

Graded Modalities in Epistemic Logic

W. van der Hoek
*J.-J. Ch. Meyer*¹

Free University, Amsterdam
Department of Mathematics and Computers Science
De Boelelaan 1081a, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

We propose an epistemic logic with so-called graded modalities, in which certain types of knowledge are expressible that are less absolute than in traditional epistemic logic. Beside 'absolute knowledge' (which does not allow for any exception), we are also able to express 'accepting φ if there at most n exceptions to φ '. This logic may be employed in decision support systems where there are different sources to judge the same proposition. We argue that the logic also provides a link between epistemic logic and the more quantitative (even probabilistic) methods used in AI systems. In this paper we investigate some properties of the logic as well as some applications.

1 Introduction

'Infallible' computers are computers that have multiple processors (usually each from a different company and programmed in a different way using different programming languages) to check and double-check on the results. Decisions are taken on a kind of democratic basis: the results that come up most often as the results of a certain calculation, are the ones that matter and are used to make a decision. The idea is just based on statistics: the chance that n independent processors are faulty at the same time is p^n for an already very small probability p . Typically, infallible computers are used in situations where the failure of a computer would have disastrous consequences, such as the stock exchange, certain security situations, and the so-called flying-by-wire (i.e. using a steering computer) of an airplane like the Airbus A320. Decision Support Systems working on infallible computers, and devices with several input sensors in general, may have knowledge that is source dependent. In this paper we will propose an epistemic logic that can deal with knowledge (or some may prefer the term *belief* here) that is not absolutely true in all worlds, but may have exceptions in the sense that there are worlds in which the assertion (that was believed) is nevertheless not true, such as in the case of a faulty processor or sensor in the situation described above.

¹Also affiliated with the University of Nijmegen, Toernooiveld, 6525 ED Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Consider an agent getting input from three different sources w_1 , w_2 and w_3 . Suppose furthermore, that two types of information are relevant for this agent, say p and q . All the sources agree on p : they mark p as true. Finally, in w_1 and w_2 , q is true, whereas in w_3 , it is false. When using ‘standard’ modal logic to model epistemic notions (cf. [MHV91] for an overview), one would consider the resources w_i ($i \leq 3$) to be worlds in an S5-Kripke model (cf. [HC68] for an introduction to modal logic), and observe that the agent knows p , i.e. Kp holds, but does not know q or $\neg q$, since he considers both alternatives to be possible: $Mq \wedge M\neg q$ holds.

This is about the limit of the expressibility of standard modal epistemic logic, where the only operators that are available are K and M , to express ‘truth in all accessible worlds’ and ‘truth in some accessible world’, respectively. Since the favourite system for knowledge (S5) may be interpreted on Kripke models in which the accessibility relation is universal (cf. [HM85, MHV91]), we may leave out the reference to this relation, leaving one with a system in which one can associate ‘ K ’ with ‘all (worlds)’ and M with ‘some (world)’ (cf. [GP90]).

However, in the above example, it might be desirable to be able to express that the agent has more confidence in q than in $\neg q$. (For instance, a robot which (who?) is after block A, may choose to first look for it on block B, if two of its sensors tell him it is there—while the third sensor tells him it is on block C.) One way to achieve this is to add a qualitative modality ‘ $>$ ’, enabling the agent to judge ($q > \neg q$), as we did in [Ho91a] (and, in a specific epistemic context, see also [Le80]). Here, we will take an alternative approach, in which we add quantitative modalities to the language (M_n , $n \in \mathbb{N}$), so that, in the above example, we can describe the agent’s point of view in a more precise manner, like for instance the fact that he considers exactly two q -alternatives possible (‘input-sources’), and exactly one $\neg q$ -alternative.

Actually, adding such ‘graded modalities’ to the modal language is not new. We refer to [Ho91b] for some history, and a first investigation into the expressibility, decidability and definability of this graded language. An application of those graded modalities, especially of the graded analogue of S5, has been studied in the area of *Generalized Quantifiers*, (cf. [HR91]). In this paper, we try to explain how the greater expressive power of graded modalities may be used in *epistemic logic*. We already showed in [HoM90] how these new modalities may help to make some issues in the field of *implicit knowledge* explicit. However, there, the graded modalities are motivated to establish some properties on a ‘meta-level’; adding them to the language enables one to more precisely define accurate models for implicit knowledge. Here, though, we try to use the new operators directly in the object language in order to obtain a more fine-tuned epistemic logic. We think that, using the enriched language, one has an appropriate

tool to deal with notions like ‘uncertain’, or ‘almost certain’ knowledge (or belief). The new operators may then be helpful to reason with *degrees of acceptance*. In fact, one may distinguish as many degrees of belief as there are graded modalities. To support our claim, we will sketch some directions in which such modalities might be employed.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. In the following section, we will introduce our main system, together with its natural semantics. In section 3, we investigate how this system of section 2 can be interpreted epistemically. Then we give some examples and conclude by indicating some further directions of research in section 5.

2 The system Gr(S5)

Before plunging into the definitions of the graded language and the formal system, it may be useful to keep in mind how standard modal logic (together with its semantics) is used to model knowledge. There, $K\phi$ (ϕ is known) is defined to be true in a Kripke model (\mathcal{M}, w) iff in all worlds v accessible from w , (\mathcal{M}, v) is a model for ϕ . Also, $M\phi$ is defined to be $\neg K\neg\phi$, which will be true in w iff ϕ is true in some accessible world v . The intended interpretation of $M_n\phi$, ($n \in \mathbb{N}$) will be that there are more than n accessible worlds verifying ϕ . Then, $K_n\phi$ is true iff at most n accessible worlds refute ϕ .

In terms of epistemic operators, note that $K_0\phi$ boils down to $K\phi$, so that we may interpret K_0 as our (certain) knowledge operator. Generally, $K_n\phi$ means that the agent reckons with at most n exceptions for ϕ . Dually, $M_n\phi$ then means that the agent considers more than n alternatives possible, in which ϕ is true. Now, what would be the appropriate properties of these ‘defeasible’ necessity operators? For instance, what kind of introspective properties are desirable? Many possibilities present itself at this point, but for the time being we will remain on solid ground by considering the graded analogue of S5.

Our language L is built, in the usual way, from propositional atoms $p, q, \dots \in P$, using the standard connectives $\wedge, \vee, \neg, \rightarrow$ and \leftrightarrow . Moreover, if $\phi \in L$, then so is $M_n\phi$ ($n \in \mathbb{N}$). From now on, we will assume that $n, m, k \in \mathbb{N}$. We use K_n as an abbreviation for $\neg M_n\neg$. Finally we introduce the abbreviation $M!_n\phi$, where $M!_0\phi \equiv K_0\neg\phi$, $M!_n\phi \equiv (M_{n-1}\phi \wedge \neg M_n\phi)$, if $n > 0$. From the definitions above, it is clear that $M!_n$ means ‘exactly n ’.

2.1 Definition. The system Gr(S5) is defined as follows (cf. [HR91]). It has inference rules Modus Ponens and Necessitation:

$$R0 \quad \vdash \phi, \vdash \phi \rightarrow \psi \Rightarrow \vdash \psi$$

R1 $\vdash \varphi \Rightarrow \vdash K_0\varphi$

It has also the following axioms (for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$):

A0 all propositional tautologies

A1 $K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K_n\varphi \rightarrow K_n\psi)$

A2 $K_n\varphi \rightarrow K_{n+1}\varphi$

A3 $K_0\neg(\varphi \wedge \psi) \rightarrow ((M!_n\varphi \wedge M!_m\psi) \rightarrow M!_{n+m}(\varphi \vee \psi))$

A4 $\neg K_n\varphi \rightarrow K_0\neg K_n\varphi$

A5 $K_0\varphi \rightarrow \varphi$

Before elaborating on the impact of the axioms on our intended epistemic reading of the operators, which we will do in the following section, let us pause for a moment to sharpen our understanding of the postulates as such. The system with rules R0 and R1, axioms A0 - A3 is the graded modal analogue of K, the basic modal system—so let us refer to it with Gr(K). In Gr(K), A1 is a kind of ‘generalized K-axiom’ (cf. 2.3), A2 is a way to ‘decrease grades’ in the possibility operator (A2 is equivalent to $M_{n+1}\varphi \rightarrow M_n\varphi$) and using A3, one can go to ‘higher grades’. To ensure that the definitions work out rightly, we take proposition 2.9 from [Ho91b]:

2.2 Proposition. The following are derivable in Gr(K) (and hence in Gr(S5)):

- (i) $M_n(\varphi \wedge \psi) \rightarrow (M_n\varphi \wedge M_n\psi)$
- (ii) $M!_n\varphi \wedge M!_m\varphi \rightarrow \perp$ ($n \neq m$)
- (iii) $K_n\neg\varphi \leftrightarrow (M!_0\varphi \Delta M!_1\varphi \Delta \dots \Delta M!_n\varphi)$ (Δ denotes ‘exclusive or’)
- (iv) $\neg M_n(\varphi \vee \psi) \rightarrow \neg M_n\varphi$
- (v) $M_{n+m}(\varphi \vee \psi) \rightarrow (M_n\varphi \vee M_m\psi)$
- (vi) $M!_n\varphi \wedge M_m\varphi \rightarrow \perp$ ($m \geq n$)
- (vii) $M_n(\varphi \wedge \psi) \wedge M_m(\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \rightarrow M_{n+m+1}\varphi$
- (viii) $(K_0\neg(\varphi \wedge \psi) \wedge (M_n\varphi \wedge M_m\psi)) \rightarrow M_{n+m+1}(\varphi \vee \psi)$

To see the system in action, we will give a derivation of a theorem which is a generalisation of the K-axiom from standard modal logic.

2.3 Proposition. The following is derivable in Gr(K) (and in Gr(S5)).

$$K_n(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K_m\varphi \rightarrow K_{n+m}\psi).$$

Proof. We implicitly use the (Gr(K)-derivable) rule of substitution: $\vdash \alpha \leftrightarrow \beta \Rightarrow \vdash \varphi \leftrightarrow \varphi[\alpha/\beta]$. Then, observe that $\vdash A1 \leftrightarrow (K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (M_n\varphi \rightarrow M_n\psi))$ (*). To see this, note that $\vdash K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \leftrightarrow K_0(\neg\psi \rightarrow \neg\varphi)$, and $\vdash (M_n\varphi \rightarrow M_n\psi) \leftrightarrow (K_n\neg\psi \rightarrow K_n\neg\varphi)$.

$$1 \quad \vdash \neg\psi \rightarrow (\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \vee (\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \tag{A0}$$

2	$\vdash K_0(\neg\psi \rightarrow (\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \vee (\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi))$	R1,1
3	$\vdash M_{n+m}\neg\psi \rightarrow M_{n+m}((\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \vee (\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi))$	(*),2
4	$\vdash M_{n+m}((\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \vee (\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi)) \rightarrow M_n(\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \vee M_m(\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi)$	2.2(v)
5	$\vdash ((\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \rightarrow \neg(\varphi \rightarrow \psi)) \wedge ((\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \rightarrow \neg\varphi)$	A0
6	$\vdash (M_n(\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \rightarrow M_n\neg(\varphi \rightarrow \psi)) \wedge (M_m(\neg\varphi \wedge \neg\psi) \rightarrow M_m\neg\varphi)$	R1,1, A1
7	$\vdash M_{n+m}\neg\psi \rightarrow (M_n\neg(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \vee M_m\neg\varphi)$	A1, 3,4,6
8	$\vdash \neg M_m\neg(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (\neg M_n\neg\varphi \rightarrow \neg M_{n+m}\neg\psi)$	A0,7
9	$\vdash K_n(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K_m\varphi \rightarrow K_{n+m}\psi)$	Def K_k ,8

Note that, by taking $n = m = 0$ in 2.3, we get the K-axiom in Gr(S5). In the presence of the necessitation rule, this means that K_0 is a ‘normal’ modal operator. In fact, the axioms A4 and A5 are graded versions of Euclidicity and reflexivity, respectively. Before making this explicit, we give the definition of the models on which we want to interpret formulas of L.

2.4 Definition. A *Kripke structure* \mathcal{M} is a tuple $\langle W, \pi, R \rangle$, where W is a set (of ‘worlds’ or ‘states’), π a truth assignment for each $w \in W$ and R a binary relation on W . If R is both reflexive and Euclidean (i.e. $\forall xyz((Rxy \wedge Rxz) \rightarrow Ryz)$), we say that $\mathcal{M} \in S5$. It is easily verified that the accessibility relations R of $\mathcal{M} \in S5$ are equivalence relations. A model $\mathcal{M} \in S5$ is known to be a model of (standard) S5 (cf. [MHV91]).

2.5 Definition. For a Kripke structure \mathcal{M} we define the *truth of* φ at w inductively:

- (i) $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models p$ iff $\pi(s)(p) = \text{true}$, for all $p \in P$.
- (ii) $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \neg\varphi$ iff not $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \varphi$.
- (iii) $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \varphi \vee \psi$ iff $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \varphi$ or $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \psi$.
- (iv) $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models M_n\varphi$ iff $|\{w' \in W \mid Rww' \text{ and } (\mathcal{M}, w') \models \varphi\}| > n, n \in \mathbb{N}$.

2.6 Remark. Note that $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models K_n\varphi$ iff $|\{w' \in W \mid Rww' \text{ and } (\mathcal{M}, w') \models \neg\varphi\}| \leq n$. Also, note that the modal operators M and K (in the literature also written as M and L , or \diamond and \Box) are special cases of our indexed operators: $M\varphi \equiv M_0\varphi$ and $K\varphi \equiv K_0\varphi$.

2.7 Definition. We say that φ is *true* in \mathcal{M} at w if $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \varphi$. If such an \mathcal{M} and w exist for φ , we say that φ is *satisfiable*. Formula φ is *true* in \mathcal{M} ($\mathcal{M} \models \varphi$) if $(\mathcal{M}, w) \models \varphi$ for all $w \in W$, and φ is called *valid* ($\models \varphi$) if $\mathcal{M} \models \varphi$ for all \mathcal{M} . If \mathcal{C} is a class of models (like S5), $\mathcal{C} \models \varphi$ means that for all $\mathcal{M} \in \mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{M} \models \varphi$.

We end this introduction to Gr(S5) by recalling the following results:

2.8 Theorem. (Completeness: [Fi72], [FC88]). For all $\varphi \in L$, $\vdash \varphi$ iff $S5 \models \varphi$. Thus $S5$ is also a class of models characterizing $\text{Gr}(S5)$.

2.9 Theorem. (Finite models: [Ho91b]). Any $\varphi \in L$ is satisfiable iff it is so on a finite model.

2.10 Theorem. (Freedom of nestings: cf [HR91]). In $\text{Gr}(S5)$, each formula is equivalent to a formula in which no nestings of (graded) modal operators occur.

3 Epistemic reading

Returning to the main point of this paper: how can $\text{Gr}(S5)$ serve as an appropriate starting point to study epistemic entities?. To start with, $R0$ and $A0$ express that we are dealing with an (extension of) classical propositional logic: we may use Modus Ponens and reason ‘classically’ ($A0$). By taking $S5$ as a ‘standard’ system for knowledge, the observations in the preceding section suggest that we interpret $K_0\varphi$ as ‘ φ is known’ (by the agent: for the moment, we focus on one-agent systems, although graded modalities do not prevent us from studying multi-agent systems—on the contrary, cf. [HoM90]).

Then, $R0$, $R1$, $A0$ and $A5$ find their motivation in the same fashion as the corresponding properties in $S5$, i.e., we may use Modus Ponens, the agent knows all ($\text{Gr}(S5)$)-derivable facts, we are dealing with an extension of propositional logic ($A0$) and moreover the agent cannot know facts that are not true ($A5$).

In order to interpret the other axioms, we need to have some intuition about the meaning of $K_n\varphi$. The semantics suggest, that it should be something like ‘the agent reckons with at most n exceptional situations for φ ’, or ‘the agent “knows-modulo- n -exceptions” φ ’. Thus, the greater n is in $K_n\varphi$, the less confidence in φ is uttered by that sentence. The latter observation immediately hints at $A2$, $K_n\varphi \rightarrow K_{n+1}\varphi$: if the agent foresees at most n exceptions to φ , he also does so with at most $n+1$ exceptions. Of course, the generalisation of $A3$, for $n > 0$; $K_n\varphi \rightarrow \varphi$ is not valid: if the agent does not know φ for sure, i.e., if he allows for exceptions on φ , he cannot conclude that φ is the case. Thus $K_n\varphi$ expresses a form of “uncertain knowledge”.

In standard $S5$, we have the axiom $\neg K\varphi \rightarrow K\neg K\varphi$, expressing the agent’s negative introspection: if he does not know a given fact, he knows that he does not (this is of course an ‘over-idealised’ property of knowledge, especially if we have in mind capturing human knowledge; see [MHV91] for a short discussion and further references). We may write this introspection axiom equivalently as

$$(1) \quad M\phi \rightarrow KM\phi,$$

saying that the agent has awareness (see [FH88] or [HoM88] for a discussion on this ‘awareness’—defined in a technical sense) of what he considers to be possible. Now that we have at hand a more fine-tuned mechanism to distinguish between ‘grades’ of possibility, it seems straightforward to strengthen the bare introspection formula (1) to

$$(2) \quad M_n\phi \rightarrow K_0M_n\phi,$$

saying that the agent is aware of the fact that he considers more than n ϕ -situations possible. (2) is equivalent with our axiom A4. Note that (2) is at the same time the ‘most general’ way to generalise (1): it implies, (using A2 $m-1$ times) for instance $M_n\phi \rightarrow K_mM_n\phi$. Moreover, note that (2) is the proper justification for A4: they are equivalent.

In the same spirit, we can interpret A1: if the agent knows that ϕ implies ψ , then, if he believes that there can be at most n exceptions to ϕ , he will not imagine more than n exceptions to ψ , since every exception to ψ will be an exception to ϕ as well, i.e. $K_0(\phi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K_n\phi \rightarrow K_n\psi)$, or equivalently (cf. 2.3), $K_0(\phi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (M_n\phi \rightarrow M_n\psi)$ (A1’). In epistemic logic, the K-axiom, $K(\phi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K\phi \rightarrow K\psi)$, has been considered a source of *logical omniscience* ([FH88] or [Ho92]), which yields a too idealistic notion of knowledge (and certainly of belief). It would mean that the agent is capable to close his knowledge (belief) under logical implication. However, now that we allow for weaker notions of knowledge, it appears that the K-axiom is only valid for K_0 , which we may consider as a kind of ‘ideal’ knowledge. Instead of a K-axiom for each K_n , we have the much more realistic (cf. 2.3)

$$(3) \quad K_n(\phi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (K_m\phi \rightarrow K_{n+m}\psi).$$

This seems very reasonable (suppose $n, m > 0$): if the agent has some confidence that ϕ implies ψ , and also has some confidence in ϕ , his conclusion that ψ holds should be stated with even less certitude than that of the two assertions separately. This is also reminiscent of *plausible* ([Re76]) or *defeasible reasoning*, where reasoning under uncertainties is also the topic of investigation. Note that (3) guarantees that, the longer the chain of reasoning with uncertain arguments, the less certain the conclusion can be stated by the agent.

Finally, to understand A3, we must recall that $M!_n\phi$ means that the agent is aware of exactly n possible situations in which ϕ is true. But then, A3 simply states this property of additivity: if the agent knows that ϕ and ψ are mutual exclusive events, and he is thinking of exactly n situations in which ϕ is true and, at the same time, m situations in which ψ is true, altogether he

has to reckon with $(n + m)$ situations in which one of these two alternatives is the case.

Up to now, we have been deliberately slightly vague about what $M_n\phi$ and $M!_n\phi$ exactly should mean. For instance, is this index n in the scope of the agent's knowledge? That is, does the agent know himself of (exactly) n concrete situations in which ϕ holds, and if so, is it possible that there are still other situations he does not know about where ϕ holds as well? This makes sense in situations in which the agent has to make decisions that depend on rules that allow for *exceptions*. The alternative interpretation is, that these n situations are only known to the reasoner *using* the system at a meta-level, interpreting K_n as some abstract n -degree of knowledge (or perhaps belief, if $n >$ some threshold)? We believe that the logic can be used in both these cases, and will not fix the interpretation in this paper.

It is argued (cf. [HM85]) that the axiom which distinguishes knowledge (K) from belief (B) is $(K\phi \rightarrow \phi)$ Instead of $(B\phi \rightarrow \phi)$, for belief, the weaker axiom $\neg B\perp$ is added. Now that we have (infinitely) many operators around, we might see how they behave in this respect. In $Gr(S5)$, $\neg K_n\perp$ (meaning that more than n possibilities are reckoned with) is derivable only for $n = 0$. If we would have (add) $\neg K_n\perp$, it would mean that the agent does not know too much (for 'big' n); he allows for more than n possibilities. And indeed, as long as the agent considers at least one possible world, it means that he does not know contradictions ($\neg K\perp$). In case he has no epistemic alternative left his knowledge is all encompassing but inconsistent ($K\phi$, for any ϕ). This is of course excluded in $S5$ (and hence in $Gr(S5)$), but so far, there was no way to exclude the extreme case of an 'omniscient knower', i.e., one for which $(K\phi \leftrightarrow \phi)$ holds. Semantically speaking, there was no way to define the class of Kripke models in which each world had more than one successor.

4 Examples

When interpreting K_n as an 'n-degree of knowledge', we recall that the higher the degree, the less certain the knowledge. The picture is denoted in the following chain:

$$K_0\phi \rightarrow K_1\phi \rightarrow \dots K_n\phi \rightarrow K_{n+1}\phi \dots \Rightarrow \dots M_{n+1}\phi \rightarrow M_n\phi \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow M_1\phi \rightarrow M_0\phi.$$

Here, the ' \rightarrow ' denotes logical implication. If, semantically speaking, the number of alternatives is infinite, the sequence is an infinite one, and ' \Rightarrow ' denotes implication, in the sense that all M_i -formulas are logically weaker than all the K_j -formulas. We could, as argued above, interpret the strongest formula in this chain (' $K_0\phi$ ') as " ϕ is known", and the weakest (' $M_0\phi$ ') as " ϕ is not impossible—but even as " ϕ is believed", cf. [HoM88].

If, however, the number of alternatives is *finite*, say N , we get the sequence

$$K_0\phi (\equiv M_{N-1}\phi) \rightarrow K_1\phi (\equiv M_{N-2}\phi) \rightarrow \dots K_n\phi (\equiv M_{N-n-1}\phi) \rightarrow \dots K_{N-1}\phi (\equiv M_0\phi) \rightarrow K_N\phi (\equiv T)$$

In fact, this is the case in the situation of the introduction, where the agent is capable to sum up a complete description of the model by listing a (finite) number of possible situations determined by some finite set of propositional atoms.

The property that each formula of L is equivalent to one in which no nestings of the operator occur, (2.10), supports to consider an $S5$ -model to be a collection of ‘points’ (worlds) that can have certain properties (summarized by the atomic formulas that are true in each world), the language L being sufficiently expressive to sum up the quantitative distribution of those properties over the model. Alternatively, identifying worlds with truth assignments to primitive propositions, as is usual in standard $S5$ -models, we can view a $Gr(S5)$ -model as a multi-set of truth assignments rather than a set of these as in standard, ungraded modal logic. A special case, of course, is that situations (= truth assignments) occur only once in a description. We shall refer to these models as *simple* (referring to the original Latin meaning of this word). Note that in simple models it is still sensible to use graded modalities, since an assertion (even a primitive proposition) may nevertheless hold in more than one situation, as e.g. p in the situations $\{p \text{ is true, } q \text{ is false}\}$ and $\{p \text{ is true, } q \text{ is true}\}$.

To be more specific, let us consider a simple example. Suppose we are given that the agent knows $(p \vee q)$ and also $(p \vee r)$. Since q and r are ‘independent’ propositional atoms, we try to formalise our intuition that the agent has more confidence in p than in q (or r). Given the three propositional atoms, the agent will consider five of the eight (a priori) possible worlds: the worlds in which $(\neg p \wedge (\neg q \vee \neg r))$ is true, left out. Thus, assuming that we have a simple model in the sense above, we get $(M!_5T \wedge M!_4p \wedge M!_3q \wedge M!_3r)$, indicating that indeed, p is the ‘most frequent’ atom.

In the example of the introduction, the number of worlds (sources) was fixed. This gives rise to considering $Gr_n(S5)$, with fixed $n \in \mathbb{N}$, which is obtained from $Gr(S5)$ by adding $M!_nT$. Let

$$n^\wedge = \min\{m \in \mathbb{N} \mid m > \frac{1}{2}n\}.$$

Using a preference modality (*use belief* in the sense of Perlis [Pe86]) expressed by operator P as in [MH91], we may express the democratic principle of infallible computers in $Gr_n(S5)$, with n denoting the number of computers, as $P\phi \leftrightarrow K_{n^\wedge}\phi$, that is, ϕ is preferred (is a practical/working/use belief) iff it is true in more than the half of all sources. Note that there is no logical omniscience in this respect, resembling the local reasoning approach of [FH88].

However, note that here, P is not a normal modality as it is in [MH91], since, as follows from our discussion about the K -axiom, $P(\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \rightarrow (P\varphi \rightarrow P\psi)$ is not valid. To illustrate this, consider the case of an airplane with three sensors w_1 , w_2 and w_3 in which “it is foggy” (φ) is true according to w_1 and w_2 (and not according to w_3), and “permission to take off” (ψ) according to sensor w_1 only. Then we have that both $P(\varphi \rightarrow \psi)$ (since $\varphi \rightarrow \psi$ is true in w_1 and w_3) and $P\varphi$ (since φ is true in w_1 and w_2), thus both φ and $(\varphi \rightarrow \psi)$ are working beliefs, without the conclusion “permission to take off” (ψ) being one.

One might contrast this with the situation where *rules* are added to the system (in the form of (certain) knowledge: cf. [MH91]). For instance, in the above example, $K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \neg\psi)$ might be a rule (it is *known* by the decision support system, independently of the information supplied by the sources, that fog is sufficient to deny permission to leave). If in addition, $P\varphi$ would be the case (the systems supposes φ based on the information of its sources), it would take as a working belief $\neg\psi$, i.e. there is no permission to fly! (This follows directly from axiom A1: $K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \neg\psi) \rightarrow (K_n\wedge\varphi \rightarrow K_n\wedge\neg\psi)$, i.e., $K_0(\varphi \rightarrow \neg\psi) \rightarrow (P\varphi \rightarrow P\neg\psi)$.)

Finally, we mention the use of graded operators to express the ‘numerical syllogisms’ as introduced in [AP88]. In the following, the left hand side is our translation of the numerical syllogisms on the right hand side.

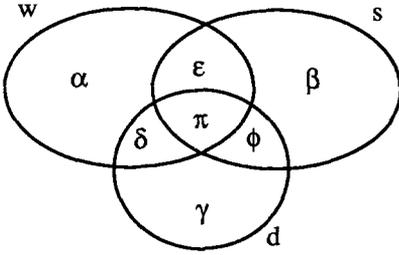
$M!_7d$	exactly 7 days of the week are known
$M!_5(w \wedge d)$	I know 5 of them to be working days
$M_3(s \wedge d)$	<u>at least 4 days are shopping days</u>
$\therefore M_2(w \wedge s)$	\therefore I know at least 3 days to go working and shopping.

To prove such a conclusion formally, it turns out to be worthwhile to split up the set of formulas (the formulas in d , w and s), in to a set of partitions (cf. figure 4.1).

The formal derivation now reads as follows (note $\Gamma = \{\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \varepsilon, \phi, \pi\}$):

(1)	$M!_7(\gamma \vee \delta \vee \phi \vee \pi)$	translation of 1 (cf. figure 4.1)
(2)	$M!_5(\delta \vee \pi)$	translation of 2
(3)	$M_3(\phi \vee \pi)$	translation of 3
(4)	$K_0\neg((\phi \vee \pi) \wedge (\gamma \vee \delta))$	definition of Γ
(5)	$\neg M_7(\gamma \vee \delta \vee \phi \vee \pi)$	(1), def. $M!$
(6)	$\neg M_3(\gamma \vee \delta)$	2.2.(viii), (3), (4), (5)
(7)	$(K_0(\delta \rightarrow (\gamma \vee \delta)) \rightarrow (M_3\delta \rightarrow M_3(\gamma \vee \delta))) \wedge K_0(\delta \rightarrow (\gamma \vee \delta))$	A1' and A0, R1
(8)	$\neg M_3\delta$	A0, (6), (7)
(9)	$M!_0\delta \vee M!_1\delta \vee M!_2\delta$	(8), 2.2.(iii)

- (10) $\neg M_1\pi \rightarrow (M!_0\pi \vee M!_1\pi)$ 2.2.(iii)
(11) $K_0\neg(\delta \wedge \pi) \rightarrow [((M!_0\delta \vee M!_1\delta \vee M!_2\delta) \wedge (M!_0\pi \vee M!_1\pi)) \rightarrow (M!_0(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_1(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_2(\delta \vee \pi))]$ A0, A3
(12) $\neg M_1\pi \rightarrow (M!_0(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_1(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_2(\delta \vee \pi))$ (9)(10)(11), $\vdash K_0\neg(\delta \wedge \pi)$
(13) $[(M!_0(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_1(\delta \vee \pi) \vee M!_2(\delta \vee \pi))] \rightarrow \neg M_2(\delta \vee \pi)$ A0, def. M!
(14) $(M!_5(\delta \vee \pi) \rightarrow M_4(\delta \vee \pi)) \wedge (M_4(\delta \vee \pi) \rightarrow M_2(\delta \vee \pi))$ def. M!, A2 twice
(15) $(\neg M_2(\delta \vee \pi) \wedge M!_5(\delta \vee \pi)) \rightarrow \perp$ A0, (14)
(16) $(\neg M_1\pi \wedge M!_5(\delta \vee \pi)) \rightarrow \perp$ A0, (12), (13), (15)
(17) $M_1\pi$ (2), (16)
(18) $M_1(\pi \vee \varepsilon)$ (17), A1'



For example, it is understood that $w \leftrightarrow (\alpha \vee \delta \vee \varepsilon \vee \pi)$. If $\Gamma = \{\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \varepsilon, \phi, \pi\}$, then, for all different $x_1, \dots, x_k \in \Gamma$ ($2 \leq k \leq 7$):
(*) $\vdash \neg (x_1 \wedge \dots \wedge x_k)$

figure 4.1

5 Conclusion

We have argued that extending the modal language with graded modalities (taking into account the number of accessible worlds) gives some interesting options for epistemic logic. We provided some examples of how this new language can be used in an epistemic context. Particularly, we indicated how these operators can be used in the context of a fixed number of sources. It thus provides us with a framework for *reasoning with exceptions*.

We think the graded modalities are especially useful in ‘laboratory-like situations’, where explicit bounds are prescribed. Areas of application that may be worthwhile may therefore typically be found in situations where numbers of counter-examples have a clear evidence and meaning. Typical examples (that have not been worked out by us, yet) may thus be found in ‘laboratory situations’ like (reasoning about) *a voting* or in a *legal context* (where for instance a petition is granted when at least n requirements are met) or more generally, intelligent databases of which the quantities of the data matters (cf. [Ho92], for several examples).

We see two lines of future work. Firstly, we may transfer some standard questions from ‘standard’ epistemic logic to the graded language. For instance, it might be interesting to study the introspection properties more systematically, like was done e.g. in [Ho91c]. Secondly, we think that several of our proposals have natural generalisations. For instance, where the P-

operator models the notion of ‘more than-a-half’, we could have such operators P_n for ‘more than-an-n-th’. This also suggests a relation with ‘probabilistic modal logics’ (cf. [Ho90]), which get an interpretation on *probabilistic Kripke models*. Here, one can also define a P-like operator, for instance in terms of the operator ‘ \geq ’ of [Ho91a].

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