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Germans from Different Places: Constructing a German Space in Urban Canada

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This paper deals with the role of the distinction between Germans from speech islands (the so-called *Volksdeutsche*) and Germans from Germany (the so-called *Reichsdeutsche*) in conceptualizing the German community in urban Canada. First, 64 interviews with members of this community were analyzed for stretches of talk in which that distinction was made relevant. Then, a subset of these was chosen for the analysis presented here. Our analysis of these six excerpts employs both conversation analysis and positioning theory in order to show how participants draw on various aspects of place, ethnicity, and time in constructing a German space in Canada and their own ethnic identities in connection with it.[*]

1. Introduction.

The "Germans" have been counted by census takers in Canada as one of the country's largest immigrant communities (Prokop & Bassler 2004). The unifying characteristics of this group have been well documented (Bassler 1998:86), encompassing shared behavior patterns such as patterns of settlement, adaptation, and interaction. As a group, however, they are far from homogeneous—they differ with respect to the amount

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of German they use in everyday life, with respect to their relationships to German cultural institutions both in their local communities and in Europe, and also with respect to characteristics of the immigrant experience such as length of time in Canada and their age of immigration. One of the most salient of these distinctions within the German-Canadian community is the one between those immigrants who came to Canada from Germany on the one hand, and native German-speaking immigrants who came to Canada from parts of Europe where German is a minority language on the other. In this paper, we explore the conversational negotiation of this distinction as it relates to the construction of a shared German-Canadian space in urban Canada.

Our method of analysis is based on conversation analysis and is therefore constructivist, which means that we analyze abstract concepts such as identity and space as discursively constructed in interaction (see, among others, Antaki & Widdicombe 1998, Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004) rather than as a series of fixed categories that can be quantified and tallied. In doing so, we are guided by a series of research questions:

(i) What role do different immigrant trajectories—that is, the distinction between Germans who came to Canada from Germany itself and those who came to Canada from outside the borders of that country—play in constructing distinctions within the German community in urban Canada? How are these concepts invoked and what are the interactional consequences?

(ii) In what ways are past or present European spaces mapped (or not mapped) onto the German space in Canada by indexing German ethnicity, immigrants' places of origin, or the German language, and how are these spaces transformed into a Canadian space?

(iii) What is the relationship between the construction of shared space and the construction of an individual immigrant's more or less authentically German identity?

In our analysis, we find that place, time, and ethnic identity are intricately linked through the ways in which community members position themselves with respect to a German space in Canada. In analyzing this

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positioning in a systematic and detailed way, we focus on the role of language through the linguistic and interactional details involved in it.

1.1. Germans from Germany and Germans from Speech Islands.
For more than a thousand years, streams of migrants flowed from the German lands in central Europe to Eastern European countries such as Russia, Romania, Hungary, and Poland. Although they took on the citizenships of their new countries, these groups largely maintained their German language and cultural practices. The German term most commonly used to refer to the people in these communities is *Volksdeutsche,* a term that is strongly associated with Adolf Hitler and his government's policies (Bergen 1994). During the Nazi period, this term was used to denote people living outside of Germany who did not have German citizenship but who were still categorized as linguistically and culturally German. The corresponding term *Reichsdeutsche* was used by analogy to distinguish those Germans who did live within the formal boundaries of Germany and did have German citizenship.

Due to at times exclusionary immigration policies in Canada, however, a large portion of the German speakers who migrated there over the course of the 20th century came not from Germany itself, but from these German-speaking enclaves in Eastern Europe (Prokop & Bassler 2004:8–9). Because of this, the distinction between speakers of German who came from Germany and those who came from different countries altogether becomes relevant in an immigrant context not only because of its history, but also for simple practical reasons. After all, the traditional question one asks an immigrant is not "What are you?" but "Where are you from?"—and this latter question implies not ethnicity, but origin and trajectory.

The language and culture a person grew up with are far from irrelevant in the construction of an immigrant identity, but it is difficult if not impossible for immigrants to put aside the aspect of their precise place of origin, especially when it comes to legal matters such as citizenship. A German speaker who immigrated to Canada from Romania comes with different cultural baggage and is therefore likely to be perceived differently from a German speaker who immigrated to Canada from Germany—and not just by fellow members of the German-speaking community, but by Canadian-born Canadians as well. Evoking the distinction between these groups in discussions of the Germans in

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Canada and one's own immigrant history therefore does not reflect the Nazi connotations of the difference between *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* so much as their German-Canadian immigrant reality.[1] At the same time, however, most German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada—and particularly the older generations who were themselves directly affected by the Second World War or the immediate post-war period—are aware of the Nazi history of the terms for this distinction and conscious of the ways in which the common terminology for it is therefore problematic.

In writing this paper, we, like our participants, wrestled with the question of how we might refer to these groups that are still so salient to many members of the German community in Canada without proliferating a painful and problematic Nazi ideology. It was also important to take into account the inadequate way the German terms for these groups have often been rendered in English: *Reichsdeutsche* is frequently translated as 'imperial Germans', which evokes imagery of royalty or monarchy rather than that of Hitler's 'Greater Germany'. *Volksdeutsche* is often rendered as 'ethnic Germans', which in an immigrant context carries the nonsensical contrastive implication that *Reichsdeutsche* are somehow not ethnically German.

In the end, we opted for the following. Since the *Volksdeutsche*, in fact, come from German-speaking speech islands contained within other European countries, we refer to this group by the geographic-sociolinguistic term GERMANS FROM SPEECH ISLANDS, and by analogy to the *Reichsdeutsche*—as GERMANS FROM GERMANY. These new terms substitute for, but do not correspond precisely to, the German terms, since they do not reflect the time frame in which the terms *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* originated. They do, however, clearly evoke the distinction our participants seem to be intending to make when they refer to

[1] In fact, it is unclear whether the terms are even used in the same way in the Canadian context as they were used in Nazi Germany, and if so, it is not merely the connotations but the actual denotations that differ between contexts. For example, a resident of Eastern Pomerania would certainly have been labeled a *Reichsdeutscher* in Nazi Germany due to that region's inclusion within the German *Reich* at the time, but it seems unlikely that the same individual would still be considered a *Reichsdeutscher* in a present-day Canadian context since that same region now forms parts of Poland and Russia.

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these groups since they refer directly to the place-of-origin categories that are relevant in making that distinction.

1.2. The Data.

Our data stem from a larger project about language use and identity in two German-speaking urban areas in Canada: Edmonton in western Canada and Kitchener-Waterloo in central Canada. For this project, a total of 64 audiotaped conversational interviews, each with between one and three participants, were conducted in 2007 and 2008 by a different native German-speaking research assistant in each area. Both interviewers were fluently bilingual female Ph.D. students in their twenties, and both had come from Germany to Canada for their studies within the four years prior to the start of the project. In Kitchener-Waterloo, almost all of the participants responded to a local newspaper article, in which the project was described and participation from German-speaking immigrants and their direct descendants was requested. In Edmonton, where the same newspaper article provoked little response, participants were recruited largely through the "friend-of-a-friend" method (see, for instance, Milroy 1980). In the resulting conversations, interviewees used either or both languages according to their preferences.

The 91 participants from Edmonton and Kitchener-Waterloo were of different ages and immigrant generations. Their immigrant backgrounds included Germany and German-speaking speech islands in Europe. The oldest first-generation immigrants were those who had immigrated in the 1950s and were of retirement age at the time of the interviews. Some second-generation, that is, born-in-Canada, immigrants were also of that age, though most were around 50 years old. A few older participants were of the so-called 1.5 generation, that is, they had immigrated to Canada with their parents as children. About a third of the total participants (most of whom came from the Edmonton corpus) were recent first-generation immigrants who arrived in Canada only in the 1990s and later.

2. Theory and Methodology.

This paper is concerned with the discursive construction of space in its link to place, time, and identity in this particular immigrant context. The concept of PLACE can be pinned down as a geographic location and is linguistically fixed by giving that location a name, the combination of

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which lends it a rather static character. From a constructivist perspective, however, this rather static concept can be seen to correspond to one that is less fixed, that is SPACE, which transforms place "from a static physical location into a dynamic social scene of (potential) action" (Stevenson & Carl 2010:33). This corresponds to de Certeau (1998:117), for whom space is "a practiced place," that is, place becomes space through the practices connected to it (see also Baynham 2003). On the one hand, this transformation of place into space can be "real" in the sense that it is an actually occurring process. For example, according to de Certeau, the practice of walking transforms the geometrically defined place of the street into a space. On the other hand, space can also be discursively constructed, and it is this construction that we focus on here.

In this paper, we investigate how these practices are linked to place, ethnic identity, and time, and serve as interconnected resources used in the construction of spaces. Of these, ETHNICITY is arguably the most central concept, since the construction of space in this context is about constructed cultural differences and commonalities. This understanding of ethnicity is based on Jenkins (2008:169), who defines ethnicity as "a matter of 'cultural' differentiation … and of shared meanings … produced and reproduced during interaction." Like Jenkins, we are interested in the "segmentary and hierarchical" nature of ethnicity, but in contrast to Jenkins, whose primary example is the Welsh in Wales, immigrant trajectories (that is, where an individual immigrant or family comes from) play an additional role in this immigrant situation in the construction of these segmentations and hierarchies. There is, then, also a nonlinear connection between ethnicity and nation, because while the ethnicity may be German, the country of origin might be Hungary, Romania, or Russia.

TIME, the third factor in this constellation of place, time, and ethnicity, includes several aspects. First, it refers to the historicity of labels—with the terms *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* as a prime example—that link to the construction of identities in the sense that these labels travel through time along with those who have been categorized in this way. Another aspect is the "salience of ethnicity within primary socialization … is likely to be a product of local contingencies of place and time" (Jenkins 2008:49). This alludes to the possibility that the construction of ethnic identity relies in important ways on local understandings of ethnicity, which may vary among different immigrant

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generations. Finally, "time" also refers to the fact that resources used to construct space such as ethnicity can vary from one moment to another across time; such resources are always negotiable.

In our understanding, space has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension includes the construction of hierarchies in the relationships between groups, which in a migrant context often consists of AUTHENTICATING DISCOURSE dealing with degrees of ethnic authenticity (Shenk 2007). The horizontal dimension involves the changing nature of space over time, or the narrated fixedness of space within a certain time period. Most importantly in the context of our data, it includes the different constructions of space by and of different generations of immigrants, and the connection of the past to the present. In light of our data and focus, then, the concepts of place, space, time, and ethnic identity can be further specified. Relevant places are the rather static, though individually different, geographic points of departure, to which we refer as PLACE OF ORIGIN, and the geographic points of arrival of immigrants and their descendants, to which we refer as PLACE OF LIVING. Participants can then construct the same place of origin as different spaces, and the same place of living (notably, one of the Edmonton and Kitchener-Waterloo areas) can also be constructed differently.

In both places of living, our specific interest lies in the construction of a German-Canadian community, an interest that is also reflected in the interviewers' questions. At the same time, however, these concepts also derive from our interview data and, as such, represent the interviewees' perspectives due to our close adherence to an emic analysis. This analysis as part of a conversation analytic approach (see, for instance, Goodwin & Heritage 1990) allows us to discover nuances in the construction of different spaces connected to the same place by different individuals. Conversation analysis uses the sequential nature of interaction to uncover the ways in which conversation participants employ linguistic and interactive tools to convey subtle shades of meaning. In using this approach, we can analyze the moment-by-moment construction of space by the same person as well as the co-construction and negotiation of space through the turn taking by different interactants.

In constructing a German space that involves certain categories and practices, then, individuals do not only present a picture of the community itself, but also of their own and others' positions within it. They

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do this by POSITIONING themselves and others through the use of grammatical and other elements within the language and interactive CONTEXTUALIZATION CUES (Gumperz 1982). By means of positioning, interactants make relationships to categories relevant (Harré & van Langenhove 1991, van Langenhove & Harré 1993, Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher 2009). In doing so, they highlight certain aspects of their IDENTITY, which we understand as a constructivist and interactive concept in the tradition of interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982) and membership analysis (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998). Through positioning, conversation participants do not only draw on available categories, but they also create and reevaluate them and establish relationships between them.

There are always new possibilities for the categories resulting from identification and categorization, despite the fact that the existence of linguistic terms for these categories gives us the illusion that they are static and immutable. Categories can be derived from place (for example, Siebenbürgen), linked to a national space (for example, Austria), ethnicity (for example, German), or language (for example, German speaking). In addition, categories can be associated with certain kinds of practice, such as cooking, and analyzed in ways that membership analysis has taught us. Several concepts and practices are used in the construction of a German space in Canada in the two focus communities and play a role in the excerpts discussed below.

As alluded to earlier, one way of constructing relationships between categories in a migrant setting such as the German-Canadian community is by indexing degrees of AUTHENTICITY in ethnic identity. For example, Shenk (2007) found that members of the Mexican-American community construct themselves and others as more or less authentically Mexican by exploiting three ideological constructs: purity of bloodline (that is, tracing back through the generations), purity of nationality, and Spanish linguistic fluency. However, while the construction of oneself as one ethnicity or another is always carried out by particular individuals in specific conversations, in a migrant context they necessarily have an impact on how the wider community is perceived as well. If a migrant constructs himself as authentically German as a result of his ethnic origins and his ability to speak the German language, for example, he is implying that those same ethnic origins and ability to speak German would make another migrant similarly authentic, and the absence of them would make

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her less authentic. The result is the discursive construction of the CENTER and PERIPHERY of the local German space. Giampapa (2004:193) describes the center as "a group of people who define and reproduce social, political, institutional, and linguistic norms and have access to symbolic capital and material resources." The periphery, then, consists of those who do not define, reproduce, and control that access.

As we discuss further below, the construction of space has to be understood as a local practice that may fulfill purposeful acts for an individual, such as the possibility of including oneself in a constructed space, or the reluctance to participate in a research study. In the end, the construction of space and positioning is never free of these local circumstances, neither with the qualitative analysis pursued here nor with any kind of quantitative analysis. The picture we present thus provides us with a glimpse of how people construct spaces in these circumstances and in these local contexts.

3. Analysis.

Our analysis consisted of two phases: the macro phase and the micro phase. In the macro phase, we carefully examined the entire corpus of data and identified all of the parts of each individual interview in which German spaces were discursively constructed. In comparing these stretches of talk, we noticed that in quite a number of them, the participants addressed the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands, sometimes in response to the interviewers' questions and other times without prompting. By choosing representative examples of these as excerpts for a closer analysis, it was our hope that a comparison would provide us with insights into how and why participants are constructing the German space this way. We, then, proceeded with the micro level of analysis, using a conversation analytic approach to analyze participants' positioning, as outlined above.

Three of the six excerpts in this paper come from interviews with retirement-age first generation immigrants, two come from interviews with members of the 1.5 generation, and one participant is a second-generation immigrant. No recent immigrants could be included since none of them addressed the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands. It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the way more recent immigrants construct the German space in Canada, but this is an interesting finding that in and of itself speaks

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volumes about which parts of the community still find this distinction relevant. Rather than presenting the excerpts according to generations in the analysis part of this paper, however, we organize them according to certain patterns in the construction of German spaces in Canada.

3.1. Constructing Germans from Germany and from Speech Islands.
The excerpts in this first section exemplify on a basic level the ways in which many of our participants construct the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands in terms of degrees of authentic ethnicity. In this first excerpt, Viola, who came to Edmonton from Cologne in Germany as a small child after the war, is talking with the Edmonton interviewer (IntE). The overall discussion in the stretch of conversation this comes from is about the German immigrant experience in Canada, but here she specifically digresses into the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands.[2]

Excerpt 1[3]
Viola:
1 and, even if you weren't (.) you know (.) german german (.) like you know
2 um (.) you know if you were volksdeutsch
IntE:
3 yeah.

[2] Pseudonyms are used instead of original names, and any other identifying information has been changed. Transcription conventions are as follows: German and English utterances are in normal type and English translations (where necessary) are in *italics* directly beneath them. The transcript differs from usual orthographic spelling. For instance, capitalization in the transcript is used to mark intensity. Rising intonation is indicated with a question mark, and falling intonation is indicated with a period. Unclear passages are marked with (single brackets) and commentary with ((double brackets)), while conversational overlap is indicated with [square brackets], and conversational noises such as laughter with {curly brackets}. Pauses lasting a beat (.) or two (..) are indicated as shown; longer pauses are indicated in seconds.

[3] The change in the transcription conventions of the excerpts was made for reasons of space.

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Viola:
4 to be volksdeutsch {laughter} and the germans look down on the
5 volksdeutsche
IntE:
6 yeah.
Viola:
7 and this hieRARchical rank.
IntE:
8 yeah.
Viola:
9 is something that i, do not believe in (.) and i think it's it's (.) in canada (.)
10 it's there.

The distinction between the two groups is expressed first in lines 1–2. The doubling of the term *German* in reference to Germans from Germany (by contrast with *Volksdeutsch* in line 2) is an example of contrastive focus reduplication, which is used in English to contrast a more authentic form of something with a less authentic one (Ghomeshi et al. 2004). In this case, the more authentic form is *German German* and the less authentic form is *volksdeutsch*. The effect of this contrast is that it establishes the Germans from Germany as the center, that is, the more authentic members of the community, while moving the Germans from speech islands toward the periphery. This effect is further reinforced in Viola's following turn, in which she repeats the term *volksdeutsch* and punctuates it with laughter, possibly indicating her nervousness around the term in general, a nervousness that is also indicated through her hesitation (the repeated *you know* and the pauses) in using the term in lines 1–2. She then goes on to make yet another contrast between the two groups, stating that it is the more authentic *Germans* who look down on the less authentic *Volksdeutsche*. Characterizing the group of Germans from Germany as *Germans* has a similar effect to the prior contrastive focus reduplication, that is, it conveys that their ethnicity is somehow more authentically German than that of their speech island counterparts.

In Viola's final turn, then, she ties this distinction directly to the construction of space by specifying that particularly in Canada the hierarchy between these groups is relevant. This conversational move transports the historical and European-specific concepts of Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands to the Canadian context and

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relabels them as something specific to German-speaking Canada, thereby connecting the horizontal dimension of these outdated terms as a part of European history with the vertical dimension of a hierarchical distinction in the German-Canadian space that is still very relevant today. Also of interest in terms of the construction of space is the use of the descriptive terms in their adjectival forms *German German* and *volksdeutsch* rather than the equivalent noun forms. By phrasing the distinction this way, Viola can position these groups as tied not to any one particular place, but solely to German ethnicity, which is not place-of-origin-specific.

Viola, therefore, never explicitly names places of origin of immigrants, but instead implicitly distinguishes between two kinds of places linked to her use of terminology: those outside of Germany and Germany itself. By contrast, a different immigrant, Gerda, in her interview with the Waterloo interviewer (IntW), begins the next excerpt by mentioning the role of place in constructing degrees of authenticity in German ethnic identity (and in turn the center and periphery of the German space). Gerda is of retirement age and immigrated to Canada from Berlin when she was 35 years old.

Excerpt 2

Gerda:

1 ja es sind viele die nicht richtig deutsche sind die sind zugereist von rumänien
yeah there are a lot who are not really germans who came here from romania

2 oder eh you know from different [countries
or uh

IntW:

3 [ja sie meinen volksdeutsche?
[*yeah you mean germans from speech islands?*

4 [und so?
[*and that sort of thing?*

Gerda:

5 [ja (.) ja ja
[*yeah* (.) *yeah yeah*

6 und ich bin ja berlinerin (.2) [da sind
and you know i'm from berlin (.2) [*there aren't*

IntW:

7 [mhmh

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Gerda:
8 nicht ZUviele hier [(.) und viele sind eben (.)
TOO many of those here [(.) *and many are just*
IntW:
9 [ja
[*yeah*
Gerda:
10 süddeutschland (.) norddeutschland oder (.)
southern germany (.) *northern germany or* (.)
11 [andere countries
[*other*
IntW:
12 [ja
[*yeah*
((lines omitted))
IntW:
28 ja ehm (.2) hören sie denn auch SPRACHliche unterschiede
yeah um (.2) *do you also hear LANGuage differences*
29 wenn sie einen volksdeutschen haben mit
when you have a german from a speech island with
30 einem [(wie was) wie ist das
a [*(how what) how is that*
Gerda:
31 [ja die haben diaLEKT
[*yeah they have DIAlect*
IntW:
32 achso
oh
Gerda:
33 dialekt
dialect
IntW:
34 fällt ihnen fällt ihnen das sehr auf oder w::
is that really noticable to you or w::
Gerda:
35 mh: man gewöh:nt sich dran
mh: you get used to it

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Although she does not label them, Gerda first evokes the category of Germans from speech islands in the first three lines by referencing their place of origin, and it is this place of origin that is said to imply that they are less authentic (*not really Germans)*. Yet it is not just the past that is affected by this place of origin, but also the present, since through the use of the present tense this group is described as being not only less authentically German *originally* but also still less German *now*. As in excerpt 1, this formulation has the additional effect of placing them further toward the periphery of the German-Canadian space today. It also taps into the horizontal dimension of space in that it conveys the way past trajectories still influence present identities.

However, in the next few lines, this distinction becomes more complex. It is the interviewer who first introduces the term *Volksdeutsche* into the conversation, but Gerda's repeated *yes* confirmations in line 5 leaves no doubt that it is in fact the speech-island group that Gerda had been referring to. In lines 2 and 11, she connects this group directly with what defines them as less authentically German in the Canadian context, that is, a place of origin that is outside of Germany and a trajectory that still influences the current construction of a German-Canadian space. However, by using the English paraphrase *from different countries* to refer to the Germans from speech islands in line 2 (which she reinforces again in line 11), she both avoids the problematic term *Volksdeutsche* and more strongly ties this construction to the way immigrants are routinely described in a primarily English-speaking space.

In line 7, Gerda sets Germans from speech islands against the category to which she belongs: that of Germans from Berlin, and, by implication, that of Germans from Germany. She describes this group as the local minority, with the majority group consisting of northern and southern Germans, and those with places of origin in other countries. By doing this, she not only projects the European space onto the German-Canadian space, but also devises hierarchies within the latter that are largely based on numbers. In line 31, however, language becomes an issue. When she talks about the two groups' differing dialects, both Gerda's verb choice (suggesting that the Germans from speech islands *have dialect* as a sort of cultural possession) and the use of the demonstrative pronoun *die*—which automatically sets up a contrast with the opposing group: the Germans from speech islands "have dialect," but her own group does not—have the effect of constructing Germans from

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speech islands as less authentically German and relegating them to the periphery of the community.

3.2. Conflicting Constructions of Time, Place, and Space.
In this section, two excerpts are presented that stand in contrast to each other. This contrast comes mainly from the way in which different relationships to places are invoked in order to construct different degrees of authentic Germanness. As a result of this, as well as through establishing different temporal links, different spaces are constructed. In excerpt 3 below, the Edmonton interviewer is talking with Ulla and her husband Nino, who are both of retirement age. Ulla emigrated in 1950 from a German-speaking area in Poland, and she met Nino in Canada. Nino grew up in a German-speaking area in Hungary and then moved to Austria before coming to Canada. This part of the conversation takes place at the beginning of an interview in which Nino is reluctant to participate. Here the interactants negotiate Nino's "Germanness" in which time, place, and space are central.

Excerpt 3

Nino:
1 well there's a GERMAN from russia historical society (.) meeting at uh,
2 saint uh, young lutheran church in the basement.
((lines omitted))
Nino:
8 that's uh where we have a christmas party at the (.) german from overseas (.)
9 like, I'M not a german i'm (.) i lived in, twelve years in hungary,
IntE:
10 hm=hm.
Nino:
11 and ten years in vienna.
IntE:
12 hm=hm.
Nino:
13 what in vienna [is ( )
Ulla:
14 [but you're a GERMAN, WAY back, [my dear.
Nino:
15 [oh yeah my- (.)

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16 seven hundred years ago, they came from bavaria into hungary.
IntE:
17 THAT'S still a [german {laughter}
Ulla:
18 [{laughter} you had a german name, you're all german dear.
19 (1.0)
Nino:
20 so uh, if you want some questions just uh, then i help you out, but i don't feel
21 i (myself properly) know (.) have some input (.) if you want me to.

At the beginning of the excerpt, Nino volunteers the information that they regularly go to the *German from Russia Historical Society*. In line 8, however, he uses the formulation *German from overseas,* which seems to refer to the same society. There are two possible interpretations of this. First, by equating these two, he may be implying that only Germans from Russia are from overseas, thereby positioning them as more foreign than other German groups and thus further from the center. Second, he may be aligning with the Canadian perspective and defining all European Germans as *Germans from overseas*. In either interpretation, however, he is distancing himself from these groups. This corresponds to his more direct positioning of himself outside of the group of Germans in line 9, when he is quick to point out that he is not German himself, and the readiness with which he does this suggests that he does not want to be considered German in any way. By formulating his ethnic identity in terms of nationality rather than the language he speaks or his ancestry he leaves open the possibility that he is not part of a German national group even though he speaks German.[4] This challenges his wife's construction of a German space in Canada as resulting from multiple European places of origin but unified largely through a common ethnicity (and perhaps a common language). In justifying his non-Germanness, Nino refers to Hungary and Vienna as the places where he grew up. Within a construction of German space that rests largely on language as a unifying

[4] Later in the interview, his wife attests that he speaks German very well, in fact, better than she does. Interestingly, Nino's German ability never enters the discussion, which lends weight to the argument that language proficiency is less important than ethnic identity and place of origin in constructing Nino's Germanness.

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feature, these are places that could just as easily be used to argue for rather than against Germanness since both Austria and the Hungarian-German speech island are German-speaking. Nino, however, rejects language as a basis for a common ethnicity, and by associating himself with places outside of Germany also rejects the label of German for himself.

Starting with line 14, then, his German connection is discursively constructed by both Ulla and the interviewer. To position him within the German group, Ulla reminds him of his German ancestry by using time and a presumed, but not formulated, German place of origin clearly referencing the immigration out of the original European German space. While he admits to this ancestry, Nino makes it a matter of history long past and distances himself from this group through deixis in line 16 by saying *they came*. This has the effect of foregrounding the outdatedness of his German connection and gives preference to time over place in the construction of a German space in Canada. In doing so he is contesting the ideology according to which one finds his or her roots in the place of origin of his or her ancestry, an ideology that potentially allows the construction of any space on the basis of the place of origin by assuming travelling identities. Rather, Nino is arguing that the origin is outdated and that place relates to a temporary space limited by the time frame of the self-experienced place of living. Based on that construction, Nino is Hungarian and Austrian. In line 17, the interviewer rejects Nino's argument by positioning him as authentically German by ancestry as his wife had done before, although her laughter suggests that she does this not in an entirely serious way. His wife then provides another factor for positioning him as authentically German by reminding him of his German name in line 18. Since she formulates this in the past tense, he may have given up his German name when coming to Canada, a further indication that he does not want to be associated with Germanness in Canada.

In excerpt 4 below, place is again an important factor in the construction of identity through positioning. Here, however, it is used in a very different way from Nino's constructions of place of living versus place of origin. In addition, a hierarchical relationship between Germans from speech islands and Germans from Germany is created in excerpt 4 through the formulation of stereotypical images and their construction by different generations. The Waterloo interviewer is talking to Sven here, who is of retirement age. He was born in Canada to parents who immi-

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grated in the late 1920s from the Ukraine and Siebenbürgen, an area located in Romania and Hungary.

Excerpt 4

IntW:
1 sagen ihnen denn die begriffe volksdeutsche reichsdeutsche etwas?
are you familiar with the terms volksdeutsche reichsdeutsche?
Sven:
2 [not that I'm aware of
IntW:
3 [are you f:amiliar [with
Sven:
4 [although (.) although I can remember my mother saying
5 that she felt the the reichsdeutsche were sort of snooty.
IntW:
6 aha okay [aha
Sven:
7 [they they had a higher opinion of themselves.
IntW:
8 wissen sie was reichsdeutsche sind also [sagt ihnen das (was)?
do you know what reichsdeutsche are i mean [*are you familiar with that?*
Sven:
9 [oh yes
IntW:
10 ja also das ist ihnen schon [ja
yeah so that actually is [*yeah*
Sven:
11 [oh ja
[*oh yeah*
IntW:
12 [aha
Sven:
13 [ehm (.) my uncle (.) my great uncle Jakob's wife was from germany.
IntW:
14 ja.
Sven:
15 she had a bit of a superiority attitude.

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IntW:
16 ah [okay
Sven:
17 [my father's best friend's wife was also from germany (.) his best friend
18 was not. (.) she also ha- had a high opinion of herself.
IntW:
19 [ah okay
Sven:
20 [but ehm you knew it.
IntW:
21 ist ihnen das selber auch mal aufgefallen oder war das mehr so in
did you notice that yourself or was it more like that in
22 der generation ihrer eltern dass [das ein unterschied?
the generation of your parents that [*that was a difference?*
Sven:
23 [it was that generation (.) yah.
24 [that that was there
IntW:
25 [also in DER generation gabs den unterschied sozusagen?
[*so in THAT generation there was that difference so to speak?*
Sven:
26 ja.
yes.
IntW:
27 ihnen selber ist das nicht bewusst geworden?
you yourself didn't become aware of it?
Sven:
28 no. (.)
IntW:
29 ja. (.) obwohl ihre familie selber dann auch volksdeutsch also sie haben ja
yeah. (.) although your family themselves were also germans from speech
30 volksdeutschen hintergrund sozusagen.
islands i mean you have a german from speech island background so to speak.
Sven:
31 hmm.
IntW:
32 assoziieren sie dann (.) assoziieren sie dann deutschland als ihr heritage
so do you associate (.) do you associate german as your heritage

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33 oder assoziieren sie dann eher siebenbürgen und und die ukraine ihr heritage
or do you tend to associate siebenbürgen and and the ukraine your heritage
34 [als ihr erbe
[*as your heritage*
Sven:
35 [certainly not ukrainian uhm we we have never considered ourselves
36 rumanian.uh: (.) and none of the no, I don't think any of the customs eh
37 coming from the siebenbürgen area (.) uhm (.) among the german enclave
38 are romanian (.) other than well I'm not sure {laughter} a couple of things
39 in their cooking [I think
IntW:
40 [achso (.) hmm.
[*oh*
Sven:
41 uh but no it was, they considered themselves german. completely german,
42 that's what they considered themselves. and that's what we felt they were as
43 well.

In lines 4–5, Sven cites his mother's negative stereotypical image of Germans from Germany.[5] He then provides his own examples that reflect this same image. He also indicates the importance of the group distinction by interrupting the flow of his turn in line 18 to point out that a very important relationship of his father's was not with a German from Germany. Thus, while he attributes these images to the previous generation in order to create a hierarchy (see lines 23–24, 26, and 28), he uses them himself to construct an outgroup that is essentially distinguished only by place—Germans from Germany—and which he relegates to the periphery of the German space in Canada.

In contrast to Nino in the previous example, when Sven is asked about his heritage and that of his group in lines 32–34, he rejects any connection to the non-German part of his parents' preimmigrant places of living: The *customs,* that is, cultural practices, of the *German enclave* are constructed as German rather than Romanian. This has the effect of constructing his family's place of origin, which is outside of Germany, as part of the German space in Europe, and therefore as equally

[5] Sven seems to have some difficulties understanding the interviewer's German in this excerpt, though this does not influence our overall interpretation.

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authentically German. Sven first includes himself as part of the referenced *heritage* group through the "we" in line 35. He then shifts to more distancing formulations such as *German enclave* in line 38 and *their cooking* in line 39. He positions himself even further away from this group by formulating who they are in line 41 and, by implication, what he is not: *they considered themselves german*. Through the use of the past tense, he assigns the immigrant generation a space of the past, and through pronoun deixis, he positions himself outside of that group.

Eventually, he presents this immigrant generation in line 43 as divorced from his own generation by defining his own contrastive group in terms of a different perspective: *that's what we felt they were as well*. Although the reference for *we* is not stated explicitly, it seems to index his own second generation of immigrants by contrasting them with a different group. Here, again, he uses the past tense in *we felt they were* instead of *we feel they are*. This indicates that he delineates the "German-Canadian" space along different generations and wants to see himself as separate, though the images and hierarchies are still projected by him as well.

3.3. An Authentic Diversified Unity without Center and Periphery.
Excerpts 5 and 6 in this section contain examples of the construction of an entirely authentic German-Canadian space in which both Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands play a role, but where unity as opposed to distinctiveness is emphasized. The interviewee in this excerpt is Hans, a retirement-age immigrant who grew up in Germany's Thuringia but was born in Poland, and who came to Canada in the 1950s as a young adult.

Excerpt 5

IntW:

1 halten sie sich mehr an deutsche oder mehr an kanadische (feiertage)
do you stick more to german or more to canadian (holidays)

Hans:

2 well also an die feiertage drehen sich alles um die kirche und und weil wir zur
well well when it's the holidays everything is about churchand and because we
3 deutschen gemeinde gehören nicht wahr alles deutsche leute
belong to a german congregation right it's all german people

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IntW:
4 hm=hm.
Hans:
5: die die deutschen leute kommen aus dreizehn
the the german people come from thirteen
6 verschiedenen ländern der europas
different countries of europe
((lines omitted))
13 und äh die die leute obwohl die äh von den verschiedenen
and uh the the people even though they uh come from the different
14 gegenden kommen äh sprechen sie äh viele dialekte
regions uh they speak uh many dialects
IntW:
15 ja.
yeah.
Hans:
16 aber alles deutsch.
but all german.

In line 3, in response to a question about German or Canadian holidays, Hans describes both his church and the people who belong to it as German. Then he states that *these German people come from 13 different countries of Europe,* thereby creating a common space of authentic German ethnicity for this group of people in Canada, even though their places of origin in Europe are different. By indexing this diversity, Hans draws attention to the process by which a unified authentic German-Canadian space is constructed in this church. After all, if different places are considered as contributing to differences in identities, the mention of this relatively large number of places demands respect by the listener, and if Hans has successfully constructed the unity-through-diversity of the community, this indicates that he takes a certain pride in this process and in the diversity. In this group description, such a large number of countries must include people from German speech islands and not just Germany, but Hans does not articulate this distinction. Instead of being indicative of differences in authenticity, the places of origin are simply indications of different trajectories and have no further value for Hans in this new space in Canada.

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In disregarding the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands, he also essentially disregards the distinction between a center and periphery. Rather, he makes the whole of Europe the reference point for Germanness, that is, the center. Constructing the space this way has an impact on Hans' own positioning. With Poland as his own place of origin, that country is included among the 13 countries of Europe that he mentions. Hans is, therefore, able to position himself alongside those from the other 13 countries in the new space he is constructing, all of which are equally authentically German in a Canadian context. Since there is no distinction between center and periphery, he is able to position himself undeniably as an equal, and as authentically German.

Besides place of origin, in lines 13–14 Hans mentions another criterion that makes this group of *German people* diverse: they speak different dialects. However, in line 16 Hans is quick to unify this diversity again by adding their common ethnic Germanness once more: *but all German*. It is striking here that he does not use an adjective to designate the ethnic Germanness of the language or the people but uses instead a general description referring to some kind of ethnic Germanness that does not specifically say what or who is *all German*. By doing this, he creates a general space of authentic Germanness in which, again, he is able to include himself by disregarding a center and a periphery among the local German community.[6]

The final example also comes from the Waterloo corpus, and it also provides evidence for the unity-through-diversity construction of the German space in Canada that Hans evokes in excerpt 5. Excerpt 6 comes from an interview with a retirement-age immigrant named Franz. He belongs to the 1.5 generation because he came to Canada with his parents at the age of 7.

[6] There are other examples in the data where the use of "German" as a nationality description is changed. For example, within the same turn *deutsche bekannte* 'German acquaintances' is reworded as *bekannte, die deutsch sprachen* 'acquaintances who spoke German'.

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Excerpt 6

IntW:
did it [that is, the distinction between "Volksdeutsche" und "Reichsdeutsche"]
ever matter here in canada? like did for example you ever
Franz:
no, no just everybody was painted with the same color with the same
brush.
IntW:
{laughter}
Franz:
it was german.
IntW:
yah.
Franz:
that's it. finished.
IntW:
yah. also among the germans basically did you ever feel there is a
difference?
Franz:
no, no because everybody came from another place.
IntW:
hmhm
Franz:
yah, they were under the german label. because they felt that they eh
probably just like us you know were german. ok yah we lived in other
countries. but our ties were still to germany.
IntW:
yah
Franz:
the support was to germany. ehm we had a strong nationalistic feeling to
germany even though the times were as terrible as what they were you,
know that was still. you didn't see that part. and here in canada they either
came from holland, hungary, yugoslavia, russia or they come from
lithuania or some other place that was all a mish-mash that they were all
under the german
IntW:
hm hm

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Franz:
you know. i no i never at least i never realized it you know (.) oh well, you
are not a reichsdeutsche, you weren't born- you were born in germany
but your parents should have been born there too (.)
IntW:
hm hm
Franz:
it didn't seem to come up at all.
((lines omitted))
IntW:
also not a ling- like a language difference that people spoke different.
Franz:
no, no. yeah we knew that other people like from austria they they spoke
with an austrian dialect. that was it.
IntW:
hm hm
Franz:
they spoke with an austrian dialect.
IntW:
he he
Franz:
that was not a not an issue for austrians for swiss or hungarians we knew
a number of hungarians in pembroke they were everybody was the same
you know
IntW:
hm hm
Franz:
only when you got in contact (.) oh well we are hungarians, or we are
or we are yugoslavians, or hm Czech
IntW:
you mean as germans we are yeah ok hm hm
Franz:
in pembroke in canada here you know. i only found out eh that some friends
that my parents knew eh for the longest time i only found out that they were
czech.
IntW:
oh yah.

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Franz:
53 yah. they came from the sudetenlands.
IntW:
54 ah ja sudentenland ah ja.
oh yeah sudentenland oh yeah.
Franz:
55 en they were germans.
IntW:
56 hm hm
Franz:
57 as far as i was concerned they were germans ehm
IntW:
58 even nowadays like you you don't recognize differences
59 between the different german immigrants here or do you?
Franz:
60 no
IntW:
61 no

At first glance, similarly to Hans in excerpt 5, Franz makes the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands relevant by constructing a unified authentic German space in Canada rather than emphasizing the distinctions within that space. However, numerous nuances suggest that the matter is somewhat more complicated than he initially lets on. For example, through the passive voice in line 3, *everybody was painted the same color with the same brush*, he conveys the lack of importance of the distinction as originating not within the German community but outside of it, with the external authoritative voice of English-speaking Canadians who gave all Germans the same label. In line 11, then, Franz evokes the different places of origin of community members as one reason for why it did not make a difference: If absolutely everyone was from different places, then the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands could not actually lead to differences in authenticity within the community. To underscore this point, he then elaborates further on what exactly unified this diverse group of people: their connection to Germany (lines 15, 17–18). At the point where he evokes the concept of a speech-island German category most strongly, he does so with the voice of an

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imaginary outsider (lines 24–26), that is, with the voice of someone who did not actually say these things to him. Even there, this voice does not tell him what he is, but what he is not. All this seems to suggest that Franz is constructing this community as one without differences, and by doing so he constructs a general authentic German space emerging from multiple places of origin, which is only possible in an immigrant context.

Although Franz consistently characterizes the community as unified, this characterization becomes more complex starting in line 36. He begins by using Austrians as an example of a group that might speak differently but states that this difference did not matter either to Austrians or to other groups, such as the Swiss or Hungarians. Yet, in lines 46–47, Franz conveys that once you *get in contact* with people, these people let on that their identity is more complex than just German. More contact, therefore, produces a more nuanced picture of people's identities and thus a more diversified German space. Interestingly, Franz does not portray himself as the author of the contributions from the Germans from speech islands in lines 46–47, but merely as their animator, expressing these people as saying *we are hungarians, we are yugoslavians* and *we are czech*, and in doing this, he uses the noun forms that are simultaneously laden with connotations of national origin and ethnic origin. The use of these nation-specific ethnic identity terms could be interpreted as denying the Germans from speech islands a German connection, but the apparent incongruity of those terms and the Germanness he is attributing to them does not occur to Franz. This only lends weight to his construction of a specifically Canadian authentic German space with multiple European places of origin.

In fact, within the unity Franz constructs, specific places of origin have no importance in evaluating degrees of authentic ethnic identity. The commonality, despite different places of origin in Europe, is a certain tie to Germanness—a tie that is very broadly conceived, since even Austria becomes part of this authentic German space merely because of the German language. Franz seems to be assuming that there is a common German space in Europe that is similar to the ways that he constructs a German space in Canada: The place of origin does not matter; what counts is the German connection. This space is not lost even when a non-German national identification (Czech, Hungarian, etc.) is assigned as the main identification of Germans from speech islands: they are still part of the German space. This effect of this construction is

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twofold. Consciously or not, Franz gives precedence to Germanness as a national and linguistic space over the place or non-German nationalities and possibly languages. Thus, he recreates a German space in Europe that is more historical than current, and, in fact, conflicts with current notions of Germanness and national boundaries. For his own personal positioning, this implies that he can always claim German ancestry (and an authentic German identity) for himself, no matter where he grew up.

4. Conclusion.

As we have seen in the examples presented here, the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands is a salient one among German-Canadians of the older first, 1.5, and second generations. More often than not, this distinction is invoked by the participants themselves without the interviewer's prompting. At the same time, though, it is often implied through the mention of places rather than directly formulated, and when specific formulations are used, the terms *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* are often marked as problematic, for example, through hesitation, reformulation, or a search for alternatives.

Similarly, problematic at times was the use of terms indicating German as a national category, which resulted in a search for alternative unifying categories such as German ethnicity, or ties to the common German language. In one case, this even resulted in the rather marked inclusion of Austria as part of a German national category, which in a European German context would automatically evoke frightening images of Hitler's Greater Germany, but which takes on a much more benign meaning when referring to the Canadian German space.

The vertical dimension of space plays a role in the construction, through the concepts of center and periphery, both of differing degrees of authenticity in individual migrant identities and of a German space in Canada. However, there is little agreement about what constitutes these. This is a finding that starkly differs from Giampapa's (2004) findings of a common projected—though negotiated and contested—center among Italian-Canadians. In our interviews, we encountered contrasting descriptions of hierarchies and relationships, and no clearly defined and universally accepted center and periphery emerged. In some cases throughout our data, Germans from Germany were constructed as representing the center; yet in other cases, Germans from German speech islands were represented at the center. In two excerpts, no center and periphery were

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constructed at all. This does not mean that there is no hierarchical organization of this community, however, but that the lines between different places of origin and conceptualizations of majority and minority are not clear enough to reach common agreement about that hierarchy. It is also striking that the three ideological constructs identified by Shenk (2007) as playing a role in constructing degrees of authenticity in ethnic identities were also found here: purity of bloodline, purity of nationality, and the German language.

Even aside from issues of authenticity, we found space to be generally linked to ethnic identity. This was not only because participants' individual positionings served, in turn, to construct the German space in Canada. The reverse was also true: The ways in which participants construct spaces could be shown to have an impact on their own positioning within that space. In one excerpt, for example, the creation of a unified space with no differences between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands was used to include the speaker as part of this nonhierarchical space. In another excerpt, a speaker constructed a unified space, and in doing so, positioned himself as a part of a new generation. However, this speaker did this only by using the images and space constructions of the previous generation. This seems to imply that constructions of spaces tied to an earlier time and to immigrants' place of origin continue to inform the immigrant space in the place of living.

Despite the differing conceptions of the German space in relation to the distinction between Germans from Germany and Germans from speech islands, however, it is clear that participants always evoke the same elements to construct that space: place, ethnicity, and time. As de Certeau's (1988) model of place and space suggests, space is evoked through the practices related to a certain place. In this paper, this evocation of space always includes a conception of German ethnicity, even though this conception may vary from one participant to the next, and place—both in terms of places of origin (especially as compared with other migrants' places of origin) and places of living. However, time also seems to have a lasting influence on the construction of a German space by these generations of German-Canadians in at least three respects. First, time is relevant in tracing the German ethnic ancestry so essential to claiming authentic Germanness for oneself or anyone else. Second, in that individuals' past, immigrant trajectories have an impact on how the community is constructed now. Finally, the shadow of history not only

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has an impact on which terms are used to describe distinctions within the space, but also which distinctions are automatically evoked by those terms. All three of these seem to be integral elements in constructing a German space in Canada.

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