

“Return to Censorship”: Portuguese Perceptions of Digital Disinformation Regulation

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This study addresses the phenomenon of disinformation and seeks to analyze the current public policies to combat it in Portugal. In this sense, a study was conducted on the enactment of the Portuguese Charter of Human Rights in the Digital Age, which enshrines rights, freedoms, and guarantees of citizens on the internet. The lack of consensus on Article 6, concerning protection against disinformation, has promoted indignation from public opinion, parties, and political figures. To understand Portuguese perceptions of disinformation regulation, we carried out an inductive content analysis of comments ($N = 314$) in comment boxes of journalistic texts from five reference media in Portugal, which reported legislation on Facebook. The data reveal that 56% of users have a negative perception of the law. This research also concluded that the reference to censorship represents one of the four most used argumentation patterns among Portuguese when expressing dissatisfaction ($N = 101, 51.3\%$).

Keywords: disinformation, vulnerability factors, public policies, perceptions, Portugal

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