



INFLUENCE OF DISTANCE FROM BULGARIA ON THE LEVELS OF IDENTIFICATION AMONG MIGRANTS FROM GERMANY AND THE USA

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Abstract. *Identification processes in host countries are influenced by many and varied factors. They help or hinder the successful integration of migrants. Among them, the geographical remoteness of the host country plays a key role. In fact, the role of proximity or remoteness to the country to which a person migrates is of paramount importance in the study of migration processes.*

In this regard, the aim of the present study is to investigate and analyze the influence of host country remoteness on identification processes. It focuses on the countries of Germany and the USA – a choice based entirely on the geographical distance of the countries from Bulgaria.

The methodological toolkit includes quantitative and qualitative analysis from a questionnaire survey and interviews using the narrative-biographical method. The sample of the quantitative study included 491 Bulgarian migrants (306 respondents from Germany and 185 respondents from the USA).

The results obtained from three identification profiles (high, low and intermediate) composed of Bulgarian migrants in Germany and the USA. It was observed that the USA is mostly dominated by migrants with high and some with intermediate levels of identity. The average identification and low profile is characteristic of persons who prevail in Germany. Persons with high levels of identity in the USA identify themselves as Bulgarians and maintain contact with Bulgarians. They lack the possibility of frequent visits to their homeland, feel homesick and vote in elections. Distances are a serious barrier for them. Persons with low levels of identity in Germany define themselves as Europeans and do not maintain contact with Bulgarians. They have the possibility of frequent visits, and more communication. They do not vote, and factors such as nostalgia and sadness are not important to them. Persons with intermediate identification levels in Germany and the USA are characterized by the fact that they maintain less frequent contact with other Bulgarians. They also communicate a lot more with locals. Some wish to vote but do not have the necessary conditions. Others have conditions, but do not wish to vote and consider that as emigrants they have no right to participate in the political life of Bulgaria. They self-identify as both European/American and “other”.

The results give reason to claim that migrants who have easier access to Bulgaria have weaker to medium identification. While those who live in the geographically more distant country have a more pronounced identity. The report presents the possible interpretations of the obtained result.

Keywords: identification; geographical distance; host country; emigrants; Germany; USA.

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BACKGROUND

In contemporary social processes, the sense of belonging, (self) representation and (non)identification experienced by migrants has been observed, analyzed and theorized by numerous authors and researchers. Focusing on migrants as 'people in transit' reveals that the study of identification in the context of migration is crucial to identity research. The aspects of identification in the migration process are focused in two directions: - personal (process of social categorization); and social (result of the individual's interactions with other people).

A connection between the identification and the processes of social categorization (the personal aspect) of individuals can be found even in the "social balance theory" of Fritz Heider (Heider, 1946). This describes a model revealing how a social group develops to a state of possible equilibrium (Heider, 1946). The sense of belonging is a crucial step in the processes of identity formation and recovery of migrants. The main focus is on identity as a consequence of social interaction, and on how identities are constructed, negotiated and transformed (Simon, 2004). Patterns of identification among migrants vary widely, ranging from identification with country of origin, religion or mother tongue through host country to neither (Ramelli et al., 2013). Disillusionment and nostalgia often contribute to the idealization of the country of origin, which is further "beautified" through memory. However, when the migrant returns home, the contrast between the ideal and the real reappears. To some extent, migrants live between idealization and disillusionment in both the host country and the country of origin (Ramelli et al., 2013).

Social identity is a person's individual concept of self, as derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group (Turner and Oakes, 1986). In the basis of the interpretation of the results (from the point of view of the social aspect), is the "social identity theory" of A. Tajfel and J. Turner (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). According to this theory, social behavior requires a person to change his/her behavior while in the group, and this behavior itself can vary between interpersonal behavior and intergroup behavior.

Modern research proves how the different degree of impact of various factors (trust, socio-political activity, place in society, income, religiosity) influence attitudes towards ethno-national and cultural diversity (Zografova, 2019). There is a deep bond with the groups or community to which one belongs or is affiliated with in the process of defin-

ing this type of identity (Zografova, 2019). Others investigate the influence of optimism and pessimism on attitudes such as patriotic feelings, identification self-determination, the relationship between them and certain demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, education), the importance of people's economic status (Hristova et al., 2017). It is believed that among the main reasons for Bulgarian emigration are economic - the need to look for new opportunities for personal development and prosperity, for a better standard and quality of life (Hristova, 2020).

In this regard and in relation to the identification processes and aspects of migration, the geographical remoteness of the receiving country plays a strong significance and dependence. In fact, the role of the proximity or remoteness of the country to which the person migrates is of paramount importance in the study of all factors related to migration processes.

The specification of the host country in the present study, and the follow-up of its results in terms of identification also suggest a corresponding comparative analysis in relation to geographical distance. The choice of the two key countries in the study also corresponds to this geographical remoteness. On the one hand, Germany – as a member of the EU, a country much closer to Bulgaria and with much easier connections in many respects (including communication, transport). It is also a destination with much more opportunities for mobility (from and to the homeland), *inter alia*. On the other hand is the USA, a much larger country both in terms of area and population a highly remote destination, and a country from and to which movement is much more difficult than Germany. It is also a country which strongly hinders the mobility of migrants (not only in terms of the visa regime, but also in relation to transport links, limited only to air transport), *inter alia*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As part of a larger study, the present report examines the influence of remoteness of host countries on identification processes. It focuses on the countries of Germany and the USA: a choice based on the geographical distance of the countries from Bulgaria.

The methodological toolkit includes quantitative and qualitative analysis from a questionnaire survey and interviews using the narrative-biographical method. The sample of the quantitative study included 491 Bulgarian migrants (306 respondents from Germany and 185 respondents from the USA). The statistical results were processed with SPSS

and include models of frequency distribution according to the relevant trait, Chi-Square Tests and Symmetric Measures containing coefficients which show whether there are relationships between the studied variables. The qualitative study included 32 respondents (12 for Germany and 20 for the USA).

In answer to the question **“Do you maintain contact with other Bulgarians in the country in which you live?”**, it was observed that individuals maintain contact with other Bulgarians in the host country most “often”, with those in the USA more than those in Germany:

The results show that there is a relationship between the two variables “Country” and “Maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country”. In the USA, they maintain contact with other Bulgarians more often than those in Germany. Here it can be assumed that this is due to some extent to the specific working conditions that the US state offers. Migrants probably maintain more contacts with Bulgarians also due to the fact that there are families with children here (more than those in Germany). This creates prerequisites for contacts in the parent-child chain, visits to Bulgarian schools, the Bulgarian community as a whole. Furthermore, the USA is the more distant country, which implies the distance

of the migrants from Bulgaria. Therefore, this suggests a desire to preserve, seek and maintain Bulgarian contacts. Some more indirect factors are also assumed, such as nostalgia, sadness for the homeland, or the purely psychological “acceptance” of the fact that they are very far away, and it is difficult to visit Bulgaria due to transport connections, the long distances. The USA is also much larger than Germany as a territory which further strengthens the desire for contact with more Bulgarians.

These results are also supported by the qualitative study, since emigrants in the USA constantly maintain contacts with other Bulgarians. They gather on holidays, organize and conduct Bulgarian events, and establish centers for the Bulgarian community. In contrast, those in Germany rarely interact with their compatriots. Most define the encapsulation of Bulgarians in smaller communities (family, household, close circles of friends) and the absence of social contacts in general with the lack of values (honesty, integrity) in relations in Germany between compatriots. The relations between Bulgarian emigrants are often defined as built on the basis of benefit. It is also observed that the longer a given emigrant has been, the fewer contacts he maintains with Bulgarians in Germany.

Table 1. Frequency distribution according to the attribute “maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country”

Crosstab						
			DO YOU MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH OTHER BULGARIANS IN THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU LIVE?			Total
			Yes, rarely	Yes, often	No	
Country	Germany	Count	101	195	10	306
		% within Country	33,0%	63,7%	3,3%	100,0%
	USA	Count	39	141	5	185
		% within Country	21,1%	76,2%	2,7%	100,0%
Total		Count	140	336	15	491
		% within Country	28,5%	68,4%	3,1%	100,0%

Table 2. Relationship between the variables “Country” and “Maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country”

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8,500 ^a	2	,014
Likelihood Ratio	8,721	2	,013
Linear-by-Linear Association	5,919	1	,015
N of Valid Cases	491		
a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5,65.			

Table 3. Opinions of Bulgarian emigrants regarding
“maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians” (Germany, USA)

GERMANY	USA
„I don’t communicate with Bulgarians, only with certain people or if I have patients. I go to church, but not on holidays.“ Female, 50 years old, Germany	„We have Bulgarian televisions, theaters come all the time, we have a wonderful theater hall. Life in Bulgaria is family oriented. Here, the community seeks to gather with Bulgarians, there is a Plovdiv evening, a Blagoevgrad evening, there are 6 or 7 groups for dances. Female, 60 years old, USA
„Our friends are mainly Bulgarians, but here one is much more closed in terms of social contacts. In Bulgaria, there are accumulated social contacts - neighbors, classmates, teachers, friends, fellow students. Abroad, true friendships can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In this respect, our contacts with Germans are much more honest and non-committal. They help us much more than the Bulgarians here.“ Female, 62 years old, Germany	„We get together a lot on holidays, apart from the summer we get together every Saturday and Sunday, somewhere for a barbecue. We just get together a lot and in general the Bulgarian community has a pretty good social life. There are assemblies, there is a very large assembly at which many people gather.“ Female, 35 years old, USA
„Last year I communicated more with Bulgarians here and I noticed, especially those who don’t speak the language, they haven’t left Bulgaria at all. Here they are creating a small Bulgaria. They are here because of the higher pay or because of the opportunities for their child. But they do not seek to learn the language, nor to socialize - just to pass the years and live in Bulgaria“. Female, 29 years old, Germany	„I have never been separated from the Bulgarian community, because our friends are Bulgarians and we have maintained good relations. And I am satisfied with all the Bulgarians with whom I have had something in common“. Female, 40 years old, USA

Table 4. Frequency distribution according to the attribute “proximity of people by place of residence”

Crosstab												
			WHICH PEOPLE DO YOU FEEL THE CLOSEST TO									Total
			I cannot decide	From the Balkans	From Bulgaria	From another country, not listed	From countries of the former Soviet Union	From the European Union	From my native village / town	From the town where I currently live	From USA / Canada	
COUNTRY	Germany	Count	76	36	99	2	4	24	34	31	0	306
		% within Country	24,8%	11,8%	32,4%	0,7%	1,3%	7,8%	11,1%	10,1%	0,0%	100,0%
	USA	Count	45	19	69	3	1	8	12	17	11	185
		% within Country	24,3%	10,3%	37,3%	1,6%	0,5%	4,3%	6,5%	9,2%	5,9%	100,0%
Total		Count	121	55	168	5	5	32	46	48	11	491
		% within Country	24,6%	11,2%	34,2%	1,0%	1,0%	6,5%	9,4%	9,8%	2,2%	100,0%

Table 5. Relationship between the variables “Country” and
“Proximity of people by place of residence” (Chi-Square Tests)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25,914 ^a	8	,001
Likelihood Ratio	29,489	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	,028	1	,867
N of Valid Cases	491		
a. 5 cells (27,8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,88.			

In answer to the question **“Which people do you feel the closest to?”**, it was observed that for the largest percentage of both samples, the closest to the faces are the people from Bulgaria, followed by “I can’t judge”, although the difference here is barely 0.5%.

It was also observed that there is a relationship between the two variables “Country” and “Proximity of People by Settlement”. Persons in the USA feel closest to people from Bulgaria more than those in Germany. This is probably due to the fact that individuals in the USA live in a more closed Bulgarian community than those in Germany. They work in Bulgarian companies, many of them communicate more in Bulgarian, their children attend Bulgarian schools, and they also create and maintain Bulgarian centers. Furthermore, the distance barrier is much greater for the US than for Germany; The USA is the farthest country from Bulgaria. Some other determinants are probably also important here, such as nostalgia for the homeland and the greater difficulty associated in visiting Bulgaria compared to Germany.

Individuals in Germany feel closer to people from their own community where they currently live. On the other hand individuals in the US are less close. This is probably due to the fact that those from Germany communicate less with Bul-

garians, as well as the lack of a cohesive, unified Bulgarian community in Germany. Communication with more local people in Germany creates prerequisites for a stronger feeling towards those from the place of residence at the moment, in the host country. Those in the USA characteristically maintain contacts with other Bulgarians more than with locals. The desire to preserve Bulgarian belonging is also reflected in communication, including in terms of the bonds formed and the preferences of US migrants with regard to the choice of whom to be closer to.

The results are also supported by the interviews. Among the persons in the USA, in addition to contacts with other Bulgarians, it was also observed that they feel people from Bulgaria to be closest. Apart from the fact that most of them work in Bulgarian companies, and the children attend Bulgarian schools, their social life develops mostly with other Bulgarians to whom they feel close. In contrast, migrants in Germany do not feel a closeness to Bulgarians close. On the contrary, they often determine that they cannot rely on Bulgarians, but rather on local or other migrants. Also, given that they work more for German companies, the closeness with Bulgarians is also very limited, and the environment is much different than in the USA. In Germany, migrants believe that other Bulgarians often consider them as

Table 6. Opinions of Bulgarian emigrants in relation to “closeness of people according to the place of residence” (Germany, USA)

GERMANY	USA
„The Bulgarians did not give me gifts, only this icon. Everything else is from Turks, Russians, not from Bulgarians. They think you owe it to them to treat them and help them.“ Female, 50 years old, Germany „I don’t really need others. There are a lot of musicians here who take themselves as competition, and they don’t help each other. Here in artistic circles you can rely more on the Germans or others, but not on the Bulgarians“. Female, 45 years old, Germany „I probably communicate 85% with Germans and 15% with Bulgarians, even 90%.“ Very few with Bulgarians. At school and with friends by chance on the street. And past the children, but now that they have grown up, we see each other less often. This is in addition to my work, I mainly communicate with Germans. It is also a matter of time.“ Female, 45 years old, Germany	„The community here is made up of people who want to keep their Bulgarianness. They can live without even realizing that they are in America. There are huge companies where you can get a job. Successful businessmen. You go to work and speak Bulgarian...“ Female, 60 years old, USA „We have Bulgarian shops, Bulgarian cinemas, Bulgarian restaurants, there are Bulgarians here who live in a typical Bulgarian way. They work in a Bulgarian company, speak Bulgarian all day, go out only in Bulgarian restaurants in the evening... There are just such people, but there are also integrated ones...“ Female, 35 years old, USA „I am very proud of the fact that we managed to create some kind of center for the Bulgarian community - where people can get to know each other, where children can speak Bulgarian... My children feel good, they know children from the Bulgarian school. Most of our close friends are Bulgarian. We just feel more at home with them, not that we don’t have American friends, but we feel better with Bulgarians.“ Female, 51 years old, USA

Table 7. Frequency distribution according to the indicator “do you vote in elections in Bulgaria”

Crosstab								
			IF YOU ARE A BULGARIAN CITIZEN ABROAD, DO YOU VOTE AT ELECTIONS IN BULGARIA?					
			1	I would like to, but I have no conditions	I vote when I have the chance	Yes, always	No, I am not voting	
Country	Germany	Count	2	39	110	55	100	306
		% within Country	0,7%	12,7%	35,9%	18,0%	32,7%	100,0%
	USA	Count	1	16	75	49	44	185
		% within Country	0,5%	8,6%	40,5%	26,5%	23,8%	100,0%
Total		Count	3	55	185	104	144	491
		% within Country	0,6%	11,2%	37,7%	21,2%	29,3%	100,0%

Table 8. Relationship between the variables “Country” and “Do you vote at elections in Bulgaria” (Chi-Square Tests)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,452 ^a	4	,051
Likelihood Ratio	9,503	4	,050
Linear-by-Linear Association	,265	1	,607
N of Valid Cases	491		
a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,13.			

competitors which also alienates them, rather than brings together.

To the question “**If you are a Bulgarian citizen abroad, do you vote at elections in Bulgaria?**”, it is observed that some migrants believe that if Bulgarians are more active, incl. in connection with Bulgarian representatives in the local government of the host country, this can be beneficial for the future rapprochement with Bulgaria.

The results show that there is again a relationship between the two variables “Country” and “Do you vote at elections in Bulgaria”. People in the US vote when they have the opportunity more than those in Germany. Also, those in the US who always vote are more than those in Germany. We suggest that this is probably due to several main reasons:

- Persons in the USA are more highly educated than those in Germany which implies a higher self-awareness in the exercising of their voice and its significance in the homeland;

- Those in the USA are further away from Bulgaria which reduces the probability that they will visit Bulgaria and that this visit will be during elections in our country;
- Those in the US plan to return after retirement more than people in Germany, suggesting a desire and hope for a more peaceful and secure old age in the future.

A qualitative analysis of voting in host-country elections in the US shows that both those who do not actively participate and those who vote whenever or whenever they have the opportunity are observed. Electoral involvement is observed when it comes to supporting compatriots participating in the administration of the host country. There are opinions that emigrants have no right to “interfere” in the political life of Bulgaria and/or define it with their vote. In contrast, the emigrants in Germany, apart from maintaining much less frequent contact with other Bulgarians, do not vote in elections either. Some of them say that they do not

Table 9. Opinions of Bulgarian emigrants regarding “voting in elections” (Germany, USA)

GERMANY	USA
„We don't watch Bulgarian TV. Now we get information on the Internet. But I don't vote.“ Female, 62 years old, Germany	„I vote. I've voted in Chicago before, here (Indiana – A/N) there was an outpost in 2014, and we voted then. As for the representation of emigration in the parliament, I think that this can contribute to rapprochement with Bulgaria in the future“. Woman, USA
„I don't lose contact with Bulgaria, but I don't go to vote. If it's online here (voting – A/N) - I'll do it, but to go to the embassy, stand in line and watch all this ignorance, no.“ Male, Germany	“I voted because a former classmate had run for office...I voted, but generally no. But in general the elections are well organized here. And the sections and everything“. Female, 35 years old, USA
„I constantly follow everything that happens in Bulgaria - we have Bulgarian television, I read newspapers, Facebook. But I'm not very interested in politics, I'm not active. I understand that everyone in Bulgaria has different political positions, and they are all my friends. Even my Bulgarian friends in Germany become very aggressive when it comes to politics, they scold me for not voting“. Female, 45-50 years old, Germany	“Yes, I used to vote. But now I realize that I live abroad and I do not have the right to vote for Bulgaria - the people who live in Bulgaria, they must vote. We, the people abroad, do not think that we can be decisive in making decisions related to Bulgaria“. Female, 51 years old, USA
	„The last people who voted here were 1,300-1,400 people. For a big Chicago... But I don't know how proper it is for people who have been abroad for a long time to vote.“ Male, 65 years old, USA

Table 10. Frequency distribution according to the attribute “sense of identity towards Bulgaria”

Cross tabulation					
			Country		Total
			Germany	USA	
WHEN YOU THINK OF YOURSELF, WHAT IS THE WORD THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU?	American	Count	0	6	6
		% within Country	0,0%	3,2%	1,2%
	Bulgarian	Count	171	121	292
		% within Country	55,9%	65,4%	59,5%
	European	Count	115	31	146
		% within Country	37,6%	16,8%	29,7%
	Something else	Count	19	27	46
		% within Country	6,2%	14,6%	9,6%
Total		Count	306	185	491
		% within Country	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 11. Relationship between the variables “Country” and “Sense of identity towards Bulgaria” (Chi-Square Tests)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77,948 ^a	41	,000
Likelihood Ratio	93,816	41	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,831	1	,176
N of Valid Cases	491		
a. 80 cells (95,2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,38.			

Table 12. Opinions of Bulgarian emigrants in relation to “sense of identity towards Bulgaria” (Germany, USA)

GERMANY	USA
„I do not find that the attitude towards Bulgarians is special, we are Europeans. It seems that things around Bulgaria and Romania have quieted down and there is not so much talk. Of course, the problem with minority groups such as the Roma remains a big one.“ Female, 62 years old, Germany „I know that Bulgaria has developed a lot, advanced, but I have burned bridges. I only have German citizenship and I’ve really burned all bridges.“ Female, 50 years old, Germany „My parents are in Bulgaria. I go 1-2 times a year, they come here. The children are also in love with the village and the sea. Our village is Ravda, on the sea.“ Female, 45-50 years old, Germany	„Bulgarian has been preserved at a very high level here, Bulgarian is spoken at home, all traditions are respected. My mom is now 5 hours away, but she travels so we can be here together. He doesn’t miss a holiday.“ Female, 35 years old, USA „We collect textbooks, Bulgarian literature. We have set up theaters. Everyone tries to be useful in some way. Everyone is looking to preserve the Bulgarian“. Female, 35 years old, USA „I have been here for 22 years, sometimes I think about Bulgaria, but what could I do to work there. I try to ask here and there, everywhere I am answered with dislike, because I am competition“. Male, 57 years old, USA

vote, but would do so if they had the conditions for it.

When asked, **“When you think of yourself, what is the word that best describes you?”**. It was observed that more people in the USA than in Germany identify themselves as “Bulgarians”:

The results show a relationship between the two variables “Country” and “Sense of identity towards Bulgaria”. There are more people who self-identify as “Bulgarians” in the US than in Germany. This is probably due to the distance of the USA from Bulgaria which is why people in the USA strive more to preserve their Bulgarian identity. This aspiration is also predetermined by the impossibility of frequent visits to the homeland. Together with nostalgia, this outlines the preservation of the Bulgarian national identity for people in the USA.

More people self-identify as European in Germany than in the US. This is probably due to the fact that both Bulgaria and Germany are in Europe, as well as the fact that Germany is much closer to home. This means that for them Bulgaria and Germany have a common identity (belonging). Therefore, preserving the identity of Bulgarian emigrants in Germany should not be as difficult as compared to the USA. Another factor is that they have the opportunity to visit Bulgaria often, to overcome transport restrictions more easily, and to maintain closer contacts with the homeland.

More people self-identify as “other” in the US than in Germany. This to some extent may be due to the fact that the US is a vast territory that encompasses multiple identities from around the world. In this way, part of the Bulgarian emigrants there de-

fine themselves in another way: as emigrants, citizens of the world, and cosmopolitans. The distance of the USA from our country may also be a factor here, since this huge distance perhaps creates difficulties in maintaining the Bulgarian identity and preserving it.

In the analysis of interviews regarding the sense of identity towards Bulgaria, it was observed that the persons in the USA have a stronger sense of identity towards the homeland than those in Germany. The desire to belong to Bulgaria and to preserve Bulgarian identity among persons in the USA is seen in actions aimed at communicating in the Bulgarian language (both in the family and in a close, friendly environment); observance of traditions, celebration of all holidays, inter alia. In addition, individuals in the USA work harder to maintain their Bulgarian affiliation, contributing to the preservation of identity (collecting literature, creating art, educating children, celebrating together) - not only in terms of the family, but also to the benefit of Bulgarian society. At the same time, there are also people who do not define themselves as Bulgarians. Rather, they are long-term emigrants who have somehow retained not particularly positive memories and feelings towards the homeland as it was at the time they left (impossibility of realization in our country, collision with competition, lack of recognition in Bulgaria, etc.). On the other hand, those in Germany accept themselves as Europeans, identify with Europe as a sense of belonging and place Bulgaria and Germany under a common identity. For them the identity is the same, they visit Bulgaria often, bring their children here, visit their parents and have no problem

in terms of their belonging. There are also those in Germany for whom Bulgarian identity does not exist at all, they renounced their Bulgarian citizenship, do not visit their homeland, etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results obtained, we can establish relationships / dependencies between the variable "Country" and the variables: "Maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country", "Closeness of people according to the place of residence", "Do you vote at elections in Bulgaria" and "Sense of identity to Bulgaria". The highest degree of significance is the dependence between the variables "Country" and "Feeling of identity towards Bulgaria" ($p = 0.000$), followed by "Proximity of people according to the place of residence" ($p = 0.001$). A weaker relationship is established between "Country" and "Maintaining contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country" ($p = 0.014$), and the weakest relationship is between the two variables "Country" and "Do you vote in elections in Bulgaria" ($p = 0.051$). This gives reason to conclude that the studied variables depend on the country (host country) – Germany or the USA.

The results obtained and conclusions give reason to compile a profile of the emigrants, depending on the established relationships between the variable "Country" and other variables, in order to establish their levels of identity.

On this basis, we find that the first profile is composed of men and women living in the US who:

- Maintain contacts with other Bulgarians in the host country (more in the USA, less in Germany);
- They feel closest to people from Bulgaria (more in the USA, less in Germany);
- Vote in elections in Bulgaria when they have the opportunity (more in the USA, less in Germany);
- They self-identify as Bulgarians (more in the USA, less in Germany).

This profile has high levels of identity, as there is an accumulation of persons who, according to the characteristics studied, show high levels of identification in the USA (maintain contact with other Bulgarians and feel the people from Bulgaria closest, vote, self-identify as Bulgarians). According to their demographic characteristics, they are highly educated people who sometimes consider returning to Bulgaria after retirement. These people maintain frequent contacts with other Bulgarians, feel closest to

the people from Bulgaria, vote and define themselves as Bulgarians. They are married with children, with dual citizenship and average incomes for the country (with a slight dominance of higher incomes in the USA, compared to Germany).

The following emigrant profile are men and women who live in Germany:

- They do not maintain contact with other Bulgarians in the host country (more in Germany, less in the USA);
- They cannot judge where the people they feel closest to are from (more in Germany, less in the USA);
- They do not vote in elections in Bulgaria (more in Germany, less in the USA);
- They self-identify as European much more than those in the US self-identify as American (more in Germany, less in the US).

This profile has low identity levels. In all questions, there is an accumulation of subjects who, according to the study characteristics, demonstrate low levels of identification in Germany. According to their demographic characteristics, they are well educated - university graduates, and those with a special secondary education who do not consider returning to Bulgaria. These people do not maintain contact with other Bulgarians and cannot judge where the people they feel closest to are from. They do not vote at elections and define themselves as Europeans. In most cases, they are single or cohabiting with a partner, and do not hold dual citizenship.

There is also an "average/intermediate profile" of emigrants, made up of men and women living in both Germany and the USA:

- They less often maintain contact with other Bulgarians in the host country, they also communicate a lot with locals (both in Germany and in the USA);
- They feel closer to those from their native village/town, but also from the settlement in which they live (both in Germany and in the USA);
- Some wish to vote, but do not possess the necessary conditions (more in Germany, less in the USA); others have conditions, but do not wish to vote and consider that they have no right to participate in the political life of Bulgaria, as they are emigrants (more in the USA, less in Germany);
- They self-identify both as European / American and as "other" (both in Germany and the US).

This profile has average identity levels in Germany and the US. According to their demographics, they are educated and plan eventually to return by starting their own business, an extension of what they do in the host country. They are married with children or cohabiting with a partner, who less often maintain contact with other Bulgarians. They feel closer to those from their home village/town, but also from the settlement in which they live. They wish to vote, but do not have the conditions, or have the conditions, but consider that they should not do so. They define themselves to be Europeans / Americans, but also as “others” (citizens of the world, cosmopolitans, emigrants, “nomads”, earthlings, human beings, etc.).

CONCLUSION

From the results presented herein, it was observed that much more people from the USA maintain regular contact with Bulgarians. This is in contrast to persons in Germany, suggesting higher levels of identity. The remoteness of the USA from Bulgaria explains this fact. The huge distances in the country, as well as the impossibility of frequent visits to the homeland, including a desire to strive to maintain relations with Bulgarians, are also reason for the higher identification levels of this emigrant profile. This can be explained both by the fact that Bulgarians in the USA work more in Bulgarian companies. Their children attend Bulgarian schools and in general they are representatives of a closed community. Furthermore, there is a great distance between the USA and Bulgaria, compared to Germany, therefore - the distance of the emigrants as well from the homeland and the continuous desire to maintain ties with Bulgarians. They look for them through the community, and want to maintain contacts. Another sign of a higher identity is learning the Bulgarian language, attending Bulgarian schools by the children of emigrants, and maintaining a community (especially in cities like Chicago). They vote more in elections than those in Germany - both because of the impossibility to do so in Bulgaria and as part of their connection and identification with the homeland. As a reason for the higher identification levels of Bulgarians in the USA, certain factors such as nostalgia, sadness for Bulgaria, and the huge distances should not be excluded.

The low identification levels in Germany were observed among people of different ages, more often educated, who are to some extent disappointed with the opportunities for realization in Bulgaria.

They are either from the older generation of emigrants (some of whom categorically state that they have severed all ties with the homeland, have only German citizenship, do not communicate with Bulgarians, do not visit Bulgaria, do not vote) or are among the newer emigrants who do not imagine returning to their homeland. They are used to Germany, have settled there, have German partners and future plans in the host country. These individuals lack a sense of community. They communicate very little with Bulgarians and consider that the Bulgarian community in Germany is divided. These are emigrants who have been living in the country for a longer time (more than 6 years). They are more established, adapted, and more permanently positioned.

The intermediate integration profile in Germany and the USA is characterized by a desire to maintain a relationship with Bulgaria. Some of them keep their children speaking both languages, to be in contact with relatives, including in our country. They maintain contacts with both Bulgarians and locals. Some are willing to vote but have no conditions, while others have conditions but are unwilling to vote. This profile self-identifies as both European/American and “other”.

The proximity/remoteness of the host countries to Bulgaria also affects their relations with Bulgarians, their work with Bulgarians, their communication with Bulgarians and locals, the formation/presence/participation in communities. The absence of such a community in Germany (or rather its division) is logically a predictor of lower identification, while the more cohesive immigrant community in the US acts as a reverse catalyst, therefore – low levels of integration are not observed in the US. In addition, the proximity of Germany to Bulgaria, the possibilities of the Internet and social networks, easier travel to Bulgaria, contribute to a dissipation of the sense of identity or its fusion with a European sense. This also facilitates easier adaptation and lower or intermediate identification levels. On the other hand, the remoteness of the USA and the impossibility of visiting Bulgaria creates more challenges for the preservation of Bulgarian identity. The family environment, the Bulgarian community, Bulgarian schools, communication in Bulgarian, regular events, etc., create more cohesion and a sense of identity towards Bulgaria. It can be seen that in Germany lower and intermediate identified persons predominate, while in the USA these levels are high and medium.

It can therefore be argued that emigrants in the USA, which is further away from Bulgaria, have

higher and medium levels of identity, while those in Germany, which is closer, have medium to lower identification.

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