Short-Term Scientific Mission Brief

Action number: CA17132

STSM start and end date: 27 June 2022-8 July 2022

Grantee name: Chiara Mercuri

Home institution: Università della Svizzera Italiana

Host Institution: Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Research interest

Chiara Mercuri is a PhD candidate working on argumentation in communicative contexts. In her dissertation, she investigates the theoretical relationship between conflicting characterization frames and underlying argumentative premises in the context of the public controversy surrounding sustainable fashion.

STSM Summary

The main purpose of this Short Time Scientific Mission was to develop a sound methodology for the argumentative analysis of the public controversy at issue. In particular, the Grantee aimed at elaborating a method for combining the analysis of conflicting characterization frames with the retrieval of argumentative patterns in her corpus.

The public controversy surrounding fashion sustainability represents an instance of argumentative polylogue. Moreover, it constitutes a case of climate change discourse which concerns a variety of stakeholders holding conflicting views in respect to a topic of common interest. In order to empirically investigate this complex polylogue, the Grantee considers a variety of texts which include social media posts, sustainability brand reports and EU institutional documents. In this perspective, advancement in the analysis of this multi-genre corpus is in line with the objectives of Working Group 1.

At the same time, as the visit focused on the development of suitable methodology for investigating a complex public controversy, the STSM was also relevant for the activities of Working Group 2, to which both Hosts belong.

In dialogue with Dima Mohammed, the Grantee enriched the theoretical framework for the analysis, as they discussed the applicability of some concepts developed by the Host, such as argumentative potential, standing standpoints and argumentative associates. All these concepts are going to be included in the development of the methodology for investigating this public controversy.

In the second part of the STSM spent with Marcin Lewiński, the Grantee focused on understanding better the polylogical nature of the public controversy under study.In particular, the Host suggested some criteria to determine whether a shared communicative space existed between the various players involved in the polylogue. Therefore, the additional documents to be included in the corpus will be selected considering whether they belong to a shared communicative space or not, in line with these criteria.

In terms of output, the insights deriving from the STSM informed the Grantee’s presentations at the WG1 workshop “Empirical studies of discourse and argumentation in public policy: multidisciplinary and multilingual perspectives”, held at the Catholic University of Milan-Brescia in early September 2022, and at the 4th European Conference on Argumentation, which will take place in Rome at the end of September 2022. Learnings from the STSM will also be crucial for the Grantee’s doctoral dissertation.