

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION BRIEF

Action number: ECOST-STSM-CA17132-47532

STSM Start and end date: 2020/10/30 - 2021/02/28

Grantee name: Jan Kleňha

Home Institution: Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

Host institution: University of Wrocław, Poland

Research interest

In this research, I study the influence of cultural values of forecasters on their ability to predict the views of experts on long-term priorities in public policy. The research aims to verify the hypothesis that forecasters with rather collectivist cultural values can predict the views of experts in this area more accurately than those who hold more individualistic values. Data will be collected through a structured forecasting tournament, several semi-structured questionnaires and qualitative observations. From a territorial point of view, the approach is based on studies of the distribution of values in multiple countries including the Czech Republic and the USA, and the forecasting questions will concern global public policy areas that are, at the same time, relevant to the Czech public policy. The verification of the hypothesis should suggest that any potential broad civic participation in predicting public priorities, which has been proposed to be an effective tool for public policy argumentation, would show more accurate results in societies with more persistent collectivistic values rather than societies with more individualistic values.

STSM Summary

The purpose of the STSM was to conduct a small scale proof-of-concept pilot with at least a dozen participants and to make theoretical and practical preparations for the main forecasting experiment. The first main result of the STSM is the successfully run small scale pilot, wherein a 1.5h interactive online training was developed, 17 participants conducted the training, answered the Individualism-Collectivism cultural orientation questionnaire, voted for their own

public policy priorities using quadratic voting method, and finally predicted the opinion of the whole group (average of all the participant's responses).

The preliminary results suggest that the experimental design is appropriate, the quadratic voting mechanism is perceived as complicated but not being regularly misunderstood if properly explained, and adjusting the final ranking of priorities by Surprising popularity does seem to provide promising results. The second main result is the advanced preparation for a larger experiment, as part of which a cooperation with another research project has been established, the descriptions of all policy areas to be prioritized were improved, 800+ participants were registered for participation and more than 50% of them already conducted the forecasting training.

Further step following the STSM is to finish this larger experiment, which will be enhanced by a crowd forecasting session predicting the opinion of a group of experts when presented with the same public policy prioritization task, so that the effectiveness of various prioritization approaches can be compared. The final step is to analyze the collected data and publish a study elaborating on the results, ultimately aiming to help develop new participative prioritization mechanisms, whose outputs will more precisely represent the importance of long-term priorities and become a widely available resource for more rational policy argumentation.