# Toward a semantics for personal name blends

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# The phenomenon

(1)     **Brangelina** are true globetrotters, but have settled down in the vineyards of France, where they got married last year. (iWeb)

Brad (Pitt) & Angelina (Jolie)

(2)     **Steinmerkel** spricht über Kredite für den Mittelstand. (DeReKo)

'Steinmerkel talks about loans for medium-sized businesses.'

(Frank-Walter) Steinmeier & (Angela) Merkel

- Blends made up from (at least) two personal names
- Some shortening of the base words
- Single phonological word template

Arndt -Lappe & Plag 2013; Beliaeva 2019

# The phenomenon

- Little known about semantics of **personal name blends** – usually not distinguished from lexical blends

- Meaning of lexical blends is usually identified with the meaning of copulative compounds
  - (1) celesbian --> celebrity + lesbian      (additive; cf. *singer-songwriter*)
  - (2) chofa --> chair + sofa      (compromise; cf. *northeast*)

- *Brangelina* etc. "denote a group of individuals" (Renner 2015: 127); are "nicknames" (Mattiello 2017: 57)

Fleischer & Barz 2012; Bauer 2008; Bauer, Lieber & Plag 2013

# Why at the event semantics workshop?

- Frequently, personal name blends are eventive

(1)     Michonne never gained anything from the **Richonne** <u>ship</u>… (iWeb)

(2)     Aniston also confirmed […] "that **Brangelina** <u>happened</u> behind her back." (iWeb)

(3)     Frankreichs neuer Präsident setzt auf „**Mercron**", die deutsch-französische <u>Freundschaft</u> als Motor für die EU und die Welt.

   'France's new president believes in "Mercron", the Franco-German friendship as the engine for the EU and the world.'

- Blends often serve as premodifiers for eventive nouns as in (1)
- Also denote (abstract) eventualities such as romantic relationships in (2) or friendships as in (3) on their own

# Goals and challenges

- Typology of semantic types of personal name blends

- Show semantic relatedness of some of these types (incl. eventive ones), polysemy, and high degree of context-/world knowledge dependence

- Assumption that names have no semantics – complex blends, however, do

- Build on previous studies that made use of social ontologies and suggest a frame semantic analysis  for some of the semantic types

# The data base

Sources:

- German/English data from Twitter, iWeb, DeReKo, message boards

Methods:

- Initial list of well-known celebrity blends
- Extended through surveys in online message boards and corpora

Data:

- 1468 types – 2909 tokens

# Typology of readings

**Headed blends**

(1)      …you really think that they can just get goons from the streets […] to shout **MESSI-DONA** for them and Messi would just score many goals… (iWeb)

(2)      Out there, they hailed each other. "I always call him '**Maradonny**'," Nouri said. "At first I didn't know he was that technically skilled… (guardian.co.uk)

- Not frequent
- Always similative --> 'Messi is like Maradona in some respect'
- Head placement variable
- Common semantization pattern (cf. *to out-Merkel s.o., merkelisieren, Merkel one's way into sth.*)

# Typology of readings

**Non-headed additive**    (both from iWeb)


(1)    And so **Richonne** <u>has</u> emerged as the core couple -- the patriarch and matriarch of Alexandria.

(2)    Novak had serve issues that year and **Fedal** really <u>weren't</u> his problem in slams.


- ~collection of individuals
- Non-headed / exocentric
- Either plural or singular agreement (like many group nouns, e.g. *couple*, *police* etc.)

# Typology of readings

**Non-headed abstract event**      (both from iWeb)


(1)      **Richonne** is a freaking <u>love story</u> by the book!

(2)      This is what the […] wounded Federer fans miss about each re-enactment of this <u>rivalry</u>. # The foremost point to remember about **Fedal** and the two men <u>at the heart</u> of <u>it</u> is that in 2003, mens tennis was not in a very good place.


- Abstract events: romance and rivalry, respectively

- Non-headed / exocentric

- Always singular agreement

# Typology of readings

**Non-headed single event**

(1)     No, you're NOT a bad tennis fan if you didn't want **Fedal** to <u>happen</u>. […] Similarly, the magnitude of <u>Sundays occasion </u>doesn't mean that one cant want a Nadal-Djokovic Roland Garros final just as much. (iWeb)

- Not very frequent
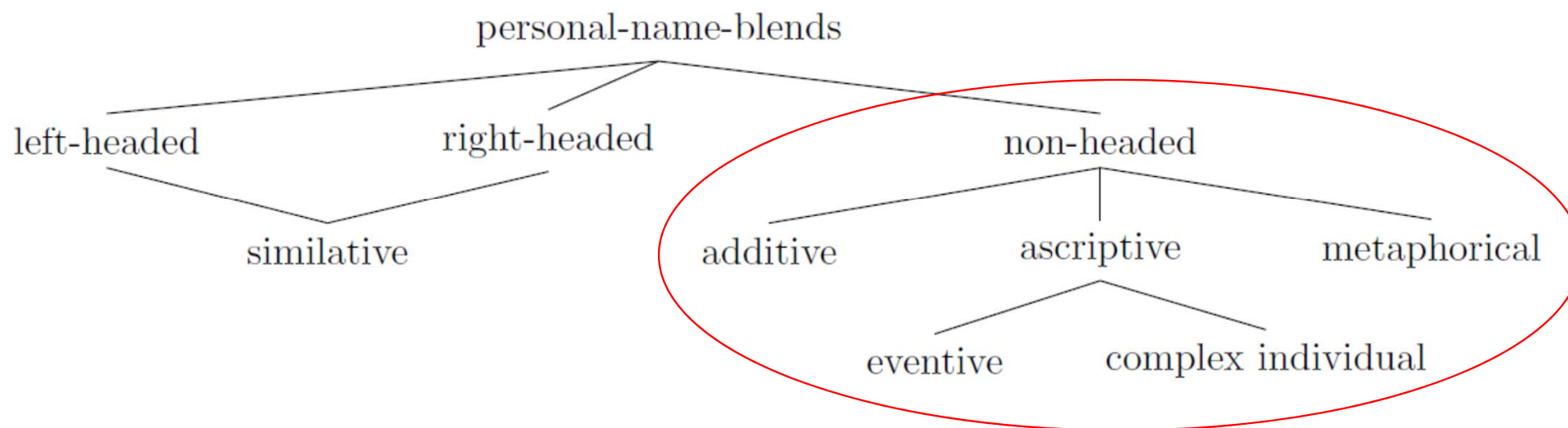- Concrete event – (1) refers to a single match, not the abstract rivalry

# Typology of readings

**Metaphorical, semanticized**

(1)      The 3.5mm headphone port and the Lightning jack are the **Brangelina of smartphone components**. It seems like everyday there is a new rumor of their split in the upcoming iPhone 7… (iWeb)

- Not very frequent
- Typically realized as *of*-PP with target domain as complement (or genitives in German)
- Reliant on entrenched characteristics of source domain blend
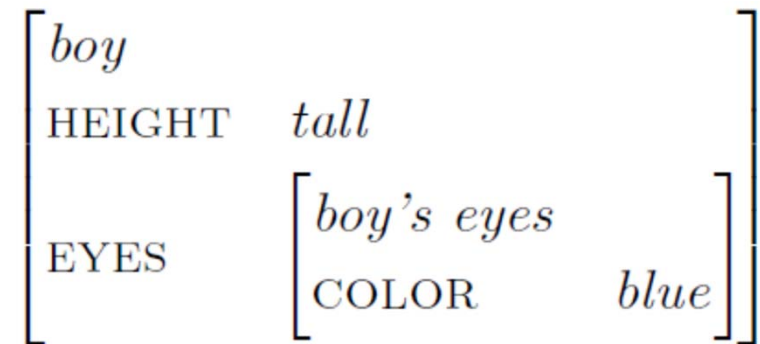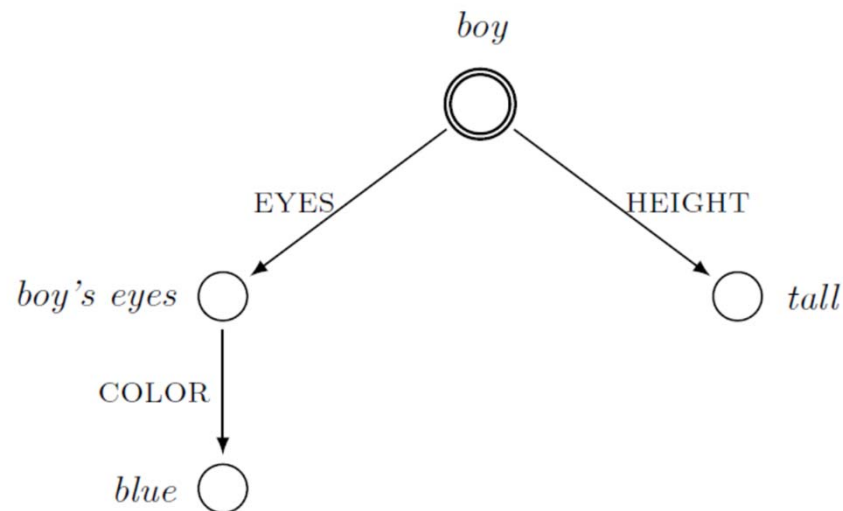
# Typology of readings



Claim:
- All non-headed types are semantically related
- Either rely or build on each other semantically/conceptually
- Representation of complex frame in combination with a social ontology captures possible readings

# *Fedal* as case study

(1)      Novak had serve issues that year and **Fedal** really weren't his problem in slams.
            --> **ADDITIVE** (sum of X and Y)

(2)      This is what […] the wounded Federer fans miss about each re-enactment of this
            <u>rivalry</u>. The foremost point to remember about **Fedal** and the two men at the heart
            of <u>it</u> is that in 2003, mens tennis was not in a very good place.
            --> **ABSTRACT EVENT** (rivalry)

(3)      No, you're NOT a bad tennis fan if you didn't want **Fedal** to happen. […] Similarly, the
            magnitude of Sundays occasion doesn't  mean that one cant want a Nadal-Djokovic
            Roland Garros final just as much.
            --> **SINGLE EVENT** (match)

# Modeling: Frame semantics

- A frame is a recursive attribute–value structure (Barsalou 1992; Löbner 2014; Petersen 2007)
- Attributes are unique to the attribute holder and take a single value at one point in time
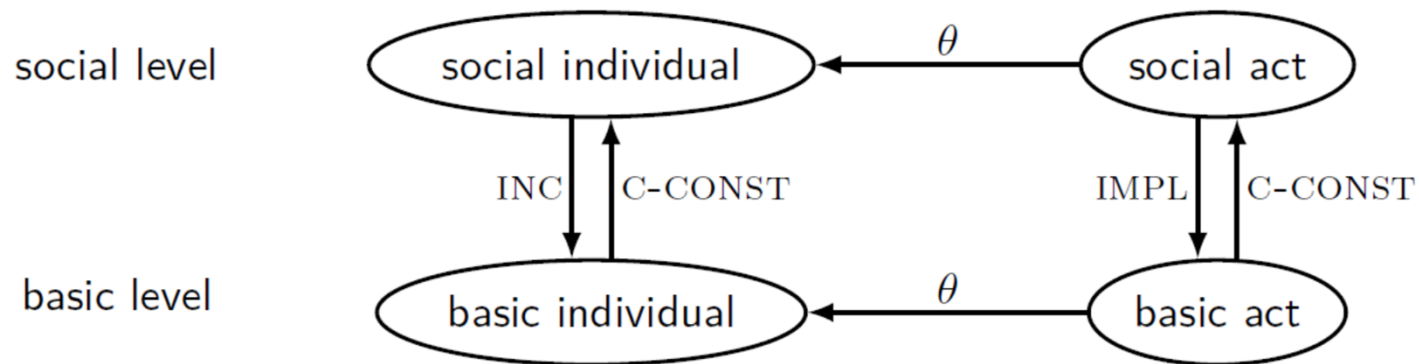
# Social ontology

- Social ontology captures social entities
    - institutions, roles, functions, social actions (e.g. voting, marrying, teaching)

- Social ontology rooted in a physical or basic ontology (of basic entities)

- These two ontological layers are related systematically

- Social entities are "created" via social acts --> given certain circumstances (acts), basic entities count as social entities

Searle 1995; Löbner/Anderson 2018; Anderson 2018

# Social ontology

- IMPL
  - Social entities are implemented by more basic entities (e.g. bill of money by scrap of paper)
- C-CONST
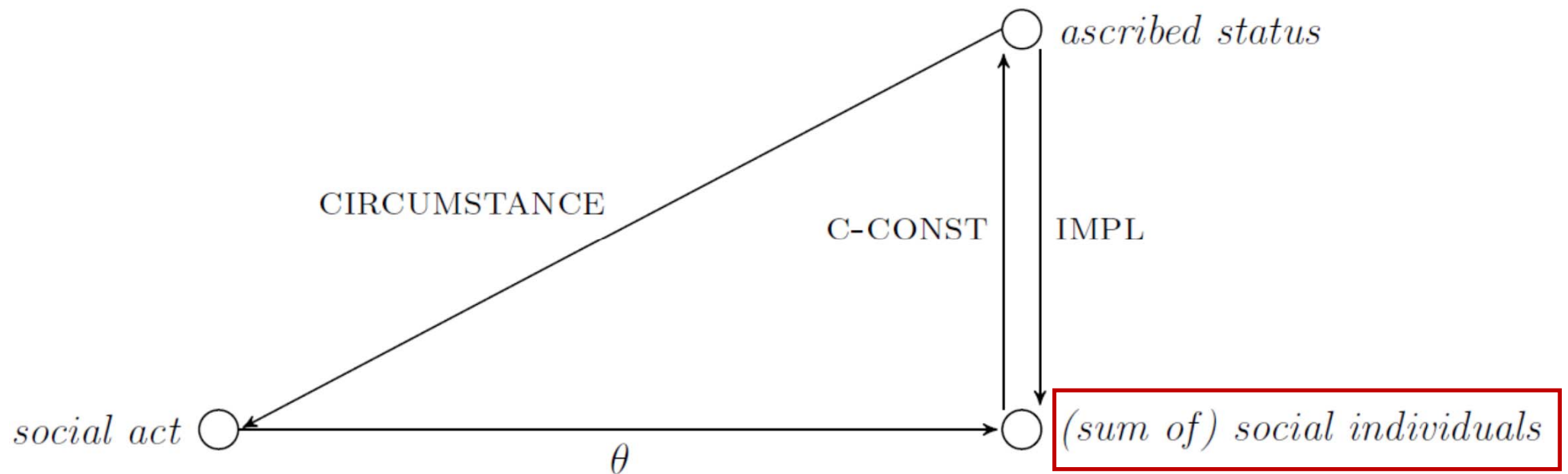  - Basic entities c-constitute social entities: Searle's <X counts as Y under circumstances Z> relation



Searle 1995; Löbner/Anderson 2018; Anderson 2018

# Social ontology

**General application to personal name blends**

# Capturing the additive reading

(1)      Novak had serve issues that year and Fedal really weren't his problem in slams. (iWeb)

$$
O_s \begin{bmatrix}
X_s\ \boxed{3} \oplus Y_s\ \boxed{4} \\[4pt]
X_s\ \boxed{3} \begin{bmatrix}
tennis\_pro_s \\
\text{IMPL}\ \boxed{1} \begin{bmatrix} person_b \\ \text{NAME}\ Federer \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix} \\[12pt]
Y_s\ \boxed{4} \begin{bmatrix}
tennis\_pro_s \\
\text{IMPL}\ \boxed{2} \begin{bmatrix} person_b \\ \text{NAME}\ Nadal \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix} \\[12pt]
c\text{-}const\ (\boxed{1},\boxed{3}) \wedge (\boxed{2},\boxed{4})
\end{bmatrix}
$$

# Rivalries and matches – abstract and single events

$$\left[\begin{array}{l}\left(e_s\,\boxed{0}\left[\begin{array}{l} compete \wedge repeated\_event \\ \text{COMPETITION } ATP\text{-}tour \\ \text{PLURACT } \langle e_1\,\boxed{7}, e_2\,\boxed{8}, \ldots, e_n\,\boxed{n}\rangle \\ \text{AGENT } \boxed{4} \\ \text{CO-AGENT } \boxed{5} \end{array}\right],\; e_s\,\boxed{1}\left[\begin{array}{l} rivalry_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{6}\left[\begin{array}{l} X_s\,\boxed{4} \oplus Y_s\,\boxed{5} \\ X_s\,\boxed{4}\left[\begin{array}{l} tennis\_pro_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{2}\left[\begin{array}{l} person_b \\ \text{NAME } Federer \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \\ Y_s\,\boxed{5}\left[\begin{array}{l} tennis\_pro_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{3}\left[\begin{array}{l} person_b \\ \text{NAME } Nadal \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right]\right) \\ c\text{-}con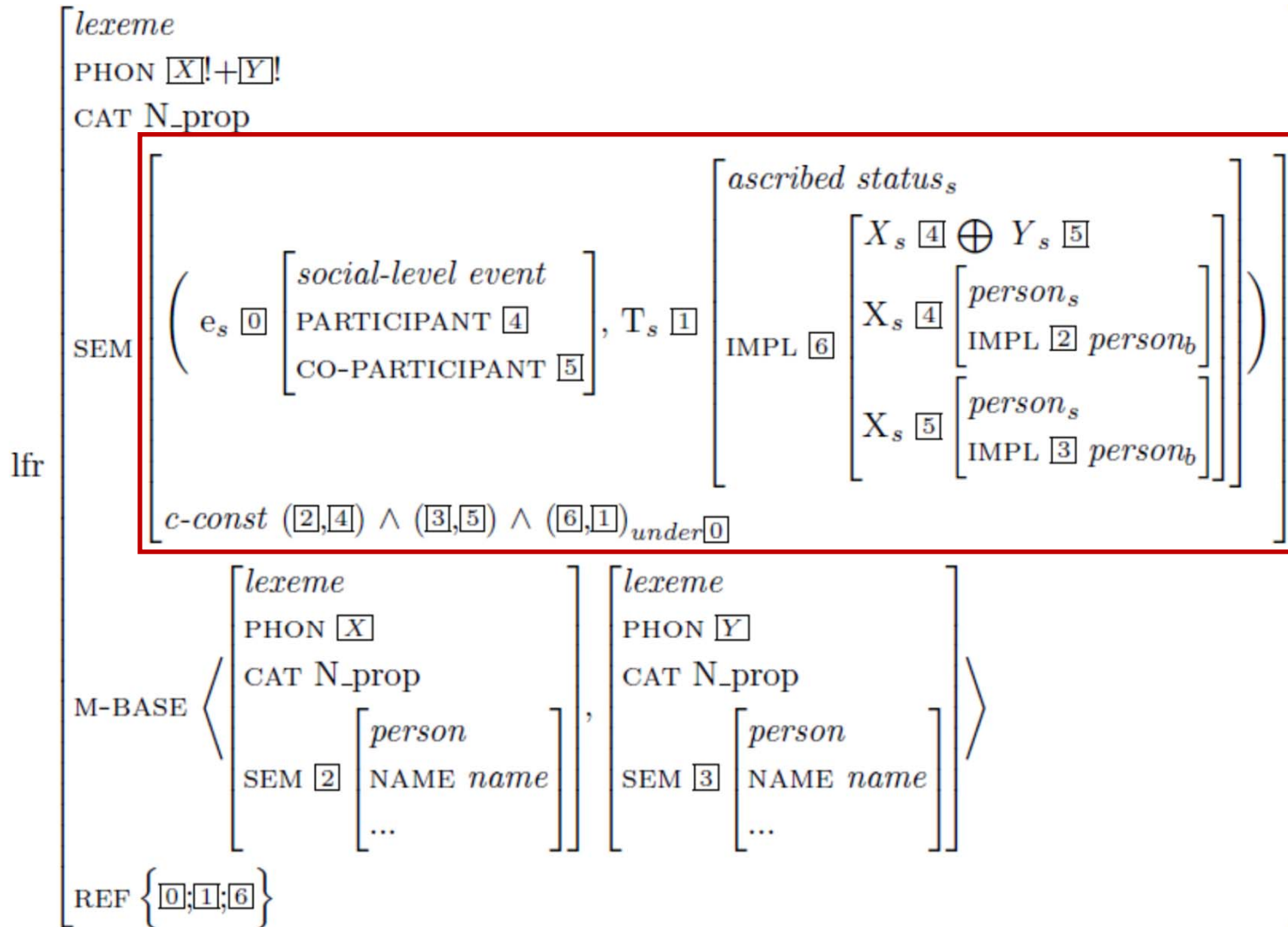st\;(\boxed{2},\boxed{4}) \wedge (\boxed{3},\boxed{5}) \wedge (\boxed{6},\boxed{1})_{under\,\boxed{0}} \\ \text{REF } \{\boxed{1},\boxed{6},\boxed{7}\text{-}\boxed{n}\} \end{array}\right]$$

# Rivalries and matches – abstract and single events

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
\left( e_s \; \boxed{0} \begin{bmatrix} compete \wedge repeated\_event \\ \text{COMPETITION } ATP\text{-}tour \\ \text{PLURACT } \langle e_1 \; \boxed{7}, e_2 \; \boxed{8}, \ldots, e_n \; \boxed{n} \rangle \\ \text{AGENT } \boxed{4} \\ \text{CO-AGENT } \boxed{5} \end{bmatrix}, \; e_s \; \boxed{1} \begin{bmatrix} rivalry_s \\ \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{6} \begin{bmatrix} X_s \; \boxed{4} \oplus Y_s \; \boxed{5} \\ X_s \; \boxed{4} \begin{bmatrix} tennis\_pro_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{2} \begin{bmatrix} person_b \\ \text{NAME } Federer \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \\ Y_s \; \boxed{5} \begin{bmatrix} tennis\_pro_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{3} \begin{bmatrix} person_b \\ \text{NAME } Nadal \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \right) \\
c\text{-}const \; (\boxed{2}, \boxed{4}) \wedge (\boxed{3}, \boxed{5}) \wedge (\boxed{6}, \boxed{1})_{under \boxed{0}} \\
\text{REF } \{\boxed{1}, \boxed{6}, \boxed{7}\text{-}\boxed{n}\}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

# Lexeme formation rule for ascriptive blends

$$
\text{lfr}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{lexeme} \\
\textsc{phon}\ \boxed{X}!+\boxed{Y}! \\
\textsc{cat}\ \text{N\_prop} \\[4pt]
\textsc{sem}\ \left(
\begin{bmatrix}
e_s\ \boxed{0}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{social-level event} \\
\textsc{participant}\ \boxed{4} \\
\textsc{co-participant}\ \boxed{5}
\end{bmatrix}
,\ T_s\ \boxed{1}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{ascribed status}_s \\
X_s\ \boxed{4} \oplus Y_s\ \boxed{5} \\
\textsc{impl}\ \boxed{6}
\begin{bmatrix}
X_s\ \boxed{4}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{person}_s \\
\textsc{impl}\ \boxed{2}\ \textit{person}_b
\end{bmatrix} \\
X_s\ \boxed{5}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{person}_s \\
\textsc{impl}\ \boxed{3}\ \textit{person}_b
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
\right) \\
\textit{c-const}\ (\boxed{2},\boxed{4}) \wedge (\boxed{3},\boxed{5}) \wedge (\boxed{6},\boxed{1})_{under\boxed{0}} \\[4pt]
\textsc{m-base}\ \left\langle
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{lexeme} \\
\textsc{phon}\ \boxed{X} \\
\textsc{cat}\ \text{N\_prop} \\
\textsc{sem}\ \boxed{2}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{person} \\
\textsc{name}\ \textit{name} \\
\ldots
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
,\
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{lexeme} \\
\textsc{phon}\ \boxed{Y} \\
\textsc{cat}\ \text{N\_prop} \\
\textsc{sem}\ \boxed{3}
\begin{bmatrix}
\textit{person} \\
\textsc{name}\ \textit{name} \\
\ldots
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
\right\rangle \\[4pt]
\textsc{ref}\ \{\boxed{0};\boxed{1};\boxed{6}\}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

- Lexical rules operating on and manipulating base structures (Andreou 2017; Bonami & Crysmann 2016; Koenig 1999)

- Descriptive rules: generalization over attestations and in consequence the lexicon

# Lexeme formation rule for ascriptive blends

$$
\text{lfr}\begin{bmatrix}
lexeme \\
\text{PHON } \boxed{X}!+\boxed{Y}! \\
\text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\[1em]
\text{SEM}\left(e_s\ \boxed{0}\begin{bmatrix} social\text{-}level\ event \\ \text{PARTICIPANT } \boxed{4} \\ \text{CO-PARTICIPANT } \boxed{5} \end{bmatrix},\ T_s\ \boxed{1}\begin{bmatrix} ascribed\ status_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{6}\begin{bmatrix} X_s\ \boxed{4}\ \oplus\ Y_s\ \boxed{5} \\ X_s\ \boxed{4}\begin{bmatrix} person_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{2}\ person_b \end{bmatrix} \\ X_s\ \boxed{5}\begin{bmatrix} person_s \\ \text{IMPL } \boxed{3}\ person_b \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}\right) \\[1em]
c\text{-}const\ (\boxed{2},\boxed{4})\ \wedge\ (\boxed{3},\boxed{5})\ \wedge\ (\boxed{6},\boxed{1})_{under\boxed{0}} \\[1em]
\text{M-BASE}\left\langle\begin{bmatrix} lexeme \\ \text{PHON } \boxed{X} \\ \text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\ \text{SEM } \boxed{2}\begin{bmatrix} person \\ \text{NAME } name \\ \dots \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix},\begin{bmatrix} lexeme \\ \text{PHON } \boxed{Y} \\ \text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\ \text{SEM } \boxed{3}\begin{bmatrix} person \\ \text{NAME } name \\ \dots \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}\right\rangle \\[1em]
\text{REF } \{\boxed{0};\boxed{1};\boxed{6}\}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

- Lexical rules operating on and manipulating base structures (Andreou 2017; Bonami & Crysmann 2016; Koenig 1999)

- Descriptive rules: generalization over attestations and in consequence the lexicon

# Summary & conclusion

- Personal name blends highly context-/world knowledge dependent
- Still, different readings connected in systematic, underspecified ways

- Social ontology and relation to basic ontology (or between types) allows for capturing ascriptive process crucial for interpretation
- Relation between a collection of individuals and status ascribed to them on basis of underlying social acts

- Seems that not very many ascriptive types possible
- Co-participation or symmetric relationship between predicate of social act and blend constituents necessary

# THANK YOU!

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# Similative blends

(1)  Seither nennt ihn das Satireblatt «**Sarkoléon**». […] Beide sind <u>klein gewachsen</u> […] und beide sind <u>gesellschaftliche Parvenus</u>, Anhänger der «Meritokratie»... (DeReKo)

'Since that time the satirical magazine has called him "Sarkoléon". Both are short in stature and both are parvenus, adherents of "meritocracy".'

$$
\left[
\left(
\text{o } \boxed{0}
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{NAME } Sarkozy \\
\ldots \\
\text{BODY HEIGHT } \boxed{2}
\begin{bmatrix}
short \\
\textcircled{C}_{s,Rel}(\boxed{2},\boxed{3}) \quad \simeq
\end{bmatrix} \\
\text{SOCIETAL STATUS } \boxed{4}
\begin{bmatrix}
parvenu \\
\textcircled{C}_{s,Rel}(\boxed{4},\boxed{5}) \quad \simeq
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
, \text{ o } \boxed{1}
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{NAME } Napoleon \\
\ldots \\
\text{BODY HEIGHT } \boxed{3} \; short \\
\text{SOCIETAL STATUS } \boxed{5} \; parvenu
\end{bmatrix}
\right) \\
\text{REF } \boxed{0}
\right]
$$

# Similative blends

$$
\text{lfr}
\begin{bmatrix}
lexeme \\
\text{PHON } \boxed{X}!+\boxed{Y}! \\
\text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\[2ex]
\text{SEM }
\begin{bmatrix}
\left(
\text{o } \boxed{0}!
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{ATTRIBUTE}_x \ \boxed{2}
\begin{bmatrix}
\alpha \\
\textcircled{C}_{s,Rel}(\boxed{2},\boxed{3}) \quad \simeq
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
, \ \text{o } \boxed{1}!
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{ATTRIBUTE}_x \ \boxed{3} \ \beta
\end{bmatrix}
\right)
\end{bmatrix} \\[6ex]
\text{M-BASE }
\left\langle
\begin{bmatrix}
lexeme \\
\text{PHON } \boxed{X} \\
\text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\
\text{SEM o } \boxed{0}
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{NAME } name \\
\ldots
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix},
\begin{bmatrix}
lexeme \\
\text{PHON } \boxed{Y} \\
\text{CAT } \text{N\_prop} \\
\text{SEM o } \boxed{1}
\begin{bmatrix}
person \\
\text{NAME } name \\
\ldots
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
\right\rangle \\[6ex]
\text{REF } \left\{ \boxed{0}!;\boxed{1}! \right\}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

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