Methodological Appendix

Our group began our project with a preliminary introductory meeting during the capstone project workshop. We introduced ourselves, our areas of study, and set up a WhatsApp group for further communication, as well as discussed strengths and interests.

We were waiting to hear back from our fourth group member, Caitlin Boyle (LSE) before getting going on our project in earnest and holding a more substantive first meeting, as she wasn't responding via email. After we learned at the end of October that Caitlin had dropped out of the course, we got back together to determine a more specific plan of action and solve any problems in terms of labor division. We were interested in different ways that social media can affect democracy and freedom of speech, and our preliminary areas of interest were surrounding misinformation fueling Euroscepticism, confirmation bias and siloing of information due to algorithms on social media, and policies surrounding generative AI.

We split up the suggested academic reading amongst the three of us, and then met up again to discuss and analyze the status of academic literature and different arguments regarding civic engagement and technology as relating to our topic. We decided at this point to focus specifically on the foundational threat that Euroscepticism poses, though we were still uncertain the best next steps for policy proposals, debating the value of proposing fact-checking policies versus promoting media literacy, understanding that the EU system already has multiple of each in place. Because we each approached this project with a different cultural background and worldview, we listened closely to each other regarding what we view as major challenges before we determined a path forward.

Our midway check-in meeting with our advisors was valuable in clarifying the ways in which we could further narrow our research. After another discussion, we assigned responsibility between the deliverables, separating introduction and literature review, policy status quo, and policy proposal into three parts.

Our final policy proposal was based on gaps in the policy status quo, especially regarding last-mile and grassroots engagement and integration of rapidly evolving generative AI systems. Following our final check-in with our advisors, we more thoroughly revised each other's writing in order to ensure a cohesive and concise style, as well as to ensure a clear line of thinking throughout. This required a significant amount of teamwork and coordination, especially as some of us were beginning to operate on different time zones due to holidays and travel.

For our methods of analysis, we utilized both academic and gray (policy) literature in our background research, and compared and analyzed them from a primarily qualitative perspective. We critiqued the status quo of policies and compared them to the challenges that the academic literature focused on, then sought to creatively solve the problem with tools at hand.

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