The data and aim. A cross-linguistic contrast found with impersonal pronouns (glossed as IMP) concerns their possible contexts of use and the corresponding interpretations in these contexts: some pronouns (e.g., English *one*, Icelandic *maður*) only occur in generic sentences with a generic interpretation (≈ people in general); others (e.g., French *on*, German *man*) can also be used in episodic sentences that talk about situations involving particular individuals, see (1) for German *man* (see Fenger 2018).

(1) **Man** hat für dich angerufen.

IMP has for you called

In the literature, impersonal pronouns in episodic sentences are said to be in their “existential use”: the pronouns intuitively contribute unspecific (groups of) individuals that are involved in the particular event described in the sentence (see also Chierchia 1995). For instance, *man* in (1) is comparable to the English existential indefinite pronoun *someone*, and (1) is approximately ‘Someone called for you’ (see also Cabredo-Hofherr 2010, Malamud 2012, 2013). The aim of this talk is to argue against existing analyses that assign German *man* in episodic sentences like (1) a basic or derived existential semantics (e.g., Malamud 2012). Instead, I propose that in these sentences, *man* takes a verbal one-place predicate as its argument and fills the open argument slot with an individual that is inferred from the predicate.

Malamud 2012—a free variable analysis with existential closure. To capture the use of *man* in (1), Malamud assumes that *man* contributes an individual variable \( x \), which is bound by the existential quantifier \( \exists \) involved in existential event closure at AspP; example (2) is the simplified analysis for (1).

(2) \[ [\{1\}]^c = \exists e, x [\tau(c_T) < c_T \land \text{call}(c_A)(x)(e)] \]

IN WORDS: there is an event \( e \) and an individual \( x \) such that the runtime of \( e \) precedes the utterance time \( c_T \), and \( e \) is a calling-event by \( x \) in order to reach the addressee \( c_A \).

Malamud’s analysis captures the intuitive existential semantics of *man* in sentences like (1). It also accounts for the observation that existentially used *man* always has lowest scope relative to co-occurring adverbial quantifiers, see (3) (e.g., Zifonun 2000): *man* inherits the scope behavior of existential event closure, which always scopes below adverbial quantifiers.

(3) **Man** hat mir das schon oft gesagt.

IMP has me that already often said

Paraphrase: ‘it was often the case that there was an event of someone telling me that’

Two undesirable predictions of existential analyses. [While the data presented below come from the literature, the problems they pose for analyses that assume an existential semantics for *man* in sentences like (1) have not been worked out in detail before.] The first undesirable prediction of an existential analysis like Malamud’s (2012) is that *man* in (1) should be able to act as an antecedent for co-referential 3sg pronouns. This is, however, not the case (see Cabredo-Hofherr 2010): the 3sg pronoun er (*‘he’*) in (4) cannot be used to refer to the caller of the first sentence (i.e., the agent of *call*).

(4) **Man** hat für dich angerufen. **#Er** wollte über das Projekt reden.

IMP has for you called he wanted about the project talk

The analysis in (2) predicts (4) to be okay. We observe that the existentially quantified event variable that is the result of existential event closure introduces a discourse referent that can be readily picked up by 3sg *it* in a subsequent sentence, see (5).

(5) Jones buttered a piece of toast. He did *it* with a knife in the bathroom. (Davidson 1967:37)

So, if the same existential quantifier also binds the variable contributed by *man*, *man* should be a possible antecedent, contrary to fact. Malamud 2013 proposes a fix for this problem: the discourse referent contributed by existentially used *man* is marked as a dispreferred antecedent for subsequent anaphora. While this fix might correct the predictions for (4), it does not circumvent the second undesirable prediction of these accounts, which concerns the association with predicative, weak adjunct als-phrases (Engl. *as*-phrases). We observe that full indefinite DPs can *associate* with weak adjunct als-phrases, which contribute adverbial-clause-like propositional content about the individual given by the DP. In (6), the als-phrase als Fremdenführer (just like as a tourist guide in the translation) contributes causal-clause-like content about the participant of the course introduced by the indefinite DP (see Zobel 2018).

(6) Jones buttered a piece of toast. He did *it* with a knife in the bathroom. (Davidson 1967:37)
Als Fremdenführer konnte uns ein Kursteilnehmer weiterhelfen.

‘As a tourist guide, a participant of the course was able to help us.’

(≈ A participant of the course was able to help us since he was a tourist guide.)

Following Adler 2006, Zobel (2017, 2018) assumes that the association relation between weak adjunct as-phrases and their associated DPs involves adjunct control, which is not fixed structurally but pragmatically via the discourse referent of the DP. Now, unlike indefinite DPs, man in its “existential use” cannot associate with a weak adjunct als-phrase, see (7) (cf. Kratzer 1997).

No existential analysis that takes existentially used man to contribute a discourse referent can capture this data. Hence, the intuitive semantics of (1) has to be derived differently than suggested by Malamud.

A new analysis of man in sentences like (1). I assume an existential formal system with events. I propose that man contributes an operator that combines with a verbal one-place predicate $P$ (type $(e, vt)$) and fills the open individual argument of $P$ with the maximal individual that participates in the event $e$ in the role belonging to this argument slot (note: man always sits in subject position), see (8).

For (1), this proposal results in the denotation in (10), which is built from the proposal for man in (8) and the predicate denoted by für dich anrufen (‘call for you’) in (9).

The denotation in (10) is the set of events for which the maximal element of the set of individual(s) that called for the addressee called for the addressee. In other words, (10) describes the set of events in which someone called for the addressee. Temporal anchoring of the event and existential event closure of (10) results in the denotation of (1) in (11).

In words: there is an event $e$ such that the runtime of $e$ precedes the utterance time $c_T$, and $e$ is a calling-for-the-addressee-event by the maximal individual who called in $e$ in order to reach $c_A$.

Advantages and positive predictions of the analysis. 1) The contribution of man in (8) provides the external argument of $P$ via inference without introducing a discourse referent. Therefore, the analysis can capture that man cannot be an antecedent for 3sg pronouns, see (4), or associate with weak adjunct als-phrases, see (7). 2) Since the existential quantifier $\exists$ involved in existential event closure binds into the contribution of man, the scope of $\exists$ determines the “scope” of man, which captures the observation that man intuitively has low scope relative to adverbial quantifiers, see (3). 3) Since the argument of $P$ is determined only via $P$ and $e$, we do not learn anything about the individuals that fill the argument slot of $P$ apart from their participation in the $P$-event $e$. This fits the intuition described in the literature that this use of man is similar to passivization with an implicit agent (see Cabredo-Hofherr 2010). 4) The analysis in (8) captures that if additional information about the event $e$ is provided by the context or co-occurring adverbials, we can infer more about the individuals filling the argument slot of $P$: yesterday was board.meeting IMP voted for the proposal

The first sentence in (12) establishes that we talk about a board meeting. Hence, we can infer for those who voted that they were part of the board. • In sum, the new function-based account improves upon the existing existential accounts regarding empirical coverage. In my presentation, I will further address whether and how the account can be extended to cover German man in generic sentences.