LEARNING & CONTESTING ASSUMPTION-BASED ARGUMENTATION FRAMEWORKS

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AI³, Rende, Italy 13 September 2025

- Assumption-based Argumentation ABA frameworks
- Learning ABA frameworks
- Contesting argumentative claims
- Redressing as a way of learning



- Assumption-based Argumentation
 - **ABA frameworks**
- Learning ABA frameworks
- Contesting argumentative claims
- Redressing as a way of learning



Rule-based systems

for non-monotonic reasoning formalisms, can be used for **explainable AI** by providing **arguments** for **claims**

Arguments are **structured: derivations** built from rules supported by **assumptions**

Rules are **defeasible** by deriving arguments for **contraries** of assumptions

Assumption-based Argumentation

ABA frameworks

- Learning
 ABA frameworks
- Contesting argumentative claims
- Redressing as a way of learning

Automated logic-based learning
of ABA frameworks from
background knowledge
+
positive & negative examples

Algorithm based on transformation rules, implemented in **Answer Set Programming**

 Assumption-based Argumentation ABA frameworks

Learning ABA frameworks highly desirable property for **human-centric Al**

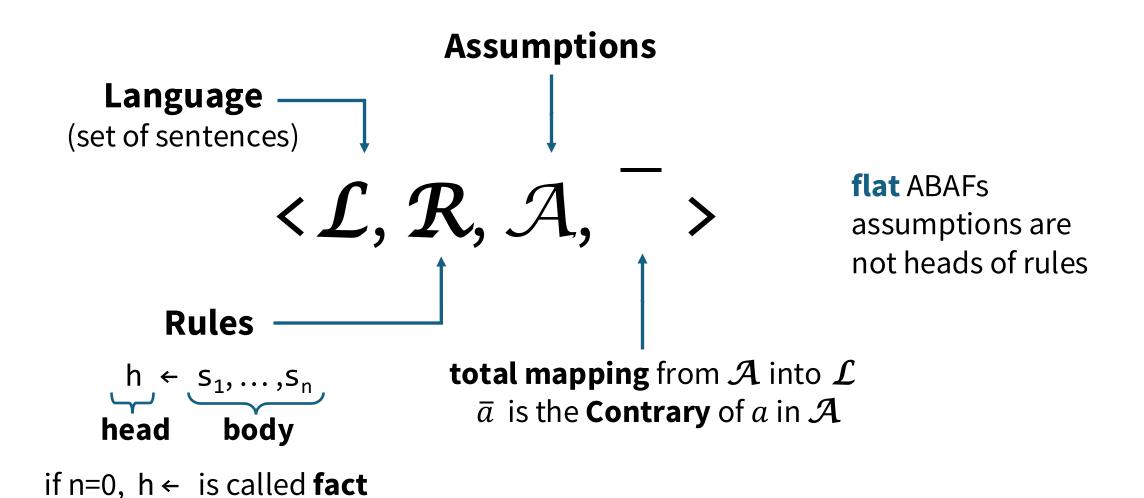
 Contesting argumentative claims claims are subject to **contestation**:

- rejected claims may be desirable
- accepted claims may be undesirable

Redressing as a way of learning

modify rules incrementally to **reconcile** contestations

ABA FRAMEWORKS



ABA FRAMEWORKS

an example ...

```
employed(jo) ← onleave(jo) ← maternity(jo) ←
employed(bob) ← onleave(bob) ← maternity(diana) ←
employed(claudia) ←

loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)

breaks(X) ← onleave(X)

rules

contrary of
nobreaks
contrary of
nobreaks
```

nobreaks(X) renders the rule defeasible:
it can be applied only if breaks(X) cannot be derived

ABA FRAMEWORKS - SEMANTICS

"acceptable" extensions: sets of arguments able to "defend" themselves from "attacks" (as determined by the chosen semantics)

```
employed(jo) ← onleave(jo) ← maternity(jo) ←
employed(bob) ← onleave(bob) ← maternity(diana) ←
employed(claudia) ←
loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)
breaks(X) ← onleave(X)
```

- Arguments are deductions of claims using rules and supported by assumptions
- Attacks are directed at the assumptions in the support of arguments

```
{
    arg1: { nobreaks(jo) } ⊢ loan(jo)
    arg2: { nobreaks(bob) } ⊢ loan(bob)
    arg3: { nobreaks(claudia) } ⊢ loan(claudia)
    arg4: { } ⊢ breaks(jo)
    arg5: { } ⊢ breaks(bob)
}
```

We focus on stable extensions

any set of arguments S that

- 1. do not attack each other (conflict-free)
- 2. S attacks all arguments it does not contain

Accepted claims: loan(claudia) Rejected claims: loan(jo) loan(bob)

BRAVE ABA LEARNING PROBLEM

Given

- 1. ABA framework $\mathbf{F} = \langle \mathcal{L}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A}, \rangle$ (background knowledge) with at least one stable extension
- 2. **Ep** = { **positive examples** }
- 3. En = { negative examples }
- 4. T = { learnable predicates }

find $\mathbf{F'} = \langle \mathcal{L'}, \mathcal{R'}, \mathcal{A'}, - \rangle$ with a stable extension S such that

- i. **F** ⊆ **F**'
- ii. positive are covered: every positive has an argument in S
- iii. negative are not covered: no negative has an argument in S

F' is a solution to the brave ABA learning problem

CAUTIOUS ABA LEARNING PROBLEM

Given

- 1. ABA framework $\mathbf{F} = \langle \mathcal{L}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A}, \rangle$ (background knowledge) with at least one stable extension
- 2. **Ep** = { **positive examples** }
- 3. En = { negative examples }
- 4. T = { learnable predicates }

find $\mathbf{F'} = \langle \mathcal{L'}, \mathcal{R'}, \mathcal{A'}, - \rangle$ with at least one stable extension

- i. **F** ⊆ **F**'
- ii. **positive** are **covered**: every positive has an argument in C
- ii. negative are not covered: no negative has an argument in C

 $C = \bigcap_{k}^{n} S_{i}$ $S_{1},...,S_{n}$: stable extensions of **F**'

F' is a **solution** to the **cautious** ABA learning problem

ABA LEARNING VIA TRANSFORMATION RULES

Learning ABA frameworks relies upon a set of transformation rules

$$\langle \mathcal{L}_1, \mathcal{R}_1, \mathcal{A}_1, \stackrel{-1}{>} \longrightarrow \langle \mathcal{L}_2, \mathcal{R}_2, \mathcal{A}_2, \stackrel{-2}{>} \longrightarrow \dots \longrightarrow \langle \mathcal{L}_n, \mathcal{R}_n, \mathcal{A}_n, \stackrel{n}{>}$$
background knowledge intensional solution

→ ∈ { Rote Learning, Folding, Assumption Introduction, Subsumption }

learnt rules **do not**make explicit
reference to specific
values in the universe

A **strategy** controls the order of application of the transformation rules

ABA LEARNING at work

Language { employed(X)←, onleave(X)←, maternity(X)←, loan(X)← }

1. Background Knowledge

```
\leftarrow \mathcal{L}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A},
```

```
1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 7, 1
```

Rules

```
{ employed(jo)←, employed(bob)←, employed(claudia)←,
  onleave(jo)←, onleave(bob)←,
  maternity(jo)←, maternity(diana)← }
```

2. Positive examples

```
Ep = { loan(claudia) }
```

3. Negative examples

```
En = { loan(bob) }
```

4. Learnable Predicates

```
T = \{ loan \}
```

```
Assumptions
```

nobreaks(X) }

Contraries

nobreaks(X) = breaks(X)

X ∈ {claudia, jo, bob, diana}

TRANSFORMATION RULES at work ROTE LEARNING

Add facts

- from **positive** examples
- for contraries of assumptions

to get a (non-intensional) solution

It's enough to learn

TRANSFORMATION RULES at work FOLDING

Towards an **intensional** solution ...

Generalise

loan(X) ← X=claudia

to

 $loan(X) \leftarrow employed(X)$

by using

 $employed(X) \leftarrow X=claudia$

WARNING

It also constructs an argument for a negative example: loan(bob)

ABA LEARNING is **parametric** w.r.t. the folding strategy
It includes a portfolio of strategies, such as "nondeterministic" and "greedy" folding

TRANSFORMATION RULES at work ASSUMPTION INTRODUCTION

Repairing the ABA framework to get a solution ...

Add an **assumption** to avoid

- rejecting a positive example
- accepting a negative example

```
loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)
```

with contrary breaks(X)

AND REPEAT!

Rote Learning breaks(X) ← X=bob

Folding breaks(X) ← onleave(X)

No more rules to learn: LEARNING COMPLETED!

```
employed(jo) \( \infty \) onleave(jo) \( \infty \) maternity(jo) \( \infty \)
employed(bob) \( \infty \) onleave(bob) \( \infty \) maternity(diana) \( \infty \)
employed(claudia) \( \infty \) Rules in the Background Knowledge
```

loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)
breaks(X) ← onleave(X)

Learnt rules

TRANSFORMATION RULES at work ASSUMPTION INTRODUCTION

Repairing the ABA framework to get a solution ...

Add an assumption to avoid

- rejecting a positive example
- accepting a negative example

```
loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)
```

with contrary
breaks(X)

To get termination ... $p1(X) \leftarrow Q(X)$, $asm_Q(X)$... reuse $p2(X) \leftarrow Q(X)$, $asm_Q(X)$ $asm_Q(X)$ is "relative to" Q(X)

Algorithm 1: RASP-ABAlearn

```
Input: (\langle \mathcal{R}_0, \mathcal{A}_0, \overline{\phantom{a}}^0 \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}^+, \mathcal{E}^- \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}_C^+, \mathcal{E}_C^- \rangle, \mathcal{T}): redress problem
      Output: \langle \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A}, \overline{\phantom{a}} \rangle: incremental redress relative to \langle \mathcal{E}_{\mathcal{C}}^+, \mathcal{E}_{\mathcal{C}}^- \rangle
 1 \mathcal{R} := \mathcal{R}_0; \mathcal{A} := \mathcal{A}_0; \overline{\phantom{a}} := \overline{\phantom{a}}^0; \mathcal{R}_l := \emptyset;
 2 RoLe(); Gen(); return \langle \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A}, \overline{\phantom{A}} \rangle;
  3 Procedure RoLe()
              P := ASP(\langle \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{A}, \overline{\phantom{A}} \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}^+, \mathcal{E}^- \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}_C^+, \mathcal{E}_C^- \rangle, \mathcal{T});
              if \neg sat(P) then
                      fail:
              _{
m else}
                      S := as(P);
                      // R1. Rote Learning
                      for each newp(t) \in S do
                             \mathcal{R}_l := \mathcal{R}_l \cup \{p(X) \leftarrow X = t\};
11
                      \mathbf{end}
12
              \mathbf{end}
13 Procedure Gen()
              foreach \rho: (p(X) \leftarrow X = t) \in \mathcal{R}_l do
                      \mathcal{R}_l := \mathcal{R}_l \setminus \{\rho\};
                      // R4. Fact Subsumption
                      if \neg sat(ASP(\langle \mathcal{R} \cup \mathcal{R}_l, \mathcal{A}, \overline{\ }), \langle \mathcal{E}^+, \mathcal{E}^- \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}_G^+, \mathcal{E}_G^- \rangle, \emptyset)) then
16
                              // R2 w/ R3. Folding with Assumption Introduction
                             \langle \rho_{\alpha}, \alpha(X), C_{\alpha} \rangle := Folding WAsmIntro(\rho);
17
                             \mathcal{R}\!:=\!\mathcal{R}\!\cup\!\{
ho_g\};
18
                             \mathcal{A} := \mathcal{A} \cup \{\alpha(X)\};
                             \overline{\alpha(X)} := c \quad \alpha(X);
20
                              // R1. Rote Learning
                             for each c \alpha(t) \in C_{\alpha} do
21
                                    \mathcal{R}_l := \mathcal{R}_l \cup \{c \mid \alpha(X) \leftarrow X = t\};
23
                             end
                      \mathbf{end}
25
              \mathbf{end}
26 Function Folding WAsmIntro(ρ)
               // R2. Folding
              while foldable(\rho, \mathcal{R}) do
27

\rho := fold(\rho, \mathcal{R});

28
              // R3. Assumption Introduction
              Let \rho be H \leftarrow B; X := vars(B);
31
              if there exists \alpha(X) \in \mathcal{A} relative to B then
                      \rho_q := H \leftarrow B, \alpha(X); \quad C_\alpha := \emptyset;
                     if \neg sat(ASP(\langle \mathcal{R} \cup \{\rho\}, \mathcal{A}, \overline{\ \ \ }), \langle \mathcal{E}^+, \mathcal{E}^- \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}_C^+, \mathcal{E}_C^- \rangle, \emptyset)) then
34
                             fail;
                      \mathbf{end}
              else // introduce an assumption \alpha(X), with a new predicate \alpha
                      \rho_g := H \leftarrow B, \alpha(X);
                      F := \langle \mathcal{R} \cup \{\rho\}, \mathcal{A} \cup \{\alpha(X)\}, \overline{\phantom{A}} \cup \{\alpha(X) \mapsto c \ \alpha(X)\} \rangle;
                     C_{\alpha} := \{c_{\alpha}(X) \mid c_{\alpha}(X) \in as(ASP(F, \langle \mathcal{E}^+, \mathcal{E}^- \rangle, \langle \mathcal{E}^+_C, \mathcal{E}^-_C \rangle, \{c_{\alpha}\}))\};
39
              return \langle \rho_g, \alpha(X), C_\alpha \rangle;
```

A GLIMPSE OF IMPLEMENTATION via ASP

ASP encoding

```
loan(X) :- employed(X), nobreaks(X). ...
nobreaks(X) :- employed(X), not breaks(X).
breaks(X) :- onleave(X).
```

```
{ breaksP(X) } :- onleave(X).
breaks(X) :- breaksP(X).
#minimize{1,X: breaksP(X)}.
:- not loan(claudia).
:- loan(bob).
```

learning facts for contraries

Answer sets

(1-to-1 correspondence with **Stable extensions**)

```
{ breaks(bob), ...}, ...
```

Rote learning



Clingo (ASP)

⊕ Potassco

https://github.com/ABALearn/aba_asp

EXPERIMENTS

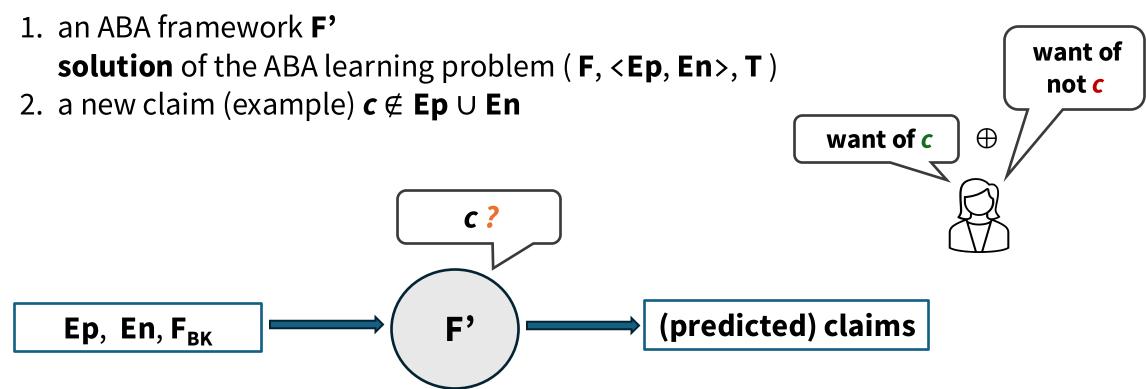
ASP-ABAlearnB

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13330013

Learning problem	ВК	Ер	En	ASP-ABAlearnB	ILASP
Flies	8	4	2	0.01	0.09
Flies_bird&planes	10	5	2	0.02	0.25
Innocent	15	2	2	0.01	1.84
Nixon_diamond	6	1	1	0.01	unsat
Nixon_diamond_2	15	3	2	0.01	unsat
Tax_law	16	2	2	0.02	0.66
Tax_law_2	17	2	2	0.01	0.92
Acute	96	21	19	0.04	unsat
Autism	5716	189	515	23.43	timeout
Breast-w	6291	241	458	16.32	timeout

CONTESTATION

Given



CONTESTATION

Given

- an ABA framework F' solution of the ABA learning problem (F, <Ep, En>, T)
- 2. a new claim (example) *c* ∉ Ep ∪ En

F' is **contested** by

want of <i>c</i> want of <i>not c</i>

iff ∄ stable extension S of **F**'s.t.

Ep U { c } are covered in S Ep are covered in S & En are not covered in S En U { c } are not covered in S

REDRESS

When a solution **F**' is **contested** by either **want of** c or **want of not** c, **redressing** consists in deriving a **solution F**" of the ABA learning problem

```
• (want of c) (F, ⟨Ep∪{c}, En⟩, T)
```

• (want of *not c*) (F, $\langle Ep, En \cup \{c\} \rangle, T$)

How to redress

from scratch

trivial form

- 1. forgetting F'
- 2. solving the <u>original</u> problem w/c
 either (F, ⟨Ep ∪ {c}, En ⟩, T)
 or (F, ⟨Ep, En ∪ {c}⟩, T)

Incremental

modifies F' as little as possible

- selecting some of the **learnt** rules & making them **defeasible** by assumption introduction, to get the <u>new</u> problem (F'_{ai}, 〈 Ep, En 〉, T'_{ai})
- solving the new problem w/c
 either (F'_{ai}, ⟨Ep ∪ {c}, En ⟩, T'_{ai})
 or (F'_{ai}, ⟨Ep, En ∪ {c}⟩, T'_{ai})

INCREMENTAL REDRESS w/ABA Learning

Suppose (the current solution) F'

```
employed(jo) ← onleave(jo) ← maternity(jo) ←
employed(bob) ← onleave(bob) ← maternity(diana) ←
employed(claudia) ←
loan(X) ← employed(X), nobreaks(X)
- breaks(X) ← onleave(X)
```

is contested by the **want of** loan(jo), which is **not** covered by any stable extension. We can **incrementally modify** F' by applying the transformation rules

```
→ breaks(X) ← onleave(X), alpha(X) (1) by assumption introduction rule
c_alpha(X) ← X=jo (2) by rote learning rule
c_alpha(X) ← maternity(X) (3) by folding rule
```

to get a new solution **F**" with at least one stable extension covering loan(jo)

EXPERIMENTS

RASP-ABAlearn

https://github.com/ABALearn/aba_asp

$|T_S| 13524$ $|S_S| 6953$ S_R 6953 $|T_R|$ 8482 $|S_S|$ 6519 42250 42173 42357 42673 | 4232 $\langle 1503, 1374 \rangle |S_S| 33409$ 33409 | 33410 | 33410 | 33410 autism33409 33410 33410 33410 33410 **≈** 6568 $|T_R|471191|$ 11680 | 11409 | 279 $\langle 171, 464 \rangle$ $\langle 214, 1587 \rangle \mid S_S \mid 34762 \mid 34762 \mid 34763 \mid 34763 \mid 34764 \mid 34763 \mid 34763 \mid 34763 \mid$

Learning problems

six standard datasets of the UCI ML Repo as ABA learning problems

Experimental processes

Redress from scratch (S) vs. Incremental redress (R)

11 runs of RASP-ABALearn:

: run (S) and (R) using 90% of positive and negative examples

1-10: run (S) and (R) each using a randomly selected **new example** either **positive** or **negative**

												The second secon
		+	+	+	+	_	+	_	_	_	_	+
	$ T_S $	13524	14427	14552	15004	14985	15252	15048	15114	15246	15097	15329
	$ T_R $	12741	970	905	999	44	1126	47	46	44	44	1144
>	$ S_S $	6953	6954	6955	6956	6956	6958	6958	6958	6958	6958	6961
	$ S_R $	6953	6954	6955	6956	6956	6957	6957	6957	6957	6957	6958

size of the background knowledge (# rules)

 $S_R \mid 34762 \mid 34762 \mid 34763 \mid 34763 \mid 34764 \mid 34765 \mid 34765$

 $\langle |Ep|, |En| \rangle$

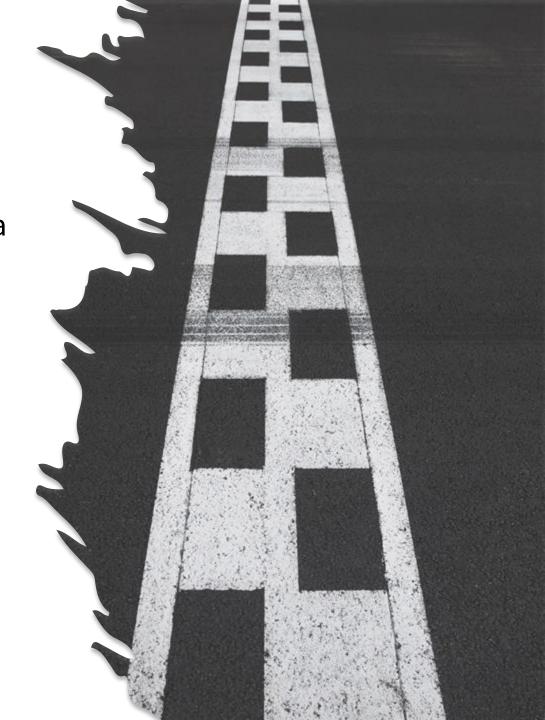
 $\frac{T_S}{T_R}$ time in ms

 S_S

of learn rules

CONCLUSIONS

- Automatic learning of ABA frameworks from a background knowledge, and positive and negative examples
- Contestability for ABA frameworks
- Redressing as a way of learning from additional positive or negative examples
- Experiments show
 - folding & assumption introduction improve effectiveness in learning
 - incremental redress is more efficient than re-learning from scratch



AGENTIFIED ARGUMENTATIVE LEARNING

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from

ARGUMENTATIVE LEARNING (w/ABA Learning)

- learn ABAFs from (possibly) very few examples to make run-time inference about previously unseen examples
- learnt ABAFs may admit no or several extensions,
 failing to determine definite (non-)acceptance of unseen example

to

AGENTIFIED

ARGUMENTATIVE LEARNING (w/ABA Learning)

- actions: consulting an external source (human, agent or data repo)
- observations: learning the outcome of the consultation

NON-FLAT ABAFs w/ "actionable assumption"

NON-FLAT ABA FRAMEWORKS

a variant of the Nixon diamond problem

```
quaker(a) ← quaker(b) ← republican(c) ←

voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X)

voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X)

heads of the rules are assumptions
republican(c) ←

facts

rules
```

voted(X,against_war) = voted(X,pro_war)

voted(X,pro war) = voted(X,against_war)

ARGUMENTATIVE LEARNING w/ABA Learning

```
X \in \{a,b,c\}
Language
{ quaker(X)←, republican(X)←, voted(X,pro_war)←,
                                                                                   Assumptions
  voted(X,against_war)\leftarrow, militarist(X)\leftarrow, pacifist(X)\leftarrow }
                                                                             voted(X,pro_war),
                                                                             voted(X,against_war) }
     Background Knowledge < \mathcal{L} , \mathcal{R} , \mathcal{A} ,
                                                                                    Contraries
       Rules
                                                                           \{\overline{\text{voted}(X, against\_war)} =
                                                                             voted(X,pro_war),
       { quaker(a)←, quaker(b)←, republican(c)←,
          voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X),
                                                                            voted(X,pro_war) =
          voted(X,pro\_war) \leftarrow militarist(X).
                                                                             voted(X,against war) }
```

- 2. Positive examples
- 3. Negative examples
- 4. Learnable Predicates

```
Ep = { pacifist(a), pacifist(b), militarist(c) }
```

En = { militarist(a), militarist(b), pacifist(c) }

T = { pacifist, militarist }

ABA LEARNING at work

```
      Rote Learning
      pacifist(X) ← X=a
      militarist(X) ← X=c

      Folding
      pacifist(X) ← quaker(X)
      militarist(X) ← republican(X)
```

No more rules to learn: LEARNING COMPLETED!

```
pacifist(X) ← quaker(X)
militarist(X) ← republican(X)
```

Learnt rules



quakers are pacifists & republicans are militarists

{ pacifist(a), { militarist(a), pacifist(b), militarist(b), militarist(c) } pacifist(c) }

ABAF) — (predicted) claims

Rules in BK

```
{ quaker(a) ←, quaker(b) ←, republican(c) ←
  voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X),
  voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X) }
```

Rules in BK U Learnt rules

```
{ quaker(a) ←, quaker(b) ←, republican(c) ←
  voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X),
  voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X),
  pacifist(X) ← quaker(X),
  militarist(X) ← republican(X)
}
```



quakers are pacifists & republicans are militarists

(predicted) claims

Ep, En, ABAF_{BK}

```
{ pacifist(a), { militarist(a), pacifist(b), militarist(b),
```

militarist(c) } pacifist(c)

Observations

{ quaker(nixon) ←,
 republican(nixon) ← }

Rules in BK

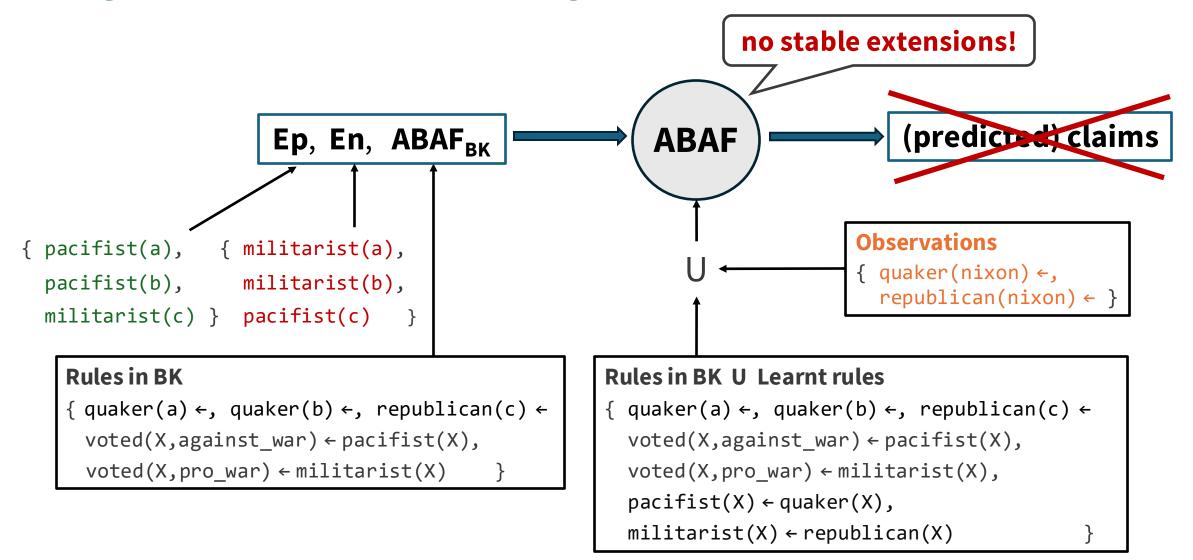
```
{ quaker(a) ←, quaker(b) ←, republican(c) ←
  voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X),
  voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X) }
```

Rules in BK U Learnt rules

ABAF

```
{ quaker(a) ←, quaker(b) ←, republican(c) ←
  voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X),
  voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X),
  pacifist(X) ← quaker(X),
  militarist(X) ← republican(X) }
```

RUN-TIME INFERENCE



ABA LEARNING at work

```
quaker(a) ← quaker(b) ← republican(c) ←
voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X)

voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X)

pacifist(X) ← quaker(X), normal_quaker(X)

militarist(X) ← republican(X), normal_republican(X)

Learnt rules
```

Learnt rules are rendered defeasible by applying **assumption introduction**

```
pacifist(X) ← quaker(X), normal_quaker(X)
militarist(X) ← republican(X), normal_republican(X)
Learnt rules
```

```
normal_quaker(X) = abnormal_quaker(X)
normal_republican(X) = abnormal_republican(X)
```

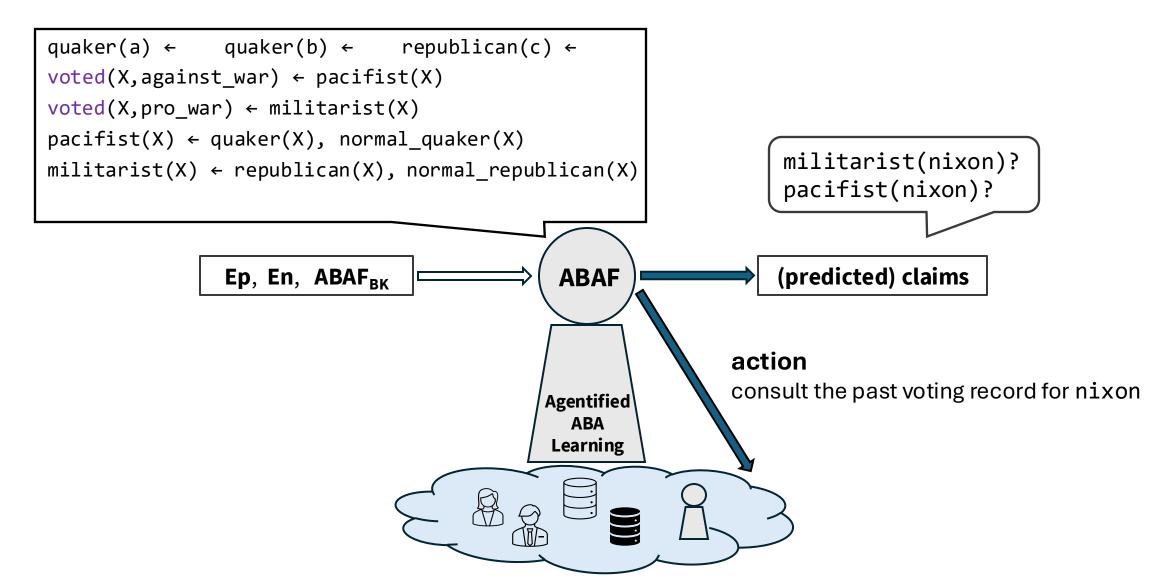
ABA LEARNING at work

```
quaker(a) \leftarrow quaker(b) \leftarrow republican(c) \leftarrow
         voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X)
         voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X)
         pacifist(X) ← quaker(X), normal_quaker(X)
         militarist(X) ← republican(X), normal_republican(X)
                                          Which rule should we
Rote Learning
                                                 learn
        abnormal_quaker(X) ← X=nixon
                                                          abnormal_republican(X) ← X=nixon
Folding
       ¦abnormal_quaker(X) ← republican(X) ¦
                                                      abnormal_ republican(X) ← quaker(X) ¦
                                          Which claim should be
                  militarist(nixon)
                                                                    pacifist(nixon)
                                               accepted
                                                               voted(nixon,against_war)
                 voted(nixon,pro war)
```

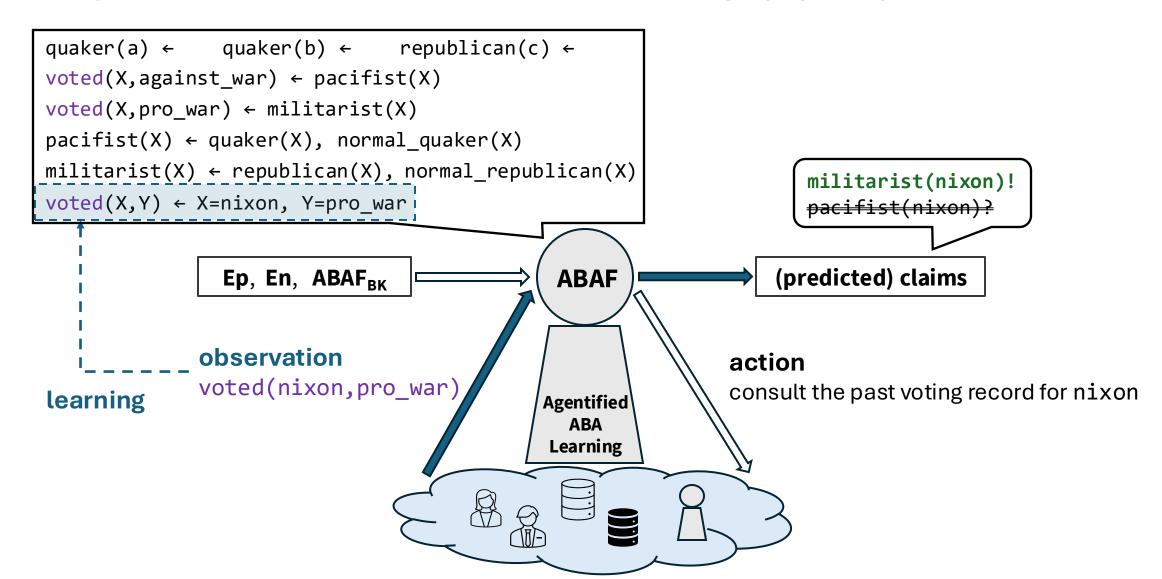
AGENTIFIED ABA LEARNING at work

```
quaker(a) \leftarrow quaker(b) \leftarrow republican(c) \leftarrow
         voted(X,against_war) ← pacifist(X)
                                                                    actionable assumption
         voted(X,pro_war) ← militarist(X)
         pacifist(X) \leftarrow quaker(X), normal_quaker(X)
         militarist(X) ← republican(X), mormal_republican(X)
                                           Which rule should we
Rote Learning
                                                  learn
        abnormal_quaker(X) ← X=nixon
                                                           abnormal_republican(X) ← X=nixon
Folding
       ¦abnormal_quaker(X) ← republican(X) ¦
                                                       abnormal_ republican(X) ← quaker(X) ¦
                                          Which claim should be
                   militarist(nixon)
                                                                     pacifist(nixon)
                                               accepted
                 voted(nixon,pro_war)
                                                                voted(nixon,against_war)
```

AGENTIFIED ABA LEARNING at work



AGENTIFIED ABA LEARNING at work



CONCLUSIONS

Novel vision for argumentative agents
learning from examples & performing actions to
generate targeted expansions of their knowledge

 Enhancement of ABA Learning leveraging on non-flat ABAFs

 TODO turn the vision into an algorithm

