**Title: Is Our House on Fire? Analysis and Prediction of European Attitudes towards Climate Change.**

Student: Claudia Giuspoli

Supervisor: prof. Giuseppe A. Veltri

Co-supervisor: dott.ssa Elena Pavan

*Object*

Nowadays, climate change is one of the substantial issues and challenges that is continuing to grow in intensity and complexity. Understanding the individual environmental attitudes is fundamental to promote citizen engagement in pro-environmental behavior and support green development.

Scholars have identified several factors that shape pro-environmental behaviour: sociodemographic, individual, and external dimensions. For example, being young, well educated, wealthy, and liberal (sociodemographic dimension) positively influences eco-friendly action. Afterward, people who perceive themselves as a green-identity and have a high climate change risk perception (individual dimension) are more likely to behave eco-sustainably to mitigate and fight the environmental problem. Finally, the country of origin of the citizens and the shared cultural schemas (contextual dimension) could shape pro-environmental behaviour. These cultural schemas control the rules of thinking and, combined with cultural values, may interact with eco-friendly actions

However, the literature review suggests that there is a value-action gap. High worry does not always lead to environmental behavior. Sometimes, worried citizens do not perform any pro-environmental behaviours, or unworried citizens act ecologically.

*Case of Study*

The study focuses on the prediction and classification of the behaviour (dummy outcome: yes-action, no-action) of European citizens. I used the Special Eurobarometer 91.3 dataset, entitled “Climate Change”, in which some relevant items about climate change and socio-demographic variables are selected. In particular, the dependent variable is pro-environmental behaviour, while the explanatory variables are climate change risk perception, political orientation, marital status, education, gender, age, residence, social class, and country. Besides, some items about climate change are selected. By adopting climate change items, different types of cultural schemas and self-green identity are built.

The primary broader aim is to understand what factors shape pro-environmental behavior. Secondly, the research study aims to better understand the relationship between climate change risk perception and pro-environmental behaviour by investigating more about the value-action gap. Therefore, the second part of the analysis pursues to examine the factors that determine the actions of worried and unworried citizens separately.

*Analysis*

Before starting the predictions, Correlational Class Analysis (CCA) and Partitioning Around Medoids (PAM) clustering are performed to identify some citizens' profiles. CCA finds some shared cultural schemas among citizens. It can control the rules of thinking and interpretation of climate change. PAM partition citizens into clusters according to similar attitudes toward climate change, which I call green-identity. For these algorithms, only variables about climate change issues are adopted. The new classes created are introduced in the final prediction models.

Logistic Regression, Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Gradient Boosting are the chosen classifiers. I have decided to use different methods because I want to compare the results obtained and, I want to find an optimal model that best predicts the behavior. Random Forest yields the best results in terms of accuracy predictive (0.70) and macro-f1 (0.65). Climate change risk perception is one of the main important factors in shaping pro-environmental behaviour in all non-parametric models. I have deeply explained that higher individual climate change risk perception positively influences and predicts pro-environmental behaviour. Another important factor that shapes pro-environmental behaviour is extreme green-identity. Individuals who share green values are more likely to behave ecologically, as they share the importance to fight climate change. Lastly, some sociodemographic variables: age and high-education are important predictors.

In the second part of the analysis, I divide the dataset into two: one with worried citizens and one with unworried ones, and I fit these four classifiers separately. The explanatory variables are the same as the traditional model, but risk perception is excluded. The best model with the subset of worried citizens is Gradient Boosting (accuracy = 0.66 and macro-f1 0.64). For this subset, the important variables remain the same as in the previous model. Extreme green-identity and higher education have a positive effect on pro-environmental behaviour. Instead of the unworried citizens’ subset, the best model is Random Forest (accuracy 0.64 and macro-f1 0.63). In this case, the youngest unworried adults (15-30 years old) and moderate green-identity have a negative effect and, they are less likely to behave eco-friendly.

*Conclusion*

The importance of the dissertation is to find some strategies for promoting citizens’ engagement in pro-environmental behaviour. Public policy should encourage education or, in general, information about climate change to increase risk perception and create an extreme-green identity. All these factors lead to an active engagement of European citizens. Some new findings: Eastern countries have a negative effect on pro-environmental behaviour. A limitation concerns data available and the impossibility to insert all explanatory variables (especially those relating to external factors). Institutional, economic, and socio-cultural factors are not completely examined. Future research could create a model with all the dimensions’ factors, joining different datasets. Lastly, predictions of the behaviour could be divided according to the nation to examine strategies at a national level to promote pro-environmental behaviour.