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## ***Sosúa heute / Sosúa Today:* A Post-Place Community Connected by a Shared History**

### **1. Introduction**

Sosúa is a small city at the Dominican Republic's Northern coast, which was founded in the early 1940s to support a group of Jewish refugees escaping persecution by the national socialists during the German Third Reich. The history and socioeconomic development of this settlement has been well documented,<sup>1</sup> but only few studies have considered the sociolinguistic character and the current development of this group.<sup>2</sup> While few members of the community still reside in Sosúa permanently, it seems that the shared history, upbringing, and similar migration experiences have formed a community that is multi- / trilingual, interconnected, and identifies with Sosúa and its linguistic heritage.

This essay serves two major purposes: first, to provide more insights into the language use in Sosúa from its establishment until the present day based on oral history interviews, and second, to show that the concept of "post-place community"<sup>3</sup> may be fruitfully integrated into sociolinguistic approaches since the group defies traditional notions of "*Sprachinsel*" because most group members no longer (permanently) reside in Sosúa. In sociology, it is argued that people nowadays typically do not find a sense of community in their place of residence (e.g. town or neighborhood) but instead develop communities based on shared interests, beliefs or experiences that are no longer tied to a particular place. We believe that adopting this theory into

sociolinguistics is worthwhile and provide a description of the unique make-up of this group, while simultaneously arguing for a broader approach for defining communities in the wake of post-vernacular and post-place groups and identity construction.

## **2. Summary of Sosúa's history and development**

The city of Sosúa, located at the north coast of the Dominican Republic, has a special history which is often overlooked by the average tourist that frequents its popular hotels, bars, and restaurants. It was originally founded as an agricultural commune for Jewish refugees escaping Europe during the Third Reich and saved more than 750 lives.<sup>4</sup> During the conference of Evian in 1938, delegates from more than 32 countries met to discuss the fate of Jewish people and other minorities under the prosecution of the Nazi regime. Despite the horrendous situation, the results of the conference were disappointing, as only one country offered to open its borders for large-scale immigration efforts. This country was the Dominican Republic, represented by its controversial dictator, Raphael Trujillo. Trujillo himself had ordered the murder of 20,000 Haitians, and his offer to accept up to 100,000 Jewish refugees has been argued to be an attempt of polishing his image internationally, while also being at least partially motivated by the idea of “whitening” the Dominican population. Nonetheless, or due to a lack of other options, the plan was set in motion and a committee led by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (or JDC) began to prepare for an agricultural commune to be founded in Sosúa. Land was acquired for this project, and applicants were “recruited” often from labor camps in the German Third Reich. Because of the strict requirements (preferably young, unmarried, physically fit people with knowledge in the agricultural sector), the number of approved visas was rather low. At the same time, the beginning of the war made travel across the ocean increasingly difficult and dangerous for those who had received a visa to settle in the Dominican Republic. Out of the first 2,000 approved applicants, only 54 eventually arrived in Sosúa in 1941.<sup>5</sup>

In the first years, the agricultural aspirations to grow crops were unsuccessful and only a switch to dairy farming and the production of cheese and butter brought economic success. The community slowly grew with more settlers arriving from Europe and Shanghai, and new institutions were founded by the settlers with funds from the Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA). Among these were a synagogue, a school, a theater, and a hospital, so that the community was self-sufficient and even started employing locals in certain sectors. However, when the United States opened its borders to immigrants again after the end of the war, many families took the opportunity to leave the Dominican Republic. Some families

kept vacation homes or businesses and regularly returned to Sosúa. In the following decades, Sosúa grew in size and became a popular tourist town with a lively red-light district and party scene. The German-Jewish heritage of the town is still represented with the synagogue and museum as well as some street signs, but most community members have moved to the United States or other countries (Argentina, Israel, Germany). Nonetheless, there seems to be a sense of community and identification with the shared history and heritage by community members, which will be shown in more detail in the next sections.

### **3. Beyond the *Sprachinsel* – theoretical considerations**

Given the special history of Sosúa and the complex linguistic situation, a first challenge is to find a suitable theoretical framework with which the group and its current language use can be described and analyzed: While it is a group of mainly German-speaking origin, the linguistic situation has been more complex since the beginning, with other Eastern European languages being spoken in the group, albeit to a lesser extent. From an identificatory perspective, the context of persecution, escape and Jewish diaspora in the Americas plays a major role, even if religious practices never played a central role in the group.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, the question of whether there is a single group to be studied at all arises.

In the following, we approach these problems from a starting point of language island studies and the Verticalization Model of language shift, before proposing the concept of “post-place community” as a means of encompassing non-local groups of speakers like Sosúa.

#### *3.1. Language islands and Verticalization*

The concept of *Sprachinsel*<sup>7</sup> has traditionally been often used to describe German-speaking groups which migrated from German-speaking regions and established settlements that are linguistically and culturally distinct from the new surrounding majority society. In the original sense, *Sprachinselforschung* focuses on “internally structured settlements of a linguistic minority on a limited geographical area in the midst of a linguistically different majority.”<sup>8</sup> Rosenberg differentiates the ‘old language islands’ which were founded in the Middle Ages in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe from the ‘new language islands’ which were established in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Logically, the groups that can be found in North and South America, Australia, and Asia according to this definition all fall under the ‘new’ category. Strictly speaking, the settlement in Sosúa would already fall outside of these categories because it was founded in 1940, but we will assume for now that

settlements established in the 20th century may potentially still develop as language islands. In order to understand what defines a language island, we will consider Mattheier's "Sprachinsel-Lebenslaufmodell" ('model of a language island life').<sup>9</sup> Based on the descriptive developments of numerous language islands in the United States, he proposed that language islands typically develop in four phases and may decline due to social-cultural change in two phases (see Table 1).

<b>Table 1.</b> Model of a language island life (modified from Mattheier 2003, p. 28)	
Initial situation ( <i>Ausgangskonstellation</i> )	Sociohistorical developments that cause (mass) migration  Phase of migration
Foundationphase of a language island ( <i>Konstituierungsphase</i> )	Settlement as a group (sometimes group identity only develops due to settlement)
Consolidationphase ( <i>Konsolidierungsphase</i> )	Linguistic processes of mixing, leveling or koineization; sociolinguistic finalization of group consolidation (integration of late migrants); development or adaptation of group-identity to new surrounding  If no group identity is developed, assimilation may be expected sooner
Phase of stability ( <i>Stabilitätsphase</i> )	No or minimal language loss / change  In this phase, language spread may be possible
Between the phase of stability and the phase of assimilation, socio-cultural changes in the language island or its surrounding are expected	
Turning point ( <i>Umschlagpunkt</i> )	
Phase of assimilation ( <i>Assimilationsphase</i> )	Often as a belated three-generation assimilation process  Decay of language island ( <i>Sprachinselerfall</i> ) (→ Language shift or language change)
Language island death ( <i>Sprachinseltod</i> ) (→ completion of language shift)	Late phases of a language island as 'culture islands' or tourist attraction (→ postvernacular or post-place stage possible)

Some of the terminology in this model has been under criticism in recent years (especially the terms *Sprachinselverfall* ‘decay of the language island’ and *Sprachinseltod* ‘language island death’).<sup>10</sup> For one, ‘decay of language island’ assumes a qualitative decline of the language or community, but is rather broad in scope. We will use the terms ‘language shift’ to refer to the change from one community language to another, and ‘language change’ to refer to structural changes within the linguistic system of the minority language, to avoid the negative connotation of ‘decay’.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, many recent approaches shy away from the term ‘language island death’, as the term implies a finality and complete disappearance of the group, which is typically not the case. Instead, studies have shown that passive linguistic knowledge often extends beyond the last active speaker generation<sup>12</sup> and that identification with the heritage and cultural traditions remain vital components of postvernacular communities.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, instead of using *Sprachinseltod*, we will refer to this (potential) phase as ‘completion of language shift.’ We also believe that the community may continue to exist even after the minority language is no longer passed on to younger generations. In those cases, the community may exist as a locally bound postvernacular community, in which community members still identify with their heritage, or the community may spread out and no longer exist as a local entity but rather as a loose, (globally) scattered network of individuals and families who identify as part of the group on the basis of shared experiences or a shared history.

Another point of criticism of *Sprachinseln* is their supposed isolation: While in the beginning some minority groups may in part have been geographically delimited and relatively isolated, these characteristics hardly apply to newer communities or the remainders of older groups. Therefore, modern minority language groups can hardly be defined as *islands*.<sup>14</sup> In fact, even very remote language islands are always in some form of contact to the surrounding societies, for example via the presence of national institutions and services. The role of these institutions is also one of the main factors for language shift that has recently been in the focus of studies and has led to the development of the Verticalization Model of language shift. Based on Warren’s theoretic model of community,<sup>15</sup> this concept explains language shift as the outcome of switching from locally (i.e., “horizontally”) organized institutions to regional, statewide or nationally (“vertically”) organized ones: “[H]orizontally structured communities will typically maintain a minority language, while verticalization will lead to shift to the majority language.”<sup>16</sup> In the case of Sosúa, the question of interest would thus be whether there have been horizontally organized institutions in the early years of the settlement and if a shift to vertical ones can be retraced. This question will be addressed in section 5.

### 3.2 “Post-place” but not gone: Global networks of identification

Despite the criticism that minority language groups do no longer exist as isolated, geographically secluded settlements, there have been few attempts from within the field of linguistics to describe groups that are no longer bound to one location but exist rather as a loose network of individuals and families who identify with a shared heritage.<sup>17</sup> In an approach from the studies of community development, Bradshaw defines this kind of network as a “post-place community” arguing that urban living spaces provide few incentives to identify with a location or with the other people living in the same geographic area.<sup>18</sup> Rather, many people nowadays tend to search for a sense of community by identifying with people who share their values, interests, or heritage. This practice is especially easy due to the advent of modern technology, connecting networks of people all over the globe. Thus, post-place communities are “virtual and global, fluid and transformative, largely electronic with occasional face to face” and community members typically have weak ties and are affiliated to multiple different networks.<sup>19</sup>

As we have seen, while the community of Sosúa developed out of a settlement that could be considered similar to a *Sprachinsel*, there are factors which make the categorization difficult, if not impossible: Firstly, the often assumed (and in fact never complete) isolation of the settling group is clearly not given. The settlers in Sosúa had been in contact with the Dominican society since their arrival, despite settling in a relatively remote area. Secondly, the time for the development of a *Sprachinsel* society was not given since the migration towards the U.S. started shortly after WWII. Thirdly, *Sprachinsel* societies were mostly self-sustaining agricultural settlements and although the Jewish settlers in Sosúa worked towards learning these traits and becoming more or less self-sufficient, their personal backgrounds were mostly non-agricultural ones, making the transition into the new lifestyle very difficult. This, in turn, made the option of migrating to the U.S. and work in other trades even more appealing.

At the same time, it is evident that the German-Jewish community of Sosúa has not merely disappeared or reached the completion of language shift, since German is still partly being spoken. Moreover, as Schröer & Rocker<sup>20</sup> have shown, there continues to be a community from Sosúa with many former residents now owning vacation homes in Sosúa, returning regularly for family festivities and maintaining contact with the larger group through social media. In order to account for the community in its current form, we want to propose the adaptation of the concept of post-place communities.<sup>21</sup> This theory is based on the differentiation between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* by Tönnies,<sup>22</sup> but adding the fact that community does not have to be linked to place:

A key feature of the solidarity-based community as opposed to the place-based community is that community becomes a concept that is variable rather than either-or. If we define community on the basis of physical boundaries, then a resident is either in or out. If we define community in terms of social ties characteristic of solidarity, then it can scale from low to high. The question is not if you are in a community but how much community you have.<sup>23</sup>

This approach allows for us to suppose the existence of a community, even if the members reside in different parts of the world. We are thus going to assume that there is a post-place community of Sosúa, consisting of members in the Dominican Republic, parts of the US, and other countries in Latin America.

#### **4. Data**

The data presented here stem from two different sources. Firstly, we will make use of oral history interviews which were conducted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington in the early 1990s. In these interviews, informants narrate their experiences during the Third Reich, their escape from Europe, their arrival and stay in Sosúa, and their life after leaving the Dominican Republic. We made use of four English oral history interviews mentioning Sosúa, which are publicly available in video format and in some cases feature transcriptions or notes with event markers and time stamps. Where no official transcript is available, we transcribed excerpts of the interviews for this article (simplified transcript).

The second data set was collected in an initial study in 2019.<sup>24</sup> Three informants were interviewed in German, Spanish, and English about their memories and experiences growing up in Sosúa as “second-generation” settlers. Besides the sociolinguistic interviews, participants were asked to narrate the picture book story ‘Frog, where are you?’.<sup>25</sup> The following analysis is based on both sets of interview data.

### **5. Sociolinguistic development of Sosúa**

#### *5.1 Early years: German as a lingua franca*

For most language islands, migration is caused by *push* or *pull* factors, meaning that certain sociopolitical or economic reasons may *push* people to leave their homes, whereas reports from previous migrants, prospects of a

more prosperous life or more freedom may *pull* immigrants towards a certain area.<sup>26</sup> Importantly, the migration we see in language islands is typically voluntary and often served the pursuit of economic betterment or religious freedom. For Sosúa, the circumstances which caused migration could not be further removed. As the national socialist party increased the persecution and murder of Jewish people and other minorities across Europe, chances of escape became slim and options were scarce. In fact, some refugees were able to escape labor camps because they received visa for the Dominican Republic, sometimes without knowing what they had signed up for:

*Later on, when I had said yes, and .. and .. we were already .. uh informed which route we would take and – then, I got myself a map and said ‘Where is the Dominican Republic? I’ve never heard in my life of it.’ And I had no idea what we will do there. It was the tro- a tropical island, somewhere, in the Caribbean, but – that was all I knew about it. But we didn’t care. To get out of Europe, have the possibility, was great.<sup>27</sup>*

As exemplified in this example, Jewish refugees did not *choose* to settle down in the Dominican Republic, rather it was their only option of escaping. In addition, it seems that the selection process (see section 2) and administrative hurdles hindered the rescue of more people. Those who were selected and able to escape often endured a long and difficult journey, traveling via Spain, Portugal, and Ellis Island (USA) to the Dominican Republic. Since the selection process was led by the *American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee* (known as JDC or Joint) in many different countries, refugees originated from across Europe. As one second generation settler recalls:

*Die Stiefmutter sprach Deutsch, aber österreichisches Deutsch. Und ein bisschen Jiddisch dabei. [...] Wir hatten Leute aus Polen, aus Russland, aus Luxemburg, glaube ich, aus der Tschechoslowakei, aus Österreich und Deutschland, aber unsere Hauptsprache war Deutsch.<sup>28</sup>*

In contrast to many other *Sprachinseln*, whose community members have often been described as forming group identity based on shared local origin<sup>29</sup> such as “Hessen, Schwaben or Plattdeutsche”,<sup>30</sup> the group in Sosúa obviously lacked such geographical or dialectal commonalities but shared their religion, European background, and similar sociopolitical experiences. Thus, it is possible that their group identity was influenced by shared experiences, attitudes, and, to some extent, necessity, as they were trying to navigate their new environment. Despite the different places of origin, German was the *lingua franca* in the early years of the settlement. Since many facilities were



run by settlers for settlers, not everyone had a need to learn Spanish. For the first generation, it seems that men learned more Spanish because they often worked in the agricultural sections and interacted more with the locals than women did, who tended to work as homemakers, in the communal kitchen, or in the hospital. One nurse, who worked at the newly established hospital in Sosúa, recalls:

Interviewer: *I don't suppose you spoke Spanish before you went to the Dominican Republic, uh right?*

Mrs. Bauer: *No. And I did not learn as much at that time as . . . uh my husband. I didn't have time. I worked twelve to fourteen hours every single day [...].*<sup>31</sup>

Another individual, who migrated to Sosúa from Shanghai in 1947 as a child, said:

*Meine Mutter hat nie eine andere Sprache gelernt. In der Familie haben wir Deutsch gesprochen. Wenn sie hat hier gelebt, sie hat sich nie angepasst richtig. [...] zu der Zeit hier in Sosúa haben alle Leute Deutsch gesprochen.*<sup>32</sup>

The Dominican-born children of the settlers can be described as German heritage speakers, since they acquired the language at home and with other community members but also learned Spanish early on from local children:

*Nun die Kinder, die meisten Kinder, waren hier geboren. [...] Die sprachen Deutsch zu Hause, aber auf der Straße haben die immer Spanisch gelernt. [...] Es waren ein paar Dominikaner, aber die Schule war ein, war eine deutsche Schule, aber man hat Spanisch gesprochen.*<sup>33</sup>

Since the second generation grew up in close contact with the local Dominican children, they learned Spanish early on. It is possible that the different German dialects did not form a koiné or show signs of leveling because the second generation showed high levels of bilingualism and strongly identified with their Spanish-speaking peers. In some cases, this led to conflicts with parents, as the Dominican-born children identified with their homeland and sometimes even rejected speaking German in public. A feeling of belonging and being a part of the local community is also expressed by one of the first-generation settlers, who contrasts her experiences with the hatred and mistrust she had experienced in Germany during the Nazi regime:

*But now, as an adult, I came to understand why I'm so attached to this. And that's simply because that was the first time in my life that I felt, experienced any kind of freedom. Any kind of equality with being able to walk in the street without being afraid. And with people looking me straight in the eye and smiling, rather than looking at me with hate and looking away.*<sup>34</sup>

With regard to Mattheier's language island model, we can establish that the foundation and consolidation phase (see section 3.1), which may lead to the development of a distinct local variety, were rather short-lived in the case of Sosúa. Although German was used as a *lingua franca* among the first-generation settlers, there seems to have been no dialect levelling or koineization, as current informants refer to 'the Austrians' or 'the Germans', hinting at the transfer of local dialects to children. In fact, the second-generation of settlers already grew up bilingually and often developed a German-Dominican identity. This bond is probably a strong common ground for the prevailing identification with Sosúa. If there ever was a phase of stability, it was between the late 1940s and 1960s, when families who did not want to stay had moved on, and those who wanted to stay had more agency in the local dairy factory or other businesses.<sup>35</sup> This would also have been the time when Dominican-born community members entered adolescence and early adulthood.

Similar developments have also been described for German or German Bohemian minority groups in Romania, where initially isolated language islands dispersed over the years, but a sense of community was upheld based on a shared group identity:

Diese in den Jahrzehnten nach der Einwanderung entstandene, identitätsbasierte Zusammengehörigkeit konnte und kann zum Teil bis heute gewisse räumliche Distanzen überwinden und eine zumindest rudimentäre Sprachgemeinschaft erhalten.<sup>36</sup>

In the case of Sosúa, we believe that identity-based belonging is a major component of community building, especially as the shared and dominant languages seem to be shifting from German to Spanish and English, which will be explored in more detail in the next section.

### *5.2 The USA as a point of attraction: Becoming trilingual*

Although the settlement was developing well economically, many individuals and families decided to leave Sosúa and the Dominican Republic altogether in 1946, mostly heading to the USA.<sup>37</sup> Since the location and

purpose of the settlement was decided by the Dominican government and the Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA),<sup>38</sup> individuals arriving in Sosúa had little say about the location or purpose of the settlement. Thus, the strenuous work conditions in the agricultural section as well as the tropical climate did not appeal to everybody. When the USA lifted the immigration ban for German citizens after the end of the war, many individuals and families left Sosúa, often because they assumed better economic conditions and educational opportunities but also to be reunited with family members who had settled in the USA prior to the war. One interviewee talks about being very happy to leave Sosúa for New York City with her sister:

*My sister and I came in March of 1946 and our parents stayed behind in Sosúa in the Dominican Republic. I remember that when our visas arrived, I jumped about this high. [...] I was so happy.<sup>39</sup>*

Although many settlers expressed relieve to receive the opportunity to go to the United States, this decision came with some obstacles for some individuals, especially in terms of learning another language, as this example shows:

*And I stayed there until nineteen forty-six. 'Til I got papers to come to United States. so . . . eventually, I boarded a train – uh a plane, and I flew to Miami. And I had to learn another language. This time, I had to learn English. That time, nobody understood Spanish in Miami.<sup>40</sup>*

While the younger generation seemed to be able to pick up English quickly (all interviews by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are in English), some of the older family members never learned English, despite spending the rest of their lives in the USA. One interviewee recalls of her father, who worked as a lawyer and helped fellow German-Jewish immigrants to receive restitutions from the German government:

*He had a very difficult time adjusting to American life, at first and he never learned English. [...] And he was-- that way, he never needed to speak English because all of his customers were German.<sup>41</sup>*

However, many of the Dominican-born individuals also developed intense ties to the USA, often receiving an education or spending many years of their lives away from the Dominican Republic. Thus, one second-generation settler recalls being sent to New York to live with his sister at the age of 14 in order to receive a better education, while the parents remained in Sosúa. After high school, he joined the US Navy and got a degree as a mechanic. But after

spending most of his adolescent and young adult years in the US, he returned to the Dominican Republic in 1975 and permanently settled down in Sosúa in 1990.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, another interviewee said that he went to Pittsburgh in 1959 to study engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, and ended up staying in the USA for a total of 17 years before returning to Sosúa.<sup>43</sup> Both speakers mention their positive attitudes towards the USA but emphasize that they felt more at home in the Dominican Republic. This feeling of connectedness is expressed by the regular celebrations of anniversaries of the settlements, which date back as early as 1950, when the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the settlement was celebrated.<sup>44</sup> Many of the later anniversaries attracted former residents to return to Sosúa, for example in 1980 for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was celebrated with a religious service in the synagogue.<sup>45</sup> For the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a brochure with photos and a summary of the celebrations was published afterwards.<sup>46</sup> In recent years, the celebrations have often been attended by political and religious leaders from Israel, Germany, and the USA, as well as former and current residents of Sosúa.<sup>47</sup> These recurring organized events have strengthened the pride and identification of the (former) residents with the global Sosúa community.

## **6. Discussion and outlook**

As detailed above, the Sosúa settlement had a relatively short lifespan compared to other, more traditional language islands. Although German was used as the *lingua franca* between first-generation settlers, the Dominican-born children grew up bilingually and received their basic education in Spanish. Even though other institutions maintained the immigrant languages (Hebrew in the synagogue, mostly German in the hospital), introducing Spanish as the school language may have accelerated the language shift within the second generation. Since many individuals and families left the country in 1946 for the USA, the community adopted a third language, English. As the community in Sosúa became global and trilingual as individuals migrated to the USA and other countries, many felt intense ties to their old home and maintained personal connections to other former settlers, thus forming a community based on shared history and identity, rather than a shared residential area. Therefore, defining communities like Sosúa as “Sprachinseln” may not be an adequate description of many minority language groups in the 21st century. As such, we have shown that it is worthwhile to adopt Bradshaw’s concept of “post-place community” which no longer defines communities by a shared geographic location but rather by networks of people sharing a particular identity or set of values.<sup>48</sup>

While the settlement in Sosúa was initially a geographically secluded

community with a shared sociopolitical and religious background, many individuals and families eventually left and migrated to different locations, such as the USA. As a result, the group in Sosúa may no longer be bound to one specific location, but rather exists as a loose global network of individuals and families who are virtually connected but still identify with their shared heritage.

With the advent of modern technology, such as the internet and social media, it has become easier for individuals in and from Sosúa to connect with others who share their heritage, regardless of their physical location. This has allowed for the formation of a “post-place community” where individuals can maintain their sense of identity and connection with others who share their cultural background, even if they are dispersed across different geographic areas. We believe it may be time to reevaluate our understanding of language communities in light of current global sociological and technical developments and hope to have provided a helpful first attempt at describing one such community.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dillmann und Heim 2009; Kaplan 2010; Wells 2009.

<sup>2</sup> But cf. Schröer & Rocker 2021 and Wolf-Farré & Rocker 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Bradshaw 2008, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Wells 2009, p. 285.

<sup>5</sup> Ross 1994, p. 250.

<sup>6</sup> Dillmann und Heim 2009, pp. 109–110.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Mattheier 1994.

<sup>8</sup> English translation by Rosenberg 2005 p. 221, based on a German citation from Hutterer 1982, p. 178.

<sup>9</sup> Mattheier 2003, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Cabo & Rothman 2012, Putnam & Sánchez 2013, Kupisch & Rothman 2018.

<sup>11</sup> A further discussion of Mattheier’s (2003) model and the terminology around “language shift” can be found in Wildfeuer (2017a, p. 199–210).

<sup>12</sup> Sherkina-Lieber et al. 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Brown & Hietpas 2019; Kleih 2022; Reershemius 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Wildfeuer 2017b; Franz 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Warren 1978.

<sup>16</sup> Salmons 2005, p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> As an exception, cf. a third-party funded project by Alfred Wildfeuer (University of Augsburg) and Sebastian Franz (University of Heidelberg) exploring multilingual networks and cross-local identity constructions for Banater Germans in Romania and the United States (more information available at <[https://www.uni-augsburg.de/de/fakultaet/philhist/professuren/germanistik/variationalinguistik/forschung/bkm\\_forschungsprojekt/](https://www.uni-augsburg.de/de/fakultaet/philhist/professuren/germanistik/variationalinguistik/forschung/bkm_forschungsprojekt/)>).

<sup>18</sup> Bradshaw 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Bradshaw 2008, p. 8, Table 1.

<sup>20</sup> Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Bradshaw 2008.

<sup>22</sup> I.e., Community and Society, cf. Tönnies und Harris 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Bradshaw 2008, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Schröer & Rocker 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Mayer 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Lee 1966.

<sup>27</sup> RG-50.166.0002, 1992. Oral history interview with Felix Bauer; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn505514>; 24:25–24:57).

<sup>28</sup> Speaker 2, female, born 1953 in Sosúa. Interviewed in November 2019 in Sosúa, for more information see Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 88. English translation: “The stepmother spoke German, but Austrian German. And a bit of Yiddish as well. [...] We had people from Poland, from Russia, from Luxemburg I believe, from Czechoslovakia, from Austria and Germany but our main language was German.”

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Bousquette & Ehresmann 2010, Frizzel 1992, Langer 2008, Litty et al. 2015, Keel 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Langer 2008, p. 190; Franz 2021.

<sup>31</sup> RG Number: RG-50.166.0003. 1992. Oral history interview with Martha Bauer; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507341>; 28:21–28:36).

<sup>32</sup> Speaker 1, male, born 1941 in Shanghai, settled in Sosúa with his family in 1947. Interviewed in November 2019 in Sosúa; for more information see Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 87–88. English translation: “My mother never learned a different language. We spoke German in our family. When she lived here, she never really assimilated. At the time, everybody spoke German here. My dad learned Chinese when he was in China and English because he worked with the English army there and when he came here, he learned Spanish. Not very well but he was able to converse in every language.”

<sup>33</sup> Speaker 1. Interviewed in November 2019 in Sosúa; for more information see Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 90. English translation: “Well the children, most of the children were born here. They spoke German at home but they learned Spanish on the street. There were a few Dominicans, the school was a German school but we spoke Spanish.” (Clarification: the school was founded by the community and the school teacher was one of the settlers, who had learned Spanish prior to migrating to Sosúa. Although he spoke German, the school was run in Spanish and the local Dominican children were invited to attend as well).

<sup>34</sup> RG Number: RG-50.477.0031. 1992. Oral history interview with Lore Gilbert; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507702>; Part 7, 00:38:32–00:39:11).

<sup>35</sup> Dillmann & Heim 2009, p. 157–165.

<sup>36</sup> Wildfeuer 2017b, p. 375; English translation: “This identity-based unity, which emerged in the decades after immigration, could and can still partially overcome certain spatial distances and maintain at least a rudimentary language community.”

<sup>37</sup> Dillmann & Heim 2009, p. 148–149.

<sup>38</sup> DORSA was a subcommittee organized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known as JDC or Joint), which is based in New York.

<sup>39</sup> RG Number: RG-50.477.0031. 1992. Oral history interview with Lore Gilbert; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507702>; Part 4, 00:15:19–00:15:36).

<sup>40</sup> RG Number: RG-50.462.0410. 1981. Oral history interview with Alex Mathes; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn566033>: Part 3, 00:41:45–00:42:25).

<sup>41</sup> RG Number: RG-50.477.0031. 1992. Oral history interview with Lore Gilbert; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507702> ; Part 4, 00:12:54–00:14:38).

<sup>42</sup> Speaker 3, male, born 1942 in Sosúa. Interviewed in November 2019 in Sosúa; for more information see Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 88.

<sup>43</sup> Speaker 1, male, born 1941 in Shanghai, settled in Sosúa with his family in 1947. Interviewed in November 2019 in Sosúa; for more information see Schröer & Rocker 2021, p. 87–88.

<sup>44</sup> Sosúa Virtual Museum 2011. (Available at: <http://www.sosuamuseum.org/events/sosua-anniversary-celebrations/10-anniversary-of-sosua-2/>)

<sup>45</sup> Sosúa Virtual Museum 2011. (Available at: <http://www.sosuamuseum.org/events/sosua-anniversary-celebrations/40-aniversario-periodico-2-1/>)

<sup>46</sup> RG Number: RG-50.477.0031. 1992. Oral history interview with Lore Gilbert; The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. (Available at: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507702>; Part 7, 00:41:13–00:41:23)

<sup>47</sup> Dominican Today 2011, Sosúa Villas 2008–2022.

<sup>48</sup> Bradshaw 2008, p. 5.

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