

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE RUSSIAN GERMANS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES OF EUROPE

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Abstract

This article investigates the ethnoconfessional, ethnolinguistical and ethnocultural identification of the Russian Germans as perceived by the population of the biggest German-speaking countries – Germany and Austria. The empirical basis of the research of the identification of the Russian Germans in the German speaking countries of Europe is a special survey which gathered feedback from 1007 respondents and was conducted with the financial support of the Goethe-Institute Kyiv in November 2003 – December 2004.

The survey confirms that the absence of the unilateral expert opinion on the term “Russian Germans” can, to a certain degree, be explained by a variety of approaches to the identification of the term by mass consciousness.

Keywords: the Russia Germans, ethnolinguistical identification of the Russian Germans, ethnoconfessional identification of the Russian Germans, the ethnogeny of the Russian Germans.

Introduction

The breakup of the USSR led to the complete devaluation of the term “Soviet Germans” constructed by Stalin’s ideologists in the late twenties of the 20th century. However, today, hundreds of thousands of the so-called “Soviet” Germans live on the territory of the former USSR. Neither in Ukrainian nor in foreign literature is there a common opinion on the ethnonym “German diaspora”. The most consistent stand on this issue is presented by German researchers. For example, in an authoritative historical-cultural encyclopedia there is a special term which defines ethnic Germans as those who had been setting down on the territory of the Russian Empire for centuries as well as their descendants who are still living on the territory of the former Russian Empire (Bottger, Bieregell, Dittrich, Forster, & Zilzheimer, 2000).

The same standpoint is shared by the author of the most popular fundamental research in the history of the Germans in the Russian Empire and the former Soviet Union Doctor A. Eisfeld (1992).

The first paragraph of the fourth clause of the Statute of “Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland” gives us a more condensed definition of “the Russian Germans”: “The Russian Germans are the Germans, who were born in Russia within the boundaries of the USSR of 1937” (Archive of the Donetsk oblast national-cultural organization of the ethnic Germans “Wiedergeburt”, Stock 26, register 1, file1, p. 3). Furthermore, the third paragraph extends the meaning of this term: “The Russian Germans are those Germans, who have been living for a long period of time in the oblasts mentioned in the first paragraph of the fourth clause, and have declared their close connection with the ethnic group of Russian Germans” (Ibid, p. 4).

In terms of methodology, it is especially interesting for us to consider the article by Head of “Historischen Forschungsvereins der Deutschen aus Russland” A. Bosch, published in „Volk auf dem Weg“ in (2001, Vol. 2, p. 24). This article is written in reply to a letter of an American reader of this journal, who does not agree with the usage of the term “Russian Germans” as regards Ukraine’s ethnic Germans, and proposes to replace it with the term “Ukrainian Germans”. Sharing A. Bosch’s view about the importance of holding the term “Russian Germans” as a generalizing definition for all

ethnic Germans of the former Russian Empire and the CIS, we could not agree with any of the author's argument in support of his standpoint. For instance, we disagree with A. Bosch's extending of geographical limits of the term "Ukrainian Germans" to the east of the Volga. Furthermore, the author mistakenly thinks that the German colonization had begun after the Germans' settlement on the Volga. In fact, the German settlement on the territory of the modern Ukraine began in the early Middle Ages (3d - 4th centuries), and on the Volga banks – only the middle of the 18th century. (Дынгер А. А., 1992, p. 44–65.; Дынгер А. А., 2000; Пиоро, 1990).

This collection of ethnonyms of the ethnic Germans of the former USSR could certainly be significantly enlarged, but it should be pointed out that all existing definitions present more or less successful constructs, especially if we do not take into account both real self-identification of the ethnic Germans in the CIS and abroad and the identification of the Russian Germans by the representatives of other ethnic groups.

In November 2003 – January 2004, we conducted a special survey in order to collect an empirical basis for the research into the identification of the Russian Germans in the German speaking countries of Europe. As a result of this three months' survey, we gathered 1700 questionnaires from 32 countries around the world. After publishing a summary of the data in a special brochure supported by the Goethe-Institute Kyiv in March 2004 (Дынгер А., Дынгер Ю., 2004), in April – December 2004, we collected another 2511 samples. Thus, almost for a year (November, 2003 - December, 2004) the number of respondents covered in both survey rounds had grown to 4211 and the number of countries reached - 35. 1007 respondents representing about 23,91 % of the total survey data came from Germany (772 respondents or 76,7 %) and Austria (235 respondents or 23,3 %).

Based on the data of the above-mentioned 1007 questionnaires, this study attempts to analyze the ethnoconfessional, ethnolinguistical and ethnocultural identification of the Russian Germans as perceived by the population of the biggest German-speaking countries – Germany and Austria.

While investigating the data, we used such quantification research methods as inductive method, cross-cultural comparison method, face-to-face interviews, Internet questionnaires, grouping method, and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Social Structure of the Respondents

While validating the data of the survey, it would be useful to look into the social background of our respondents. It should be pointed out that the respondents' answers were obviously influenced by gender and age criteria. In gender terms, there were 479 (47,57 %) women and 528 (52,43 %) men among those who responded to the questionnaire, 50,3 % of whom were women from Germany and 38,8 % - women from Austria. The analysis of the respondents' age has shown, that 61,9 % of respondents were young people between 16 and 30, 28,6 % - middle-aged (30–50 years old) and 9,5% - elderly people (over 50).

Certainly, a significant impact on the definition of the identification of the Russian Germans was made by the respondents' educational level. According to the collected data, about 14% respondents had unfinished secondary education, 4,8% had secondary education, 14,6% had specialized secondary education, a little more than 33% of respondents were studying at higher educational institutions and a little less than 28,6 % had university diplomas. Besides, there were about 5 % of respondents who had academic degrees. So, more than two thirds of respondents had higher and unfinished higher education. Notably, 70 % of those respondents specialized in humanities (predominantly history, political science, ethnology, sociology, philosophy, law), 82% had university degrees, and 100% had research degrees. Thus, we could regard most of the respondents as experts in history, sociology and ethnology of the Russian Germans. It is, therefore, not surprising that 76,2 % of respondents, while having to answer the first question ("Whether you know the term "the Russian Germans"?") chose option 1.5 ("well aware of the term") and 23,8 % - option 1.4 ("have general knowledge of the term").

Identification of the Term "Russian Germans"

The second question of the questionnaire was designed to collect information about the respondents' understanding of the functional content of the term "Russian Germans". The analysis of the questionnaires has shown that about a quarter of the respondents (248 persons: 149 Germans and 99 Austrians) agreed with option 2.3. In other words, they described the term "Russian Germans" as mainly ethnographic. Approximately the fifth part of the respondents (184 persons or 18,3 %)

believed that the term "Russian Germans" is, first and foremost, a sociological term. A little more than one tenth of those who answered this question (104 people: 74 Germans and 21 Austrians) defined "Russian Germans" as a political term. Approximately every twentieth respondent characterized this term as predominantly geographical. So only 58 % of the respondents chose one of the proposed responses as an optimal reply to the second question.

42 % of the respondents (432 people) gave their own definition of the term. In particular, 65 respondents (6,5 %) defined the term "Russian Germans" as geographical-ethnographical, while 81 respondents (8 %) - as political-sociological; 93 respondents (9,2 %) - as political-ethnographical, and 95 respondents (9,4 %) - as geographical-political-ethnographical. 89 respondents (8,8 %) defined the term as the summary of all the responses proposed in the questionnaire.

Let us now look at how differences in the respondents' background have impacted on their definition of the term "Russian Germans". First of all, there is a marked difference in the identification of the term "Russian Germans" between men and women. Whereas the majority of men considered this term, firstly, as ethnographical and, secondly, as political, the majority of female respondents regarded it as both ethnographical and sociological in equal terms.

Also there are noticeable distinctions in the functional characteristics of the term "Russian Germans" as seen by representatives of different age groups. Young people regarded the term as ethnographical and historic-political. The definition of this term as sociological was favoured by the middle-aged respondents. As for the elderly respondents, most of them considered the term "Russian Germans" as political-administrative.

Different approaches to the definition of the term "Russian Germans" could be observed among respondents with a different level of education. For example, among the respondents with higher and unfinished secondary education a predominate opinion was that this term is ethnographical, while the respondents with secondary education regarded the term as political, the respondents with academic degrees – as sociological, and the respondents with unfinished higher education – as geographical-political-ethnographical. There were no special preferences in response to this question among the respondents with specialized secondary education.

Hence we have reached the conclusion that there is no common approach concerning the functional content of the term "Russian Germans" among the respondents from Germany and Austria. It is obvious that the present diversity of opinion regarding a key definition of the ethnology of the Russian Germans should be taken into account while organizing next surveys on this subject. Moreover, it is also worthwhile considering creating a team for different expert commissions and editorial boards on the issues of ethnology, ethnography and history of the Russian Germans.

Ethno-Linguistic Identification of the Russian Germans

The third question concerned the definition of the native language of the Russian Germans, in other words their ethno-linguistic identification. There was no consensus of opinion among the respondents regarding this question. Almost 30 % of respondents (302 people) identified Russian as the only mother tongue of the Russian Germans (option 3.2.). 288 respondents (28,6%) gave preference to the German-Russian bilingualism. The third place in terms of frequency distribution (144 persons, 14,2 %) is occupied by the statement that the first language of the Russian Germans is the language of their country of residence. And only the fourth place (48 persons, 4,8 %) reflects the viewpoint that the mother tongue of the Russian Germans is German. In that case a number of respondents called attention to such distinctive features of the German language as its polydialectism, lack of progression and overabundance of borrowings from the lexicons of the neighboring ethnic groups. Particularly, one German woman, a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany, who was engaged in the scientific research on the language of the Russian Germans, underlined that "the German language spoken by the Russian Germans because of the lexis' deficit or its strong dialectal deviation from some standard educated norm, does not correspond to the modern German language. The case, as things now stand, is a direct result of their living far from Germany for a long period of time and lacking contacts with Germany while communicating in German among themselves" (Archive of the Donetsk oblast national-cultural organization of the ethnic Germans "Wiedergeburt", Stock 10, register 1, file 23, p. 57).

225 respondents (22,3 %) proposed their own ideas in response to the third question. We could divide the most frequently expressed opinions into three main groups: 1) native language of the Russian Germans is Russian and the language of the country of residence; 2) historically, the native language of the Russian Germans was German, and nowadays it is Russian; 3) the language of the country, where someone grew up, but not the language of the country of residence. One young

German with higher education stated that “for the elderly Russian Germans, who lived in the former USSR for more than 30 or 40 years, the Russian language will always remain their mother tongue, and for young people the German language will slowly become their native language” (Ibid, p. 72).

Let us now turn to the preferences in the identification of the native language of the Russian Germans as shown by different groups of respondents. It has been found out that 40 % of female German and Austrian respondents identified Russian as the native language of the Russian Germans. Another 30 % of female respondents were of the opinion that Russian-German bilingualism is a distinguishing characteristic of the Russian Germans. At the same time, the female respondents did not give their own opinion on the language identification of the ethnic Germans. By contrast, the male respondents on the one hand gave preference to the ethno-linguistic identification, and, on the other hand, approximately evenly decided between Russian, Russian-German bilingualism and official languages of their respective countries of residence.

Are the representatives of different age group agreed on the language identification of the Russian Germans? The trends among the young and middle-aged respondents in terms of the identification of the native language of the Russian Germans are very similar. About 23 % (young people) and of about 50 % (middle-aged) both groups were convinced of the monolingualism of the Russian Germans, and nearly 25 % (young people) and a little more than 33 % (middle-aged) – about the Russian-German bilingualism of the Russian Germans. Besides, here we had the highest rate (38,5 %) of self-produced definitions of the ethnolinguistic identification of the Russian Germans among the respondents under 30. The elderly respondents considered Russian and German monolingualism at the level of 3–5 %, bilingualism – at the level of a little more than 40% and the most “conformist” position – option 3.3. (language of the country of residence). The last option was least favoured young people (7,6–10 %).

It is *à priori* believed that the level of education has a considerable impact on the choice of language priorities. However, it is difficult to prove on the basis of our survey as the respondents with different educational levels identified the native language of the Russian Germans practically in the same way. Thus, for example, almost all the respondents with unfinished secondary education and respondents with academic degrees, as well as nearly half of the respondents with higher education defined the Russian-German proposed bilingualism as the linguistic feature of the Russian Germans. At the same time, approximately 67 % of the respondents with specialized secondary education and 43 % of the respondents with unfinished higher education believed that Russian is the mother tongue of the Russian Germans. It should be mentioned that the respondents with unfinished higher education were also the main producers (44 %) of their own concepts of the language identification of the Russian Germans. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents with secondary and unfinished higher education selected option 3.3. (language of the country of residence).

Due to the active public social work of the German national-cultural organization, there is a growing interest in the German language among the Russian Germans. Their most important partner organisations in this area of activity (German Sunday schools, courses of German, residential language camps, seminars for teachers of German, etc.) are the Goethe Institute and GTZ (Ibid Stock 25, register 1, file 4, p. 12–17, 34–35; register 6, p. 41–42, 56–61). The recent reform in Germany's immigration policy (such as an introduction of an obligatory federal German language test for the Russian Germans applying for the status of Spätaussiedler (literally "late settlers from abroad") also considerably raised the motivation for learning the language of the historical homeland inside German diasporas (Ibid, Stock 10, register 1, file 23, p. 78).

Ethnoconfessional Identification of the Russian Germans

The fourth question of the questionnaire concerned the religious orientation of the Russian Germans. This question was most difficult for the respondents as compared to the previous three. 96 of them (9,5 %) could not produce their own variant of answer in reply to it. The respondents' opinions regarding the religious identification of the Russian Germans were as follows: option 4.1 (Catholicism) - 14,8 %; option 4.2 (Orthodoxy) - 28,6 %; option 4.3 (Protestantism) – 23,8 %; option 4.4 (Atheism) -9 %; option 4.5 (own variant) - 14,3%.

Among the self-produced ideas regarding the religious identification of the Russian Germans the most frequent combination was option 4.2 (Orthodoxy) plus option 4.4 (Catholicism). It was chosen by about 4,7 % of the respondents. The combination of options 4.1 (Catholicism) and 4.3 (Protestantism) was presented by 3,5 % of the respondents. 0,7 % of those, who replied to this question, combined all the four variants of the answer into one. But the most popular response to the question about the dominant religious orientation of the Russian Germans proposed by 5,1 % of

respondents was very capacious and “concrete” - “different religions”. It was also the case with 0,3 % of the respondents, who instead of indicating the religious identification of the Russian Germans, referred to the democratic principle of liberty of conscience: the condition of being free to choose among different religions or atheism.

The above major difference in the respondents’ opinion regarding the religious identification of the majority of the Russian Germans was caused by a number of the objective reasons. Undoubtedly, most of the believers among the Russian Germans are adherents of Christianity. However, different regions and different periods of residence can be characterised by a variety of confessions within Christianity. Moreover, during religious persecutions, the data on the number of adherents of one belief or another were deliberately ignored or distorted. This discrepancy in the ethno-religious identification of the Russian Germans was also caused the existence of different sects which even experts in religious studies are not always able to classify correctly. To crown it all, the problem of calculation of the number of believers’ is compounded by a blurred borderline between the definitions of atheist and believer. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between both terms as for the way they are treated by mass consciousness, codes of law of different countries and different religious confessions. In such a situation, a series of special independent objective researches on the ethno-religious identification of the Russian Germans is required.

Identification of the Homeland of the Russian Germans

In the fifth question of the questionnaire, the respondents had to identify the homeland of the Russian Germans. It appears that 19 % of the respondents could not reply to this question. The opinions of those, who responded to this question, were as follows: option 5.1 (Germany) – 10,2 %; option 5.2 (Russia) – 4,8 %; option 5.3 (country of residence) – 9,5 %; option 5.4 (Russia + Germany) 29,2 %, option 5.5 (own variant) – 17,3 %.

Similarly to the previous questions as regards self-produced answers, in most cases we received a summary of the options offered by the questionnaire. So, 6,7 % of the respondents combined the following variants of the answer in their “own” responses: option 5.1 (Germany) with option 5.3 (country of residence) and 6,2 % – option 5.3 (country of residence) with 5.4 (Russia and Germany).

In fact, another 0,5 % of the respondents argued for the concept of the “Russian-German” homeland of the Russian Germans. However, they presented this dual concept within the following historical dynamics: “The historical homeland of the Russian Germans is Germany, and actual - Russia. On the contrary, for modern generations of the Russian Germans, Russia is becoming the historical homeland, and Germany – actual” (Ibid, p. 85). This approach, as it seems to us, can be regarded as identical to option 5.4. In this case, its leading position reaches 29,7 %.

There is an important nuance about self-produced answers as regards the respondents’ position against the mechanic presentation of Russia with Germany as a united homeland of the Russian Germans. This group of respondents underlined the organic, indissoluble nature of this tandem in comparison with the formula “either Russia, or Germany”. The answer to the fifth question of one German-student, a citizen of the FRG, can present a typical response of this group of respondents: “My friend from Petersburg, who has been living in Berlin for almost 10 years, says that today her homeland is neither Russia nor Germany, but both of them combined” (Ibid, p. 87). Taking into account such a significant remark, we have every reason to add up their responses (0,3%) to option 5.4, which gives us as much as 30 % in total.

A small group of respondents singled out those Russian Germans “who firstly emigrated from Russia to Germany and only being in Germany understood that their real and only homeland is Russia and, as a result, re-emigrated to Russia” as an independent subgroup and included them into option 5.2 (Russia) [14]. With respect to such a comment, we can add the opinion of this group of respondents (0,1 %) to the answers of those respondents who chose option 5.2. Thus, the total percentage of the respondents who supported option 5.2 was 4,9 %.

14 respondents (1,4%) had the opinion that the homeland of the Russian Germans is the country where they feel at home.

Some respondents (0,2 %) wrote that the homeland of the Russian Germans is the country come from. However, this group of respondents did not identify the homeland of those Russian Germans, who had never resettled.

11 respondents (1 %) answered to this question with a question of their own: “What is a homeland?”

We can agree with the comments of 0,9 % of the respondents that the question concerning the definition of a homeland is very difficult to tackle, and, as it was underlined by one well-educated German citizen, “very private” (Ibid, p. 93).

Defining the Typical Characteristics of the Russian Germans

Answering the sixth question of the questionnaire respondents were asked to give five most typical characteristics of the Russian Germans. As a result, the respondents singled out 34 typical characteristics on aggregate. The first rank in frequency distribution of the Russian Germans' characteristics among the answers of the Austrian respondents includes five following characteristics: 1) faithfulness, 2) thrift, 3) tolerance, 4) openheartedness, and 5) sociability. The German respondents created the following rating of typical characteristics of the Russian German: 1) openheartedness, 2) carefulness, 3) originality, 4) willingness to help, and 5) tolerance. It is easy to calculate that according to Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, the degree of correlation between the “Austrian” and “German” rating is moderate negative (-0,52). In a word, the vision of the most typical characteristics of the Russian Germans significantly differs even between so culturally close ethnoses as Germans and Austrians.

The combined Austrian-German ranking of typical characteristics of the Russian Germans looks as follows: 1) openheartedness (191 persons, 19 %) 2) carefulness (171 persons, 17 %), 3) originality (121 persons, 12 %), 4) faithfulness (111 persons, 11 %), 5) tolerance (101 persons, 10 %).

The Ukrainian respondents presented the following rating of the typical characteristics of the Russian Germans: 1) punctuality, 2) industriousness, 3) thrift, 4) discipline, 5) pedantry.

The Prospects of the Ethnogeny of the Russian Germans

While answering the seventh question, the respondents were invited to model the prospects of the ethnogeny of the Russian Germans. There is no consensus among the respondents in this key question for the Russian Germans. It appeared that 192 respondents, that is every fifth respondent, could not answer the question about the future perspectives of this ethnic group. Among the respondents, who presented their opinions on this theme, 5 % supported option 7.1 (transformation of the Russian Germans into a separate nation); the same number of respondents supported option 7.2 (the assimilation of the Russian Germans by Russians); the most of the respondents (24 %) believed that the ethnogeny of the Russian Germans will be developing according to option 7.3 (the assimilation of the Russian Germans by Germans); 19 % of the respondents predicted the ethno-political development of the Russian Germans as stated in option 7.4. (the assimilation of the Russian Germans by the nation of the country of residence).

There were 28 % of self-produced variants. The biggest group of respondents (9,6 %) stated that the Russian Germans would be assimilated in Germany, and in other countries they would turn into a separate ethnos.

Another group of respondents with self-produced answers (8,2 %) shared an opinion about the inevitability of the assimilation of all Russian Germans. Thus, the only questions for these groups were, firstly, the tempo of assimilation and, secondly, a place where it will happen. There are three major sub-groups within the above group. The representatives of the first sub-group were convinced that the assimilation would take place in a country of residence of the Russian Germans no sooner than in 100 years. The second sub-group was sure that the Russian Germans would be assimilated only in Germany, and in all other countries they would preserve their ethnic identity. Furthermore, some respondents did not like the term assimilation, and, as a result, they wanted to change it into a “more modern and popular” term – integration. Finally, the third sub-group of respondents stated that the assimilation of the Russian Germans had been happening for a long time in the form of “Russification”, which can be supported by the fact that even the Germans of the former Russian Empire and USSR called themselves “Russian Germans”.

About 6 % of respondents stated that the Russian Germans would preserve their ethnic identity irrespective of their place of residence.

Conclusions

Given the above analysis of the survey results conducted among the respondents from the German-speaking countries, we can make a number of conclusions.

Firstly, all the respondents were familiar with the term “Russian Germans”. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the respondents were well aware of the term (76,2 %). However, 4,9% of those respondents identify it as geographical.

Secondly, despite this relatively high level of awareness we noted significant, and, in some cases, dramatic discrepancy on the part of different social groups of respondents from Germany and Austria as regards the identification of the ethnic characteristics of the Russian Germans.

Thirdly, it is worthwhile mentioning that, despite the above-mentioned discrepancy, there was an obvious dominance of the positive image of the Russian Germans. This is especially significant in the light of the dominant negative image of the Russian Germans-Spätaussiedler as presented by German-speaking media as well as in academic literature.

Fourthly, only 11 % of the respondents were optimistic about the future of this ethnic group, 6 % of the respondents believing in the preservation of their ethnic identity, and about 5 % considering the possibility of their transformation into a new nation. Unfortunately, contrary to a number of respondents who were convinced of the inevitability of assimilation and offered their own options as for its ‘tempo’ and place of origin, the above-mentioned 5 % did not give any mention of the territory where the process of nation-building would happen and the time required for this. Thus, the absence of the unilateral expert opinion on the term “Russian Germans” can, to a certain degree, be explained by a variety of approaches to the identification of the term by mass consciousness.

Among some of the major factors that influenced the respondents’ opinion we should mention forced economic and ethnic migration, absence of legislation on the rehabilitation of Russian Germans in Ukraine and some other CIS countries, integration processes in Europe, national and religious conflicts, and long-standing economic, and in some regions, social and political crises.

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RUSIJOS VOKIEČIŲ IDENTIFIKAVIMAS VOKIŠKAI KALBANČIOSE ŠALYSE EUROPOJE

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Santrauka

Šis straipsnis nagrinėja Rusijos vokiečių etnoreliginius, etnolingvistinius ir etnokultūrinius tapatumus didžiausiose vokiškai kalbančiose šalyse – Vokietijoje ir Austrijoje. Empirinis tyrimo pagrindas yra speciali apžvalga, finansuota Kijevo Gėtės instituto 2003–2004 metais. Joje dalyvavo 1007 respondentai. Apžvalgos duomenys patvirtina, kad nesant vienos eksperto nuomonės, visuomenė terminą „Rusijos vokiečiai“ aiškina įvairiomis prasmėmis. Remiantis apklausa, atlikta su vokiškai kalbančiais respondентаis, galima padaryti keletą išvadų.

Pirma, visiems respondentams buvo žinomas terminas „rusakalbiai vokiečiai“, be to, dauguma respondentų šį terminą žinojo labai gerai – 76,2 proc. atsakiusiųjų. Deja, 4,9 proc. šių respondentų tą terminą apibūdina kaip geografinį.

Antra, gana aukštas žinojimo lygis, kuris mums pasirodė svarbus, ir tais atvejais, kai reiškė skirtingų nuomonių respondentų socialinių grupių iš Vokietijos ir Austrijos neatitikimą dėl rusakalbių vokiečių etninių charakteristikų nustatymo.

Trečia, verta paminėti, kad, nepaisant minėto neatitikimo, aiškiai vyrauja rusakalbių vokiečių teigiamas įvaizdis. Tai ypač svarbu žinoti matant neigiamo rusakalbių vokiečių – *Spätaussiedler* įvaizdžio, kuris pateikiamas vokiečių žiniasklaidoje bei akademinėje literatūroje, formavimą.

Ketvirta, tik 11 proc. respondentų buvo optimistiškai nusiteikę dėl šios etninės grupės ateities, 6 proc. respondentų tikėjo, kad galės išlaikyti savo etninį identitetą, ir maždaug 5 proc. svarstė galimybę pereiti į kitą tautinį vienetą. Buvo keletas respondentų, kurie buvo įsitikinę asimiliacijos neišvengiamumu, turėdami omenyje kilmės vietą ir laiką. Minėti 5 proc. respondentų nenurodė jokios vietos, kurioje galėtų vykti asimiliacijos procesas, ir nenurodė laiko, kuris reikalingas šiam procesui. Nesant bendros ekspertų nuomonės dėl termino „rusakalbiai vokiečiai“, galima būtų tvirtinti, kad egzistuoja skirtingi požiūriai formuojant visuomenės nuomonę.

Iš kai kurių svarbių veiksnių, kurie paveikė respondentų nuomonę, galėtume paminėti priverstinę ekonominę bei etninę migraciją, teisės aktų dėl rusakalbių vokiečių reabilitacijos Ukrainoje ir kai kuriose kitose buvusios NVS šalyse nebuvimą, taip pat integracinius procesus, vykstančius Europoje, tautinius ir religinius konfliktus ir kai kuriuose regionuose užsitęsusias ekonomines, socialines ir politines krizes.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: Rusijos vokiečiai, etnolingvistinis Rusijos vokiečių identifikavimas, etnoreliginis Rusijos vokiečių identifikavimas, Rusijos vokiečių etnogeniškumas (tautiškumas).