

Contextualism about evidential support.

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Abstract. In this paper, I examine a contextualist thesis that has been little discussed in comparison with contextualism about knowledge, namely contextualism about evidential support. This seems surprising since, *prima facie*, evidential support statements seem shifty in a way parallel to knowledge ascriptions. I examine but reject the suggestion that contrastivism about evidential support is motivated by arguments analogous to those used to motivate contrastivism about knowledge including sceptical closure arguments, the nature of inquiry, the existence of explicitly contrastive evidential support statements, and the intuitive shiftiness of some binary evidential support statements. I end by discussing the relations between contextualism about evidential support, evidence and knowledge. In particular, I argue that my discussion of contrastivism about evidential support undermines Neta's contextualist view about evidence, and his broader suggestion that the shiftiness of evidence statements explains the shiftiness of knowledge ascriptions.

1. Introduction.

Contextualism has been defended about a range of epistemic notions including perhaps preeminently knowledge, but also justification and reason. Surprisingly, there has been comparatively little discussion of contextualism about evidential support (one exception is Neta 2003). It is important to see if considerations used to support contextualism about other epistemic notions also apply to evidential support. First, given the importance to enquiry of the notion of evidential support, it is of intrinsic interest whether we should be contextualists about evidential support. Second, in determining whether, for example, arguments for contextualism about knowledge extend to evidential support, we will gain a better understanding of contextualism about knowledge. On the one hand, if the arguments do

extend, then we will learn that contextualists about knowledge are also committed to contextualism about evidential support even though they standardly don't comment on this (e.g. DeRose, Lewis, Schaffer). On the other hand, if the arguments do not extend, then we will gain a better understanding of the scope of the arguments for contextualism about knowledge and the features of knowledge ascriptions on which they depend. Thus, investigating contextualism about evidential support is interesting in itself and important for understanding the broader commitments of contextualists.¹

There are many different varieties of contextualism depending on whether what shifts with context is the standard for knowledge, or the relevant alternatives or contrasts (e.g. see Cohen 1988 and DeRose 1995 for the former, and Lewis 1996 and Schaffer 2004 for the latter). Discussing all these possible views is outwith the scope of the paper. Instead, I focus specifically on contrastivism. The motivation for doing so is that, as we will see, many of the key arguments used to defend contrastivism about knowledge seem to extend to evidential support. The focus on contrastivism also helps evaluate one existing discussion of contextualism about evidential support, namely Neta's. Neta assumes a contextualist view about evidential support as part of an argument for contextualism about both knowledge and evidence, saying "for S to have evidence for p is for S to have evidence that favours p over some alternative(s) that are relevant in the context of epistemic appraisal (2003:21)"². However, he doesn't provide much, if any, argument for this view.

¹ Thanks to Egan, Lasonen-Aarnio, McGrath, Schaffer, Snedegar and Vogel for helpful comments on the paper, and for audiences at Rutgers and St Andrews for discussion.

² In addition, Sinnott-Armstrong (2004 and 2006) defends contrastivism about being justified in believing that p by appeal to the existence of explicitly contrastive statements such as "S is justified in believing that p rather than q". But, the mere existence of such explicitly contrastive statements does not entail that apparently non-contrastive statements such as "S is

I start in the next section by formulating contrastivism about evidential support. In sections 3-5, I examine whether the kind of arguments used to motivate contrastivism about knowledge ascriptions motivate contrastivism about evidential support statements. In particular, I examine but reject the suggestion that contrastivism about evidential support is motivated by sceptical closure arguments, the nature of inquiry, the existence of explicitly contrastive evidential support statements, and the intuitive shiftiness of some binary evidential support statements. Along the way, I argue that Likelihoodism does not motivate contrastivism about evidential support. I end by discussing the relations between contextualism about evidential support, evidence and knowledge. In particular, I argue that my discussion of contrastivism about evidential support undermines one main way of defending contextualism about evidence, namely Neta's suggestion that the latter offers the best way of implementing contextualism about knowledge.

2. Contrastivism about evidential support.

I will focus on contextualism about evidential support of a specifically contrastive form, modelled on Schaffer's contrastivism about knowledge. Schaffer characterises this as the view that "knows" denotes a three-place relation of the form S knows that p rather than q, where q is a contrast proposition (e.g. 2004:77). While some knowledge ascriptions are explicitly contrastive, e.g. "I know that Claire stole the diamonds rather than Peter", others are not, e.g. "I know that Claire stole the diamonds". Nonetheless, Schaffer maintains that even apparently binary knowledge ascriptions are implicitly contrastive where the contrast proposition is supplied by the conversational context.

justified in believing that p" need a contrastive analysis. Snedegar (2012) attempts to fill this gap and defends contrastivism about reasons.

Analogously, contrastivism about evidential support is the view that evidential support statements whether or not they are explicitly contrastive refer to a contrastive relation. More specifically, “e is evidence for S for p”³ denotes a contrastive relation of the form e is evidence for S for p rather than q, where q is a contrast proposition supplied by the conversational context. As a result, it can be true for one attributer to say of a subject, S, “e is evidence for S that p”, while false for another attributer to say of the same subject at the same time “e is evidence for S that p”.

Before sketching how Schaffer’s arguments for contrastivism about knowledge may seem to extend to support contrastivism about evidential support, it is useful to carefully distinguish contrastivism about evidential support from other contextualist views in the neighbourhood. First, just as Schaffer (2004) carefully distinguishes his contrastive form of contextualism about knowledge from other forms of contextualism on which the threshold/standard for knowledge shifts with context, we need to distinguish contrastivism about evidential support from the distinct contextualist view that the threshold/standard for evidential support shifts with context. Shifty threshold views of evidential support are perhaps most plausible for such locutions as “e is good evidence for h”. For instance, the threshold for “good evidence” in science may be higher than the threshold for “good evidence” down the pub. So, to help us focus on shifts in contrasts rather than thresholds, it may be easier if we focus on e’s being evidence that p in the sense of increasing confirmation, rather than high confirmation⁴.

³ There are a number of ways in which English expresses relations of evidential support including “e is evidence for p”, “e is evidence that p”, “e supports p”, “S has evidence that p”, “e is evidence for S that p” etc.

⁴ This distinction has a long history tracing back to Carnap who distinguished confirmation as increasing firmness from confirmation as firmness.

Second, notice that contrastivism about evidential support is distinct from the uncontroversial view that whether *e* is evidence for *S* for *p* depends on *S*'s background information. The relativity of evidential support to a *subject*'s background information doesn't establish contextualism according to which the truth conditions of an evidential support statement vary with the *attributer*'s context. In order to separate contextualism about evidential support from the more mundane relativity of evidential support to background information, it is useful to hold fixed the relevant subject for whom *e* is evidence and the relevant time. In what follows, I will mainly leave this implicit.

Third, it is useful to distinguish contextualism about evidential support of whatever kind from contextualism about evidence. The truth of "e is evidence for *S* for *p*" requires both that *e* is part of *S*'s evidence and that *e* supports *p*. For instance, the truth of the claim, "That the murderer has size 10 footprints is evidence for Watson that the butler was the murderer" requires both that Watson's evidence includes that the murderer has size 10 footprints and that this supports the butler hypothesis. Thus, evidential support statements could be shifty either because of shiftiness in what counts as evidence, or in what counts as evidential support. According to the first, contextualism about evidence, whether *e* counts as part of *S*'s evidence depends on the attributer's context. According to the second, contextualism about evidential support, whether some element of *S*'s evidence counts as evidence for *S* for *p* depends on the attributer's context. These two contextualist theses are independent of each other. Our focus here is on contextualism about evidential support. Thus, for simplicity, we will assume an invariantist account of evidence. However, at the end of the paper we will return to a discussion of the relation between contextualism about evidential support and contextualism about evidence as part of a discussion of Neta's overall contextualist view.

Having clarified contrastivism about evidential support and its relationship to other neighbouring contextualist claims, let us now see how, *prima facie*, a number of the

considerations used to support contrastivism about knowledge also apply to contrastivism about evidential support. For instance, just as in the case of knowledge, some evidential support statements explicitly take a contrastivist form. For instance, a detective might say “I have evidence that Claire stole the diamonds rather than Peter”.⁵ Furthermore, the felicity of binary evidential support statements seems to shift with the relevant contrasts. Consider the following dialogues modelled on dialogues involving knowledge in Schaffer and Szabo (2013):

(Who). Claire stole the diamonds. Ann and Ben are wondering who stole the diamonds, and Ann finds Claire’s fingerprints all over the safe.

(What). Claire stole the diamonds. Ann and Ben are wondering what Claire stole, and Ann finds Claire’s fingerprints all over the safe.

Schaffer uses such dialogues to show that the intuitive truth value of knowledge ascriptions shifts with the context and, in particular, the question under discussion. In the who-context, the question under discussion is who stole the diamonds. Since the fingerprint evidence gathered by Ann does answer the question, it seems correct for Ann to say “I know that Claire stole the diamonds”. By contrast, in the what-context, the question under discussion is what was stolen by Claire. Since the fingerprint evidence does not answer that question, it seems incorrect for Ann to say, “I know that Claire stole the diamonds” (Schaffer and Szabo 2013: S1.2). While Schaffer does not explicitly defend contrastivism about evidential support, his cases seem easily applicable to show a parallel shiftiness in evidential support statements, such as the following:

- 1) I have evidence that Claire stole the diamonds.

⁵ Relatedly, Sinnott-Armstrong (2004, 2006) and Snedegar (2012) argue for contrastivism about reasons including epistemic reasons by appeal to explicitly contrastive reasons.

Since the fingerprint evidence answers the question under discussion in the who-context, namely who stole the diamonds, it seems correct for Ann to say 1). By contrast, in the what-context, the fingerprint evidence does not help answer the question under discussion, namely what was stolen by Claire. So, it seems incorrect for Ann to say 1). Thus, the intuitive acceptability of 1) seems to vary with the question under discussion. Relatedly, the intuitive truth value of evidential support statements may seem to shift with focus. For instance, the intuitive truth value of the following statement seems to shift with whether the focus is placed on “Claire” or on “the diamonds”, “By finding Claire’s fingerprints in the area, Ann acquired evidence that Claire stole the diamonds”.

The contrastivist view may also seem helpful in dealing with the apparent shiftiness in binary evidential support ascriptions generated by consideration of scepticism⁶. Ordinarily, we take it that perceptual experience is evidence for various claims about the material world. For instance, ordinarily, the following claim seems felicitous:

2) My perceptual experience as of a hand is evidence that I have a hand.

However, after the sceptic raises the possibility that I’m a handless BIV being stimulated to have perceptual experiences as of a hand, I would admit that the experience as of hands is not evidence that I’m not such a BIV. In the light of this, it might no longer seem felicitous for me to say that my perceptual experience is evidence that I have a hand. A contrastivist could explain the shiftiness of 2) by appealing to a change in the contrasts.

Notice that a threshold-shift version of contextualism about what counts as good evidential support doesn’t seem to hold much promise of explaining the data reviewed so far. For instance, consider the fact that 1) “I have evidence that Claire stole the diamonds” seems true in the who-context but not in the what-context. The problem isn’t that the fingerprints

⁶ Sinnott-Armstrong (2004, 2006) appeals to scepticism to defend a contrastive analysis of attributions of epistemic reasons and justification.

provide some evidence concerning what Claire stole, but not good evidence. Rather, the fingerprints don't provide any evidence about what Claire stole. Similarly, the problem in the sceptical case isn't that my experience is some evidence that I'm not a BIV, but not good evidence. Rather, the problem is that my experience isn't any evidence that I'm not a BIV. So, the data reviewed so far seem best explained by a contrastive version of contextualism about evidential support, rather than one on which what shifts is the threshold/standard.

Now, the intuitive data mentioned above don't establish contrastivism about evidential support. As the debate about contextualism concerning knowledge has demonstrated, the intuitive shiftiness of ascriptions of some epistemic status could in principle be accommodated not only by contextualism, but instead by a variety of rival semantic views including invariantism and relativism. For this reason, a contrastivist needs to reinforce appeal to the intuitive shiftiness of evidential support ascriptions with other arguments.

A contrastivist might hope to find such arguments by looking at the way in which contrastivism about knowledge attributions is motivated. In sections 3-4, I consider whether contrastivism about evidential support statements can be supported by arguments analogous to those used to support contrastivism about knowledge, including the sceptical closure argument, appeal to the role of knowledge ascriptions in scoring inquiry, and appeal to explicitly contrastive knowledge ascriptions.⁷ Unfortunately for the contrastivist about

⁷ DeRose (2002) and Schaffer (2008b) also support contextualism about knowledge ascriptions by appeal to the idea that knowledge is the norm of assertion. But this argument isn't obviously applicable to evidential support statements. An alternative potential motivation for contextualism about evidential support statements would appeal to the suggestion that they are analysed in terms of some further expression, say "explanation" or

epistemic support, it turns out that none of the relevant arguments is successful in the case of evidential support. Then, in sections 5-6, I consider and reject the suggestion that contrastivism about evidential support can be supported by an inference to the best explanation from the intuitive shiftiness of some evidential support statements. In section 7, I use the earlier discussion to undermine Neta's attempt to argue for a related contextualist view, namely contextualism about evidence.

3. Closure arguments for contextualism about evidential support.

One central motivation for contextualism about knowledge arises from the sceptical closure argument:

3. One doesn't know that one's not a BIV.
4. If one doesn't know that one is not a BIV, then one doesn't know that one has hands.
5. So, one doesn't know that one has hands.

The argument rests on the principle of closure for knowledge, or *Closure (knowledge)* which for simplicity of exegesis⁸ we may formulate thus: if S knows that p, and S knows that p entails that q, then S knows that q.⁹ Contextualists claim to provide a response which explains

“causation”, which is context-sensitive. However, since it is controversial how to analyse evidential support, such an argument would be of limited interest.

⁹ For well-known reasons, it might be better replaced by Williamson's formulation: if S knows that p and competently deduces q from p, thereby coming to believe that q while retaining knowledge that p, S comes to know that q (2000:117). Similar comments apply to *Closure (Evidential Support)*.

⁹ Schechter (2013) appeals to the accumulation of risk across long chains of single premise deductions to challenge single premise closure for justified belief. Even assuming a link between justified belief and evidential support, this provides no reason to think that there is a

the power of the sceptical argument, maintains *Closure (knowledge)*, and yet allows that many ordinary knowledge claims are true.

Opponents of contextualism have challenged the adequacy of the contextualist reply to the sceptical argument (e.g. Schiffer 1996). However, I will set aside these concerns to focus on the question of whether a closure argument parallel to that used to defend contextualism about knowledge could be used to motivate contextualism about evidential support. According to closure for evidential support, or *Closure (Evidential Support)*, if e is evidence for one for h_1 , and one knows that h_1 entails h_2 , then e is evidence for one for h_2 . A sceptic may exploit this principle in the following closure argument:

6. One's experience as of hands is not evidence that one is not a BIV.
7. If one's experience as of hands is not evidence that one is not a BIV, then it is not evidence that one has hands.
8. Thus, one's experience as of hands is not evidence that one has hands.

The contextualist about evidential support could claim that her position provides the best response to this sceptical argument, one which combines an explanation of the power of the sceptical argument, *Closure (Evidential support)*, and the view that many ordinary evidential support statements are true.

However, a major problem affects the appeal to this closure argument to motivate contextualism about evidential support. On a wide range of views about evidential support, *Closure (Evidential Support)* is false. To see this, let's start by assuming that one's experience as of hands is evidence that one has hands. However, now notice that the hypothesis that one is a BIV being stimulated to have the experience as of hands entails that one has that experience. Thus, on standard Bayesian assumptions, the experience as of hands failure of closure for evidential support across the inference from hands to not-BIV, when it is not part of a long chain of single premise deductions.

raises the probability that one is a BIV (eg White 2005). It follows that it lowers the probability that one is not a BIV. But, then, on a range of different views about the nature of evidential support, the experience as of hands is not evidence that one is not a BIV. We can obtain this result most obviously on the view that identifies evidential support with increasing probability:

Probability raising: e is evidence for S for h if and only if 1) e is part of S's evidence and 2) $\Pr(h/e) > \Pr(h)$.

The same result obtains on any account of evidential support on which e is evidence for p only if it increases the probability of p or, more minimally, does not decrease its probability (Kotzen 2012).

Further, Sharon and Spectre (forthcoming) have recently shown that *Closure (Evidential Support)* fails on any view of evidential support which combines what they call “*Consistency*” and “*Underdetermination*”. By *Consistency*, e is evidence for p only if it is not evidence for not-p. *Underdetermination* is the claim that some evidence can support a first hypothesis and a second hypothesis which is inconsistent with the first. For instance, if two incompatible scientific theories, T1 and T2, are compatible with, and predict, all the observations made to date (O), then, it seems that the observations support each of these theories, despite their incompatibility. So, O is evidence for T1 and O is evidence for T2. Appealing to *Consistency* and the fact that O is evidence for T2, it follows that O is not evidence for not-T2. Thus, *Underdetermination* and *Consistency* combine to show that evidential support is not closed across the known entailment from T1 to not-T2. One could apply this framework to argue for a failure of closure for evidential support across the known entailment from hands to not-BIV by letting T1 be the hypothesis that one has hands; T2 be the hypothesis that one is a handless BIV; and O be the experience as of hands.

That *Closure (Evidential Support)* fails on a large range of views of evidential support is not to say that there is no view of evidential support on which it holds. Indeed, *Closure (Evidential Support)* holds on the following threshold view:

Threshold: e is evidence for S for h if and only if 1) e is part of S's evidence and 2) $\Pr(h/e) > t$.

On Bayesian assumptions, an entailment, q, of a hypothesis, p, cannot be less likely on one's evidence than the hypothesis, p, itself. Thus, if the probability of p on one's evidence exceeds the relevant threshold, it follows that the probability of q on one's evidence exceeds the relevant threshold as well. Although *Closure (Evidential Support)* holds on the threshold view, this is of little use in defending the contrastivist thesis we are considering here. For, we are focusing on evidential support in the sense of increasing confirmation not a high degree of confirmation. But, the threshold view is plausible as an account only of the latter not the former.

I've argued that closure considerations are not effective in defending contextualism about evidential support since, on a wide variety of views of evidential support, *Closure (Evidential Support)* fails. Interestingly, the problems facing closure arguments for contextualism about evidential support do not necessarily extend to closure arguments for contextualism about knowledge. For, many, including some contextualists, hold that knowledge is closed under known entailment even if evidential support is not.¹⁰ For instance, many hold that one has knowledge that one has hands and that one is not a BIV even though the experience as of hands is evidence for the claim that one has hands but not that one is not a BIV (e.g. DeRose 1995, Lewis 1996, Sosa 1999, Wright 2000, Schaffer 2004). Some suggest that one knows one is not a BIV because of a non-evidential entitlement or because one's belief trivially meets the safety condition for knowledge. So, the failure of *Closure*

¹⁰ But, see Sharon and Spectre (forthcoming) for the contrary view.

(evidential support) does not entail the failure of *Closure (knowledge)*. As a result, someone could endorse the closure argument for contextualism about knowledge but not for contextualism about evidential support.

4. The no-ambiguity argument and enquiry.

Schaffer (2007) motivates contrastivism about knowledge ascriptions by arguing that 1) contrastivism is true of some subset of knowledge ascriptions, and that 2) “knows” has a uniform semantics across this subset of knowledge ascriptions and other knowledge ascriptions. Thus, he concludes that “knows” always refers to a ternary relation. Similarly, one could offer a parallel argument for contrastivism about evidential support statements:

- a) Explicitly contrastive evidential support statements require a contrastivist semantics.
- b) “Evidence that” is semantically univocal across explicitly contrastive evidential support statements and binary evidential support statements.
- c) So, binary evidential support statements need a contrastivist reading.

For instance, suppose that in the course of his investigation into the recent diamond heist, Holmes says, “The manner of the burglary is evidence that Claire stole the diamonds rather than Peter”. It might seem natural to give this statement a contrastivist semantics, on which evidential support is a ternary relation linking some evidence to two hypotheses. Further, one standard test for univocity, coordination across conjunction, may be used to argue that “evidence that” is semantically univocal across explicitly contrastive evidential support statements and binary evidential support statements. For instance, we might felicitously say “Holmes has evidence that the diamonds were stolen and that Claire rather than Peter stole them”. If explicitly contrastive evidential support statements have a contrastivist semantics, and “evidence that” is semantically univocal across explicitly contrastive and binary

evidential support statements, it follows that even binary evidential support statements have a contrastivist semantics.

This argument for contrastivism about evidential support statements might be challenged by a reading of explicitly contrastive evidential support statements on which they are understood as a comparison between two binary evidential support statements. For instance, Holmes' claim, "The manner of the burglary is evidence that Claire stole the diamonds rather than Peter", could be understood as the comparative statement that the manner of the burglary supports the claim that Claire stole the diamonds to a greater degree than it supports the claim that Peter stole the diamonds.¹¹ On this view, the explicitly contrastive evidential support statement is understood as stating a comparison between two binary evidential support statements: that the manner of the burglary supports the claim that Claire stole the diamonds, and that the manner of the burglary supports the claim that Peter stole the diamonds.

In reply, a contrastivist might try to defend the necessity of a contrastivist reading of some evidential support statements by appeal to Likelihoodism. Defenders of Likelihoodism are concerned that, in some cases, there is no objective way of assigning the prior probabilities which Bayesians use in understanding evidential support. In such cases, they recommend that we should avoid Bayesian measures of confirmation which employ priors, and instead use the notion of a likelihood, i.e. the probability of the observations on a given hypothesis (as opposed to the probability of the hypothesis on the observations). According to the law of likelihood, the observations support a first hypothesis over a second if and only if the probability of the observations on the first hypothesis is greater than their probability on

¹¹ Some rather-than statements are true not because the evidence supports both hypotheses and supports one more than the other, but because it supports one hypothesis and disconfirms the other.

the second. The degree to which o favours h_1 over h_2 is given by the likelihood ratio $\Pr(o/h_1)/\Pr(o/h_2)$. The notion of favouring is a three place relation connecting two hypotheses and the observations. Defenders of Likelihoodism emphasise that one should not understand this notion of favouring in terms of a comparison between the degree to which o supports h_1 , and the degree to which o supports h_2 , where each of these is understood in binary terms. Rather, they insist, there is no such thing as the degree to which an observation supports a single hypothesis; support is essentially contrastive (Sober 2008: 33).

However, this style of defence of the first premise of the no-ambiguity argument in fact undermines the second premise of semantic univocity. For, as Likelihoodists admit, many ordinary evidential support statements are not plausibly understood in terms of the likelihoodist notion of favouring¹². This comes out clearly when we choose an example in which e favours h_1 over h_2 , even though the probability of h_2 given e is greater than the probability of h_1 given e (Sober 2008: 35-37). For instance, suppose that our evidence is that my cow has died. This observation is extremely probable on the hypothesis that my neighbour is a witch who has cast a spell on my cow. By contrast, the probability that my cow has died given the alternative hypothesis that she was sick from natural causes is, let us suppose, less than the probability that she died given the witch hypothesis. Nonetheless, given the antecedently low probability that my neighbour is a witch, we would not ordinarily say that the observation that my cow has died favours the witch hypothesis over the sickness hypothesis. Indeed, we would describe the evidence that my cow has died as evidence that she was sick, not as evidence that my neighbour's a witch. Thus, many of our ordinary

¹² For instance, Sober (2008: 37), says "we just need to recognise that the ordinary words "support" and "favouring" sometimes need to be understood within a Bayesian framework in which it is the probabilities of hypotheses that are under discussion", where probabilities are distinct from likelihoods.

evidential support statements must be understood in a Bayesian way, rather than the likelihoodist way. As a result, even if Likelihoodism identifies a theoretically important notion of favouring, appeal to it is not likely to help support the view that all evidential support statements are contrastive by means of the no-ambiguity argument.

I have argued that it is difficult to appeal to the no-ambiguity argument to defend the claim that all evidential support statements are contrastive. The failure of this style of argument for contrastivism about evidential support statements also helps us assess another potential argument for contrastivism. Schaffer (2004) defends contrastivism about knowledge ascriptions by appeal to the role of knowledge ascriptions in scoring enquiry. Similarly, one could support contrastivism about evidential support statements by appeal to the idea that they serve to score the progress of enquiry. For instance, we may want to score our progress with respect to the question (p, q) even when we don't yet know which of these options obtains by recording whether our evidence supports p rather than q. A contrastivist account of evidential support statements seems especially well-suited to this role. However, this argument runs into similar difficulties to the argument from explicitly contrastive evidential support statements. We could score our progress with respect to the question whether p or q by using an explicitly contrastive evidential support statement. But, first, a Bayesian could argue that such an explicitly contrastive evidential support statement could be given a reading on which evidential support is a binary rather than a ternary relation. Second, if a contrastivist attempts to appeal to Likelihoodism to defend a ternary rather than a binary reading of explicitly contrastive evidential support statements, then it becomes difficult to argue that all evidential support statements have a ternary reading. For, as we've seen, it is implausible that all evidential support statements should be understood as involving the Likelihoodist notion of favouring.

The failure of the no-ambiguity and role of enquiry arguments for contrastivism about evidential support needn't undermine the use of these arguments for contrastivism about knowledge. For the possible binary treatments of contrastive knowledge ascriptions differ from those available for contrastive evidential support ascriptions and need to be assessed separately. In particular, the knowledge ascription "Holmes knows that Clare rather than Peter stole the diamonds" cannot be given a comparative reading analogous to that considered above, e.g. Holmes knows that Clare stole the diamonds to a higher degree than he knows that Peter stole the diamonds! As a result, a contrastivist could endorse the no-ambiguity argument for knowledge without endorsing it for evidential support.

In this and the last section, we've seen that three core arguments used to motivate contrastivism about knowledge ascriptions are ineffective when used to motivate contrastivism about evidential support ascriptions: the sceptical closure argument, appeal to explicitly contrastive evidential support statements, and appeal to the role of evidential support statements in scoring our progress in enquiry. In addition, we've seen that it is hard to motivate contrastivism by appeal to Likelihoodism since many ordinary evidential support statements cannot plausibly be understood as employing the Likelihoodist notion of favouring. Given the failure of these arguments, I now consider whether a contrastivist could defend her view by arguing that it offers the best explanation of the intuitive shiftiness of evidential support statements.

5. Shifty binary statements.

We saw earlier that certain binary evidential support statements seem shifty: their intuitive truth value shifts with the context of attribution. For instance, the intuitive truth value of the following evidential support statement made by Ann who has found Claire's fingerprints all

over the safe seems to shift with whether the conversation is concerned with the question of who stole the diamonds, or the question of what was stolen:

- 1) “I have evidence that Claire stole the diamonds”.

Similarly, the intuitive felicity of the following evidential support statement seems to shift when the sceptical BIV hypothesis is introduced:

- 2) My perceptual experience as of a hand is evidence that I have a hand.

A contrastivist might try to explain the shift in the intuitive truth value of the relevant binary evidential support statements across the two contexts by appeal to contrastivism about evidential support statements combined with the claim that the different contexts make different contrasts salient.

However, a serious difficulty faces this simple contrastivist explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements, namely that it overgeneralises and predicts shiftiness in the felicity of evidential support statements in cases where we don't find such shiftiness. To see this, first consider lottery cases. Ordinarily, it seems correct for me to self-ascribe knowledge that I can't afford an expensive safari this summer. If you then remind me that I hold a lottery ticket in my pocket, I will concede that I don't know that I won't win the lottery. But, of course, if I do win the lottery then I can afford the expensive safari. Reflecting on this, I reach the sceptical conclusion that I don't know that I can't afford the expensive safari. So, we get a shift in the intuitive acceptability of the claim that I know I can't afford a safari between the ordinary and lottery context.

However, we don't seem to get any parallel shift in the intuitive acceptability of evidential support claims. In the ordinary context, it seems correct for me to say i) “My income is evidence that I can't afford an expensive safari”. Suppose that you then remind me that I hold a lottery ticket, and that if my ticket is a winner, I will be able to afford the expensive safari. Even after that, it still seems true for me to cite my income as evidence for

the claim that I can't afford an expensive safari. Of course, I concede that the evidence concerning my salary doesn't tell against the possibility that I might win the lottery and so have enough money to afford the safari after all. Still, I might summarise my situation by saying, "My income is evidence that I can't afford the safari, even though it doesn't tell against the possibility that my lottery ticket has won".

The fact that i) doesn't seem to shift its truth value in the lottery context is problematic for the proposed contrastive view. On a contrastive view, i) is implicitly a contrastive claim of the form "My income is evidence that I can't afford the safari rather than q", where the contrasts shift between the ordinary and lottery context. In particular, in the ordinary context the contrasts only include ordinary possibilities in which I can afford the safari but not remote possibilities, e.g. that I can afford the safari because I win the lottery, or inherit from some long-lost uncle. Thus, in the ordinary context, i) seems correct. But, in the lottery context the possibility that I can afford the safari because I win the lottery is now conversationally relevant and so i) becomes the contrastive claim "My income is evidence that I can't afford the safari rather than that I can afford it because I have won the lottery". But, the evidence about my income doesn't tell against the possibility that I've won the lottery (indeed it doesn't tell in favour of it either; it just isn't probative on the question). So, it isn't evidence that I can't afford the safari rather than that I've won the lottery. Thus, on a contrastive view, i) should change its intuitive acceptability between the ordinary and lottery context. But, in fact, it doesn't. So, on the proposed contrastivist view, it is puzzling why i) isn't shifty.

A similar point arises for DeRose's famous bank case. In both contexts of the bank case, DeRose truly believes that the bank is open on Saturday on the basis of his recent visit. In the low context, nothing much turns on whether the bank is open on Saturday, and no error possibilities are raised. In the low context, it seems appropriate for DeRose to self-ascribe

knowledge that the bank is open on Saturday. By contrast, in the high context, it is extremely important whether the bank is open on Saturday. If DeRose is wrong about this, then he will default on his mortgage and risks losing his house. Further, various error possibilities are raised, including the possibility that there has been a recent change in bank hours. In the high context, it seems inappropriate for DeRose to self-ascribe knowledge that the bank is open on Saturday. Thus, the bank case illustrates the shiftiness of knowledge attributions.

However, curiously, the bank case doesn't lead to a shift in the appropriateness of binary evidential support statements. In the low context, it seems appropriate for DeRose to claim that his recent visit to the bank is evidence that the bank is open on Saturday. Now consider the high context in which it is extremely important to DeRose that the bank is open on Saturday, and the possibility of a recent change in hours has been mentioned. In the high context, it still seems true for DeRose to claim that his recent visit to the bank is evidence that the bank is open on Saturday. Of course, Keith should admit that this evidence isn't good enough to decide to miss the Friday queue and go to the bank on Saturday instead. As he might put it, "Well, my earlier visit to the bank is evidence that the bank is open on Saturday, but it doesn't tell against a recent change in hours. So, I guess I better check before deciding to go to the bank tomorrow, Saturday".

That we don't get a change in the intuitive truth value of the relevant binary evidential support statement in the bank case is problematic for the contrastivist explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements. As the high context of the bank case is set up, the sceptical hypothesis that the bank has recently changed its hours is a conversationally salient contrast to the claim that the bank is open on Saturday. As a result, if evidential support statements were implicitly contrastive, then we would expect that, in the high context, the ascription "Keith has evidence that the bank is open on Saturday" implicitly has the contrastive reading "Keith has evidence that the bank is open on Saturday rather than that the

bank was open on Saturday until a recent change of hours”. If this contrastive reading were the implicit reading of the apparently binary ascription then the binary ascription should seem false. For, Keith’s recent visit is not evidence against the possibility of a subsequent change in hours; it simply isn’t probative on this issue. It is false to say “Keith has evidence that there has been a recent change in hours”. So, the contextualist view predicts that the binary ascription should seem false. But, as we’ve seen it seems true.

It’s not clear how a contrastivist about evidential support statements can explain why we get an intuitive shift in the truth value of evidential support statements such as 1) and 2) above, but not in the bank and lottery cases. But given the dis-analogies between the shiftiness of knowledge ascriptions and evidential support statements, whatever story the contrastivist offers in the case of evidential support statements cannot be the same story as she offers for the shiftiness of knowledge ascriptions. Further, she cannot explain the shiftiness of the relevant knowledge ascriptions by appeal to the idea that knowledge ascriptions should be analysed in terms of evidential support, and the claim that evidential support ascriptions vary with context.

The difficulties with the simple contrastivist explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements may suggest we should instead look for an invariantist explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements. The invariantist has two main options for explaining the shifty data. First, she may argue that the change in contexts varies some factor which she takes to affect the truth of evidential support statements. Second, she may accept that the factors which she allows affect the truth value of evidential support statements remain constant across the two contexts. On this second option, the intuitive change of truth value of the relevant binary support statements does not reflect their actual truth value which is unchanging. Instead, she may attempt to explain the intuitive change in truth value by appeal either to a pragmatic explanation or an error theory. Of course, the invariantist can

mix and match her options, using different kinds of explanation of the shiftiness of binary evidential support statements in different cases. I will illustrate a strategy of each main kind by re-examining the cases in which binary evidential support statements seem shifty.

First, let's re-examine the shiftiness of 1) depending on whether the attributers are concerned with who stole the diamonds, or what was stolen:

1) I have evidence that Claire stole the diamonds.

Claim 1) seems true in the who-context but not the what-context. The contrastivist explains this shift by appeal to her view that 1) is implicitly contrastive, and that the context changes the salient contrasts. However, an invariantist could claim that one of the factors which she accepts affects the truth of evidential support statements changes across the two contexts. In particular, she may claim that the described scenarios are best understood by supposing that the attributers assign different prior probabilities to the relevant claims.

For instance, the invariantist may claim that the who-context is best understood by supposing that the attributers assume that it's a given, and so probability 1, that the diamonds were stolen, but treat it as an open question who stole the diamonds. By contrast, the background in the what-context is best understood by supposing that the attributers assume that it's a given, and so probability 1, that Claire was the thief, but treat it as an open question what she stole. If the two contexts involve different prior probabilities, then an invariantist who favours a probabilistic account of evidential support may be able to appeal to these different prior probabilities to argue that 1) changes its truth value across the two contexts.

For instance, suppose that the invariantist endorses a simple probability raising account according to which some evidence is evidence for a hypothesis if and only if it raises its probability. On the assumption that, in the who-context, the attributers assume it's a given and so probability 1 that the diamonds were stolen, the fingerprint information could increase the probability of the claim that Claire stole the diamonds only by increasing the probability

of the claim that it was Claire who was the thief. Indeed, the fingerprint information does increase the probability that Claire was the thief. So, the relevant binary evidential support attribution seems true. By contrast, on the assumption that the what-context is best understood by supposing that the attributers assume that it's a given, and so probability 1, that Claire was the thief, the evidence could increase the probability of the claim that Claire stole the diamonds only by increasing the probability that it was diamonds which were stolen. But, the fingerprint information does not increase the probability that it was diamonds that were stolen and so does not increase the probability of the claim that Claire stole the diamonds. As a result, the relevant binary evidential support statement is false.¹³

¹³ A contrastivist might ask how this probabilistic explanation would apply to cases in which the attributer is not the subject and so it doesn't follow from the fact that the attributers assign different probabilities in the what- and who- contexts that the subject does. First, note that an invariantist needn't use the kind of probabilistic explanation I give but may, instead, offer a pragmatic account of putative third person cases (see the next paragraph in the main text). Second, it is not obvious that there are third person cases to which the probabilistic explanation cannot apply. Consider the following case adapted from Schaffer and Szabo:

Claire has stolen the diamonds. Dan the detective is investigating the theft. The store attendants Ann and Ben are in the back room watching Dan's investigation on closed-circuit television. In the who-variant, they are wondering who stole the diamonds; in the what-variant, they are wondering what Claire stole. They see Dan find Claire's fingerprints all over the safe, and Ann says to Ben:

a) Dan has evidence that Claire stole the diamonds.

It is not clear that we get a change in the intuitive truth value of a) across the what- and why-contexts. Crucially, the story doesn't specify whether Dan has the same concerns as Ann and Ben. On one possible filling out of the story, Dan is supposed to be wondering just what Ann

We've seen that there is a potential invariantist explanation of the shift in the acceptability of 1) which exploits the idea that the two different contexts involve different priors. In doing so we've used a probability raising account of evidential support. Of course, such an account is not uncontroversial. For, it is well known that our intuitions about probability raising do not always track our intuitions about evidential support. Nonetheless, it is useful to have shown how the probability raising account can be used to explain the shift in the acceptability of 1) even on an invariantist view. First, the probability raising account of evidential support is an extremely popular view. This is doubtless because in a great many cases our intuitions about evidential support do track probability raising. So it seems there is explanatory value in showing how the shifty intuitions can be explained on a probability raising view. Second, there is of course no current probabilistic account of evidential support which tracks all of our intuitions whatsoever. It is clearly outwith the confines of this paper to provide such an account, nor is there one to hand to simply rely on. So given the popularity of the probability raising account and the absence of an alternative which always tracks intuitions correctly, it seems reasonable enough to show how one extremely popular probabilistic approach to evidential support can explain the relevant shifty data. Third, if the

and Ben are wondering. So he too wonders who stole the diamonds in the who-variant and what Claire stole in the what-variant. If this is how the story is to be filled out, there is a change in the intuitive felicity of the evidential support statement, but the probabilistic story easily applies to cover this version. On another filling out of the story, Dan does not share the concerns of Ann and Ben. Instead, in the who-context, whereas Ann and Ben wonder who stole the diamonds, Dan has no idea about what was taken from the store. Given this setup and that the only evidence that Dan is described as having is the fingerprint evidence, it seems false for the attributers to say that he has evidence that Claire stole the diamonds. So, there seems to be no change in the felicity of a) on the second reading.

two contexts do differ in the prior probabilities as I've suggested, then accounts other than the simple probability raising account may also have the consequence that 1) changes its truth value. For instance, consider a more complex account on which *e* is evidence for *h* only if 1) *e* raises the probability of *h* and 2) the probability of *h* on *e* is greater than some threshold, *t*. Given the difference in the priors, the probability raising condition is met in the who- but not the what-context. Thus, so long as the threshold condition is met in the who-context, we will get the result that the relevant evidential support claim is true in the who- but not the what-context. And, it seems likely that the threshold condition will be met in the who-context for we may suppose that the fingerprint evidence makes it very likely that it was Mary who stole the diamonds.

Whereas the who/what case seems ripe for an invariantist explanation on which the binary evidential support statement changes its truth value across the two contexts, a different strategy may seem more helpful in dealing with the shiftiness of 2) between the ordinary and sceptical contexts:

2) My perceptual experience as of hands is evidence that I have hands.

A non-sceptical invariantist may be tempted by a pragmatic explanation of the apparent shiftiness of 2). On this view, 2) is literally true in both an ordinary and sceptical context, but seems false in a sceptical context because it pragmatically conveys a falsehood. Given the peculiar pattern of shiftiness of evidential support statements discussed above, it is not immediately obvious what pragmatic story should be offered. We already know enough to know that the story must be more complicated than the simple suggestion that the sceptical context makes the BIV possibility salient so that, in the sceptical context, 2) conveys the falsehood that "My perceptual evidence is evidence that I have hands rather than that I'm a BIV". For, this wouldn't explain why we fail to get an intuitive shift in truth value in the lottery and bank cases. However, it seems that the difficulties facing a pragmatic account of

the shiftiness of 2) are parallel to the difficulties facing a contrastivist account. To the extent that a contrastivist manages to offer a good explanation of the peculiar pattern of intuitive shiftiness of evidential support statements, it seems that elements of that story could also be exploited in a pragmatic explanation of the shiftiness compatible with an invariantist account of evidential support statements. For instance, suppose that the contrastivist comes up with some story on which, in a sceptical context, the apparently binary 2) is in fact equivalent to the false contrastive claim, “My perceptual experience as of hands is evidence that I have hands rather than that I’m a BIV”. An invariantist could exploit elements of the story to argue instead that 2) is literally true but conveys the false contrastive claim, “My perceptual experience as of hands is evidence that I have hands rather than that I’m a BIV”. So, a contrastivist not only has to find a suitable story to explain the puzzling pattern of shiftiness in evidential support statements, but also argue that her story is better than a pragmatic explanation of the data which appropriates elements of her story.

However, it is not obvious how a contextualist might argue that her explanation of the intuitive shiftiness of the relevant statements is better than the rival pragmatic explanation. Notably, one standard move made by contextualists against pragmatic explanations of shifty data is not obviously available in the case of evidential support. Contextualists allege that, even if a pragmatic explanation can explain why a literally true ascription would seem infelicitous by conveying a falsehood, it cannot explain why a literally false denial would seem felicitous by conveying a truth (e.g. DeRose 2002). But, it isn’t clear that the contextualist can exploit this manoeuvre in the case of evidential support. For instance, reconsider the sceptical context in which the sceptic raises the BIV hypothesis, and points out that one would have all the same perceptual experiences one is now having even if one were a BIV. As a sceptic puts it, one’s perceptual experience as of having hands does not support the hypothesis that one has hands rather than that one is a BIV. As a result, it may no longer

seem felicitous for one to assert that one's perceptual experience is evidence that one has hands. On the other hand, it's not obvious that it seems felicitous for one to assert that one's perceptual experience is not evidence that one has hands. The fact that one's perceptual experience does not rule out one way in which one might lack hands is not incompatible with its being evidence that one has hands. We standardly accept that some evidence may support a hypothesis even without ruling out every way in which that hypothesis might be false. For instance, that the family car is in the driveway may support the claim that my partner is home, even though it doesn't rule out one way in which this might be false, namely that after arriving home and parking the car he was abducted by aliens. Similarly, one's perceptual experience may support the hypothesis that one has hands even though it doesn't rule out the BIV possibility.¹⁴

In conclusion, the attempt to defend contrastivism about evidential support statements by an inference to the best explanation from the shiftiness of such statements faces significant difficulties. First, it is only sometimes that making a contrast salient generates a shift in the felicity of evidential support statements. It does so across the shift between the who/what contexts, and the shift from the ordinary to the sceptical context, but not across the shift in context in the bank and lottery cases. So, a contrastivist will need to do more than offer the simple suggestion that apparently binary evidential support statements are in fact ternary, and that merely making a contrast salient is enough to make that contrast an argument in the relevant ternary claim. Second, it seems that a contrastivist will need to offer different stories

¹⁴ This is consistent with, but doesn't require, the probability raising conception of evidential support. My current perceptual experience as of hands increases the probability that I have hands by decreasing the probability of various alternative hypotheses such as that I recently lost my hands and they have been replaced by stumps, or flippers. It can increase the probability that I have hands even without counting as evidence against the BIV hypothesis.

about knowledge and evidential support statements given that they exhibit very different patterns of shiftiness in intuitive acceptability. Third, whatever story the contrastivist offers of the shiftiness of evidential support statements could be co-opted instead by an invariantist to offer a pragmatic account of the relevant shifty data. Fourth, one standard manoeuvre used by contextualists against such pragmatic accounts seems unavailable in the case of evidential support statements. For, it's not clear that in the evidential support case, the invariantist is committed to holding that the shift in context not only makes certain true ascriptions infelicitous, but also makes felicitous certain false ascriptions. Last, we've seen that an invariantist could offer an explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements across the who/what contexts by arguing that such contexts trigger different assumptions about the prior probabilities of relevant hypotheses. Of course, I have not shown that it is impossible for contextualists to come up with an explanation of the shiftiness of binary evidential support statements which is better than non-contextualist explanations. Nevertheless, significant difficulties face the attempt.

6. Other data: p is probable/likely.

In the last section, I argued that an invariantist can offer an explanation of the shiftiness of some evidential support statements. However, it may be said that the discussion has overlooked some related data favouring a contrastive treatment of "p is probable/likely". So, we should consider whether these data could be used to support contrastivism about evidential support.¹⁵

Consider, for example, the following two lottery scenarios. In each, the total number of tickets is 1000, and ticket-holder Anna holds 420 tickets. In the first scenario, Lottery I, another ticket-holder, Barbara, holds all of the remaining 580 tickets. In the second scenario,

¹⁵ Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

Lottery II, all the remaining tickets are distributed so that each ticket-holder other than Anna has exactly one ticket. Despite the fact that the probability that Anna will win on the evidence is the same in the two scenarios, a number of authors have argued that our intuitions about the following claim shift between the two scenarios:

9) Anna will probably win.

In particular, it is claimed that in Lottery II, but not Lottery I, 9) seems true (Yalcin 2010; Hawthorne, Rothschild and Levi forthcoming). Given that the probability on the total evidence that Anna will win is the same in the two lotteries, this casts doubt on the idea that “Anna will probably win” is true if and only if the probability that Anna wins on the total evidence is greater than a fixed threshold, t . The case may instead suggest a simple contrastivist account on which “Anna will probably win” is true if and only if it is more probable that Anna will win than the contextually salient alternative(s). In Lottery I, the contextually salient alternative is that Anna does not win. By contrast, in Lottery II, the contextually salient alternative is that some ticketholder other than Anna wins.

Let’s now assess whether the lottery scenarios add to the case for a contrastive account of evidential support. First, it is worth noting that, of the philosophers to whom I’ve mentioned these cases, not everyone shares the intuition that 9) shifts in acceptability. Second, even if we do accept that there is such a shift, it is not clear that we should accommodate it by a contrastivist semantics for “ p is probable”. For instance, while the simple contrastivist semantics handles the above lottery scenarios well, it has the counterintuitive result that 9) is true in the following scenario, Lottery III, in which Anna has two tickets, and every other lottery ticket holder has just one ticket. But, native speakers are hardly likely to judge 9) true in such circumstances (Yalcin 2010:931).

Whatever final view we adopt concerning the semantics for “ p is probable”, it is not yet clear what, if anything, this shows about evidential support. So, let’s now consider

directly whether intuitions about evidential support shift between the first two lottery scenarios. Recall, first, that our main focus in this paper has been the notion that *e* is evidence for *h*, in the sense of increasing confirmation. However, it seems that there is no shift in intuition concerning this notion across the two scenarios. In both, learning that Anna has 420 tickets increases the likelihood that she will win. Further, it is not clear that there is a shift in intuition even with the notion that *e* is *good* evidence for *h*. Notice that it is perfectly felicitous to say, for instance, “That Anna has 420 tickets is good evidence that she will win the lottery, but that Barbara has 580 tickets is even better evidence that she will win”. Relatedly, it seems true in both Lottery I and II to say “That Anna has 420 tickets is good evidence that she will win”. Of course, it would be misleading to merely say that in Lottery I without adding “... but that Barbara has 580 tickets is even better evidence that she will win”. Still, it seems true in both scenarios that Anna’s having 420 tickets is good evidence that she will win.

In conclusion, the kind of cases which have led some to suggest contrastivism about “*p* is probable” do not support contrastivism about “*e* is evidence for *h*”. This completes my discussion of the shifty data for contrastivism about evidential support. In the next section, I turn to consider the relationship between contextualism about evidential support and contextualism about evidence.

7. Contextualism about evidence and contextualism about knowledge.

While my discussion has focused on contextualism about evidential support, it also raises difficulties for the most prominent defence of contextualism about evidence, namely that offered by Neta. Neta (2003) defends a complicated view which combines contextualism about evidence and contextualism about evidential support. He motivates this view by arguing that it offers a better implementation of contextualism about knowledge than other

views. In particular, he argues that it offers a better response to the sceptical closure argument concerning knowledge ascriptions, and a parallel sceptical closure argument concerning evidence (21). He criticises other contextualist replies to the sceptical closure argument concerning knowledge ascriptions on the grounds that, in an ordinary context, they allow that a subject knows that she has hands and knows that she is not a BIV even while admitting she has no evidence that she is not a BIV (sections II, III). By contrast, he defends a version of contextualism on which knowledge and evidence go together. On his view, in an ordinary context, one has evidence and knowledge that one has hands, and evidence and knowledge that one is not a BIV; in a sceptical context, one lacks all of that knowledge and evidence. He attempts to secure this result by arguing that what counts as one's evidence shifts between the ordinary and sceptical contexts. In the ordinary context, one's evidence includes factive states such as seeing that one has hands. However, in the sceptical context, what counts as one's evidence shrinks to just those mental states which one has and would have whether or not the sceptical hypothesis is true (23-24). Thus, in the sceptical context, one's evidence does not include such factive states, but instead only such states as having the experience as of having hands.

However, contextualism about evidence isn't enough to secure Neta's desired conclusion that knowledge and evidence go together. True, the factive state of seeing that one has hands is evidence that one has hands and that one is not a BIV. Indeed, it entails that one has hands and that one is not a BIV. However, what counts as one's evidence in the sceptical context, namely the experience as of having hands, is also evidence that one has hands (although non-entailing evidence). To get the desired linkage between knowledge and evidence, Neta also endorses a form of contextualism about evidential support. He says, "for S to have evidence for p is for S to have evidence that favours p over the counterpossibilities relevant in a context of epistemic appraisal. S can have such evidence only if p is

introspectively distinguishable from all the relevant possibilities” (24). In an ordinary context, the possibility that one is a BIV is not relevant, and so one’s factive state of seeing that one has hands is evidence that one has hands. It doesn’t undermine the latter evidential support ascription that a subject cannot introspectively distinguish between being in the factive state of seeing that one has hands and instead being a BIV, since the BIV possibility is not relevant. However, in a sceptical context, the possibility that one is a BIV is relevant. What counts as one’s evidence in the sceptical context, namely the experience as of having hands, doesn’t favour the claim that one has hands over the counterpossibility that one is a BIV, for one can’t introspectively distinguish one’s having hands from one’s being a BIV. Thus, by combining contextualism about evidence and contextualism about evidential support, he obtains the desired conclusion that, in the ordinary context, one knows that one has hands, one knows that one is not a BIV, one has evidence that one has hands, and evidence that one is not a BIV; however, in the sceptical context, one lacks all of this knowledge and evidence.

While my discussion has focused on contextualism about evidential support, it nonetheless casts doubt on Neta’s complex combined view. First, the discussion undercuts one of the main motivations which Neta offers for his view, namely his claim that it offers a solution not only to the standard sceptical closure puzzle¹⁶ concerning knowledge, but also a parallel sceptical closure puzzle concerning evidence which he formulates as follows:

- 10) I have evidence for the hypothesis that I have hands.
- 11) If I have evidence for p, and I know that p entails q, I have evidence for q.
- 12) I have no evidence for the hypothesis that I’m not a BIV.

¹⁶ One can turn this puzzle into a closure argument by simply reordering the claims thus: 12), 11), not-10).

As we've seen, there is no such parallel sceptical closure puzzle since evidential support is not closed under known entailment¹⁷. Second, I've argued that it is hard to motivate contextualism about evidential support which is an essential part of Neta's view. We've seen that there are no arguments for contrastivism about evidential support analogous to the main arguments for contrastivism about knowledge. In particular, there is no analogue of standard closure arguments, arguments from scoring progress in enquiry¹⁸, or arguments which appeal to explicitly contrastive ascriptions. Last, we've seen that the pattern of intuitive shiftiness in ascriptions of knowledge and evidential support are very different. In particular, the bank and lottery cases generate shiftiness in knowledge ascriptions, but not evidential support ascriptions. My recent visit to the bank is intuitively evidence that the bank is open on Saturday even in the high context in which, intuitively, I don't know that the bank is open on Saturday. Similarly, my income and savings are intuitively evidence that I can't afford a safari, even when you point out that I hold a lottery ticket which intuitively undermines my claim to know that I can't afford a safari. Thus, considering bank and lottery cases undermines Neta's attempt to explain the shiftiness of knowledge attributions by appeal to the shiftiness of evidential support ascriptions.

¹⁷ Neta claims that *Closure (Evidential Support)* is intuitive, and says he rejects a probability raising account of evidential support on which closure fails. However, as we've seen, evidential support fails to be closed on a wide range of different views of evidential support, not just a probability raising account.

¹⁸ Neta presents contextualism about evidential support as if it were obviously true, stating boldly without argument that "for S to have evidence for p is for S to have evidence that favours p over some alternative(s) that are relevant in the context of epistemic appraisal" (21). To the extent that he presents any motivation for it, he seems to appeal to something like the role of evidence in enquiry.

8. Conclusion.

We have considered the case for contextualism of a contrastive form about evidential support statements. While there is some evidence of intuitive shiftiness in the acceptability of apparently binary evidential support statements, we saw that it is hard for the contrastivist to use this shiftiness to motivate her position. First, it's not clear how a contrastivist can explain why evidential support statements are shifty in some cases (e.g. across the what and who-contexts) but not others (e.g. the bank and lottery cases). Second, in those cases where evidential support statements do seem shifty, an invariantist could attempt to explain the relevant shiftiness by a mix of strategies, including pragmatic strategies and the suggestion that some shifts between context affect the value of a factor, e.g. prior probabilities, which affects the truth value of evidential support statements. Third, it seems that arguments used to support contrastivism about knowledge don't carry across to the case of evidential support, including the sceptical closure argument, arguments appealing to the nature of enquiry, and arguments appealing to explicitly contrastive ascriptions. The failure of these arguments, combined with the difficulties in providing a contrastivist explanation of the shiftiness of evidential support statements suggest that it is difficult to support contrastivism about evidential support statements. This also undermines the most prominent defence of contextualism about evidence, that offered by Neta.

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