

Summary for the general public (PRELUDIUM 23)

Climate science shows with increasing certainty and detail that climate change is becoming a problem with broad implications for both natural and social systems. The climate crisis has sparked a series of discussions about the future, what it holds for us as a society, what scenarios we can predict from scientific modeling, how we envision it as individuals, and what place we see in it for ourselves. The discussion about the threat of climate catastrophe and the need for fair process change has increasingly drawn attention to the need for intergenerational justice. In this way, future generations have become one of the main actors in proposed climate policy. But how is the category of future generations (not yet present) created and used, and to what extent can we make them speak for themselves?

The project aims to investigate what social narratives about future generations look like and whether it is possible to gain insights into the value worldview of future generations through deliberation. For this purpose, the innovative Imaginary Future Generations (IFG) method will be used. The IFG method is designed to resolve intergenerational conflicts. For this purpose, it is proposed to create imaginary groups representing future generations, which negotiate with representatives of the present generation's visions of the future and related decision-making processes. In this way, future generations could become one of the parties to climate policy made democratically.

Thematically, the project will concern the energy transition process in Poland. The energy transition in Poland is currently the subject of various debates resulting from frictions between different interest groups. The climate policy on energy transition will meet public resistance and pose a significant challenge to the governments implementing it. For these reasons, the issue of a just transition is crucial for society to reduce conflicts between disputing parties and implement changes in a consensual and harmless manner. Considering the voices of future generations in current policies in an inclusive manner will go a long way in advancing the concept of intergenerational justice. The project will answer the following research questions:

- 1) What visions of the future are included in official government documents on the implementation of climate policies in Poland, and what authors' motivations were behind their characterization?
- 2) How is the category of future generations shaped in these visions, and for what purposes is it used?
- 3) Can different types of functions using the category of future generations be distinguished depending on the sources?
- 4) What are the ways of using the category of future generations in narratives alternative to the official ones, and what are the needs of their authors?
- 5) Is it possible to obtain consensus through deliberation between individuals representing different visions of the future?
- 6) What narratives were used by the participants of IFG deliberations, and how did they use the category of future generations in their visions of the future?
- 7) Is it possible to distinguish different types of functions using the category of future generations among the statements during the IFG deliberation?
- 8) Whether the visions agreed upon deliberation approach narratives from official state documents or narratives of alternative discourses?