

# The History and Spiritual Development of Germans from Russia

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## Introduction

- ▶ My personal way from Russia to Germany

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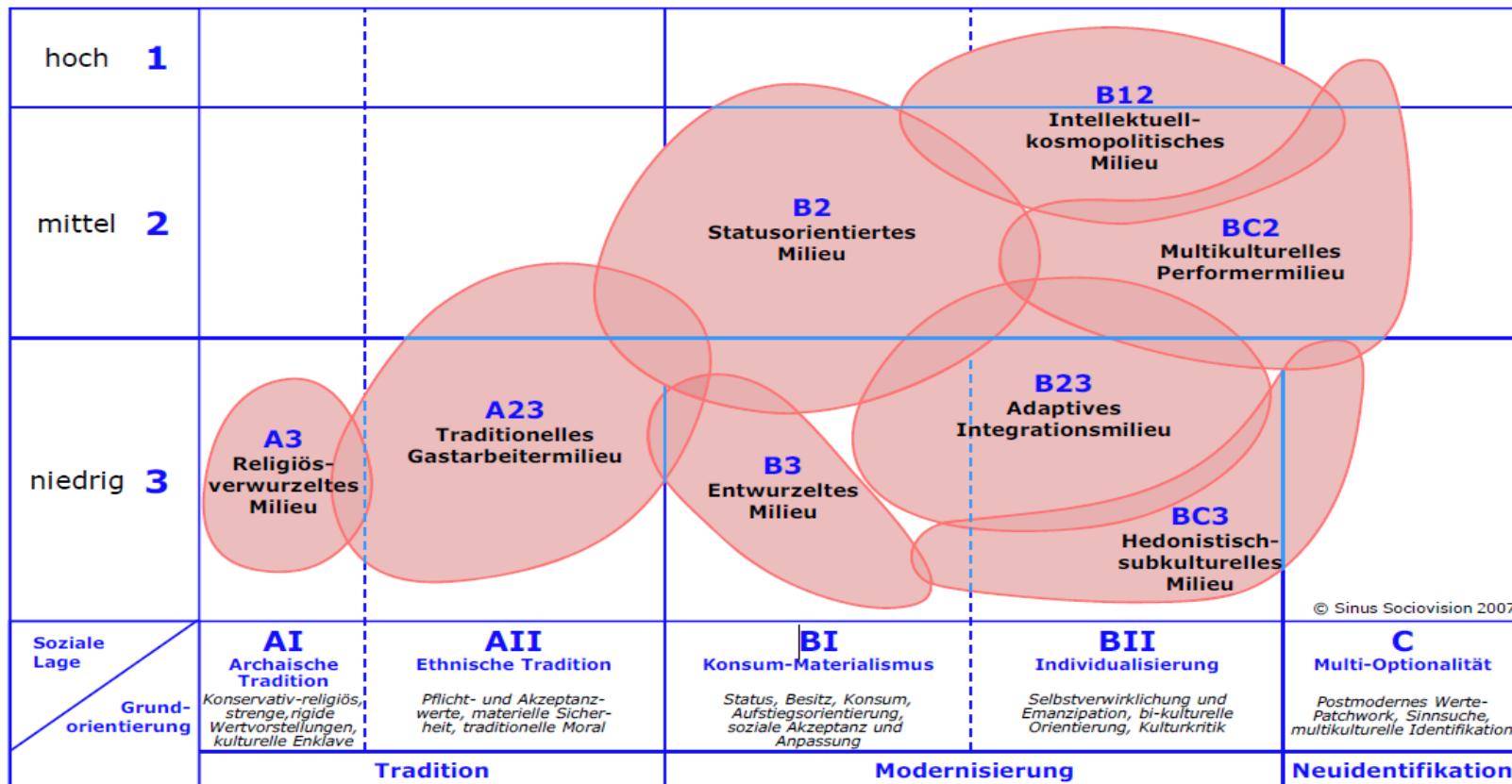
## Some Facts in an Overview

- ▶ About 2,5 Mio. Russian-Germans Emigrants live in Germany
- ▶ In majority „the Russian-Germans“ are not free-churches oriented
- ▶ The free-churches have the strongest spiritual formation in Germany
- ▶ Over 1000 free churches were planted in the past 40 years (about 700 with baptist-mennonite tradition, about 250 charismatic-pentecostal and over 100 evnagelical-brethern tradition)
- ▶ Over 300,000 church attenders every Sunday (deficit statistics)
- ▶ They would be the largest free-church in Germany but they are divided in 12 different unions
- ▶ 50 % of all free-churches are autonomes and self-sufficient
- ▶ During the church services 2-3 sermons are preached and children from all agegroups are present
- ▶ Church buildings are called „house of prayer“

# The History and Spiritual Development of Germans from Russia

Basically: There is a constitutive inter-dependence between religion, culture and integration

Die Migranten-Milieus in Deutschland 2007  
Soziale Lage und Grundorientierung



(Quelle: Wippermann 2008:20)

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## Emigration waves and reasons:

- ▶ mainly: 18. and 19. century
- ▶ Political reasons - military service, foreign ruling, wars, oppression by own governments or rulers
- ▶ Economic reasons - Bad harvests, high taxes, hunger, demand for space
- ▶ Religious reasons - especially in Württemberg (but also Mennonites from Danzig and West-Prussia)
- ▶ Personal reasons - family relationships of the royal class, relationships with family that emigrated earlier







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Manifesto of Catherine the Great (II) on July 22, 1763:

- ▶ Free transport to Russia.
- ▶ The right to settle in separate colonies
- ▶ Free land and interest-free loans.
- ▶ Religious freedom and the right, to build your own churches.
- ▶ Local self-government and establishment of own schools.
- ▶ Exemption from military service
- ▶ The right to leave Russia at any time

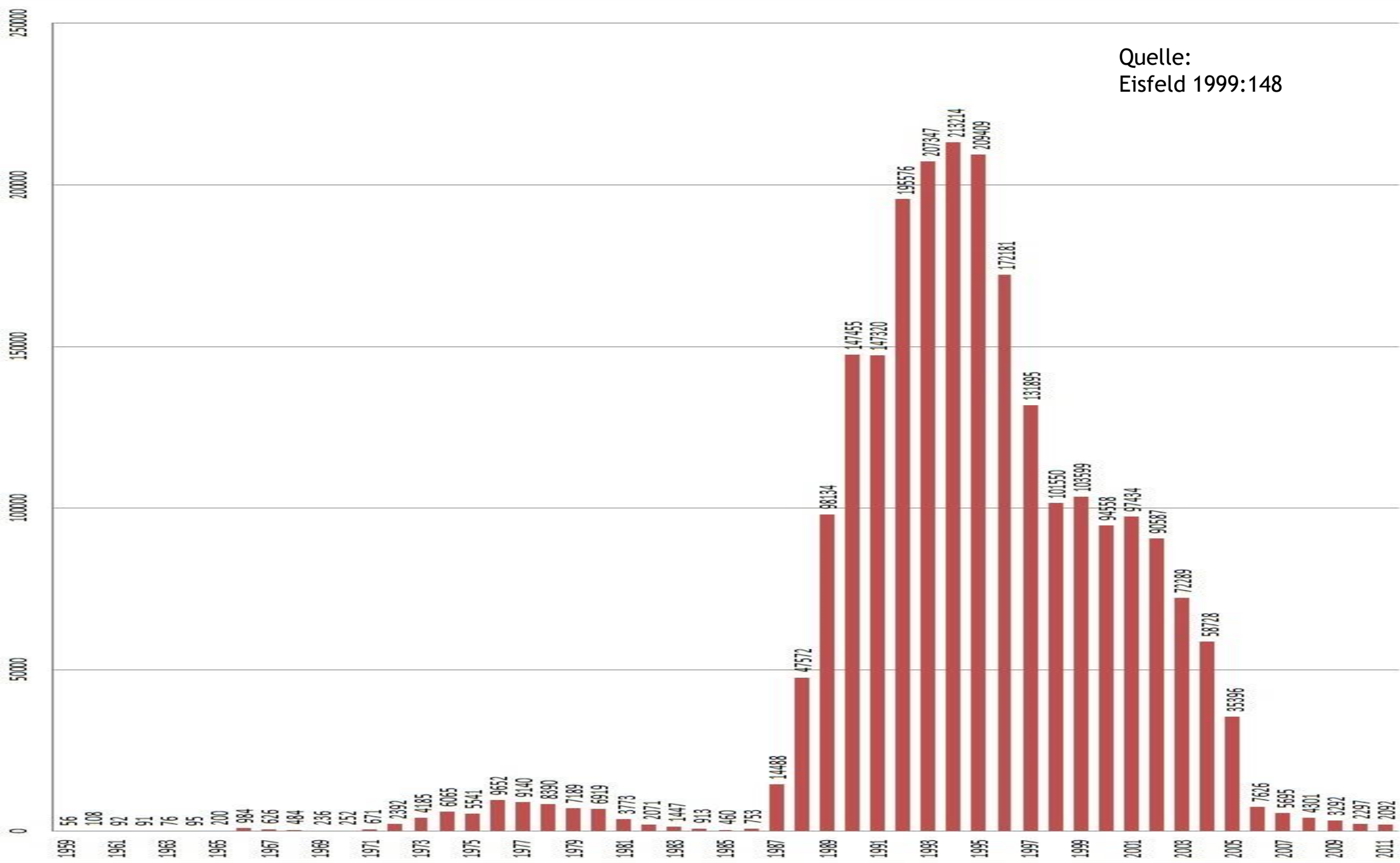
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Main reasons for return:

- ▶ Return to home country
- ▶ Political reasons
- ▶ Religious reasons
- ▶ Social reason (family reunification)
- ▶ Economic reasons
- ▶ Personal reasons (complex)



# Zuzug von (Spät-)Ausiedlern und ihren Familienangehörigen



Quelle:  
Eisfeld 1999:148

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Religious background of the Russian Germans in Germany:

- ▶ 40 % Evangelical
- ▶ 30 % Catholic
- ▶ 20-25 % Free church
- ▶ 5-10 % Other, Non-religious

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The Russian-German Free Churches form a ethno-religious community within the mainstream society in Germany

- ▶ A common history and origin
- ▶ A common culture and traditions
- ▶ A common devoutness and values
- ▶ A common language and literature

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The spiritual imprint is a Conglomerate of different confessional and theological influences:

- ▶ Reformation Influences
- ▶ Anabaptist Influences
- ▶ Pietistic Influences
- ▶ Russian Orthodox influences (very limited)

# The History and Spiritual Development of Germans from Russia

Russian Germans in the tension between assimilation and segregation:

- ▶ The Exclusives (living heavily segregated in family and community associations, hardly involved in social life)
- ▶ Conservatives (live traditionally and culturally, but want to integrate socially)
- ▶ The Progressives (life largely assimilated and are hardly perceived as Russian Germans)



# The History and Spiritual Development of Germans from Russia

**The Russian-German church service serves as a psychological and sociological shelter in the majority society:**

- ▶ Culture and tradition can be lived in the context of the community
- ▶ The divine service offers the necessary social bond and security of action
- ▶ The mutual exchange of experiences and the conveyance of values strengthens the identity and helps in the integration process
- ▶ Sociological homogeneity is a stabilizing factor in finding one's identity