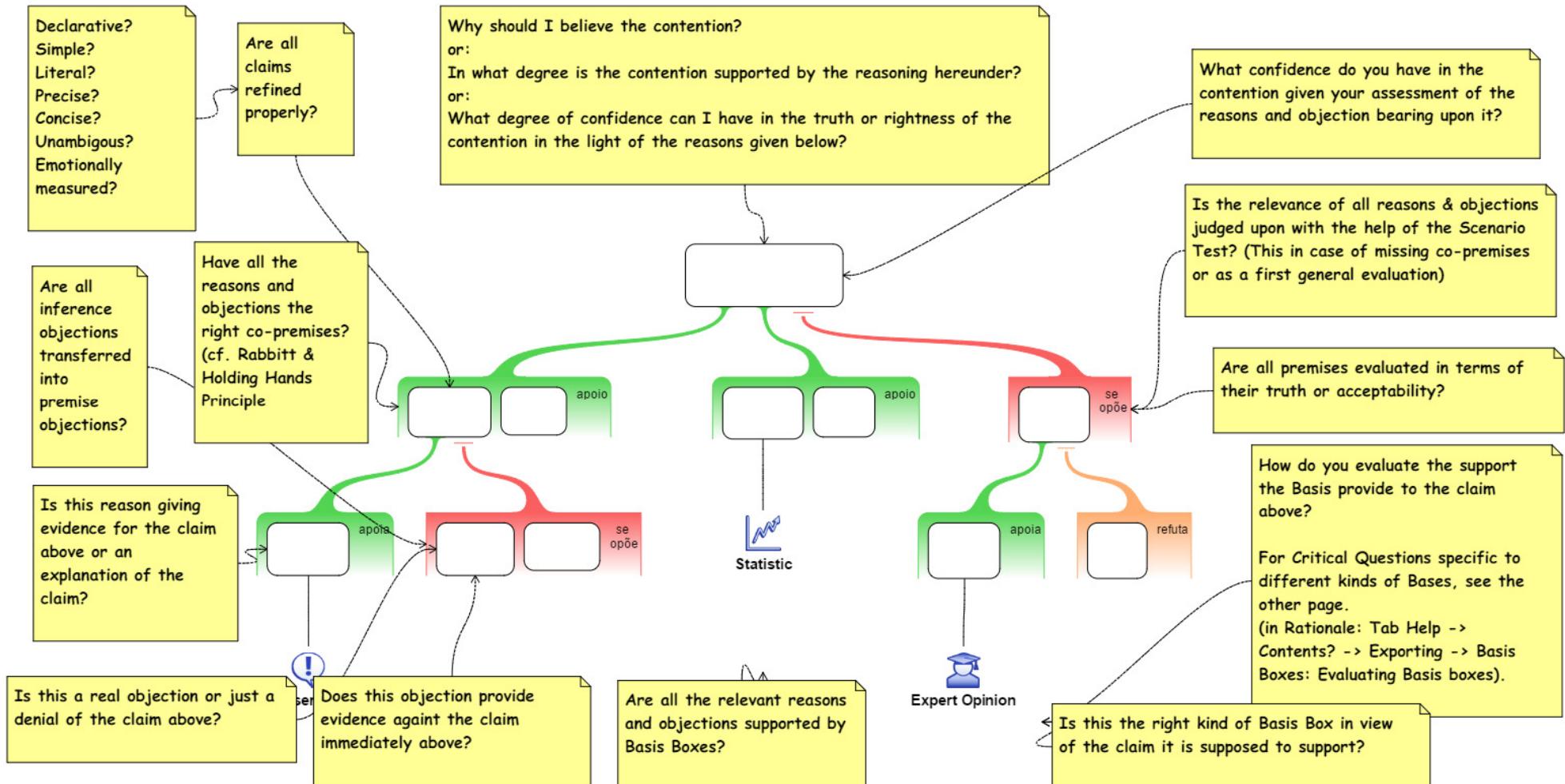


Hand-out Critical Questions for Advanced reasoning / Analysing Maps

<https://www.rationaleonline.com/map/myrma/critical-questions-for-analysing-maps/>



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| <p>Assertion How reliable is the person who made this claim?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could that person be mistaken in some way? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Could they be misremembering? ◦ Are they in a position to know? • Is that person impartial? Could they have a reason to lie or misrepresent information? • How reliable is that person? <p>Is the claim something that could count as knowledge, or is it merely someone's personal opinion?</p> <p>By Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the definition clear? • Does everyone agree with this definition? • Could two people mean something different by these expressions? <p>Case Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the case study relevant? • Does the case study provide a good basis or analogy for the claim? • Do the results of the case study concur with the claim being made? <p>Common Belief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this belief true or is it just a popular opinion, common misunderstanding or stereotype? • Is this belief really held widely across the whole population? • Is this belief well founded? • Is this belief free of serious dispute? • If the claim is a common generalization, is it true or acceptable in this instance? <p>Data How reliable are the data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How likely is it that the data could contain errors? • Could the data have been tampered with? • Were the data collected using a reliable and appropriate research method? • Are the data relevant, and do they really support the claim? | <p>Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the event relevant? • Who reported the event and are they reliable? • Does the event support the claim or provide an appropriate analogy? <p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How relevant is the example? • Is one example sufficient to establish the claim? (Sometimes a single example is enough to establish a claim; at other times it isn't.) <p>Expert Opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the expert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a genuine expert in an area relevant to the claim (i.e. do other experts recognize his or her expertise)? ◦ sincere? ◦ trustworthy and disinterested (i.e. free of conflicts of interest)? ◦ in a reasonable position to make this claim (e.g. if the claim is a prediction or hypothesis)? ◦ justifiably confident of the truth of this claim? • Is the claim seriously disputed by other experts in the field? <p>Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this Act or precedent relevant to the claim? • Has the law been superseded? • Do the details of the claim in question match the requirements of the law? <p>Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this media report reliable? • Has the media report been manipulated in some way, for example, propaganda or commercial interest? • Is the media form a genuine information source or does it provide mere gossip and innuendo? • Does the media information provide a balanced view? <p>Publication How reliable is this publication?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How respected or respectable is the author in the relevant field? • How respected or respectable is the publisher? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the publication is on the internet, is it made available on a reliable institution's website? • If the publication is a journal, is it refereed or is everyone accepted for publication? • How recent is the publication? Could the information be out of date? <p>Quote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this quote genuine, or is the person being misquoted or quoted out of context? • Is the quote relevant to the claim above it? • Does the quote really support (e.g. substantiate or illustrate) the claim? <p>Remember that when you are evaluating a quote as a basis for a claim, you are not just saying, for example, "It's true that this quote was made by Shakespeare in Macbeth"; rather you are saying, "This quote provides solid/shaky/nil support for the claim above".</p> <p>Statistic How reliable is the statistical evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the statistics based on reliable data? • Was the sample used for the statistics sufficiently large and representative of the population about which it generalizes? • Are the statistics recent? • Are there other statistics in this area that show very different results? • Does the statistic come from a trustworthy, objective, unbiased and disinterested source (i.e. where there is no conflict of interests)? (E.g. who financed the study and why?) • How big is the leap from the analysis of the data to the conclusion or findings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Does the interpretation of the data rely on questionable assumptions? ◦ If the claim is about a causal link, is there evidence of causation or merely correlation? <p>Web Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the website provide reliable information for the claim being made? (Think about whether it is a .com, .edu or .org address). • Who operates this website? Are they a credible source? • Does this website provide balanced views or only one view? |
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