This paper forms part of a larger study of variation and change in address in French, German and Swedish utilizing multiple methods of data elicitation. Here we report on findings from 72 interviews within social networks in Mannheim (western Germany), Leipzig (eastern Germany), and Vienna (Austria). They suggest that there are Unequivocal Du contexts (unmarked du), such as the immediate family, Unequivocal Sie contexts (unmarked Sie), such as most service encounters, especially with authorities, and
Contexts for negotiation of address choice – especially in the ‘friendship’ and work domains. Here there seem to be two coexisting systems – an unmarked du and an unmarked Sie according to individual preference. Factors influencing this are mainly those that can be subsumed under social distance - relative age, ‘geteilte Lebenswelt’, and familiarity, but not gender. Political attitudes are a useful indicator of address choice. The variation is problematic in that to some people, the issue of address is very serious and at the core of human relations; others now take it very lightly.
In the middle and older generations, V is more prevalent in Leipzig, due to the absence of the student movement (a promoter of du) and a reaction to the Communist Party’s du formula.

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