SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION

BRIEF

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Grantee name: Dr Martin HINTON

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Host Institution: University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Research interest:

Martin Hinton works on argument evaluation, for which he has developed the CAPNA assessment system, with a particular emphasis on linguistic elements of argument, analysed by his Informal Argument Semantics. He also works and publishes on fallacy theory.

STSM Summary

The purpose of this study mission was to develop a tool for the assessment and evaluation of the underlying reasoning of arguments, particularly in the area of public policy statements. The tool seeks to combine insights from the Periodic Table of Arguments (PTA) developed by Jean Wagemans with the theoretical framework behind the Comprehensive Assessment Procedure for Natural Argumentation (CAPNA), developed by Martin Hinton.

The results are presented in a paper which has been submitted for publication in a high-level argumentation journal. The key points are:

1.   The integration of the Argument Type Identification Procedure of the PTA into the structure of the CAPNA.

2.   The development of procedural question for the evaluation of reasoning underlying particular argument types. In this way, the PTA was successfully adapted from a purely descriptive tool into an evaluative one.

3.   The combined evaluation scheme is notable for its systematicity. It does not seek to fully automate the process of evaluation, or to remove all aspects of subjectivity from it, but rather to make the use of subjective judgement properly justified and transparent within a coherent, fixed, and systematic framework.

4.   The development of this form of evaluation has led to new insights into fallacy theory, and the discussions of the participants created an increasing awareness of the need to move on from the tradition of looking for named fallacies in argumentative texts, to a practice of assessing arguments for flaws and naming the weakness for the stage in evaluation at which it occurs.