

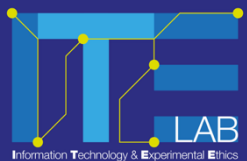
SSPH+ Annual Meeting 2026

# Misinformation and the erosion of trust

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Protecting public health evidence

June 23-24, 2026  
Fribourg, Switzerland



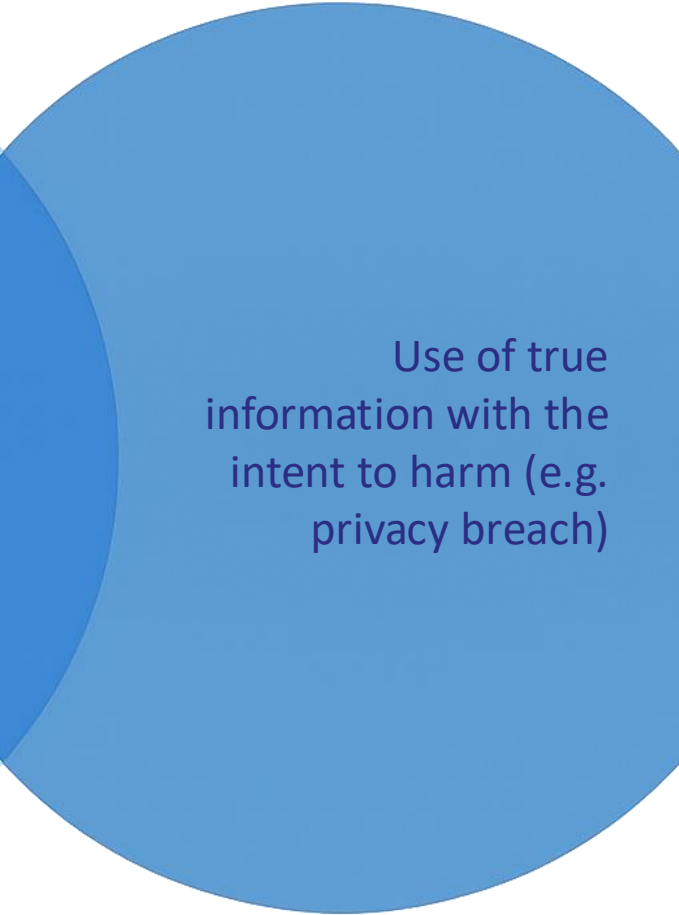
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Federico Germani  
Fribourg, Switzerland

# Misinformation

FALSENESS



Inaccurate information;  
Users spread misinformation thinking it's true



Use of true information with the intent to harm (e.g. privacy breach)

# Malinformation

INTENT TO HARM

# Disinformation

**Room F207 (2nd floor)**

**Infodemics and the challenge of misinformation for public health**

Federico Germani  
(University of Zurich)

*All interested welcome*

Tomorrow's talk:

- Why misinformation spreads faster than facts
- How to handle misinformation
- How to identify misinformation

## The problem



People evaluate information rationally and emotionally. We **interact, relate, belong.**

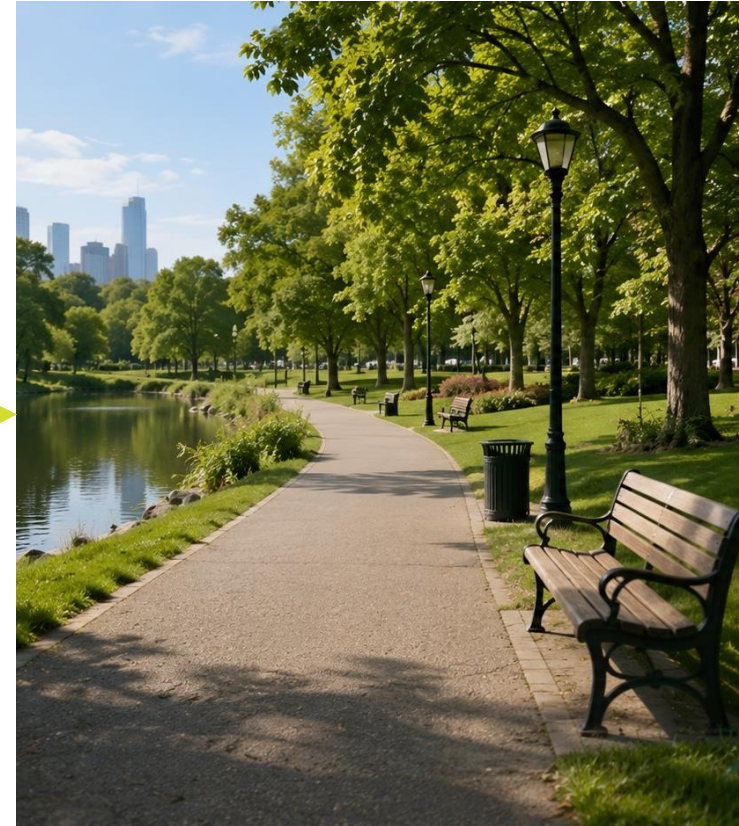
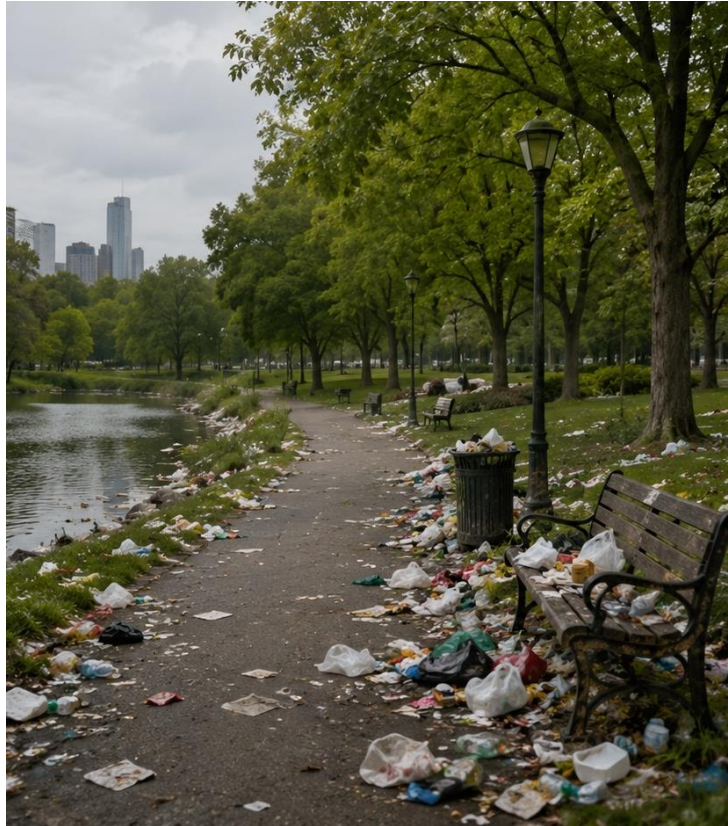


Information lives in **social and relational** infrastructures

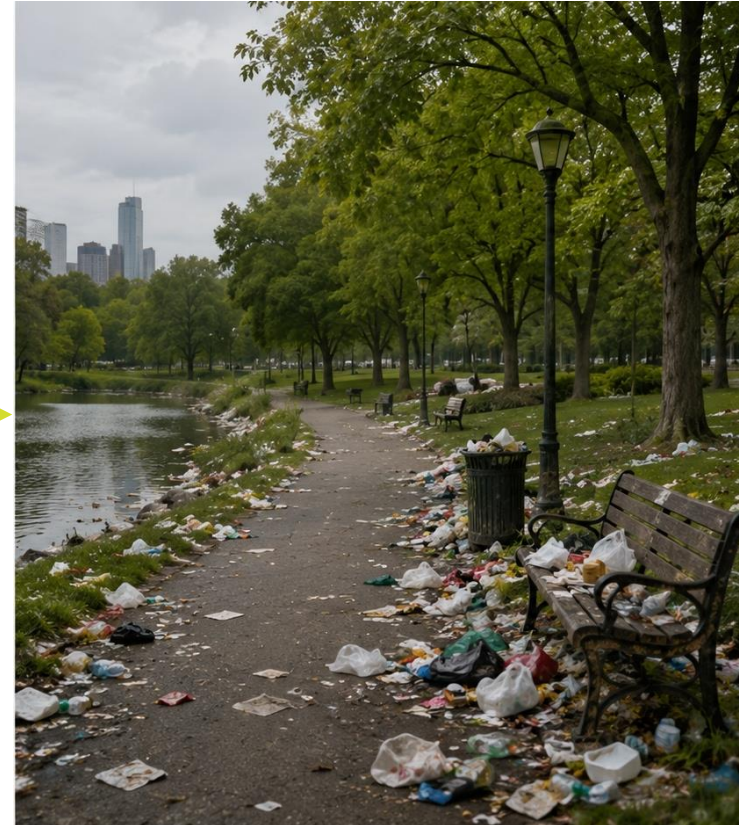
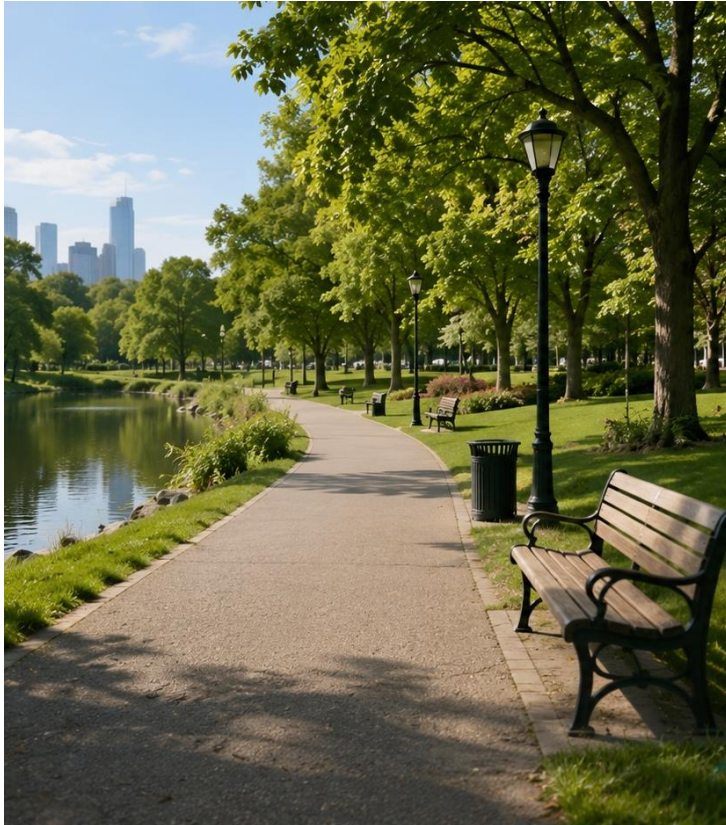


Platforms amplify **what engages us** most → algorithms shape visibility + attention

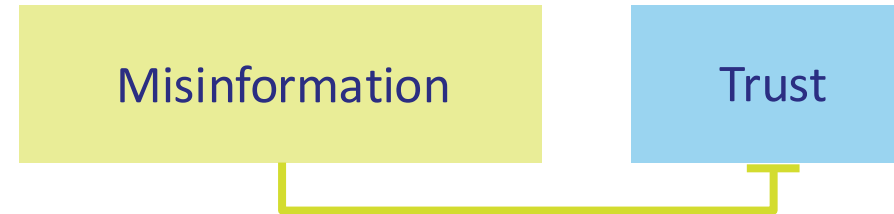
# Let's clean it up



## Let's clean it up: a few days later



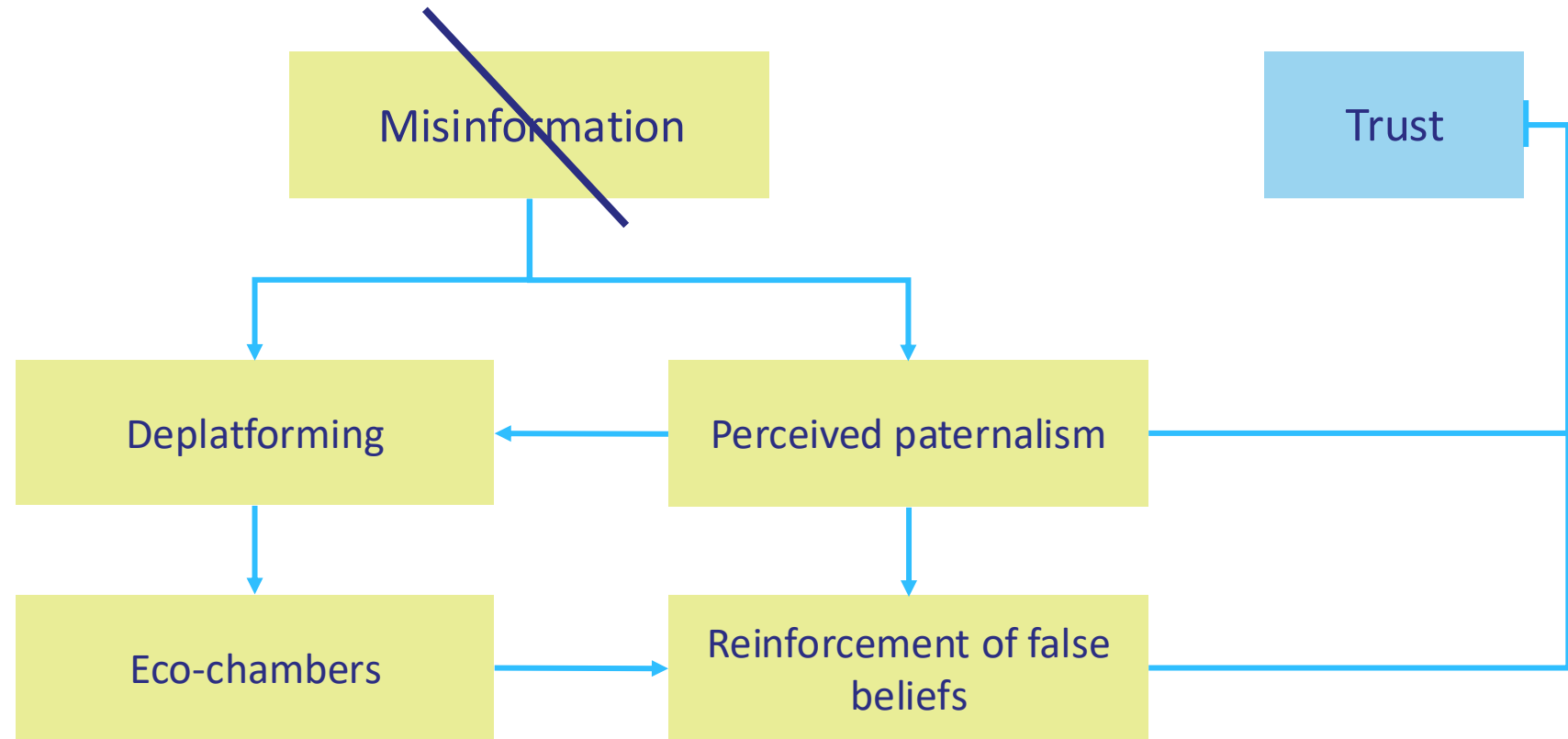
## The trust paradox of information control



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# The trust paradox of information control



## Let's play a game

“ There is no specific evidence to suggest that the wearing of masks by the mass population has any particular benefit. ”



## Let's play a game

“ There is no specific evidence to suggest that the wearing of masks by the mass population has any particular benefit. ”

”

Dr. Mike Ryan  
(Executive Director WHO's Health Emergencies Programme)  
30 March 2020, WHO Virtual Press Conference



Let's play a game



**WHO is this?**  
@WHOisthis

**FACT: COVID-19 is NOT airborne**



Let's play a game



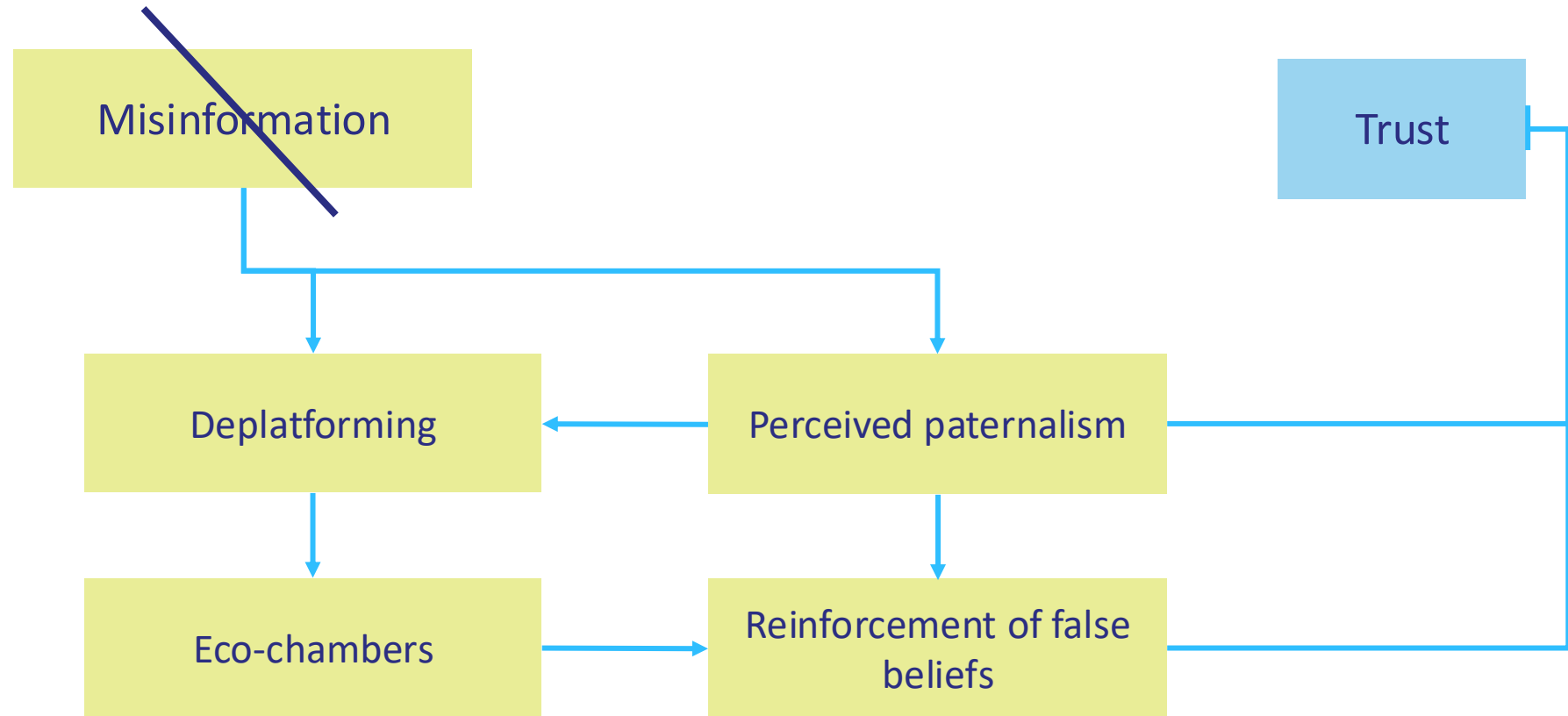
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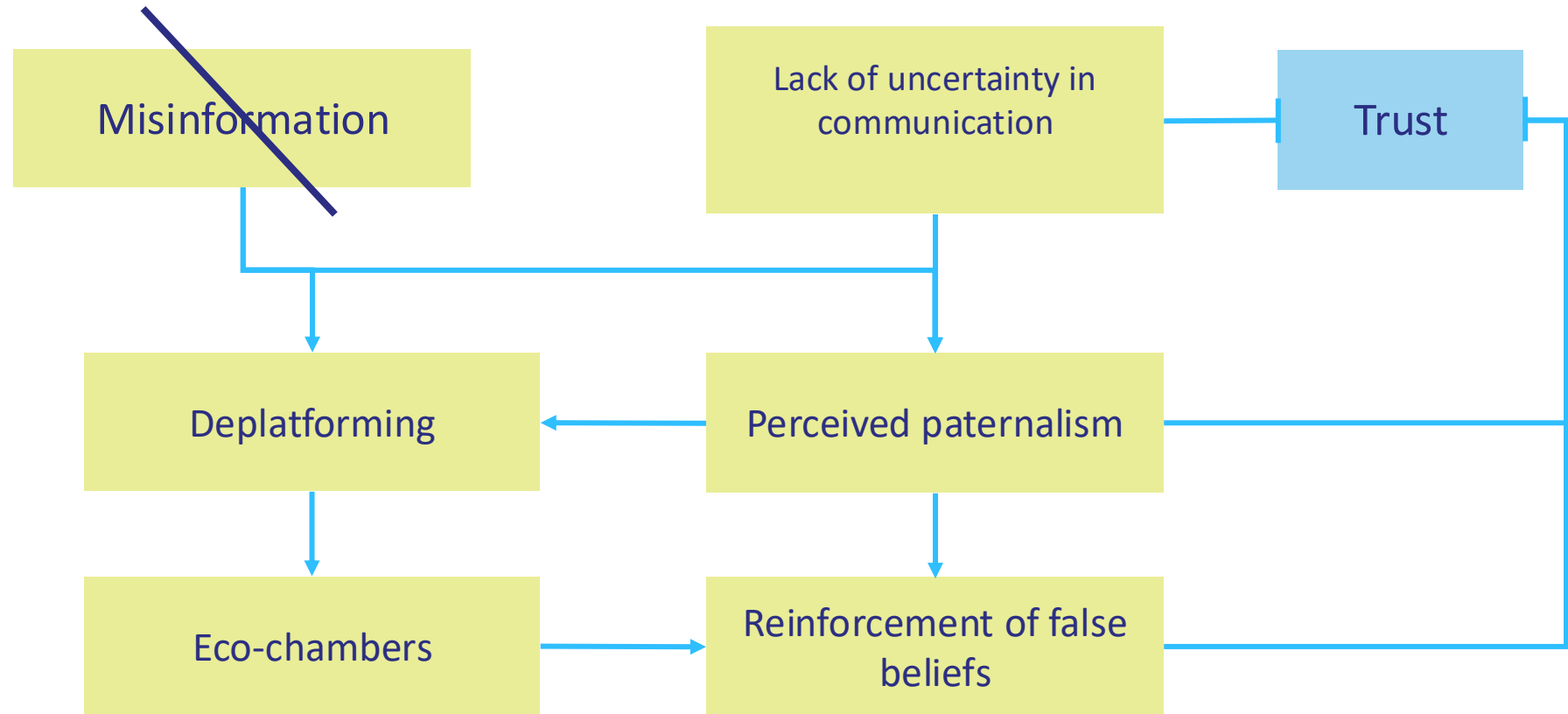
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# The trust paradox of information control

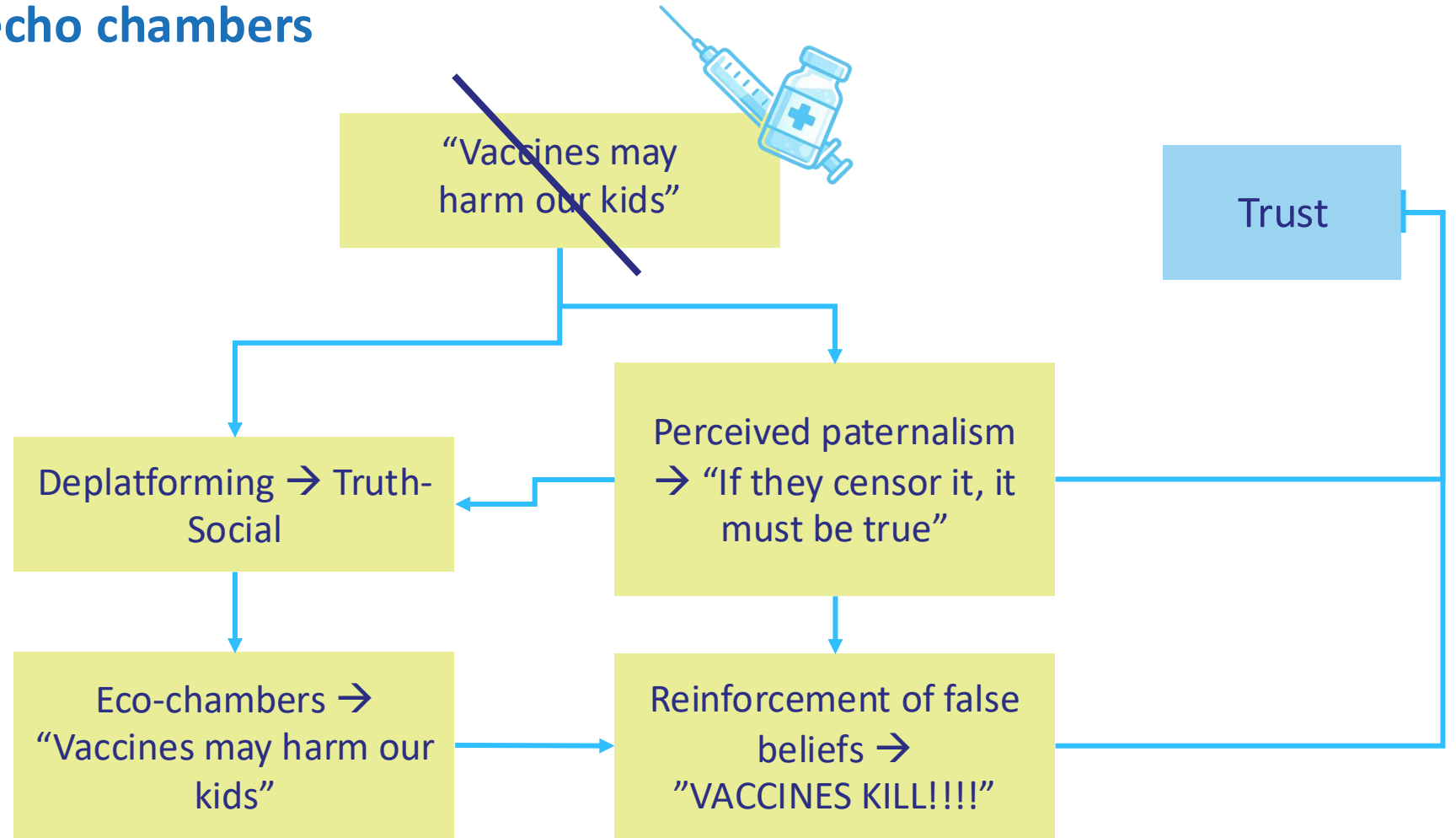


# The trust paradox of information control



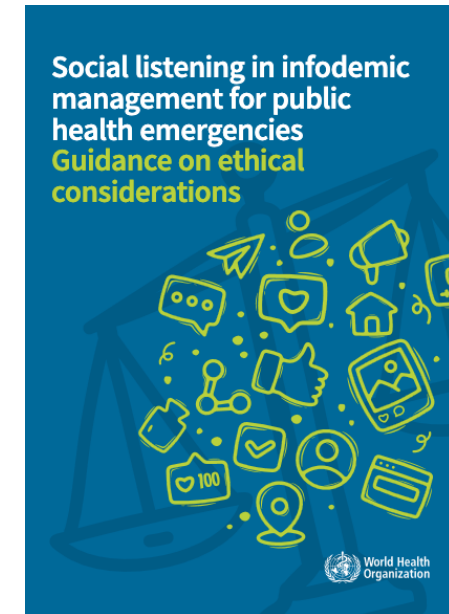
# Deplatforming & echo chambers

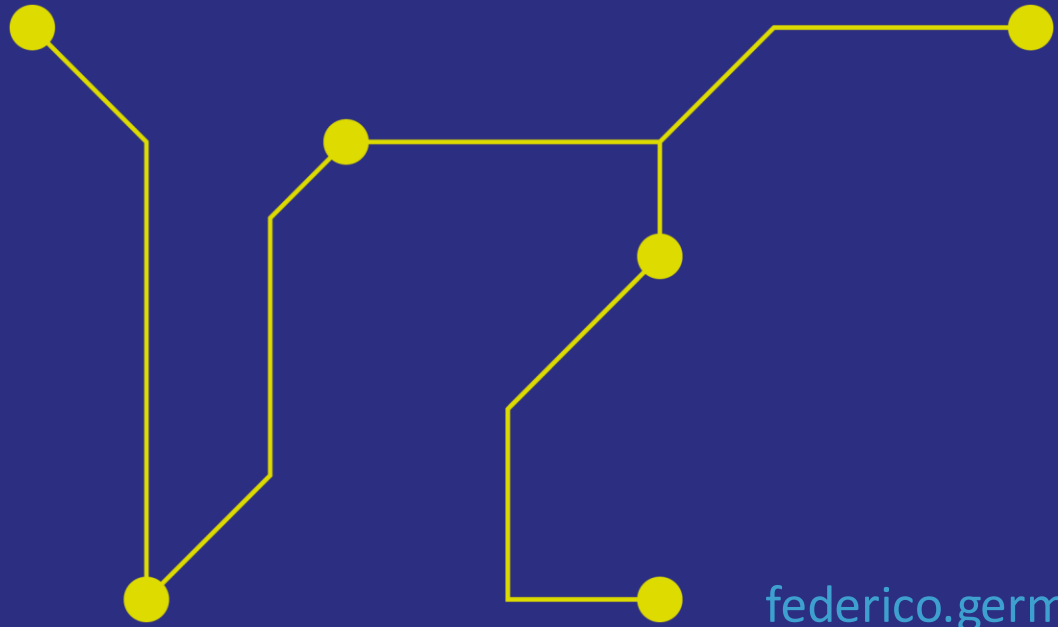
**TRUTH.**



## Resources

- World Health Organization. “Social listening in infodemic management for public health emergencies: guidance on ethical considerations.” 2025.  
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240108202>
- F Germani et al. “Ethical Considerations in Infodemic Management: Systematic Scoping Review.” JMIR Infodemiology, 2024.  
<https://infodemiology.jmir.org/2024/1/e56307/>
- G Spitale et al. “Why ethics in social listening and infodemic management matters for public health.” BMJ Public Health, 2026.  
<https://bmjpublichealth.bmj.com/content/4/1/e003652>
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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15265161.2023.2201191#abstract>
- F Germani et al. “Trump’s statements about acetaminophen and the problem of epistemic corrections.” BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine, 2026. <https://ebm.bmj.com/content/early/2026/02/11/bmjebm-2025-114372.info>





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