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# Members

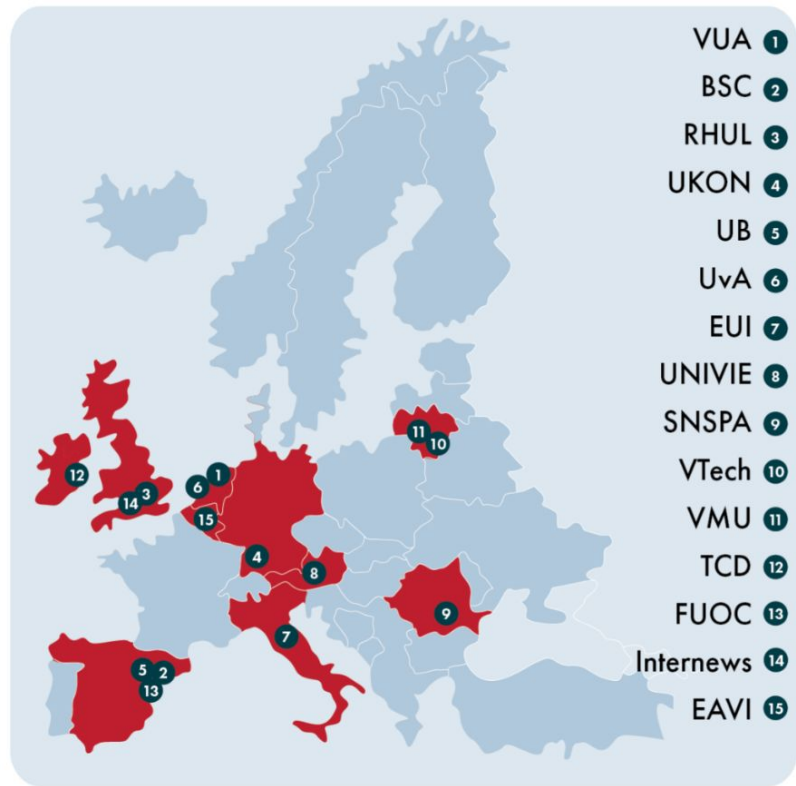
3-year project (2025-2028)



13 universities

2 societal partners (Internews, EAVI)

10 countries



# Objective

WHAT-IF addresses the challenges of disinformation, hate speech, and polarized information environments by creating an empirically grounded simulation of the digital political information landscape.



Create a digital twin of the political information environment



Test the effect of social media content, algorithms and platform affordances



Develop evidence-based policies and regulations



# Motivation

The Big Question: should governments do more to regulate social media?



Financial Times, Aug. 16, 2024

**Facebook and Instagram get rid of fact checkers**



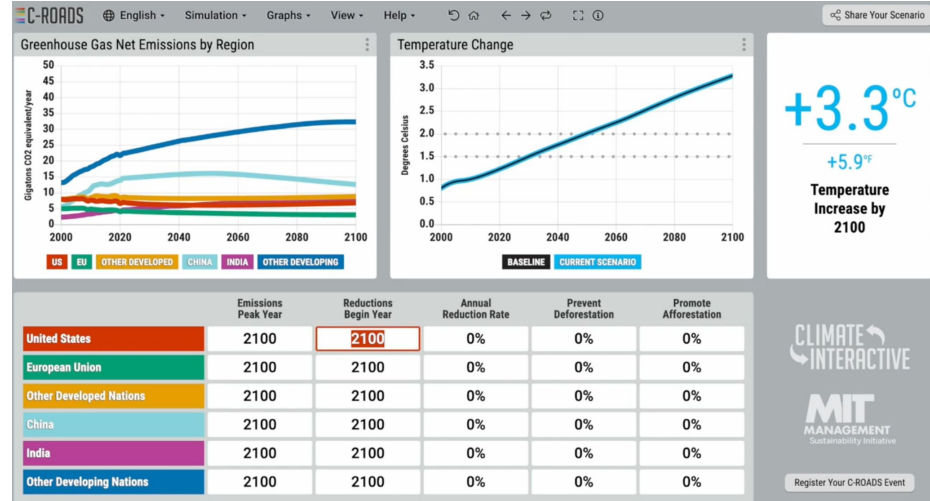
BBC, Jan. 7, 2025

# Motivation

## Modelling the population to improve infrastructure and policy

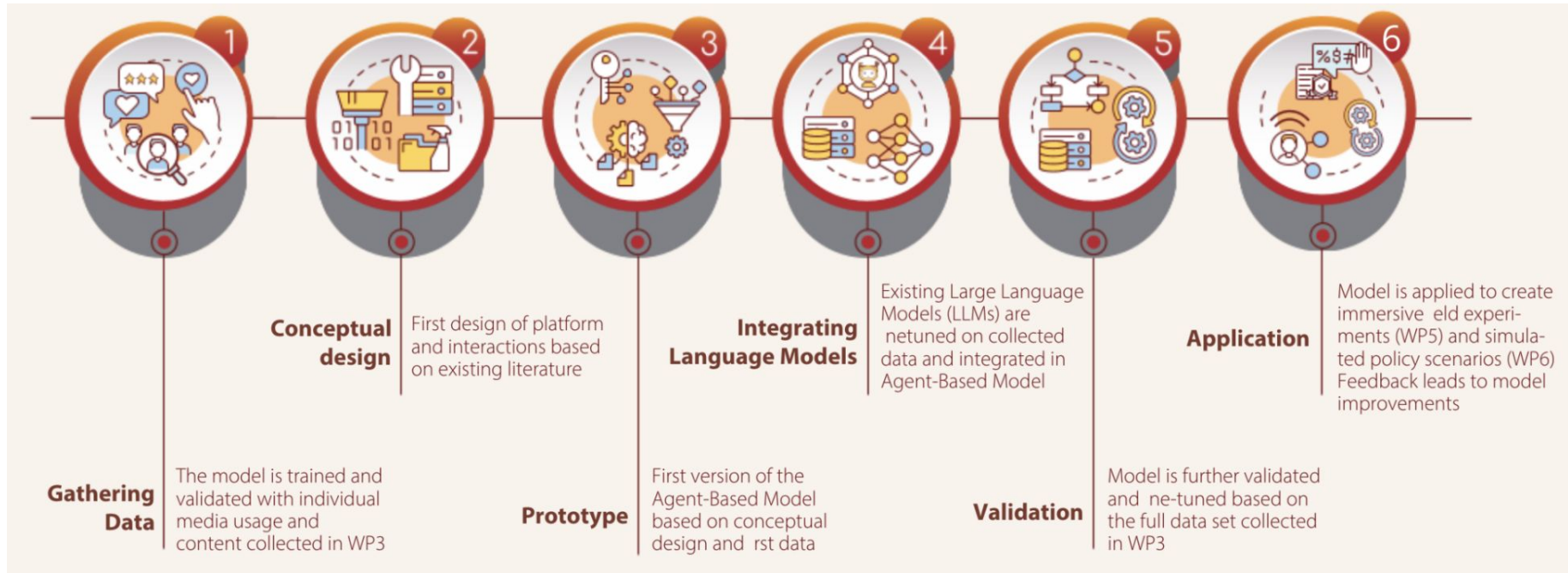


Urban Planning

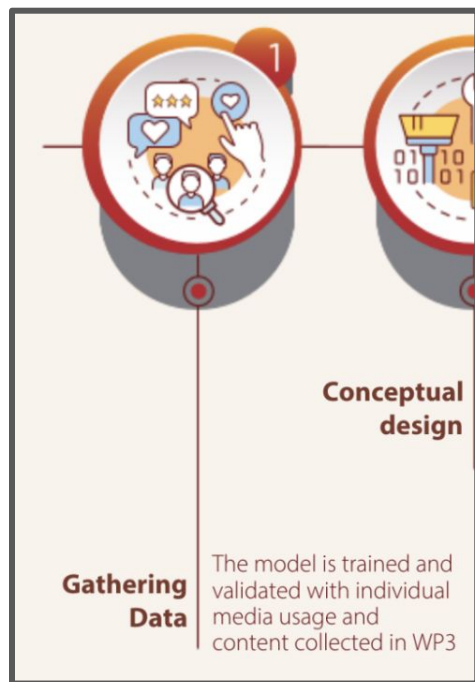


Climate Change

# Approach



# Approach



4 Countries  
ES, LT, NL, RO

## Panel Survey

2-wave  
1,800/country  
Media consumption + political att./behavior

## Digital Traces

Browsing  
Social media takeouts: FB, IG, YT, TT, X  
Adapting tool from D3I project

## News Scrapers

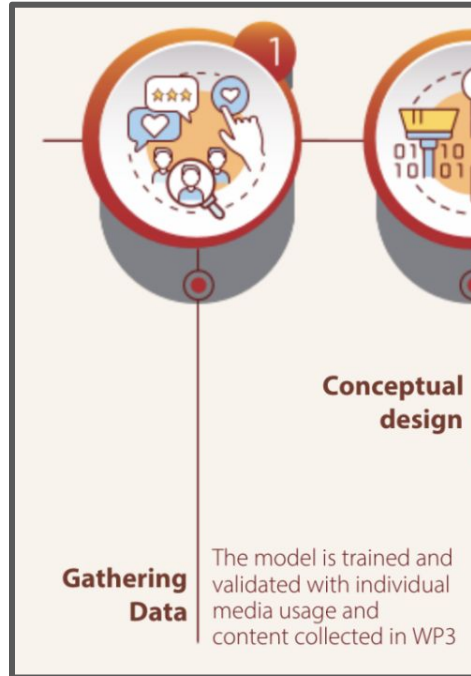
Get content of news participants accessed

## Platform Data

Get SM content participants followed/engaged



# Approach



Misinfo  
Hate speech  
Polarization

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ES, LT, NL, RO

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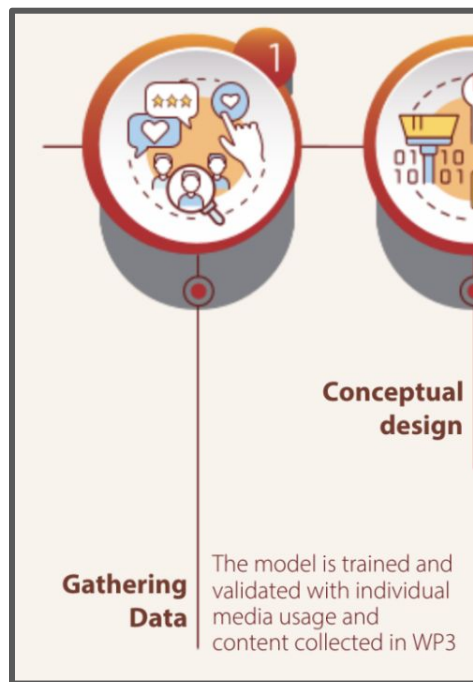
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# Approach



Misinfo  
Hate speech  
Polarization

Immigration  
Environment  
Intl. Security

4 Countries  
ES, LT, NL, RO

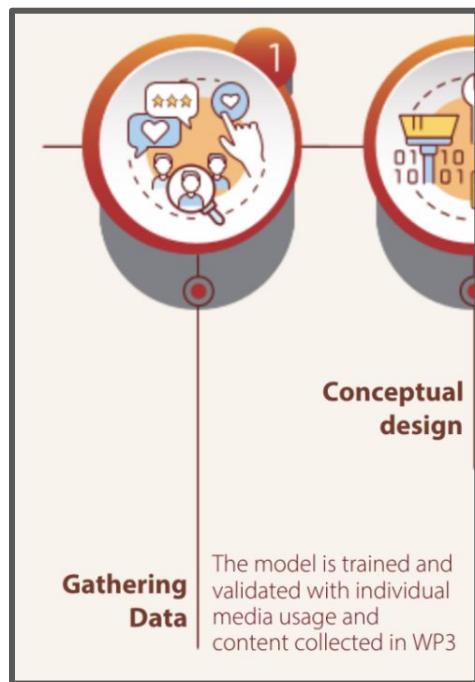
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# Approach



Exploring **synthetic data** options for openly share this data with others

4 Countries  
ES, LT, NL, RO

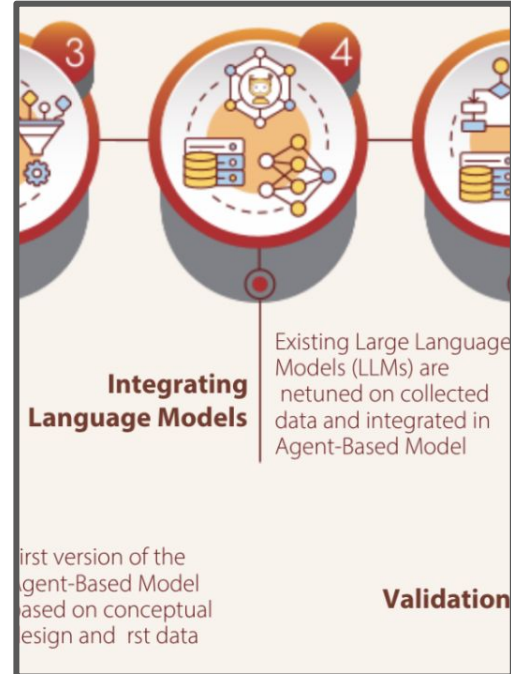
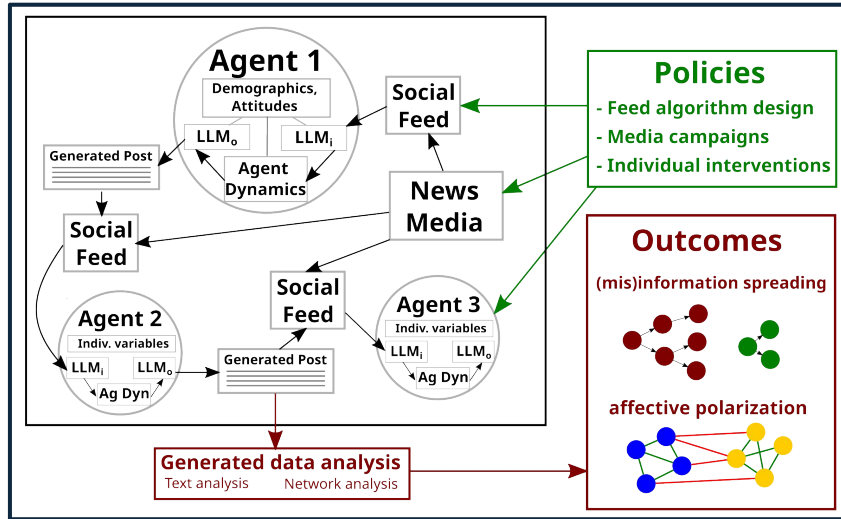
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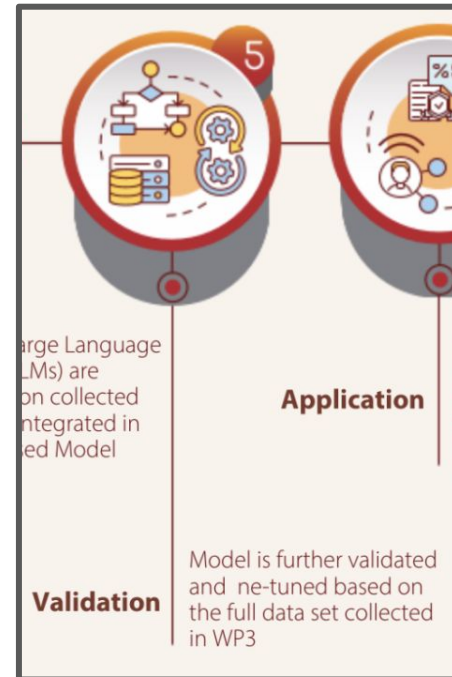
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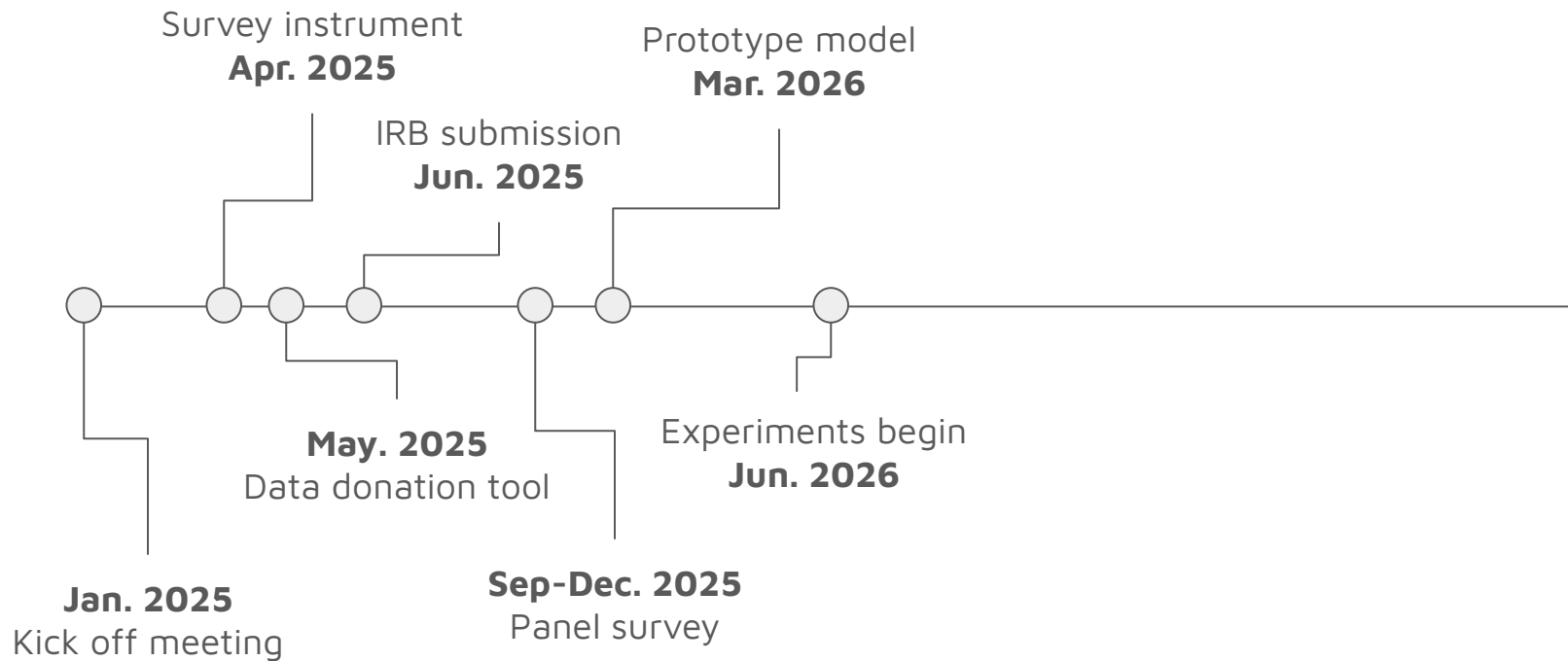


# Approach

Do we see people's behavior in a set of controlled experiment, to align with the behavioral changes predicted by the LLM-agent-based model?



# Timeline



# Key Challenges

Identify polling companies that are OK with our data donation tool  
protective of their participants/data  
legal concerns

Getting participant's social media takeouts  
1+ platform: computer + mobile survey takers  
it may take hours/days for data to be available after request

Ingesting social media takeouts  
4 languages  
unexpected (changes in) data structure

Ethical considerations  
social media takeouts: what data (not) to keep

Measuring exposure still a big challenge  
mostly unavailable in data takeouts



Thanks!

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