1. Adverbs of quantification in conditional sentences are standardly held to take scope over the entire conditional and to be restricted by the if-clauses. Accordingly, (1a) is a mere 'stylistic variant' of (1b) and shares with it the logical structure paraphrased in (1c). This is assumed regardless of whether 'cases' are thought of as the closest possible antecedent worlds (e.g. Lewis 1973) or minimal antecedent situations (e.g. Berman 1987, Kratzer 1989) or whether usually is considered an unselective adverb (e.g. Lewis 1975) or a selective one (e.g. von Fintel 1994).

(1)

a. If a cat is dropped on the ground, it usually lands on its feet.

b. Usually, if a cat is dropped on the ground, it lands on its feet.

c. 'Most cases where a cat is dropped on the ground are such that the cat lands on its feet'

2. Despite its great success, the standard hypothesis regarding the quantificational structure of conditionals illustrated in (1c) also has some limitations: (I) it accords to the adverb in (1a) a place in the logical syntax that does not correspond to its place in the overt syntax (and which cannot easily be attributed to covert movement, which is not attested for quantificational adverbs). (II) it predicts that NPIs in the antecedent of conditionals should only be licensed in conditionals that contain adverbs of quantification that create downward entailing contexts (Ladusaw 1979). But as (2) shows, NPIs are not only licensed in conditionals containing never, always, which are downward entailing in their first argument, but also in those containing sometimes, often, whose restrictions are not downward entailing:

(2) If Doug reads anything interesting in the newspaper, he never/always/sometimes/often tells Sid about it.

3. (I) and (II) indicate the need for an account where quantificational adverbs only take scope over the consequent and where the antecedent restricts a separate quantifier that is downward monotonic in its restriction. These requirements are met—and compositionality is observed and NPI licensing explained—if conditional antecedents are plural definite descriptions, as argued in Schein (2001) (cf. Schlenker 2004). (1a) no longer has the structure rendered in (1c) but that in (3):

(3) 'The cases where a cat is dropped on the ground are such that most among them are such that the cat lands on its feet'

Following Schein (2001), we take cases to be events, which are individuated by their participants and the relations holding between them. We furthermore take the modal nature of conditionals (Stalnaker 1968, Lewis 1973) to indicate that conditionals describe possible events, a subclass of possible individuals. The licensing of NPIs in antecedents, among other things, indicates that antecedents constitute a downward entailing environment. Therefore, the fact that the consequent does not quantify over all antecedent cases cannot be due to a selection function or accessibility relation (Stalnaker 1968, Lewis 1973) restricting the domain of quantification of the antecedent, thereby making it non-monotonic. Rather, the elimination of abnormal and bizarre cases must take place elsewhere; it takes place in a tacit ceteris paribus condition sandwiched between the antecedent
and consequent (Schein 2001). The resulting logical form for (1a) is (4), which says that the possible events where a cat is dropped to the ground (a) are each followed by possible events (b) where those where everything was normal (c) are such that for most of them there is an event where the dropped cat lands on its feet (d).

\[
\begin{align*}
(4) & \quad [\exists x: \text{Cat}(x)] \to [\text{Is-dropped-to-ground}(x)] \quad (a) \\
& \quad [\forall e: E(e)] [\exists E': \exists (e') \land \forall e' (E'(e') \to \text{Follow}(e,e'))]] \quad (b) \\
& \quad [\exists E': \exists (e'') \land (E''(e'') \leftrightarrow E'(e')) \land \text{Ceteris-paribus}(e,e'')] \quad (c) \\
& \quad [\text{Most } e'' : E'(e'')] \quad (d)
\end{align*}
\]

5. What happens in a conditional that lacks an overt adverb of quantification? The same, we argue, that happens in other sentences lacking one: it has a covert one. It can be of the existential sort (Davidson 1967, Parsons 1990), resulting in an episodic reading, or of the universal sort, resulting in a generic reading (cf. Carlson 1977). Whether the tacit adverb is existential or universal depends on the tense/aspect/aktionsart of its verbal predicate. In the same way that in a simple sentence future or past tense eventive predicates can create ambiguity between a generic or episodic reading (see (5a)) and simple present eventive predicates force a generic reading (see (5b)), in a conditional sentence, too, future or past tense in the consequent can create ambiguity between a generic reading and an episodic one (see(6a)), while a present tense eventive predicate in the consequent forces a generic reading (see (6b)):

\[
\begin{align*}
(5) & \quad \text{a. Typhoons arose/will arise in this part of the Pacific. Generic/episodic} \\
& \quad \text{b. Typhoons arise in this part of the Pacific. Generic} \\
(6) & \quad \text{a. If I find a quarter on the street, I’ll give it to you. Generic/episodic} \\
& \quad \text{b. If I find a quarter on the street, I give it to you. Generic}
\end{align*}
\]

The difference between weak (or ‘one case’ Kadmon 1987) and strong conditionals thus reduces to genericity (Schubert and Pelletier 1989), in particular to whether the consequent of the conditional is episodic and contains a tacit existential adverb, \(\exists e''\) in (7d), or whether it is generic and has a universal one, \(\forall e''\) in (7d):

\[
\begin{align*}
(7) & \quad [\exists x: \text{Quarter}(x)] \to \text{Find}-\text{I-on-the-street}(x)] \quad (a) \\
& \quad [\forall e: E(e)] [\exists E': \exists (e') \land \forall e' (E'(e') \to \text{Follow}(e,e'))]] \quad (b) \\
& \quad [\exists E': \exists (e'') \land (E''(e'') \leftrightarrow E'(e')) \land \text{Ceteris-paribus}(e,e'')] \quad (c) \\
& \quad \exists e''/\forall e' : E'(e'')] \quad (d)
\end{align*}
\]

Generic consequents on this account have full universal force. The ‘tolerance to exception’ the conditionals containing them show is due to the preceding \textit{ceteris paribus} condition, which renders inconsequential for the consequents those antecedent events where not all things were or remained equal. We conclude by asking whether the tolerance to exceptions shown by non-conditional generic sentences like (5) can also be attributed to the presence of a tacit \textit{ceteris paribus} condition, which would suggest that if these sentences contain a tacit quantificational adverb, it is one with full universal force.

\textbf{Selected references:}
