these are generally linked to universities, such as some research carried out at the American University of Indiana (e.g. *Botometer*, *BotSlayer*).

Finally, regarding the target audience of police officers, the European Union project *VIGILANT* (2022-2025), coordinated by an Irish institution and still in progress, can be highlighted. It seeks to develop a platform that tracks and analyses disinformation to help the police crackdown on hate crimes on the internet, using artificial intelligence which can be applied to the main social media platforms and websites, for all types of content (image, text, and video) and in several European languages.

Having already alluded to possible risks in the use of AI in disinformation —in terms of security and privacy, for example (see Bontridder & Poullet, 2021)— it is interesting to see the use of this type of technique for criminal matters, also reflecting the importance —within the European Union and with public funding— given to online discourse and interactions within social networks.

Now, looking at the figure below, which refers to the remaining projects on the list (which don't use machine learning and AI), we can briefly highlight the greater presence of projects dedicated to teachers and students (14%, corresponding to 10 initiatives). Most of these are educational tools —for example, as part of courses or presented as games— which aim to identify fake content more efficiently. In a recent period in which more AI-generated content is being disseminated and is often difficult to differentiate from content produced by humans, these initiatives could continue to be relevant in making it easier to identify all kinds of disinformation.

---

[6] Start date of the project, which is still in operation (at the date of publication of this report)

[7] Still in operation (at the date of publication of this report)

Figure 21. Target audiences for projects without Machine Learning and AI
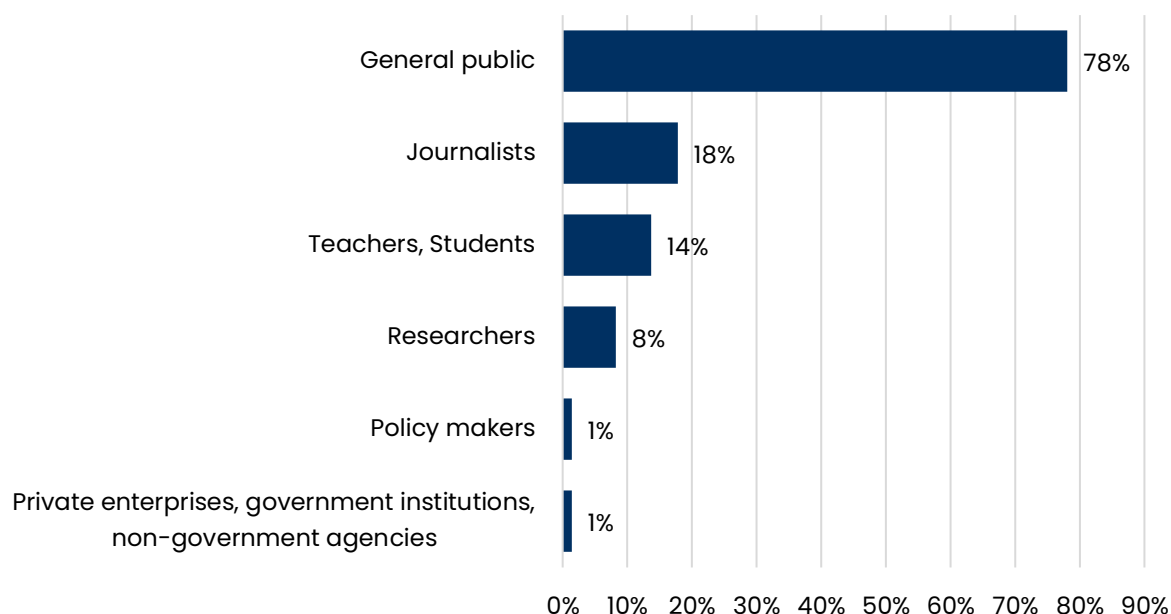
Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n=73.

Next, focusing the discussion on the issue of funding and, more specifically, in the European case, most of these projects are funded by the Horizon 2020 program. In this context, there are nine projects still in operation[8], and they are usually coordinated in partnership by educational institutions usually linked to European universities. From the point of view of the university and research institutions, this relationship therefore exists more in terms of coordination rather than leadership in the projects at hand.

In contrast, Pilati & Venturini (2014) draw attention to the trend in American projects, in which large universities and research centers, such as Harvard and MIT, are leading the development of AI tools through private funding. In any case, the same authors point out that, in general, these projects linked to universities and research centers (whether publicly or privately funded) currently tend to focus very much on an 'upstream' logic, developing AI tools with the aim of improving the quality of information and debate in the media ecosystem (Pilati & Venturini, 2014). In other words, rather than its usefulness and focus on fact-checking, which is common in disinformation projects, there also seems to be a tendency to try to anticipate and be more proactive, something AI automation can offer.

The following figure then sets out the different types of funding, and in five cases, no clear information was found about the origin of this funding. Most of these cases of uncertain origin are related to American public universities, where, however, it is not clear whether this is indeed public, private, or hybrid funding.

---

[8] The nine EU-led investigations currently in operation are as follows: *AI4Debunk, AI4MEDIA, AI4TRUST, AI-CODE, Hybrids, SOLARIS, InVid, VERA.ai, VIGILANT*.

Figure 22. Type of financing for projects that use Machine Learning and AI
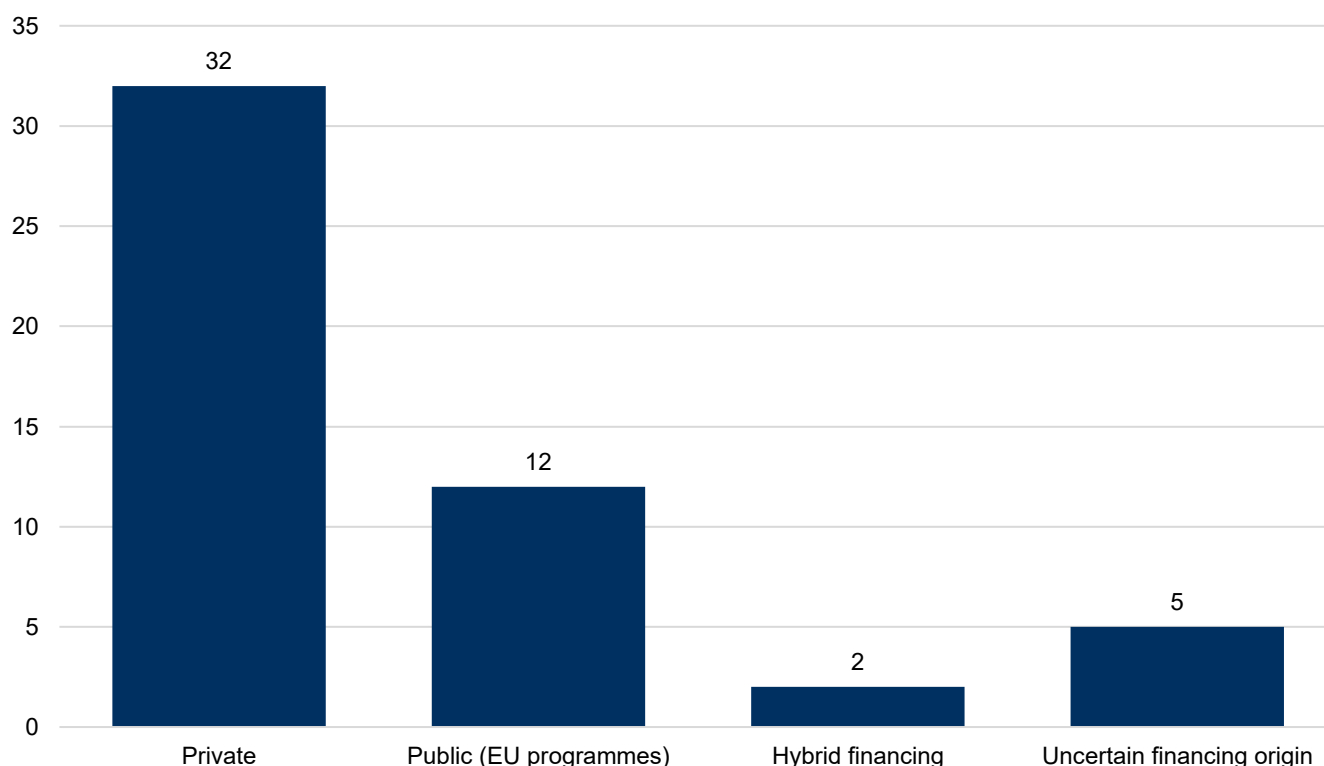
Source and Edition: OberCom / SmartVote. n=52.

The only projects on this list with public funding (12 in total) belong to the European Union, the vast majority, as mentioned, being based on the Horizon 2020 program, which funds a series of research projects related to disinformation and artificial intelligence. The hybrid funding projects are the case of *TJTool* (2018) —a Spanish project that will be later detailed— and ClaimBuster (2015), linked to the University of Texas, which has developed a model that automatically identifies content to be fact-checked.

Of the privately funded projects, we can highlight four European ones, three of which (already finalized) were developed within the framework of the European Media and Information Fund. All of these concern fact-checking in some way: the *ALETHEIA initiative* (2023-2024), led by a Dutch institution, set out to automate parts of fact-checking, taking the focus away from the manual part, which requires more resources and time; the *FRAME* tool, developed between 2023 and 2024 by a French media group, which, while not automated, promotes the identification of disinformation campaigns more closely linked to the field of law; and a more specific project, relating to the 2024 UK general election, with an AI tool developed by Full Fact, called *Full Fact AI*, that focused on monitoring the public debate and disseminating fact-checking over three months. Also noteworthy is *Factmata*, a tool developed by Nesta (an institution registered in England and Wales), which assesses the reliability of online content using community annotation and natural language processing.

The remaining private projects are mostly US-related, and the attached directory[9] gives a better idea of their diversity. Of these, however, we can highlight projects and tools aimed at the public, which are browser extensions — some focused on blocking advertising —and which can be used by users on a daily basis. For example, there is *Domain Whitelist* which, in addition to blocking advertising, identifies websites whose information can be considered reliable; the *Duke Videofactchecking* tool (2017), developed by Duke University, which promotes live fact-checking of television information; or AdBlock Plus, an extension famous for blocking adverts and websites, which has evolved to see itself as useful in blocking sources of disinformation as well.

It should also be noted that of the projects that don't use machine learning and AI, there are also some funded by the European Union that study the issue of online disinformation to better understand it. One of these is *COMPROP* (2016-2020), which, through a multidisciplinary approach that brought together experts in programming, politics, and the social sciences, sought to understand the impact that new digital trends, particularly those arising from algorithms, had on individuals. In any case, it is worth noting the European Union's tendency over the last ten years to fund studies that, in one way or another, study the subject, and, as we have seen, the Horizon2020 program already includes projects that use AI tools to use them in this fight.

With specific regard to the Iberian Peninsula, the *TJTool* tool was identified, which began to be developed in 2018 as part of the Spanish Transparency Map project. This AI tool is essentially a system for assigning degrees of transparency to news stories, analyzing them based on eight indicators of editorial transparency (e.g. authorship, date of publication). The greater transparency and reliability of the story comes from the careful cataloguing of content considering all these indicators, and journalists and newsrooms have adopted some practices taking this logic and criteria into account (Ferrari & Christofoletti, 2022). As mentioned above, its funding is hybrid, supported by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Google, and digital daily Publico.

Considering once again the report published by the European Parliament in 2019[10], this Spanish tool is in line with what seems to be the European ethos of prioritizing transparent sources and indicators, encouraging free discourse and media pluralism. If this is intended for the public, a tool like *TJTool,* with its strong emphasis on journalistic work, can also help complement the ways in which journalists work with information.

4.3. Final considerations

The analysis carried out was intended to map out, in a broad and relatively exploratory way, some of the projects and tools used in the West, particularly considering the European context. What has emerged is that despite the increasing automation that AI can offer, there is, for the time being, a tendency towards human supervision when it comes to controlling this type of tool in disinformation projects (Pilati & Venturini, 2024).

Combined with the European Union's concerns about this same lack of supervision, this seems to be an important ethical issue for the present and future, and one that merits ongoing discussion, given the evolution of this type of technology and thus the potential lesser dependence of this type of system on explicit programming by humans.

This is also why more initiatives of this kind, like web mapping, are important to get a more concrete idea of what has been done in this area. At the same time, obtaining more information about each project (unlike many of the tools on this list, which go no further than brief descriptions and cannot therefore be analyzed in depth) can help clarify the use of the technology, how it converges or not with other types of technology (e.g. blockchain), or what role human supervision plays. At the same time, more mapping studies would make it possible to better understand the basic use of this type of tool, whether in a 'downstream' logic or from a more proactive and 'upstream' perspective —again, aspects that are not always evident from the brief descriptions of several of the projects analyzed.

In any case, what seems certain —given the ever-increasing proliferation of projects using AI to combat disinformation— is that this association is not only going to last for some time to come but will probably evolve to become an increasingly indispensable tool in this fight. Considering its usefulness, the risks that this kind of technology also entails, which have been alluded to throughout the report, encourage discussion about both the positive aspects and those that are more challenging.

5. Good practices and recommendations

5. Good practices and recommendations

5.1. General recommendations

Due to the breadth and ontologically ambiguous nature of disinformation, legislative regulation in democratic countries must be especially cautious, considering numerous counterexamples of countries whose broad regulations violate fundamental rights and freedoms. Thus, in line with the United Nations framework and the special rapporteurs on freedom of speech, rights are not the problem; rather, they must be the objective and the preferred means of combating disinformation. In the face of malicious information, public deliberation is necessary. Otherwise, it inevitably leads to the criminalization of political opponents.

International legal standards agree that the illegalization of information simply labeled as 'false' seriously violates civil liberties. This was confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which unanimously condemned the Polish justice system in 2019[11] for prohibiting the distribution of an election leaflet containing false information. This does not preclude the possibility that certain forms of disinformation within the European context may be subject to criminal (hate speech, fraud), civil (disrespect), or other legal regulations.

From a strict community level, the EU, from A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Disinformation (2018) to the EU Code of Conduct on Disinformation (2025) endorsed to the Digital Service Act, stands out for the constant updating of its proposals for good practices on disinformation, adapting its core to an extremely changing context. Its basis are the values of transparency (both financial, organizational, and algorithmic in the case of tools that use AI) as well as the emphasis on education.

The main novelties are the introduction of 43 commitments and 128 specific measures across all EU Member States, such as demonetizing purveyors of disinformation, enhancing transparency in political advertising, ensuring service integrity, empowering users and researchers through media literacy initiatives, clear governance structures in social media platforms, and safe design interfaces. Additionally, it established mechanisms like a publicly accessible Transparency Centre and a permanent Task Force to adapt the Code to evolving technological and societal challenges. Over time, this framework has proven effective in curbing online disinformation during critical periods, such as elections, crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, and geopolitical conflicts like the war in Ukraine.

For years, the efforts of digital platforms, each with its own procedures, have been key in the fight against disinformation. Self-regulation or co-regulation, if effective, is preferable to strict rules with obligations or prohibitions. This translates, in our case, into special observance of these practices, aligned with more general policy recommendations. In this regard, it is advisable to strengthen cooperation with the public sector (electoral and cyber defense administrations), civil society (citizens and the third sector), the private sector (fact-checking entities), etc.

---

[11] European Court of Human Rights. (2019, July 5th). Violation of right to free expression in the context of an electoral campaign: Brzeziński c. Poland (Case 47542/07). Council of Europe.

https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-194958

This especially applies to collaboration on media literacy, which provides citizens with the knowledge and tools to deliberate critically. UNESCO, since at least 1982 and since the 2021 Windhoek +30 Declaration, recognizes the importance of integrating long-term media and digital literacy plans to promote civic participation and increase citizens' resilience to disinformation and hate speech.

To comply with their legal obligations and self-regulation commitments, it is also essential to provide training and support to journalists in addressing the challenges of the digital communications ecosystem. The first point on this path is the defense of the ethical principles of the journalistic profession, whose most significant international milestone is the European Code of Journalism (1993).

However, given the special importance of independent fact-checking organizations, the Code of Practice of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) is particularly valuable, focusing on nonpartisanship, transparency (including funding and organization structure), and honesty. Along with them, emphasizes that the work of fact-checkers does not consist of verifying opinions, but rather facts, in line with their respect for fundamental rights and, in particular, with freedom of expression. Furthermore, it is encouraged that independent organizations explicitly state in their publications the code of ethics they adhere to and establish measurable compliance with their commitments.

Looking at the Spanish and Portuguese cases there are substantial differences in terms of relationship to the media system: Spanish people are more reliant on social media, while the Portuguese tend to be more attached to TV as the main source for news. Among young people, there is a balance between TV and social media in Portugal, but in Spain, the preference for social is clear and evident.

Furthermore, Portugal stands out as one of the countries, where people prefer search engines the most, compared to other gateways to news. Nevertheless, in both countries we find that direct / branded access to news is declining, meaning that the first impact of events usually happens outside the scope of journalism.

Trust in news is higher in Portugal in general, and much higher among the 18-24 demographic and interest in journalism is declining in both countries. Avoidance is also on the rise, despite being more prevalent in Spain. However, young men in Portugal are much more likely to avoid the news than other demographic groups. Concern about disinformation is very high in both countries, and particularly among the more educated and with higher income, but young people tend to be less concerned about disinformation.

When it comes to the 18-24 target demographic, despite the clear and distinctive features to this group, namely in the sources for news and general media, propensity for activism and relationship to politics and identity, there are also stark differences when it comes to gender. Younger men and women in Iberia display diverging preferences in terms of access to news: the former being much more reliant on TV in Portugal, and the latter much more favorable to social media in Spain.

However, young men in both countries tend to have more diverse diets in terms of access to news, being more prone to access news via alternative gateways such as newsletters or mobile alerts. All in all, Spanish 18-24's are much more likely to access the news in algorithmic structures, particularly women.

Spanish and Portuguese youth value freedom of speech and thought over democracy, peace, and human rights, contrasting with wider EU averages and the main triggers for activism tend to be topics or events related to human rights, climate change, equality (gender, race, sexuality) mental health and economic concerns, particularly among men. Young men also tend to be more interested in politics in both countries, by a wide margin, and voter turnout among women is much lower.

The most common reasons for absenteeism, per the last 2024 EU elections, are lack of information, the absence of any candidate reflecting personal views, and overall distrust in politics.

National identity is stronger in Portugal compared to Spain, where attachment to regional and autonomic political identity is very relevant. In both cases, the weight of European identity is moderate.

As in most Western countries, disinformation has become a more urgent topic after the 2016 election in the U.S. As such, research regarding the phenomenon has increased in Spain and Portugal over the past 10 years, but while Spanish academics have given more attention to the role of social media and algorithms, in Portugal, most studies have focused on traditional media, and academics are now turning their attention to social media. When considering disinformation in Spain and Portugal, it is fundamental to take into account the differences in political and geographical organization.

While in Spain electoral fraud is a predominant disinformation topic, in Portugal, corruption and, more recently, immigration are prevalent. In this sense, disinformation in Spain aims to disrupt voter mobilization by attacking the voting process, while in Portugal, it is strictly directed against political figures themselves. From a strategic perspective, it has been observed in both Spain and Portugal that disinformation in elections is amplified by political actors, with this amplification giving visibility and aspects of credibility to the disinformation content.

The integration of AI tools into the daily lives of young people in Spain and Portugal is widespread, particularly for studying, work tasks, creative projects, and entertainment, with adoption rates slightly higher in Portugal than in Spain. However, about one-third of youth in both countries remain non-users, revealing a potential digital literacy gap.

Despite similar usage patterns, perceptions of AI-generated content differ: young people in both countries are more open to AI-assisted news (mostly human-produced with AI support) than to AI-generated news (mostly produced by AI). In Portugal, 48% of youth express comfort with AI-assisted news versus 39% in Spain, while comfort with fully AI-generated news is higher in Portugal (31%) than in Spain (21%). Across both contexts, young men show greater acceptance of AI-generated content than young women.

The skepticism toward AI-generated journalism becomes even stronger when it comes to sensitive areas like political news. Comfort with AI-generated political reporting drops in both countries, reflecting a significant distrust of algorithmic content creation in hard news contexts. The gender gap persists here as well, with young Portuguese men notably more accepting than young women, a pattern also visible in Spain. These results suggest that while Portuguese youth are generally more receptive to AI-supported journalism than their Spanish counterparts, both countries share a cautious approach toward allowing AI a primary role in producing news, especially on politically sensitive topics.

Collected data points towards the need for further literacy training and formation in regard to political topics in online environments, particularly with the rise of the potential for synthetized content. Lessons learned from media literacy studies are particularly important:

a) Training should be tailored to the unique needs of each audience —in this case, 18- to 24-year-olds— ensuring relevance and engagement.
b) Simply using technology does not equate to digital literacy; mastery of tools must be accompanied by critical understanding of information sources, formats and contexts.
c) Effective training programs require the coordinated involvement of all stakeholders —educators, platform providers, fact-checkers and policy-makers— within a unified framework.

5.2. Spain

5.2.1. Good systemic practices

The guarantor approach to fundamental rights in Spain, in line with international and European standards, has led the Spanish Constitutional Court to establish precedent, stating that although freedom of expression does not protect a supposed right to lie, it does make it impossible to control the truth or falsehood of opinions, especially in the political sphere. However, as a sovereign state, Spain can combat disinformation campaigns by state or non-state actors that could be construed as interference in its internal affairs or as a threat to peace or international cooperation, and to encourage citizens to refrain from such campaigns, following either international or national regulations.

Likewise, since 2018, there have been attempts at regulation. The original intention was for those responsible for digital platforms, social networks, and equivalent services to guarantee the accuracy of information, which required providing effective complaint or notification protocols prior to content removal. However, this intention ultimately resulted in a legislative project for the modification of the right to rectification on the Internet (under review), with no complaint or notification protocol having been implemented to date.

On the other hand, and in line with the aforementioned European framework, the National Security Strategy has included disinformation campaigns as a main topic since 2017. Accordingly, also was passed the 2020 Procedure Against Disinformation (2019), establishing four levels of actions, each tailored to different stages of detection, analysis, and responses to potential impacts, especially during electoral periods. It is highly valuable to have constituted a dedicated civil society working group that has outlined specific recommendations to address disinformation in electoral contexts (Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, 2022; 2024).

Those recommendations are targeted at various stakeholders such as public administrations, electoral boards, political parties, social media platforms, media organizations, fact-checkers, and civil society groups. A key proposal included creating a centralized, publicly accessible electoral ad library managed by electoral authorities that would include transparency initiatives developed by platforms, search engines, and other online services.

Furthermore, media literacy mechanisms for electoral campaigns are recommended as a means to educate citizens and counter misinformation effectively. It would include initiatives such as providing information about the electoral system and process, the promotion of collaborative fact-checking with diverse stakeholders, or the development of educational material to enable citizens to detect and verify information online.

On January 28, 2025, the National Security Council approved the draft of a new National Strategy Against Disinformation Campaigns targeting various stakeholders such as public administrations, electoral boards, political parties, social media platforms, media organizations, fact-checkers, and civil society groups. In this regard, transparency is a central principle, especially during election periods.

On the other hand, the Spanish legal system recognizes citizens' rights related to the phenomenon of disinformation, some of which are fundamental rights, such as the right to receive truthful information, freedom of expression, and the right to political participation. Although this does not constitute a normative text, the 2021 Digital Rights Charter contains some elements of interest related to disinformation.

It emphasizes that the success of disinformation campaigns depends on what interests, motivates, or pleases us, implicating personal rights such as privacy, data protection, and confidentiality of communications. Therefore, it encourages responsible citizen involvement in detecting and preventing the distribution of harmful content. To this end, it once again emphasizes the importance of media and digital literacy and education, including aspects of basic cybersecurity culture. It also highlights the importance of transparency and accountability, for which public-private collaboration is essential, including the recognition and protection of journalism against professional intrusion that discredits it.

In this regard, it is equally important to underline the necessary ethical commitment of journalistic work, assumed voluntarily (unlike regulatory obligations), both individually and collectively. In the case of Spain, and following the model of the Council of Europe, the Federation of Journalists' Associations of Spain (FAPE) developed a Code of Ethics, last updated in 2017.

5.2.2. Good media and digital literacy practices

Despite being a phenomenon of existential importance for states, as it directly affects electoral processes, disinformation completely transcends the realm of national security, as it is embedded in citizens' daily lives. This Copernican Shift, as a common element in all disinformation strategies, implies the need to promote media and digital literacy among citizens. In Spain, where political polarization and linguistic diversity intersect with high social media engagement, youth face distinctive challenges in navigating disinformation.

Currently, in Spain, there is a strong emphasis on promoting media literacy, as it is regarded as a key element in the fight against disinformation. Evidence of this can be seen in the Spanish Government's implementation of an educational strategy to combat disinformation through media literacy, as part of its Action Plan for Democracy. In this context, numerous initiatives have emerged in recent years from public administrations, media organizations, and third-sector institutions. Some of these initiatives are outlined below.

De Vicente Domínguez, Beriain-Bañares, & Sierra-Sánchez (2020) identified gaps in media literacy among Spanish youth, indicating overconfidence in identifying disinformation despite their weak verification skills. That was the reason why Carrillo and Montagut (2021) explored alternative initiatives based on Dijk's media literacy model. In this regard, Que no te la cuelen ('don't be fooled') was a notable Spain-specific initiative conducted in Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia, holding theoretical-practical workshops for students and teachers with a special focus on informational skills.

These and other similar initiatives indicate (López-Flamarique and Planillo, 2021) the effectiveness of these workshops. Also, taking into account the key role that emotional engagement plays in disinformation, gamified experiences such as escape rooms (Lozano-Monterrubio et al, 2024) have been carried out as a prevention tool based on the emotional motivation of their participants.

With this in mind, it is also possible to examine initiatives specifically aimed at young adults. Marcia-Verdú et al. (2025) examined journalism programs across 38 Spanish universities, identifying widespread but uneven inclusion of content on disinformation, post-truth, and verification.

The Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) and the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (UFV), respectively, offered the first specific seminar on digital verification in 2012, as well as the first in-person verification course in Spain (ended in 2020); training future media professionals remains a priority. That is the reason why the Universidade Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) will include in the 2025-2026 year, the courses Information Verification and Media Literacy in the new Journalism degree. In parallel, the university also promotes initiatives such as the project "De la Universidad al Instituto", where journalism students provide media literacy training to high school students.

That said, an inspiring experience was the Desinfaketion Hub (Pérez-Escolar and Varona, 2024), a university-level educational model for training undergraduate journalism students in political fact-checking and autonomous responses to disinformation conducted in Seville and Cordoba. On this occasion, a verification platform was been designed, in which students publish literacy news and denials of hoaxes detected in the media and on social networks each week.

Furthermore, information and communication professionals are in favor of including media literacy trainings in their professional development. The importance of this training is difficult to overstate, since media outlets that routinely publish quality information are not immune to bad practices such as the unintentional dissemination of misinformation. In this regard, the Federation of Journalists' Associations of Spain (FAPE) and other professional organizations play a crucial role, as they have demonstrated by promoting online courses in verification skills. Additionally, Malaga's Press Association promotes initiatives such as La prensa en mi mochila (news in my backpack) aimed at school aged in primary and secondary education and La prensa sin edad (news without age) looking to upskill and raise awareness of elderly people against disinformation.

From a comparative perspective, studies have been conducted in Spain (Nygren et al, 2021) and indicate that the use of professional fact-checking tools, even in short sessions, significantly improves young's ability to detect misinformation. Additionally, Ferreras Rodriguez (2023) analyses initiatives from several media literacy platforms accredited by the International Fact-Checking Network in several southern European countries, highlighting their rising popularity, always very focused on young audiences, as well as the diversity of materials and tools that characterise them.

Finally, Sábada and Salaverría (2022) analyze European and Spanish policy documents, highlighting initiatives to combat disinformation and their growing emphasis on media literacy as a strategic priority. Therefore, the development of educational plans (including informal ones) serving the most vulnerable audiences is highlighted, raising their awareness of the importance of access to diverse and reliable sources of information.

In any case, whether in media training for students, the general public, or journalists, the ideal trainer profile is a communication expert. Within this broad profile, fact-checkers have a special ability to identify and teach formats, channels (including instant messaging networks), and the impact of disinformation. Their role often takes the form of awareness-raising activities or training initiatives, not excluding collaboration with third-sector organizations.

It is not the purpose of this document to compile an exhaustive catalogue of initiatives that could inform the design of SmartVote's media and digital literacy materials. In this case, it is recommended to read the initiatives of general and local media, organisations, and institutions for media literacy (Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, 2022; Cucarella, Ll., Fuster, P., 2022).

It is appropriate to make a special mention of Google's promoted initiatives, such as the Alliance Against Disinformation that, in association with CLABE, carries out training for journalists; or the Vacúnate contra los bulos (get vaccinated against hoaxes) campaign in association with Newtral, aimed at the general public, in which videos are disseminated reviewing the most distributed disinformation during the immediately preceding week.

In short, three important issues can be highlighted. The first one is that, although the integration of media and digital literacy programs into broader educational curricula increases their impact, efforts fail to overcome the widespread fragmentation of these initiatives: while these interventions show short-term gains in critical skills, evidence on sustained behavioral changes is scarce. If media literacy was to be organically integrated into the mandatory curricula, measures would have to be put in place to measure the efficiency of media literacy learning.

It is then necessary to highlight the challenges related to the need to adapt to the Spanish regional context, which is diverse from a territorial, linguistic, social, and cultural perspective, as demonstrated by various initiatives, particularly linked to the narratives of some of its territories. Finally, a general conclusion is that efforts remain increasing, but with uneven support among institutions, which often results in the premature expiration of many promising initiatives.

5.3. Portugal

The institutional scene in Portugal when it comes to the prevention and mitigation of disinformation phenomena is distinct from Spain, in the sense that institutional coordination and responses are much more fragmented, with several institutions developing slightly different roles independently. While Spain has been much more proactive in these terms, creating a multi-actor structure which merges the strategic and political response to disinformation incidents, in Portugal, the legislative approach is much broader and focused on the intent to preserve freedom of speech, and not directly addressing disinformation itself.

The regulator for media and communications, ERC, has been developing work in identifying and reporting disinformation, while also promoting media literacy initiatives. ERC has as its main responsibilities in the area of media literacy the promotion of critical and informed use of media through the monitoring of projects, production of studies, development of educational materials, and the organization of awareness-raising and training initiatives. It also works in partnership with national and international entities, encouraging the inclusion of media literacy in school curricula and teacher training, with the goal of strengthening citizens' skills in consuming and analyzing information.

As for disinformation during electoral periods, the National Electoral Commission (CNE) does not have explicit recommendations yet, but, warn that disinformation and its potential to create disruption are today one of the main threats to the transparency of electoral acts and equality between candidates and candidacies, organised meetings with the aim of promoting a space to share experiences and suggestions, identifying opportunities to mitigate disinformation and strengthen more credible and transparent communication.

CNE focuses its attention on two central themes: electoral campaigning, fairness and equality in the context of electoral campaigns; and the importance of the media in combating disinformation in the context of electoral acts. It also addressed the validation of sources and the verification of facts by the media outlets, as well as European regulations and the importance of media literacy in the context of combating disinformation.

In February 2024, it was proposed that a think tank be set up between the CNE, the ERC (the media regulator), media companies, digital platforms, academia and international organisations. With the aim of creating more agile action methodologies, direct communication channels between stakeholders and greater cooperation between regulators, this network should focus on sharing experiences and knowledge, as well as international cooperation with similar bodies.

Also in 2024, CNE has set up a WhatsApp number for citizens to report cases of "disinformation or undue publicity" during the 9 June 2024 European Election campaign. Through a protocol with MediaLab Iscte, it produced a report, Europeias 2024 Relatório-síntese[12], for monitoring and screening political disinformation in the context of the electoral campaign for the European elections in Portugal.

Media literacy wise the approach is based on the idea that it is an essential skill for the exercise of democratic citizenship, involving not only the critical consumption of information but also the ability to analyze, evaluate, produce, and engage with content across different media and platforms. This integrated perspective sees media literacy as a cross-cutting field that connects education, culture, technology, and civic participation, aiming to prepare citizens to deal with the challenges of today's information ecosystem, marked by disinformation and the influence of algorithms.

Alongside the ERC, the Ministry of Education and other public bodies encourage the inclusion of media literacy in school curricula and teacher training, recognizing the importance of equipping not only young people but also adults, seniors, and media professionals with the skills needed for a more conscious and informed relationship with the media.

Examples of initiatives that illustrate this approach include the project 7 Days with the Media, which promotes awareness-raising activities in schools and communities, the National Reading Plan, which integrates media literacy components, and Portugal's participation in European networks such as EMEDUS (European Media Literacy Education Study). These actions reflect the focus on cooperation across sectors and on fostering active, critical citizenship in response to the challenges of the digital age.

---

[12] Available at: https://www.cne.pt/sites/default/files/dl/eleicoes/2024_pe/docs_geral/relatorio-sintese_eleicoes-europeias-2024_redes-sociais_monitorizacao-desinformacao.pdf

References

References

Aladro Vico, E., & Requeijo Rey, P. (2020). Discurso, estrategias e interacciones de Vox en su cuenta oficial de Instagram en las elecciones del 28-A. Derecha radical y redes sociales. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *77*, 203-229. https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2020-1455

Alonso-López, N., Sidorenko-Bautista, P., & Giacomelli, F. (2021). Beyond challenges and viral dance moves: TikTok as a vehicle for disinformation and fact-checking in Spain, Portugal, Brazil, and the USA. *Anàlisi*, (64), 65–84. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/analisi.3411

Alemanno, A. (2018). How to Counter Fake News? A Taxonomy of Anti-fake News Approaches. *Eur. J. Risk Regul*, *9*, 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1017/err.2018.12

Anderson, C. (2013). Towards a sociology of computational and algorithmic journalism. *New Media & Society*, *15*(7), 1005–1021. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812465137

Assembleia da República. (2021). Carta Portuguesa de Direitos Humanos na Era Digital. Diário da República n.º 95/2021, Série I de 2021-05-17. Available at: https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2021-164870244

Bader, M. (2018). Disinformation in elections. *Security and human rights*, *29*(1-4), 24-35. https://doi.org/10.1163/18750230-02901006

Badillo-Matos, A., Baldi, V., Arteaga, F., Paisana, M., Crespo, M., Cardoso, G., Rementería, M.J., Philippe, O., Calvo, B., Buslón, N., Hernández-Escayola, P., Gómez-Romero, J., Molina-Solana, M. (2023). Analysis of the Impact of Disinformation on Political, Economic, Social and Security Issues, Governance Models and Good Practices: The cases of Spain and Portugal. Pamplona: IBERIFIER. http://dx.doi.org/doi.org/10.15581/026.002

Baptista, J. P., & Gradim, A. (2020). Online disinformation on Facebook: the spread of fake news during the Portuguese 2019 election. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, *30*(2), 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2020.1843415

Baptista, J. P., Correia, E., Gradim, A., & Piñeiro-Naval, V. (2021). The Influence of Political Ideology on Fake News Belief: The Portuguese Case. *Publications*, *9*(2), 23. https://doi.org/10.3390/publications9020023

Baptista, J. P., & Gradim, A. (2022). Online disinformation on Facebook: the spread of fake news during the Portuguese 2019 election. *Journal of contemporary European studies*, *30*(2), 297-312. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2020.1843415

Belim, C. (2020). "In the land of elections, the populist man is king": The online communication of basta and Vox in the 2019 European elections. *Tripodos*, (49), 109-128. https://doi.org/10.51698/tripodos.2020.49p109-128

Bendiek, A., & Schulze, M. (2019). *Disinformation and elections to the European Parliament*. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik -SWP- Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit. https://doi.org/10.18449/2019C16

Boletín Oficial del Estado (2019). Orden PCM/1030/2020, de 30 de octubre, por la que se publica el Procedimiento de actuación contra la desinformación aprobada por el Consejo de Seguridad Nacional (BOE núm. 292, de 5 de noviembre de 2020, 96673-96680). Available at: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2020-13663

Bontcheva, K., Symeon, P., Filareti, T., Gallotti, R., Dutkiewicz, L., Krack, N., Teyssou, D., Nucci, F. S., Spangenberg, J., Srba, I., Aichroth, P., Cuccovillo, L., & Verdoliva, L. (2024). *Generative AI and disinformation: Advances, challenges and opportunities*. European Digital Media Observatory.

Bontridder, N., & Poullet, Y. (2021). The role of artificial intelligence in disinformation. *Data & Policy*, *3*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.28805.27365

Bovet, A., & Makse, H. A. (2019). Influence of fake news in Twitter during the 2016 US presidential election. *Nature communications*, *10*(1), 7. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-07761-2

Bouza, L. (2014). *Addressing youth absenteeism in European elections*. League of Young Voters in Europe, European Youth Forum. Available at: https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/addressing-youth-absenteeism-european-elections

Buțincu, C. N., & Alexandrescu, A. (2023). Blockchain-Based Platform to Fight Disinformation Using Crowd Wisdom and Artificial Intelligence. *Applied Sciences*, *13*(10). https://doi.org/10.3390/app13106088

Calvo, D., Campos-Domínguez, E., & Díez-Garrido, M. (2019). Hacia una campaña computacional: herramientas y estrategias online en las elecciones españolas. *Revista Española De Ciencia Política*, (51), 123–154. https://doi.org/10.21308/recp.51.05

Cano-Orón, L., Calvo, D., López García, G., & Baviera, T. (2021). Disinformation in Facebook Ads in the 2019 Spanish General Election Campaigns. *Media and Communication,* *9*(1), 217-228. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3335

Cardoso, G., Moreno, J., Narciso, I., & Palma, N. (2020). Social Media disinformation in the pre-electoral period in Portugal. *CIES e-Working Papers – CIES-Iscte*. https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/20667

Cardoso, G., Paisana, M., & Pinto-Martinho, A. (2024). Digital News Report Portugal 2024. OberCom - Observatório da Comunicação. Available at: https://www.obercom.pt/digital-news-report-portugal-2024/

Cardoso, G., & Moreno, J. (2025, March 20). Corrupção ou Imigração? *Público*. https://www.publico.pt/2025/03/20/sociedade/opiniao/corrupcao-imigracao-2126667

Carlson, M. (2015). The Robotic Reporter: Automated journalism and the redefinition of labor, compositional forms, and journalistic authority. *Digital Journalism*, *3*(3), 416–431. Scopus. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.976412

Carrillo, N., & Montagut, M. (2021). Tackling online disinformation through media literacy in Spain: The project 'Que no te la cuelen.' *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, *13*(1), 149–157. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00044_7

Casero-Ripollés, A., Sintes-Olivella, M., & Franch, P. (2017). The populist political communication style in action: Podemos's issues and functions on Twitter during the 2016 Spanish general election. *American behavioral scientist*, *61*(9), 986-1001. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217707624

Casquinho, M., Vasconcelos, A., Moreno, J., Cardoso, G., Palma, N., Paisana, M., Pinto-Martinho, A. (2024a). *Europeias 2024 - Amplificação do discurso político online e desinformação em Portugal.* Publicações OberCom. https://www.obercom.pt/legislativas-2024-amplificacao-do-discurso-politico-online-e-desinformacao/

Casquinho, M., Vasconcelos, A., Moreno, J., Cardoso, G., Palma, N., Paisana, M., Pinto-Martinho, A. (2024b). *Legislativas 2004 - Amplificação do discurso político online e desinformação em Portugal*. Publicações OberCom. https://www.obercom.pt/europeias-2024-amplificacao-do-discurso-politico-online-e-desinformacao/

Cerezales, D. P., & Soriano, V. F. (2023). Close, yet different. The Southern European transitions of the 1970s revisited. *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, *53*(1). https://doi.org/10.4000/mcv.18884

Cervi, L., & Carrillo-Andrade, A. (2019). Post-verdad y desinformación: uso del análisis del discurso para comprender la creación de narrativas emocionales y rivales en Brexit. *ComHumanitas: Revista Científica De Comunicación*, *10*(2), 125-149. https://doi.org/10.31207/rch.v10i2.207

Chamusca, P. (2024). Discontent, Populism, or the Revenge of the "Places That Don't Matter"? Analysis of the Rise of the Far-Right in Portugal. *Societies*, *14*(6), 80. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14060080

Clerwall, C. (2014). Enter the Robot Journalist: Users' perceptions of automated content. *Journalism Practice*, *8*(5), 519–531. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2014.883116

Coady, D. (2019). The trouble with 'fake news'. *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 8 (10), 40-52. https://wp.me/p1Bfg0-4w5

Código Deontológico. (n.d.). Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España. Retrieved from https://fape.es/home/codigo-deontologico-1/ on 1st of March 2025.

Colleoni, E., Rozza, A., & Arvidsson, A. (2014). Echo chamber or public sphere? Predicting political orientation and measuring political homophily in Twitter using big data. *Journal of communication*, *64*(2), 317-332. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12084

Comisión Europea (2020). Plan de Acción para la Democracia Europea. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790&from=ES

Comisión Europea (2025). Code of Conduct on Disinformation. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/code-conduct-disinformation

Córdoba-Cabús, A., Hidalgo-Arjona, M., & López-Martí-n, Álvaro. (2021). Cobertura de diarios en Twitter de las elecciones autonómicas de Madrid 2021. Procesamiento de lenguaje natural y algoritmos de aprendizaje automático. *Profesional De La información*, *30*(6). https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2021.nov.11

Consejo de Europa (1993). Código Europeo de Deontología del Periodismo (Resolución 1003). Available at: https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=16414

Cucarella, Ll., Fuster, P. (2022*). Informe sobre alfabetización mediática: contexto actual, legislación, casos de éxito, herramientas y recursos, y percepción y propuestas de especialistas y profesores*. Laboratorio de Periodismo. Fundación Luca de Tena.

Culloty, E., & Suiter, J. (2021). Anti-immigration disinformation. In *The Routledge companion to media disinformation and populism* (pp. 221-230). Routledge.

Diakopoulos, N., Cools, H., Li, C., Helberger, N., Kung, E., Rinehart, A., & Gibbs, L. (2024). *Generative AI in Journalism: The Evolution of Newswork and Ethics in a Generative Information Ecosystem*. Associated Press. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.31540.05765

Dwivedi, Y. K., Kshetri, N., Hughes, L., Slade, E. L., Jeyaraj, A., Kar, A. K., Baabdullah, A. M., Koohang, A., Raghavan, V., Ahuja, M., Albanna, H., Albashrawi, M. A., Al-Busaidi, A. S., Balakrishnan, J., Barlette, Y., Basu, S., Bose, I., Brooks, L., Buhalis, D., … Wright, R. (2023). Opinion Paper: "So what if ChatGPT wrote it?" Multidisciplinary perspectives on opportunities, challenges and implications of generative conversational AI for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management*, *71*, 102642. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2023.102642

De Vicente Domínguez, A. M., Beriain Bañares, A., & Sierra Sánchez, J. (2021). Young Spanish Adults and Disinformation: Do They Identify and Spread Fake News and Are They Literate in It? *Publications*, *9*(1), 2. https://doi.org/10.3390/publications9010002

Del Monte, M. (2023). *Youth participation in European elections*. European Parliament Think Tank. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)754634

Dentith, M. R. (2016). The problem of fake news. *Public Reason* 8 (1-2): 65-79. Available at: https://philarchive.org/rec/DENTPO-31

Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (2022). *Lucha contra las campañas de desinformación en el ámbito de la seguridad nacional: Propuestas de la sociedad civil*. Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática. Available at: https://www.dsn.gob.es/sites/default/files/documents/LibroDesinfoSN.pdf

Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (2025). *Trabajos del foro contra las campañas de desinformación*. Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática. Available at: https://www.dsn.gob.es/sites/default/files/2025-01/MODIFICADO%20ACCESIBLE%20TRABAJOS%20FORO%20CAMPA%C3%91AS%20DE%20DESINFORMACI%C3%93N.%20INICIATIVAS%20%202024.pdf

Durães, M. (2024, July 1st) Três quartos dos jovens portugueses têm uma visão polarizada da política - e mais à direita. *Público*. Available at: https://www.publico.pt/2024/07/01/p3/noticia/tres-quartos-jovens-portugueses-visao-polarizada-politica-direita-2095570

European Commission (2018). *Flash Eurobarometer 464. Fake News and Disinformation*. Available at: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2183

European Commission (2020). *Joint communication to the European Parliament, the European council, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions. Tackling Covid-19 disinformation - Getting the facts right.* JOIN/ 2020/8. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020JC0008

European Commission: Directorate-General for Communication, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and Ipsos European Public Affairs (2024). *Youth and Democracy*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org/10.2766/677571.

European Commission: Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (2018), *A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation – Report of the independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation.* Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/739290

European Court of Human Rights. (2019, July 5th). Violation of right to free expression in the context of an electoral campaign: Brzeziński c. Poland (Case 47542/07). Council of Europe. https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-194958

European Parliament (2022). *Flash Eurobarometer FL011EP - Media & News Survey 2022.* Available at: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2832

European Parliament: Directorate-General for Communication and Ipsos European Public Affairs (2025). *European Parliament Eurobarometer: Youth survey 2024.* European Parliament. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/5146566.

Faris, R., Roberts, H., Etling, B., Bourassa, N., Zuckerman, E., & Benkler, Y. (2017). Partisanship, propaganda, and disinformation: Online media and the 2016 US presidential election. *Berkman Klein Center Research Publication, 6.* Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3019414

Ferrara, E. (2017). Disinformation and social bot operations in the run up to the 2017 French presidential election. *First Monday*, *22*(8). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v22i8.8005

Ferrari, I., & Christofoletti, R. (2022). Instrumentos e práticas de transparência jornalística: Um breve mapeamento. *Ámbitos*, *57*, 157–170. https://doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2022.i57.09

Ferreras Rodríguez, E. M. (2023). Análisis de las propuestas educativas de las plataformas de fact checking en España, Italia y Portugal. *Revista de La Asociación Española de Investigación de La Comunicación*, *10*(19), 341–364. https://doi.org/10.24137/raeic.10.19.15

Ferrés, J., Aguaded, I., & García Matilla, A. (2012). La competencia mediática de la cidadania española: dificultades y retos. *Revista ICONO 14. Revista Científica De Comunicación Y Tecnologías Emergentes, 10(3),* 23-42. https://doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v10i3.201

Figueira, J., & Santos, S. (Eds.). (2019). *As fake news e a nova ordem (des) informativa na era da pós-verdade: Manipulação, Polarização, Filter Bubbles.* Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra/Coimbra University Press.

Forja-Pena, T., García-Orosa, B., & López-García, X. (2024). The Ethical Revolution: Challenges and Reflections in the Face of the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Digital Journalism. *Communication & Society*, *37*(3), 237-254. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.37.3.237-254

Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2024). *What does the public in six countries think of generative AI in news?* Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:bad671a6-860d-4513-951b-ef9cb2ac454b

Freire, A., & Santana-Pereira, J. (2018). More second-order than ever? The 2014 european election in Portugal. Em H. Schmitt & E. Teperoglou (Eds.), *Still Second Order or Critical Contests? The 2014 European Parliament Elections in Southern Europe* (pp. 109–130). Routledge.

Gelfert, A. (2018). Fake News: A Definition. *Informal Logic*, *38*(1), 84–117. https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v38i1.5068

Graves, L. (2016). *Understanding the Promise and Limits of Automated Fact-Checking.* University of Oxford.

Ignacio Criado, J., Martínez-Fuentes, G., & Silván, A. (2012). Social media for political campaigning. The use of Twitter by Spanish mayors in 2011 local elections. *Web 2.0 technologies and democratic governance: Political, policy and management implications,* 219-232. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-1448-3_14

Jones, S. (2025, April 3rd). 'It's really crude': concern over mix of misogyny and Franco nostalgia among Spanish teens. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/03/its-really-crude-concern-over-mix-of-misogyny-and-franco-nostalgia-among-spanish-teens

Kayıkçı, Ş., & Khoshgoftaar, T. M. (2024). Blockchain meets machine learning: A survey. *Journal of Big Data*, *11*(9). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40537-023-00852-y

Kertysova, K. (2018). Artificial Intelligence and Disinformation. *Security and Human Rights*, *29*, 55–81. https://doi.org/10.1163/18750230-02901005

Lilleker, D. (2017). *Evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee 'Fake news' inquiry presented by the Faculty for Media & Communication*, *Bournemouth University*. Bournemouth University. Available at: https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/28610/

López-Flamarique, M., & Planillo Artola, S. (2021). El alumnado de educación secundaria frente a las noticias falsas: resultados de una intervención didáctica. *Revista Latinoamericana de Tecnología Educativa - RELATEC*, *20*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.17398/1695-288X.20.1.39

López-García, G. (2016). Nuevos' y 'viejos' liderazgos: La campaña de las elecciones generales españolas de 2015 en Twitter. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, *29*(3), 149–167. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.29.3.sp.149-167

Lozano-Monterrubio, N., Cuartielles, R., Carrillo-Pérez, N., & Montagut, M. (2024). Escape rooms como metodología educativa para combatir la desinformación en alumnos de primaria y secundaria: el caso de Learn to Escape. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *82*. https://doi.org/10.4185/rlcs-2024-2243

Maarek, P. J. (2014). Politics 2.0: New Forms of Digital Political Marketing and Political Communication. *Tripodos*, *1*(34), 13–22. Retrieved from https://tripodos.com/index.php/Facultat_Comunicacio_Blanquerna/article/view/163

Magalhães, P. C. (2014). The Elections of the Great Recession in Portugal: Performance Voting under a Blurred Responsibility for the Economy. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, *24*(2), 180–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2013.874352

Magallón Rosa, R., Paniagua Rojano, F. J., & Chacón Peinado, S. (2019). Las elecciones andaluzas de 2018. El uso de bots como herramienta de análisis de la agenda informativa electoral. *IC Revista Científica De Información Y Comunicación*, (16). Retrieved from https://icjournal-ojs.org/index.php/IC-Journal/article/view/504

Magallón-Rosa, R. (2024). Desinformación y elecciones. La (des)confianza en el sistema. Em J. M. A. Terrón, M. V. de H. de S. Mateo, Á. G. de Ágreda, & M. P. Escolar (Eds.), *Desinformación y defensa: Conflictos híbridos, entorno cognitivo y operaciones de influencia* (pp. 59–69). Pirámide.

Maldita (2023). From Hashtags to Votes: Social Media Patterns in Spain's 2023 Parliamentary Elections. Available at: https://democracyreporting.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/images/650170c0547c7.pdf

Marcos-García, S., Alonso-Muñoz, L., & López-Meri, A. (2021). Campañas electorales y Twitter. La difusión de contenidos mediáticos en el entorno digital. *Cuadernos. info*, (48), 27-47. http://dx.doi.org/10.7764/cdi.48.1738

Marsden, C., & Meyer, T. (2019). *Regulating disinformation with artificial intelligence. Effects of disinformation initiatives on freedom of expression and media pluralism*. European Parliament. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/003689

Marsden, C., Meyer, T., & Brown, I. (2020). Platform values and democratic elections: How can the law regulate digital disinformation? *Computer Law & Security Review*, *36*(105373.). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2019.105373

Meinert, J., Mirbabaie, M., Dungs, S., Aker, A. (2018). Is It Really Fake? – Towards an Understanding of Fake News in Social Media Communication. In: Meiselwitz, G. (eds) *Social Computing and Social Media. User Experience and Behavior. SCSM 2018. Lecture Notes in Computer Science(), vol 10913*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91521-0_35

Meirinho, M., Teixeira, C.P., & Fonseca, P. (2024). 50 anos de Democracia em Portugal: Aspirações e Práticas Democráticas - Continuidades e Mudanças Geracionais. Project. Information at: https://democracia.iscsp.ulisboa.pt/

Murcia-Verdú, F.-J., Ufarte-Ruiz, M.-J., & Rodríguez-Pérez, C. (2025). La enseñanza universitaria de los desórdenes informativos en los Grados en Periodismo en España. *Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM.27852

Napoli, P. M. (2014). Automated Media: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Algorithmic Media Production and Consumption. *Communication Theory*, 24(3), 340–360. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12039

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Eddy, K., Robertson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Digital news report 2023*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-p6es-hb13

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Ross Arguedas, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2024*. Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism. https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-vy6n-4v57

Novoa-Jaso, M.F., Sierra, A., Labiano, R. & Vara-Miguel, A. (2024). *Digital News Report España 2024. Calidad periodística y pluralidad: claves para la confianza informativa en la era de la inteligencia artificial (IA).* Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra. https://doi.org/10.15581/019.2024

Nygren, T., Guath, M., Axelsson, C.-A. W., & Frau-Meigs, D. (2021). Combatting Visual Fake News with a Professional Fact-Checking Tool in Education in France, Romania, Spain and Sweden. *Information*, *12*(5), 201. https://doi.org/10.3390/info12050201

Paniagua-Rojano, F.; Seoane-Pérez, F. y Magallón-Rosa, R. (2020). Anatomía del bulo electoral: la desinformación política durante la campaña del 28-A en España. *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, *124*, p. 123-145. doi.org/10.24241/rcai.2020.124.1.123

Pardal, F. & Narciso, I. (2023). The disinformation landscape in Portugal. EU Disinfo Lab. Available at: https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/disinformation-landscape-in-portugal/

Pavlik, J. V. (2023). Collaborating With ChatGPT: Considering the Implications of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Journalism and Media Education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *78*(1), 84–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/10776958221149577

Pérez-Escolar, M., & Varona Aramburu, D. (2022). Desinfaketion Hub: una propuesta docente para llevar la verificación de la desinformación política a las aulas. *Anàlisi*, *66*, 131–151. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/analisi.3482

Peña-Fernández, S., Meso-Ayerdi, K., Larrondo-Ureta, A., & Díaz-Noci, J. (2023). Without journalists, there is no journalism: the social dimension of generative artificial intelligence in the media. *Profesional De La información*, *32*(2). https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.mar.27

Pierri, F., Artoni, A., & Ceri, S. (2020). Investigating Italian disinformation spreading on Twitter in the context of 2019 European elections. *PloS one*, *15*(1), e0227821. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0227821

Pilati, F., & Venturini, T. (2024). The use of artificial intelligence in counter-disinformation: A world wide (web) mapping. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1517726

Quevedo Redondo, R., Portalés-Oliva, M., & Berrocal Gonzalo, S. (2016). The image use on Twitter during the 2015 municipal election campaign in Spain. *Revista Latina de Comunicacion Social*, *71*, 85-107. https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1085en

Reif, K., & Schmitt, H. (1980). Nine second-order national elections–a conceptual framework for the analysis of European Election results. *European journal of political research*, *8*(1), 3-44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1980.tb00737.x

Reporters Without Borders (2024). World Press Freedom Index. Retrieved from https://rsf.org/en/index on 26th of March 2025.

Rapp, M., & Schweizer, D. (2024). A 15-year retrospective of European elections: women's political participation and representation. EU&I. Retrieved from https://euandi.eu/en/blog/knowlegde-bites/a-15-year-retrospective-of-european-elections-women-s-political-participation-and-representation.html on 27th of March 2025.

Rivas-de-Roca, R. (2021). Estudio de discursos políticos y mediáticos en las elecciones gallegas de 2020. *Doxa Comunicación. Revista Interdisciplinar De Estudios De Comunicación Y Ciencias Sociales*, *33*, 121-136. https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n33a1492

Rivas-de-Roca, R., Morais, R., & Jerónimo, P. (2022). Communication and disinformation in elections: research trends in Spain and Portugal. *Universitas, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*, (36). https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n36.2022.03

Sádaba, C., & Salaverría, R. (2022). Combatir la desinformación con alfabetización mediática: análisis de las tendencias en la Unión Europea. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *81*, 17–33. https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2023-1552

Salgado, S., Luengo, Ó. G., Papathanassopoulos, S., Suiter, J., & Stępińska, A. (2021). Crisis and populism: a comparative study of populist and non-populist candidates and rhetoric in the news media coverage of election campaigns. *European Politics and Society, 23*(5), 563–578. https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2021.1896882

Sánchez-García, P., Diez-Gracia, A., Mayorga, I. R., & Jerónimo, P. (2025). Media Self-Regulation in the Use of AI: Limitation of Multimodal Generative Content and Ethical Commitments to Transparency and Verification. *Journalism and Media*, *6*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6010029

Santos, F. C. C. (2023). Artificial Intelligence in Automated Detection of Disinformation: A Thematic Analysis. *Journalism and Media*, *4*(2), 679–687. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia4020043

Saurwein, F., & Spencer-Smith, C. (2021). Automated Trouble: The Role of Algorithmic Selection in Harms on Social Media Platforms. *Media and Communication, 9*(4), 222-233. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i4.4062

Singh, V. K., Ghosh, I., & Sonagar, D. (2021). Detecting fake news stories via multimodal analysis. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *72,* 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24359
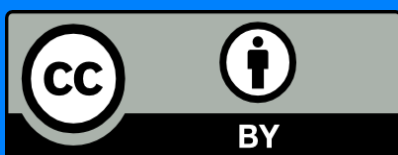
Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2017). Defining "Fake News": A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism, 6*(2), 137–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143

Vasconcelos, A., Casquinho, M., Moreno, J. & Cardoso, G. (2024). A desinformação na comunicação em rede: Desafios e identidade desinformativa. In Gustavo Cardoso (Ed.), *A nova comunicação*. (pp. 199-223). Coimbra: Almedina.

Vaccari, C., Chadwick, A., & Kaiser, J. (2022). The Campaign Disinformation Divide: Believing and Sharing News in the 2019 UK General Election. *Political Communication*, *40*(1), 4–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2022.2128948

Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M.-C., & Sixto-García, J. (2022). Mind the Gap! Journalism on Social Media and News Consumption Among Young Audiences. International Journal of Communication, 16(0), Article 0. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/19643

Vicente, A. R. (2023). *The disinformation landscape in Spain*. EU Disinfo Lab. Available at: https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/disinformation-landscape-in-spain/

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, *359*, 1146-1151. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559

Waisbord, S., & Amado, A. (2017). Populist communication by digital means: presidential Twitter in Latin America. *Information, Communication & Society*, *20*(9), 1330–1346. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328521

Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking* (Vol. 27, pp. 1-107). Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-report-november-2017/1680764666

Zimmermann, F., & Kohring, M. (2020). Mistrust, Disinforming News, and Vote Choice: A Panel Survey on the Origins and Consequences of Believing Disinformation in the 2017 German Parliamentary Election. *Political Communication*, *37*(2), 215–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1686095

Zamora-Medina, R., & Zurutuza-Muñoz, C. (2014). Campaigning on Twitter: Towards the "Personal Style" Campaign to Activate the Political Engagement During the 2011 Spanish General Elections. *Communication & Society*, 27(1), 83-106. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.27.36005

Other sources and references

Club Abierto de Editores (CLABE). Comprometidos con la verdad. https://comprometidosconlaverdad.com/

Funded projects in the fight against disinformation. European Comission. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/funded-projects-fight-against-disinformation_en

Tools That Fight Disinformation Online. RAND. Available at: https://www.rand.org/research/projects/truth-decay/fighting-disinformation/search.html

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15305356