



THREATPIE

Causes, consequences, and solutions

Findings from a mixed-method study on disinformation perception across generations in five countries
(Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain, the UK)

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Theoretical framework

- Spread of disinformation

(Bovet & Maske, 2019; Lazer et al., 2018; Vosoughi et al., 2018; Grinberg et al., 2019)

- Perception of disinformation

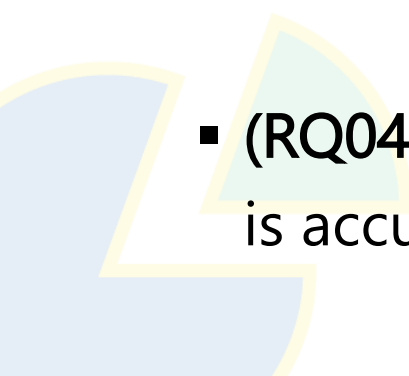
(Nielsen & Graves, 2017; IPSOS, 2018)

- Disinformation

intentional or unintentional process of disseminating false or misleading information



Research questions

- (RQ01) According to citizens, what are the causes of spreading disinformation?
 - (RQ02) In citizens' view, what would be the consequences of disinformation (at personal and social levels)?
 - (RQ03) What solutions to the spread of disinformation are offered by regular citizens?
 - (RQ04) How do citizens act when they want to know whether the information is accurate or not?
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Research methods and research design (I)

- Focus group discussions

(Fern, 2001)

- 6-7 people

(Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999)

- (18-25) and (55+)

(Andersen et al., 2021)

- Five countries

Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain,
the UK

- Online communication platforms

- Interview script

three-part structure

Research methods and research design (II)

- Comparative online survey

media and political topics; political orientation

- 18 countries

Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain, the UK

- 1500 participants

age, sex, and education

- Fieldwork dates

May-June 2022



CAUSES of spreading disinformation

18-25

55+

malicious act
(Poland, the UK)

financial gain
(Spain)

cause harm
(Germany, Spain, Romania, the UK)

defamation
(Germany)

ensure benefits
(Germany, Spain, Romania, the UK)

ease of production
(Poland)

machiavellian purposes
(Romania)

ignorance
(Germany, Romania, the UK)

grasp power
(Spain)

unintentional act
(Spain, Germany, Romania)

gain power
(Romania)

unintentional act
(the UK, Germany)

political or financial goals
(Romania)

pressure of time
(Romania)



Results (18-25)

RO01: "...people think that they are smarter than others, that they have secret information nobody else knows (...) **there is Dunning – Kruger effect,** people who know nothing but believe they know everything..."



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pressure of time
(Romania)

Results (55+)

RO03: "...chasing the news, to be the first to publish the news,

a TV channel could broadcast the news without knowing too much about it (...)

I want to be the first to publish the news, I, the journalist, I, the TV channel..."



CONSEQUENCES of disinformation

18-25

55+

trust in news
and authorities
(Germany, Poland, the UK)

political disengagement
(the UK)

political views and choices
(Poland, Spain, Germany, Romania, the UK)

growing anxiety
(Romania)

impact on electoral proces
(Spain)

Covid-19
(the UK)

news avoidance
(Romania, Poland)

impact on democracy
(Spain, Romania, the UK)

debunking
(Spain)

emergence of a post truth environment
(Poland, the UK)

Results (55+)

PL06: "...**we all live in a post-truth era**, and that disinformation may lead to questioning everything (...) **the truth does not matter**. Emotions that accompany us during various events are the most important thing..."



SOLUTIONS to the spread of disinformation

18-25

55+

social platform activities
(Germany, Spain, Poland, Romania)

fact-checking
(Poland)

individual actions
(Poland, the UK)

automated fact-checking
(Spain)

individual actions
(Poland, the UK)

media literacy
(Germany, Spain, Poland, Romania)

legal regulations
(Spain, the UK)

media activities
(Germany, Poland)

SU, public figures, NGOs
(Romania)

media literacy
(Spain, Poland, Romania, the UK)

legal regulations
(Spain, Romania, the UK)

Results (18-25)

UK07: ".....it is not possible to check every article.

A man cannot do it, **and computerized control systems are not 100% effective.**

We must compose our diet ourselves. **We must know how to use the media..."**



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Results (55+)

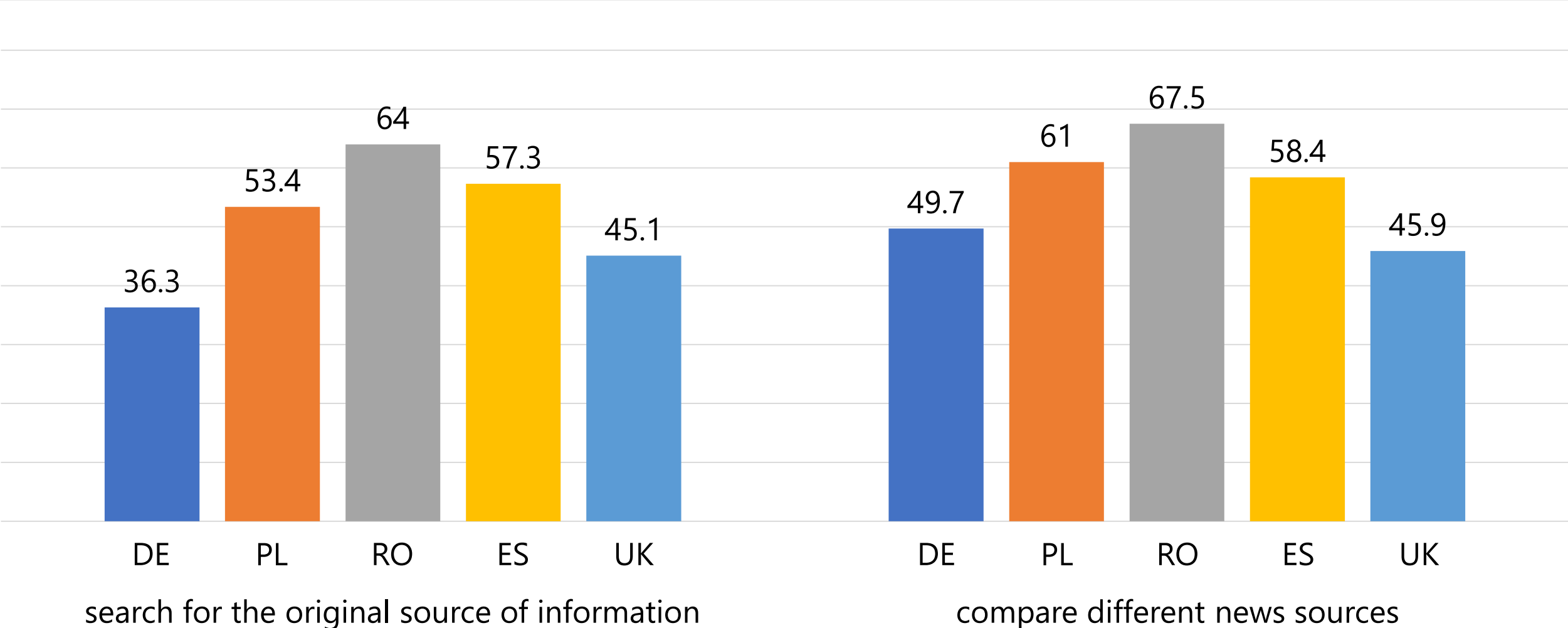
R008: "...We need a set of rules, procedures, to stop the journalists, the media channels to release fake news. **They need to be punished somehow because this type of behavior needs to have consequences.**

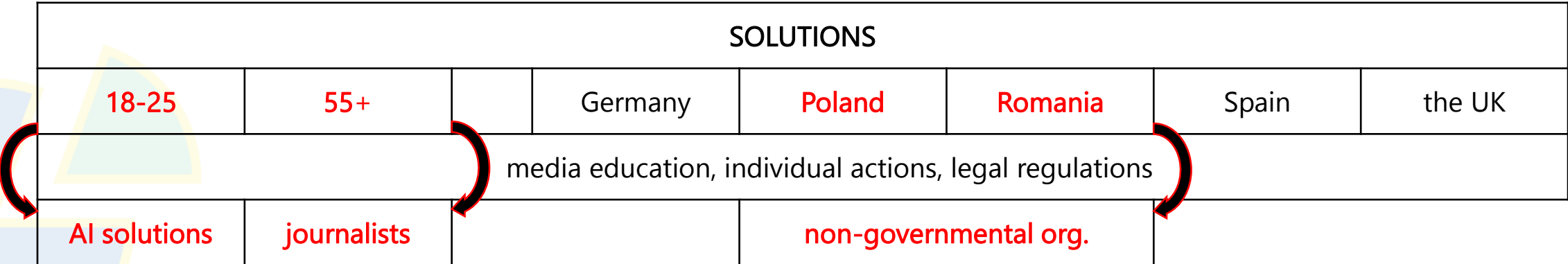
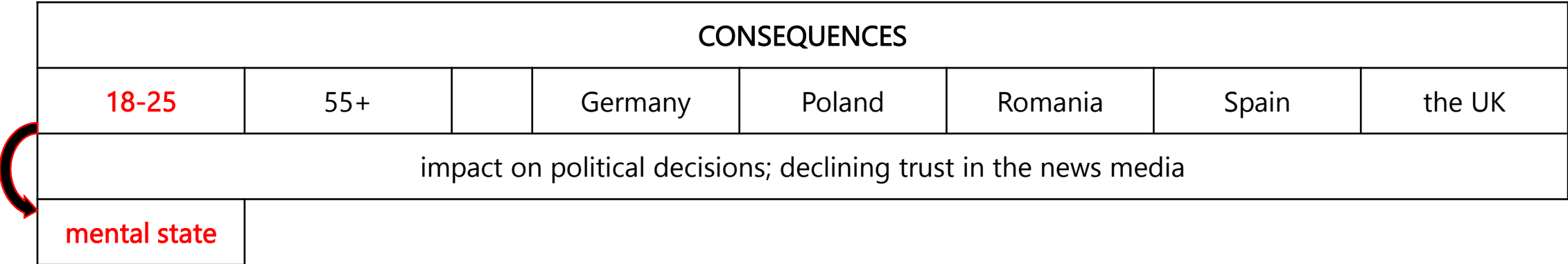
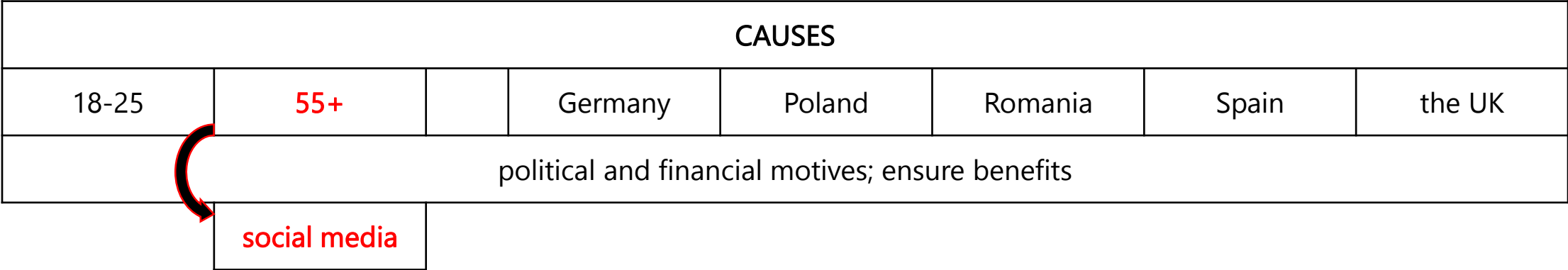
Then everybody will start obeying the rules and things could get better..."



When you come across information in traditional news media or on the internet, how do you normally know whether the information is accurate or not?

(*very often* and *always* in %)





THREATPIE



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