

BETWEEN FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND DISINFORMATION: THE CRISIS OF PUBLIC DEBATE IN A MEDIATIZED SOCIETY

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Abstract. This article analyzes the tension between freedom of speech and disinformation in the context of public debate in the information society. Its aim is to demonstrate that the source of contemporary communication problems is not freedom of speech itself, but its treatment as an absolute value, detached from any reference to truth. The analysis, conducted from a normative and axiological perspective, shows that in this framework, freedom of speech ceases to fulfill its cognitive and community-building functions, and the communicative space is transformed into an environment conducive to the spread of disinformation. Consequently, this leads to an increase in information overload and a decline in the quality of public debate. The article argues that restoring the relationship between freedom of speech and truth is a prerequisite for preserving the cognitive and social functions of communication.

Keywords: disinformation; freedom of speech; information society; public debate; truth.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

Contemporary information society, shaped by mediatization, an intensive flow of content, and the growing availability of communication tools, reveals an ambivalent character with regard to public debate: on the one hand, it creates conditions for its development, while on the other, it intensifies the phenomena that disrupt it [Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 20-26; Castells 2009, 3-4].

One of the most serious challenges in this context is disinformation, understood as the intentional misleading of audiences through the dissemination of false, manipulated, or out-of-context content. Its significance extends beyond the sphere of communication, affecting the functioning of public institutions, the stability of political systems, and social relations [Wyrostkiewicz 2025].

In the social sciences literature, disinformation is often analyzed as a threat to democracy and national security, leading to social polarization, erosion

of trust, and disruption of decision-making processes [Tenove 2020, 517-18]. In response to these phenomena, regulatory measures are being taken at the national and international levels to limit the dissemination of harmful content and protect the information space. At the same time, these measures face significant limitations. Definitional difficulties, the transnational nature of digital communication, and the risk of excessive interference with freedom of speech mean that legal regulations are unable to fully resolve the problem of disinformation, and sometimes generate new legal questions and problems themselves [Domalewska 2024, 359-62]. In this context, a theoretical problem emerges that serves as the starting point for this article: the tension between freedom of speech, regarded as one of the fundamental values of democracy, and the necessity of protecting the truth and the common good [Mill 2002; ch. 2; Barendt 2007, ch. 1].

In the Euro-Atlantic cultural framework, freedom of speech is viewed as a prerequisite for the pursuit of truth and rational public debate. In the practice of contemporary public discourse, phenomena are observed that point to the possibility of reversing this relationship – namely, situations in which invoking freedom of speech becomes a tool for spreading disinformation, and thus a factor that undermines the mechanisms it was originally intended to support [Sunstein 2018, 59-136].

Methodological Issues

The aim of this article is to analyze the aforementioned tension and to identify the mechanism by which the absolutization of freedom of speech – understood as a value independent of any reference to truth – leads to the emergence and perpetuation of disinformation. In contrast to approaches focusing exclusively on legal, technological, or political aspects, this study adopts a normative and axiological perspective rooted in a personalist understanding of the person and communication [Wyrostkiewicz 2016, 32-34, 2018, 160-62]. This approach allows us to capture those elements of the phenomenon of disinformation that lie beyond the direct scope of legal regulations and systemic analyses.

This article is theoretical and analytical in nature and is based on a review of the literature in the fields of law, political science, media studies, and the ethics of communication. It does not aim to provide an empirical case study of disinformation, but to reconstruct the normative logic of the relationship between freedom of speech, truth, and the communicative conditions of public debate. The method employed involves a conceptual reconstruction of freedom of speech and disinformation, as well as an analysis of their mutual relations from a normative and axiological perspective.

A personalist approach plays a particularly important role here, allowing communication to be understood as a person's action directed toward truth and the building of community. This perspective enables the identification

of those aspects of the phenomenon of disinformation that lie beyond the direct scope of legal and political science analyses. In this article, truth is understood not as a merely subjective conviction, but as the reference of communication to reality; therefore, it functions as a basic condition for the cognitive and community-building role of public debate.

As can be inferred from the above description, this article does not belong strictly within either legal scholarship or political science; rather, it complements these approaches. It is based on the assumption that legal instruments, though necessary in countering disinformation, operate primarily at the level of regulating behavior, rather than at the level of its axiological foundations. Consequently, they are unable to fully capture the sources of the phenomenon, which are linked to a specific understanding of freedom and its relationship to truth.

The structure of the article corresponds to the research objective. The first part presents the essence and significance of freedom of speech. Next, the phenomenon of disinformation is discussed within the context outlined earlier. The following section is devoted to an analysis of the mechanism leading from the distortion of freedom of speech to disinformation. The article concludes with an axiological reflection pointing to the necessity of restoring the proper relationship between freedom and truth as a condition for meaningful public debate – where “meaningful” implies a focus on arriving at the truth, fostering stability in social life, and enabling the integral development of individuals living in a mediatized information society.

1. FREEDOM OF SPEECH – CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION AND SCOPE

1.1. Freedom of Speech as a Right and a Principle of Social Life

Freedom of speech is a fundamental human right and one of the cornerstones of modern democratic societies. It encompasses both the ability to express views and opinions and the ability to seek and receive information, serving as a prerequisite for public debate and citizens’ participation in social and political life [Barendt 2007, chs. 1-2; Mill 2002, ch. 1]. In the European legal order, freedom of expression is recognized as one of the fundamental rights of the individual. In a democratic society, however, it is subject to necessary restrictions, particularly for reasons of security, public order, and the protection of the rights of others.¹

In the classical view, freedom of speech has a significant cognitive dimension. As John Stuart Mill points out, suppressing opinions – even erroneous

¹ *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, in: *European Convention on Human Rights*. Strasbourg, https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf [accessed: 08.04.2026], Article 10.

ones – means depriving society of the opportunity to confront the truth, because only through the clash of differing viewpoints is it possible to recognize the truth more fully. Even a false view has cognitive value in this sense, as it compels the justification of the true position and prevents its unreflective acceptance. This liberal argument remains important for the present analysis, because it shows that freedom of speech should not be limited merely because an opinion is false or controversial. The problem addressed in this article concerns a different situation: the use of freedom of speech to legitimize intentional or structurally reinforced distortions of reality that weaken the very conditions of rational public debate. In this view, freedom of speech is not merely an individual right, but a cognitive and social mechanism enabling the community to approach the truth [Mill 2002, ch. 2].

At the same time, legal and constitutional discourse emphasizes that freedom of speech is not absolute but stands in relation to other values constituting the social order. This requires balancing it in specific situations and taking into account the effects it produces in the public sphere. In this sense, freedom of speech functions as an element of a broader normative order, rather than as an autonomous and unlimited principle [Barendt 2007, ch. 3].

1.2. Freedom of Speech as an Element of the Normative Order

From an axiological perspective, freedom of speech cannot be understood as unrestricted license in expression, but rather as an element of a broader normative order that defines the framework for its exercise. As Tadeusz Styczeń notes, “to be oneself is to be dependent on the truth” [Styczeń 1999, 262]. This means that rejecting the truth is not an expression of freedom but its negation, and true freedom should be understood as the ability to act in accordance with the truth. In this sense, freedom is not the opposite of the norm but remains intrinsically linked to it. Ethical reflection emphasizes that freedom is constitutively linked to truth and goodness, and its separation from these categories leads to its distortion. Freedom deprived of reference to truth loses its proper meaning and ceases to fulfill a developmental function in both the individual and social dimensions [Idem 2013, 1999; Szostek 1999; Nowosad and Wyrostkiewicz 2005].

A similar conclusion emerges from analyses conducted within the framework of contemporary research on information and communication. The use and circulation of information are not axiologically neutral, but should be evaluated through the lens of their impact on the integral development of the person and the quality of social relations [Wyrostkiewicz 2016, 32-34]. This means that communicative actions – including the exercise of freedom of speech – are subject to evaluation not only in terms of their legality but also in terms of their consequences for cognition and community.

Freedom of speech, like any freedom, functions within a specific relational order and is subject to certain principles, the violation of which leads to disruptions in the functioning of both the individual and the community [Idem 2013, 10-18; Nowosad and Wyrstkieicz 2005].

From a normative perspective, this means that freedom of speech cannot be understood in isolation from the category of responsibility. Legal and administrative literature emphasizes that the functioning of contemporary public institutions requires the creation of regulatory frameworks and accountability mechanisms that ensure compliance with accepted norms and values. This points to a broader context in which freedom of action – including communicative action – must be embedded within a normative framework [Szewczak, Pankiewicz, and Szewczak 2025].

1.3. The Problem of Absolutizing Freedom of Speech

The contemporary media landscape reveals a tendency to interpret freedom of speech in an absolutist manner, treating it as a value independent of any reference to truth. This phenomenon stems from changes in the structure of digital communication, where content selection and personalization limit the confrontation of differing viewpoints and weaken common criteria for evaluating information [Sunstein 2018, 1-30]. Consequently, freedom is sometimes equated with the unlimited ability to disseminate content, regardless of its conformity with reality. This trend is confirmed by analyses of the phenomenon of disinformation, which point to a weakening of the significance of truth as a point of reference in public communication [Tenove 2020; Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 23-25].

Analyses conducted in the context of the digital environment indicate that understanding freedom as the unrestricted exploitation of the information space leads to its axiological reinterpretation and may result in the disruption of social order and the integral development of the person. Consequently, freedom ceases to be a tool for cognition and communication and begins to function as an end in itself, devoid of internal direction [Wyrstkieicz 2017, 161-62].

This phenomenon is facilitated by contemporary mechanisms of digital communication, in particular the selection and personalization of content and the fragmentation of public debate, which hinder the confrontation of differing viewpoints and weaken the cognitive function of communication. Under such conditions, the emphasis shifts from the content of statements to the very fact of their existence, which leads to a weakening of the normative distinction between truth and falsehood [Sunstein 2018, 59-97].

Importantly, the absolutization of free speech need not take the form of an explicitly declared doctrine. It can manifest itself in communicative

practices where the emphasis is placed on the very possibility of expression, rather than on its content and truthfulness. As a result, the communicative space ceases to fulfill its cognitive and community-building functions, creating conditions conducive to the emergence and spread of disinformation [Wyrostkiewicz 2025].

The phenomenon outlined here provides an important context for further analysis. It is not yet synonymous with disinformation, but it points to the conditions under which it can arise, develop, and spread.

2. DISINFORMATION – THE NATURE OF THE PHENOMENON AND ITS CONTEXT

2.1. Disinformation as a Disturbance of the Information Order

Disinformation is one of the key phenomena of the modern information society, in which information serves as a strategic resource that determines the functioning of social, political, and economic systems. The literature on the subject emphasizes that it is not synonymous with erroneous information resulting from ignorance, but is intentional and aimed at producing specific effects. In the framework proposed by Wardle and Derakhshan, disinformation is part of the broader phenomenon of “information disorder,” encompassing various forms of communication disruption, ranging from unintentional errors to deliberate manipulation. In this context, disinformation in the strict sense refers to the dissemination of false content with the intent to mislead the recipient [Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 20-21 and 82-84; Tenove 2020, 519].

At the same time, the specialized literature points to definitional difficulties associated with this concept. This stems in no small part from the fact that the term “fake news,” often equated with disinformation, functions ambiguously, encompassing both entirely false content and content that is partially true but misleading due to the manner of its presentation [Tandoc, Wei Lim, and Ling 2018]. Furthermore, it is also noted that the concept of disinformation is sometimes defined inconsistently, and some approaches conflate it with propaganda, manipulation, or the broader concept of information warfare. The need to clarify this concept thus stems not only from communication practice but also from the lack of precision present in the academic literature itself [Wachowicz 2019, 226-33]. On this basis, disinformation can be defined as a specific form of informational manipulation whose aim is not to convey a message, but to elicit a specific cognitive and social effect consisting in hindering the pursuit of truth [Wyrostkiewicz 2025, 364-65]. This approach corresponds with proposed definitions that emphasize that disinformation is intended to induce the recipient to treat

a false message as credible and to behave in a manner consistent with the disinformers' intent [Wachowicz 2019, 226]. It should also be noted that disinformation is not a one-time communicative act, but a process comprising various phases – from content creation, through its processing, to its distribution in the communicative space [Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 23-25].

2.2. The Nature of Disinformation: The Cognitive and Decision-Making Levels

The nature of disinformation is not limited to the dissemination of false information. Its primary target is the human cognitive process and the decisions associated with it. In this sense, disinformation involves shaping a message in such a way that it leads the recipient to a misperception of reality and, consequently, to decisions that are inconsistent with the actual state of affairs. This means that its effects are not limited to the realm of information but encompass the entirety of human action [Wyrostkiewicz 2025; Tenove 2020].

From an epistemic perspective, disinformation leads to a disruption of the relationship between cognition and reality. The recipient then operates in a space where the criteria of truth are weakened or blurred. In turn, at the decision-making level, this results in actions based on false premises [Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 23-25; Tenove 2020, 517-20].

In the social sciences literature, however, it is emphasized that one of the main effects of disinformation is not so much to convince the recipient of a specific thesis as it is to create a state of uncertainty and disorientation that hinders a rational assessment of the situation. In this sense, its goal is to destabilize the cognitive process, not merely to convey falsehood [Tenove 2020].

2.3. Mechanisms of Disinformation

The effectiveness of disinformation campaigns stems largely from the use of complex communication mechanisms by disinformers, which, by manipulating both the content and context of the message, produce the intended effects on the recipients' perceptions. One of the fundamental mechanisms is the combination of true and false elements within a single message, which makes it appear credible and leads to its almost uncritical acceptance as entirely true without further verification. Equally important is the manipulation of context: the selection of information, the omission of relevant data, or their appropriate juxtaposition can lead to conclusions inconsistent with reality [Wyrostkiewicz 2025, 365]. Such mechanisms may be observed, for example, in public controversies concerning health crises, electoral

processes, war-related narratives, or value-laden debates on family, parenthood, education, and the protection of children. In these cases, the appeal to freedom of speech may be used not to protect rational deliberation, but to justify the circulation of emotionally persuasive and misleading claims.

An important mechanism that increases the effectiveness of disinformation is emotional impact. Disinformation content is often constructed in such a way as to evoke strong reactions – such as outrage, fear, or surprise – which limits reflective engagement and, consequently, facilitates its absorption as well as its further dissemination. Research on information dissemination in social media indicates that false content spreads faster and reaches a larger audience than true content, which is linked, among other things, to its greater emotional impact and novelty [Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral 2018]. This phenomenon – as already noted – is also linked to a reduction in recipients' cognitive engagement. Analyses show that users often share content not because they consider it true, but because they do not subject it to sufficient cognitive evaluation, reacting primarily to its appeal or alignment with their own beliefs [Pennycook and Rand 2019].

Additionally, disinformation exploits the structure of the contemporary communication environment. Content selection and personalization mechanisms facilitate the rapid dissemination of messages and their large-scale replication, while simultaneously limiting exposure to differing viewpoints. As a result, the verification of information and engagement with alternative interpretations are hindered [Sunstein 2018, 98-136; Castells 2009, 54-58]. Consequently, the impact of disinformation is not limited to the level of content but extends to the structure of cognition and decision-making [Pennycook and Rand 2019; Wyrostkiewicz 2025].

2.4. Contemporary Factors and Effects of Disinformation

The steadily increasing scale of disinformation today is closely linked to the development of communication technologies, particularly social media and artificial intelligence-based tools. These technologies enable both the rapid creation of content and its wide distribution, as well as precise targeting of specific audiences. It has been noted that the structure of the digital environment facilitates the dissemination of emotionally engaging content and accelerates its spread [Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral 2018; Sunstein 2018, 98-136]. Furthermore, the structure of today's popular digital media environment facilitates the rapid dissemination of low-quality content, which stems, among other things, from the dominance of publication models based on the immediate sharing of user posts [Więckiewicz-Archacka 2025, 154-56].

Technology is not the primary source of disinformation, but rather a factor that amplifies it. Its role is amplifying – it increases the reach

and effectiveness of the impact, but does not explain the essence of the phenomenon. This is rather linked to a specific mode of communication and to the human relationship to truth, as reflected in analyses highlighting the importance of cognitive and social factors in the dissemination of disinformation [Pennycook and Rand 2019]. The process-oriented nature of disinformation means it can be amplified at every stage of its operation – from content creation to distribution [Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 23-25].

This phenomenon has multidimensional consequences. At the societal level, disinformation primarily leads to a weakening of the conditions for public debate: increased polarization, a decline in trust, and the fragmentation of the information space limit the possibility of confronting arguments and reaching common resolutions [Tenove 2020, 518-20; Domalewska 2024].

However, the effects of disinformation are not limited to the public sphere. At the individual level, it influences how reality is perceived and how decisions are made by the individual. By misleading the recipient or hindering their access to reliable information, it leads to a situation where actions are taken based on inadequate premises. This means that disinformation poses a threat not only to social and political systems, but also to the integral functioning and development of the person [Wyrostkiewicz 2025; Wyrostkiewicz and Petro 2023].

3. MECHANISM: FROM COMMUNICATION TO DISINFORMATION

3.1. The Personalist and Democratic Standard: Freedom of Speech as a Communicative Factor

Freedom of speech in the public sphere is realized through specific communicative acts involving the production and dissemination of content. Its significance is not limited to the formal right of the individual, but manifests itself in communicative practice, which helps shape the information environment. This means that the way freedom of speech is understood directly influences the nature of social communication and the quality of the information space.

In the classical view, freedom of speech serves as a tool enabling the pursuit of truth and the conduct of rational public debate. Its significance lies not merely in ensuring an individual's ability to speak, but in creating conditions for communication understood in a personalist sense, which fosters the understanding of reality and the building of a true community [Mill 2002, ch. 5].

In this sense, freedom of speech is functional in nature – its value stems from the purpose it serves. It is not an autonomous value but remains intrinsically linked to truth and to social relations based on trust and communication. Understood in this way, freedom of speech fits into a normative order

in which communication is not merely an exchange of content, but an action possessing a specific axiological dimension [Wyrostkiewicz 2018, 160-62].

3.2. A Destructive Shift: Freedom of Speech as an Autonomous Value

The contemporary communication environment fosters a transformation of the proper understanding of freedom of speech as described above. In many contexts, it begins to function not as a tool for knowledge, but as an autonomous value whose realization does not require reference to the truth. In this view, freedom of speech is equated with the unlimited possibility of expression, regardless of its content and consequences. Consequently, a situation arises in which the criterion for the admissibility of speech ceases to be its conformity with reality. This phenomenon is reinforced by contemporary communication mechanisms, in particular by the fragmentation of public debate and content selection, which hinder the confrontation of differing viewpoints and weaken the cognitive function of communication [Sunstein 2018, 1-30 and 98-136].

From a normative perspective, the situation described above signifies a shift in freedom of speech from a functional and protective level – one that safeguards the integral concept of freedom and human dignity – to an absolutist level: freedom of speech ceases to be a means and becomes an end in itself. This means that it ceases to serve the function of regulating the flow of information and begins to foster the unrestricted expansion of content. Consequently, under conditions of unlimited ability to publish and disseminate messages, the information space becomes filled with messages of varying quality and reliability, which directly results in information overload [Miotk 2021].

In this case, information overload does not merely signify an increase in the amount of available information, but above all makes it difficult to select and evaluate it – especially regarding the veracity of the content conveyed therein. The recipient thus operates in an environment where the growing number of messages competing for attention limits the ability to verify them, which encourages superficial analysis and an almost uncritical reception of them. Under such conditions, emotionally engaging and easily digestible content spreads particularly rapidly, regardless of its truthfulness. In other words: the intensification of information overload weakens the cognitive abilities of audiences and, consequently, increases their susceptibility to misleading messages. As a result, a situation arises in which freedom of speech – instead of creating the conditions for rational debate – contributes to the emergence of a media and information environment that hinders its existence and functioning [Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral 2018; Pennycook and Rand 2019].

3.3. Consequence: Disinformation as a Result of the Distortion of Freedom of Speech

A key element of the mechanism under analysis is the severing of the link between freedom of speech and truth. The analysis does not concern solely the quality of individual messages, but rather the state of public debate, which is one of the fundamental manifestations of democracy. Under conditions in which freedom of speech is absolutized in a pseudo-democratic manner, media messages cease to be primarily aimed at understanding reality – that is, at conveying the truth – and often become tools for producing arbitrary content depending on market needs. In this sense, disinformation threatens key dimensions of democratic functioning, including self-determination, representation, and the quality of public debate [Tenove 2020, 518-20].

This is related to the fact that the media are increasingly viewed primarily as businesses expected to generate revenue, while their natural mission of serving the truth is often marginalized. This means that disinformation is not a random phenomenon nor solely the result of abuses of freedom, but rather a consequence of adopting a model of free speech that has been detached from any reference to truth [Wyrostkiewicz 2025].

In the situation outlined above, the normative distinction between truth and falsehood disappears, as both categories lose their significance as criteria for evaluating statements. In practice, content that generates economic profit becomes privileged. As a result, media discourse is deprived of its natural cognitive and community-building function [Idem 2018; Młynek 2012]. However, the uninformed recipient is unaware of this and continues to regard media messages as valuable sources of true information.

Under the conditions described above, a mechanism emerges in which the distortion, and especially the absolutization, of freedom of speech leads to the production and legitimization of disinformation. For when freedom of speech is detached from truth, any statement – regardless of its correspondence to reality – can function in the public sphere as an equal element of social discourse. Thus, the resulting disinformation is the effect of adopting a model of content circulation in which there is no normative reference to truth [Castells 2009, 137-50].

Furthermore, the very rapid distribution of content – a hallmark of contemporary digital media – combined with the functioning of “information bubbles,” fosters the dissemination of messages that are appealing to audiences or consistent with their prior beliefs, thereby increasing the likelihood of uncritical acceptance of such content. In this way, broadcasters’ deliberate disinformation efforts are supported by modern media mechanisms [Sunstein 2018, 213-33]. In this sense, disinformation is not merely the result of a distortion of freedom of speech, but a consequence of a specific, increasingly noticeable way of understanding media activity.

This mechanism has adverse effects on two levels: the personal and the social. On the first level, it leads to a situation in which the recipient makes decisions based on a distorted picture of reality. Any attempt to function in an “imaginary world,” however, poses a serious threat to the integral personal development of the human person, as well as to a social life that would foster such development [Wyrostkiewicz and Petro 2023, 286-91]. In philosophical anthropology, it is stated explicitly that the truth that has been known possesses “normative power,” which binds freedom and sets the direction of action. Its rejection is not an expansion of freedom, but leads to its distortion [Styczeń 1999, 263]. In this sense, betraying the truth in the name of freedom “inevitably strikes at the subject itself as a rational being,” which means that rejecting the truth not only distorts communication but also leads to the distortion of action and cognition, and ultimately destroys the identity of the person for whom freedom and rationality constitute the foundations of identity [Szostek 1999, 284-85].

At the societal level, this results in a weakening of trust, polarization, and the destabilization of communicative and political processes. The weakening of the significance of truth in public debate leads to a situation in which the media exchange of information ceases to serve the function of rational deliberation and instead fosters disorientation and the destabilization of social processes – it becomes a space in which a shared recognition of reality becomes impossible [Domalewska 2024; Tenove 2020].

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis conducted allows us to view disinformation not merely as a technical or communicative phenomenon, but as a consequence of a specific understanding of freedom of speech. Of key importance here is the absolutization of this freedom, which consists in equating freedom of expression with the unlimited ability to disseminate content, regardless of its correspondence to reality.

In this context, freedom of speech ceases to serve as a regulatory force for communication and instead begins to foster its uncontrolled expansion. This leads to an overproduction of content and the creation of information overload, which hinders the selection and evaluation of messages. Consequently, disinformation is not merely the result of intentional actions but becomes a systemic element of the communication environment.

This means that the problem of disinformation cannot be fully resolved solely through legal and regulatory instruments. Although these are necessary to curb the most harmful forms of communication, their effectiveness remains limited because they address the effects rather than the causes.

The root of the problem is normative in nature and concerns the understanding of freedom of speech and its relationship to truth.

Consequently, countering disinformation requires supplementing the legal and political science perspectives with an axiological reflection. It is of key importance to restore the understanding of freedom of speech as a communicative practice oriented toward truth and linked to responsibility for the consequences of speech. Without such a framework, regulatory measures remain insufficient.

The theoretical character of this article also indicates a direction for further research. The proposed mechanism may be empirically examined in analyses of concrete public debates, especially those in which appeals to freedom of speech intersect with contested truth claims, emotional mobilization, and socially sensitive issues such as family, parenthood, education, or the protection of children.

Ultimately, it must be concluded that disinformation is not merely a disruption of communication, but an indicator of a deeper problem concerning the functioning of the information space. Overcoming it requires not only legal and technological tools, but also a change in the way freedom of speech is understood, so that it once again fulfills a function conducive to knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the realization of solidarity and justice, and, consequently, the building of a community understood as *communio personarum* and the fulfillment of the call for integral personal development [Nagórny 1997]. For this reason, the axiological foundations of communication should be treated as an essential dimension of any adequate response to disinformation.

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