

Chapter 13

The Views of Expatriate Austrians on Dual Citizenship: The Results of a Worldwide Survey

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Abstract

This chapter presents and discusses the results of a worldwide survey on dual citizenship among Austrians living abroad. A total of 2,403 people took part. The questions mainly focused on the respondents' attitudes towards (dual) citizenship. Most respondents showed a great interest in the subject. However, there are significant differences regarding the host country, the duration of stay in the foreign country and the level of education. Persons living in a Western country, as well as those with higher education, tend to be more in favour of dual citizenship. The longer people stay in a country, the more important the topic becomes to them. However, after a certain time (more than 20 years), the importance decreases again. The respondents evaluate citizenship not only for its symbolic and emotional value but also for its strategic advantages.

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of a survey conducted in 2019 among Austrians living abroad. The study is part of a larger research project in which the attitudes towards dual citizenship in general and towards the acquisition of Austrian citizenship in particular are investigated for three groups: South Tyroleans, Austrians living abroad and foreigners in Austria.¹ The starting point for this project was the attempt of the former ÖVP–FPÖ² government to offer dual citizenship to the South Tyrolean (Italian–Austrian) population. After asking the inhabitants of South Tyrol for their opinion on this issue, the next step was to survey the attitudes towards dual citizenship of Austrians living abroad. The motivation for the survey was the inconsistent and contradictive attitude of the Austrian government, which was considering providing Austrian citizenship to German-speaking South Tyroleans (who are Italian citizens) – and thus allowing them to have dual citizenship – even if most of them have no close ties to Austria. At the same time, it has been made continuously more difficult for immigrants in Austria to attain

¹ The results of the survey in South Tyrol are presented in this volume in [Chapter 14](#) by Atz and Haller. The survey among foreigner residents in Austria will be carried out in early 2021.

² The ÖVP is the conservative Austrian People's Party, the FPÖ the far-right Freedom Party of Austria.

Austrian citizenship (see [Chapter 10](#) by Bauböck and Valchars in this volume). A similar inconsistency has been noted with regards to the different attitudes and policies for immigrants and emigrants, even in those countries that generally do not tolerate dual citizenship for either group ([Chapter 10](#) by Bauböck and Valchars in this volume; Vink, Schmeets and Mennes 2019).

Currently about 580,000 Austrians live abroad (see Table 13.1). The *Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund* (Weltbund.at 2019)³ (AÖWB) represents their interests and provides services for them. It is the umbrella organisation of the associations for Austrian expatriates who live all over the world, of which currently about 10,000 persons are members. In cooperation with Rainer Bauböck and Max Haller, the AÖWB has conducted a survey among its members, the focus of which was the attitudes of Austrians living abroad towards citizenship in general and dual citizenship in particular. It was also relevant for the *Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund* (AÖWB), as the interest group representing these persons, to find out how strongly its members wanted the association to support access to dual citizenship.

2. State of research and hypotheses

Some recent studies on dual citizenship are presented below. Since this chapter focuses on empirical research findings, we refer to other articles in this volume for the theoretical foundations concerning (dual) citizenship. Here, we only refer to the findings of four papers which were especially important for this chapter. Lena Karasz and Bernhard Perchinig wrote a paper on Austrian citizenship, its history, the underlying goals, the present policy and a comparison with other European countries (Karasz and Perchinig 2013). They show that, in international comparison, Austria has a rather strict policy on citizenship; this is particularly evident compared to Switzerland, which has a more liberal policy. Joachim Blatter and his colleagues conducted a comprehensive study which scrutinised the situation in Switzerland. The Swiss government is generous when it comes to dual citizenship. One in four Swiss people living either in Switzerland or abroad has dual or multiple citizenship; among those living in Switzerland, the figure is 13 per cent. The authors emphasise the advantages of dual citizenship for a society, especially the stronger integration of persons with dual citizenship in the economic, political and social system (Blatter, Sochin D'Elia and Buess 2018). Harpaz and Mateos (2019) deal with the topic of dual citizenship and in particular 'strategic citizenship' from a global perspective. They illustrate the historical development of citizenship and recognise a new trend in recent decades to facilitate access to it. There has been a growing acceptance of dual citizenship which has affected the meaning of citizenship. Especially in non-Western countries, more persons are acquiring a second citizenship in order to use it to their advantage. This trend

³ World Association for Austrians Living Abroad.

is strongly linked to the developments of global mobility (Harpaz and Mateos 2019). Another author who argues in favour of dual citizenship is the American legal scholar Peter J. Spiro, a leading expert on this topic. In his book *At Home in Two Countries* he describes the history of dual citizenship, which changed from strong disapproval in former times to widespread acceptance today (Spiro 2016; see also his [Chapter 4](#) in this volume). The academic literature often distinguishes between an instrumental and an intrinsic value of citizenship and corresponding strategic and emotional interests (Bauböck 2018). The survey, therefore, not only refers to the concept of strategic citizenship as a means to personal advantage but also covers the emotional aspects of (dual) citizenship, such as feeling “at home” in a country.

Four general hypotheses were derived from the literature:

1. Austrians living abroad will be greatly interested in dual citizenship because this would enable them to participate fully in the public and political life of their host country while, at the same time, retaining close links to Austria. They will, therefore, also regard citizenship in general as important.
2. Persons living in Western, democratic and highly developed societies will have a greater interest in receiving the citizenship of these countries (and, thus, dual citizenship) than those living in poorer countries of the global South or in less-democratic countries.
3. The interest in (dual) citizenship and naturalisation will be low among persons who have only been living for a short time in a foreign country and higher among persons who have spent longer periods there. This is because a longer stay is accompanied by a stronger desire for participation.
4. With higher education, the interest in dual citizenship increases because educated persons tend to have more interest in participation in general.

3. Survey methodology and sample

A standardised questionnaire was developed in which 27 questions or statements were included. Some of the questions were also asked in the survey in South Tyrol, so that we can compare the two sets of results. The survey was carried out using online software (*SurveyMonkey*). A link to the survey was sent out via the distribution lists and social media channels of the AÖWB and its associations in the various countries. The survey was online from 11 September 2019 to 16 October 2019. A total of 2,403 respondents took part, which was clearly above expectations and showed how important the issue of citizenship seems to be for the recipients of the survey invitation.

The sample is composed as follows: 98 per cent of the 2,403 respondents currently do have Austrian citizenship, with the majority (90 per cent) having *only* Austrian citizenship. The remaining 10 per cent have dual citizenship. Almost half of the respondents

(48 per cent) have been living in the host country for more than 20 years. Conversely, just over half of the participants (56 per cent) spent between 20 and 29 years of their lives in Austria.

Table 13.1. Distribution of all Austrians abroad and respondents by country or world region (in %)

| Country or region | All Austrians abroad 2019* | Sample of the AÖWB survey |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Germany | 47 | 22 |
| Switzerland, Liechtenstein | 12 | 10 |
| Northern and Western Europe (BE, AL, DK, FI, FR, IE, IS, LU, NL, NO, SE) | 5 | 14 |
| Southern and Eastern Europe (all other European countries including Turkey) | 10 | 8 |
| USA | 5 | 12 |
| Canada | 1 | 4 |
| Australia, New Zealand | 4 | 6 |
| All other countries | 10 | 9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| (N) | (579,700) | (2,390) |

* Source (Statistik.at 2019) for all Austrians abroad: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/internationale_uebersich/036450.html (accessed 06 December 2020).

Two important facts become apparent in Table 13.1. On the one hand, we can see that the AÖWB survey has a very good coverage of Europe as well as a good coverage worldwide. On the other hand, there are also deviations between the sample and the real geographic distribution of Austrians living abroad. The respondents are clearly under-represented in Germany – where by far the largest proportion lives – and in Switzerland and Southern and Eastern Europe; they are over-represented in Great Britain and the rest of Northern and Western Europe and North America. We can suppose that there are three reasons why respondents in Germany are under-represented. One is that the AÖWB members are mostly higher educated, including people in qualified technical, scientific and managerial jobs. A large proportion of Austrians living in Germany, however, belonged to the first period of labour migration in Western Europe (1970–1980), when mainly people in blue-collar and routine white-collar jobs migrated from Austria to Germany. The second reason is that, for Austrians, living in Germany requires much less effort for their integration given the fact that they are native German-speakers. Third, since both Austria and Germany belong to the European Union, for Austrians most of the important social and mobility rights are guaranteed. Thus, most Austrians in Germany now will be well integrated into German society and feel little need to acquire German citizenship.

The consequence is that the AÖWB survey as such cannot claim to be representative of all Austrians living abroad. This is, however, no major problem because our analysis is mainly comparative. In cross-tabular analysis, we will look at the characteristics of expatriates in different countries and world regions and compare them. In multivariate statistical analysis, the absolute number of people in certain categories does not distort the supposed causal connections, given that the underlying raw numbers for the categories in the independent variables are large enough.

With regards to education, 59 per cent of those surveyed have a university degree, 28 per cent have attained a secondary school or acquired a technical qualification and 12 per cent have completed primary school or vocational training. Data on the educational level of all Austrians abroad are not available; however, it can be assumed that the study clearly over-represents persons with higher levels of education. The distortions of the sample distribution compared to the distribution of all Austrians living abroad could also explain the over-representation of such people. Among the under-represented people living in Germany are probably many workers and employees with lower qualifications while, in the over-represented, mainly Anglo-Saxon, countries more highly qualified workers (technicians and engineers, scientists, managers, etc.) are probably employed.

The gender ratio is balanced, with 51 per cent women and 49 per cent men. Most people (88 per cent) are over 35 years old; with 24 per cent of the sample, the most strongly represented age group are those aged 45 to 54.

4. Results

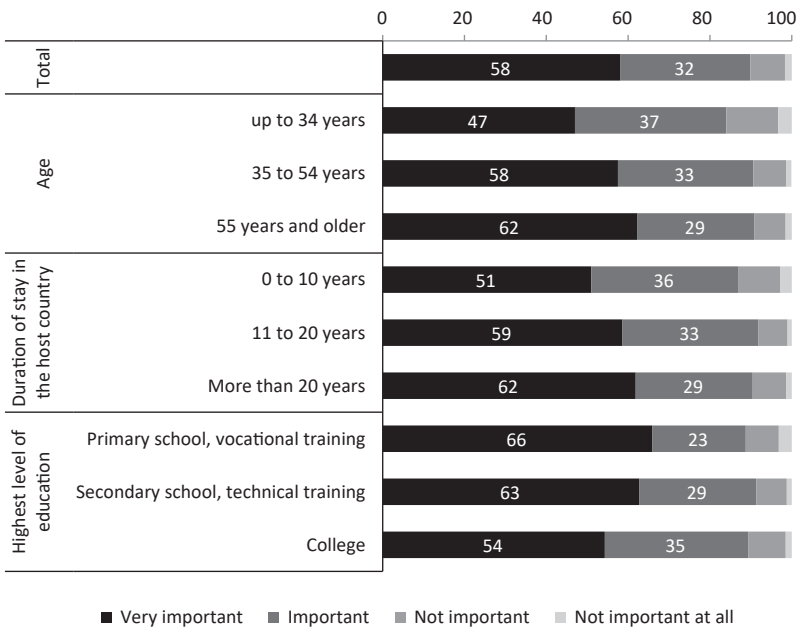
The various attitudes of respondents towards citizenship and dual citizenship were analysed and examined for differences in gender, age, educational attainment, origin (from which federal province), country or region of residence, length of stay abroad and number of years spent in Austria. The results are presented below.

4.1 Importance of the topic of citizenship

One question in the survey addressed the individual importance of the topic of citizenship. For the absolute majority (90 per cent) of respondents, citizenship is very important (58 per cent) or quite important (32 per cent), as seen in Figure 13.1.

There are significant differences by age of the respondents, with citizenship being more important for those over 35 than for younger people. Accordingly, there are also significant differences in the duration of the stay abroad: persons living abroad for more than ten years are more concerned with citizenship than those with a shorter stay. Persons with higher education are less likely to think of citizenship as “very important” and, instead, more often assess the subject as merely “important”. This is a somewhat unexpected outcome, since citizenship is an important prerequisite for participation in a country and since higher-educated people are usually more interested in participation. It may,

Figure 13.1. Importance of citizenship by age, duration of stay in host country and highest level of education (in %)



n=2,362 (highest level of education) respectively 2,403 (duration of stay, age, and total). The number varies because there were fewer responses on the question about the highest level of education.

however, reflect a slightly stronger sense of participation through their professional status, independent of their citizenship.

Highly significant differences regarding the importance attached to citizenship emerge between the various countries of residence, as shown in Figure 13.2.

In global comparison, citizenship is considered as the most important by respondents living in Australia–Oceania and North America. In Europe there is a special situation: for people living in a non-member country of the EU, the topic of citizenship is much more important than for people living in an EU member country. The latter may be the case because EU citizens enjoy nearly the same rights as national citizens when living in another member state. Austrians living abroad in the UK are an exception from this rule. At the time when this survey was conducted, the UK was still part of the European Union although the Brexit process was already at an advanced stage and many foreign residents in the UK felt uncertain about their future situation.

Furthermore, there are no statistically relevant differences concerning the attitude towards citizenship in terms of gender, federal province of origin in Austria and number

Figure 13.2. Importance of citizenship by region of residence, n=2,390 (in %)

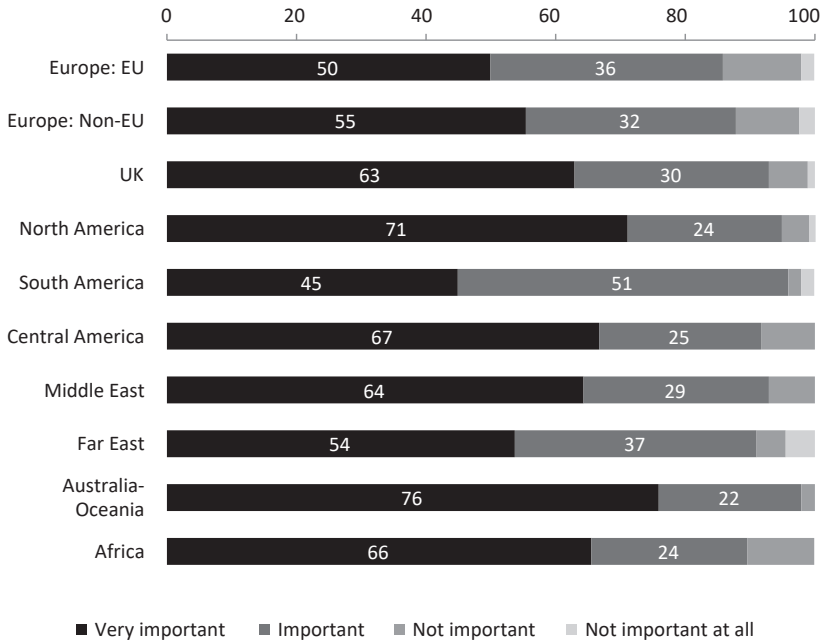


Table 13.2. Respondents' attitudes towards (dual) citizenship (in %)

| Item | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Total |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| One should not belong to two states at the same time; dual citizenships should in principle be banned | 7 | 7 | 15 | 70 | 100 |
| Citizenship is not important; the main thing is to be able to work and live freely in a country | 12 | 24 | 32 | 33 | 100 |
| Austrians who have been living abroad for some time should be given easier access to dual citizenship | 72 | 17 | 7 | 5 | 100 |
| Citizenship is an important sign of belonging to a country | 60 | 30 | 8 | 2 | 100 |

N=2,369 to 2,381.

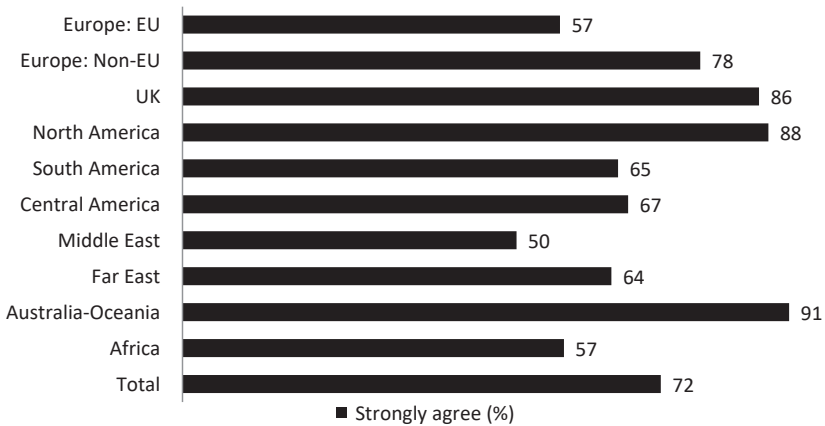
of years spent there. This is a remarkable fact, as one would suppose that these variables would have an influence. Surprising, also, is the non-existent difference between men and women. As will be seen in further results, gender does not seem to play an important role when it comes to interest in and attitudes towards citizenship in general.

4.2 Basic attitudes towards (dual) citizenship

The respondents were presented with a question containing four statements on which they could enter their agreement or disagreement on a four-level scale. The results are shown in Table 13.2.

We can see that the majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards (dual) citizenship – 90 per cent are convinced that citizenship is an important sign of belonging to a country. Two-thirds (65 per cent) think that citizenship is important even if you are allowed to work and live freely in a country. Moreover, 89 per cent of respondents think that access to dual citizenship should be made easier for Austrians who have been living abroad for some time, while 86 per cent reject a general ban on dual citizenship.

Figure 13.3. Percentage of participants who responded “Strongly agree” to the statement “Austrians who have been living abroad for some time should be given easier access to dual citizenship” (n=2,381)



Clear differences can be seen depending on the region and duration of the stay abroad. The differences in region are illustrated in Figure 13.3, in the example of consent to easier access to dual citizenship for Austrians living abroad. The differences are quite remarkable. The most positive attitude towards (dual) citizenship can be found among Austrians living in Australia-Oceania and North America. At the other end of the scale – but still with a positive attitude in principle – are those living in Africa, Central America

and the Far East. Responses by interviewees in Europe, South America and the Middle East lie between these two poles. The situation is particularly interesting in Europe. Respondents in EU member states have little interest in demanding easier access to dual citizenship, whereas those living in a non-member state show significantly more interest. Respondents in the UK, which was, at the time of the survey, in the middle of the Brexit process, show even greater interest.

Table 13.3. Logistic regression on determinants of the attitude towards dual citizenship

| Variable | Exp(B) |
|--|---------|
| Gender (w/m) | 0.752** |
| Age (3 categories: young to old) | 0.712** |
| Highest educational attainment (3 categories: low to high) | 1.283** |
| Duration of stay in host country (3 categories: short to long) | 1.102 |
| Years spent in Austria (3 categories: few to many) | 1.265** |
| Region | |
| Europe: EU (reference) | |
| Europe: Non-EU | 2.930** |
| UK | 3.625** |
| North America | 4.653** |
| South America | 2.073* |
| Central America | 0.758 |
| Middle East | 0.876 |
| Far East | 1.724* |
| Australia-Oceania | 6.135** |
| Africa | 0.983 |

N=2,343; Nagelkerke $R^2=0.173$

Dependant variable: attitude towards dual citizenship (0 negative/indifferent; 1 strongly positive)

With regards to the duration of the stay abroad, a U-shaped connection can be observed: persons living abroad for between 11 and 20 years are more positive about (dual) citizenship than those staying abroad for shorter or longer periods. The age of respondents also plays a role – younger people tend to have a more positive attitude towards (dual) citizenship than older people.

Interestingly, in terms of gender there are no differences in the attitude towards citizenship in general though there are in the attitude towards dual citizenship – women are significantly more in favour of it than men. This is one of the rare occasions where gender does have implications on the respondent's attitude. The same phenomenon can be found in the review of educational qualifications: university graduates, in particular, are more positive about dual citizenship than people with formally lower educational qualifications. Again, there are no differences in attitudes towards citizenship in general.

As the main focus of this article lies on dual citizenship, the two questions concerning this subject have been examined in detail. A new variable was created with two groups. One group consists of all people who strongly supported the claim of easier access to dual citizenship for Austrians who have been living abroad for some time and strongly disagree with the statement that dual citizenship should be generally banned. All other respondents are assigned to the second group. Afterwards a logistic regression model was created to examine which background factors are relevant for being in the group classification. The results can be seen in Table 13.3, which shows the influence of different variables on attitudes towards dual citizenship.

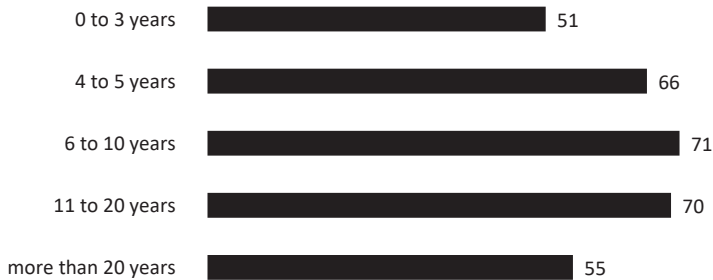
The model as a whole is significant although the strength of explanation is not very high, as reflected in the low Nagelkerke R^2 value. Except for the duration of stay in the host country,⁴ all variables show significant influence. Women are more likely to be in favour of dual citizenship than men. With the increasing age of the respondents, the importance of the topic decreases. The higher the level of education, the more likely it is that the respondents have a positive view on dual citizenship. The attitude towards dual citizenship is significantly different for respondents in different regions. Compared to respondents living in EU member countries, where the interest in dual citizenship is quite low, respondents in Australia-Oceania, North America and the UK, in particular, have a high interest.

People who have been living in Austria for a longer period of time tend to be more positive towards dual citizenship than their counterparts with fewer years spent in the host country. This relationship seems to run opposite to the correlation with age. However, on closer examination the underlying variable may be the duration of stay in the host country, which did not show significant impact in this model. Figure 13.4 shows the share of respondents with a very positive attitude towards dual citizenship by duration of stay in the host country.

The U-shaped relationship between attitude towards dual citizenship and duration of stay in the host country, as mentioned above, can be seen in Figure 13.4. Respondents who have been living in the country of residence for a shorter or longer period of time show significantly less interest in dual citizenship compared to respondents with a medium duration of stay. One explanation may be that people who have been living in a country for only a few years are not yet considering applying for naturalisation. The longer they live in the host country, the more important this option becomes for them. After a long time living in the host country or at a certain age, they have come to accept their situation as a foreign resident and many may no longer bother about dual citizenship or naturalisation.

⁴ The variables age, duration of stay in the host country and years spent in Austria are correlated to a certain degree. This leads to a minor appearance of multicollinearity in the model. However, this does not affect the validity of the results.

Figure 13.4. Share of respondents with a very positive view on dual citizenship by duration of stay in the host country (in %)



N=2,396. Each bar can range on a scale from 0 to 100%.

4.3 Respondents' intentions regarding their own citizenship

The participants in the survey were asked what concrete intentions they had with regards to their own citizenship. The question of whether they were fundamentally interested in acquiring the citizenship of their current country of residence was answered in the affirmative by two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) but only on the condition that they could also retain their Austrian citizenship. Only 3 per cent of respondents would be willing to renounce their Austrian citizenship in order to obtain the new citizenship. Almost a quarter of the respondents (21 per cent) were not interested in acquiring the citizenship of their current country of residence.

Table 13.4 shows that there are differences between the respondents in several respects: the U-shaped relationship that had already emerged manifests itself again in the duration of the stay abroad. Persons who have lived in the host country for between 11 and 20 years tend to be more eager to acquire its citizenship, in contrast to persons with shorter or longer periods of residence. Of those who have lived in Austria for less than 20 years, a larger proportion is not interested in acquiring the citizenship of the host country than of those who have lived in Austria for more than 20 years. University graduates distinguish themselves from people with lower educational attainment by being more interested in acquiring the citizenship of the host country but, again, only on the condition that they can retain their Austrian citizenship. A gender comparison shows the same pattern: women are more willing than men to acquire the citizenship of the host country – if they can retain their Austrian citizenship in return. In contrast to the younger interviewees, those over 55 years of age were less willing to accept the citizenship of the host country. Again, large differences can be seen, depending on the country in which the respondents live. Almost two-thirds of our respondents in Africa and

the Middle East had no interest at all in acquiring the citizenship of their host country. The interviewees in the Far East and in Central and South America had above-average little interest in acquiring the citizenship of their host country. In Europe, we can see a split: in EU member countries, the interest is not very high but in the other countries it is. It is also very high in North America and Australia-Oceania; more than 90 per cent of respondents there are interested in acquiring the citizenship of their host country.

Table 13.4. Willingness to accept the citizenship of the host country by duration of stay in the host country, highest level of education, sex, age and region of residence, n=2,152–2,187 (%)

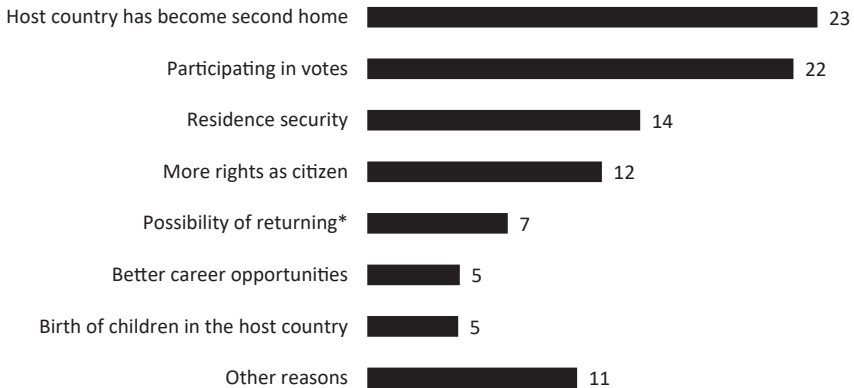
| | | Yes* | Yes, but** | No | Don't know | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|------------|----|------------|-------|
| Total | | 3 | 71 | 23 | 3 | 100 |
| Duration of stay in the host country | 0–10 years | 4 | 71 | 21 | 4 | 100 |
| | 11–20 years | 2 | 80 | 16 | 2 | 100 |
| | 20+ years | 3 | 67 | 29 | 2 | 100 |
| Highest level of education | Primary school, vocational training | 4 | 65 | 30 | 2 | 100 |
| | Secondary school, technical training | 3 | 65 | 30 | 2 | 100 |
| | College | 3 | 75 | 19 | 3 | 100 |
| Sex | Female | 2 | 76 | 20 | 3 | 100 |
| | Male | 4 | 66 | 27 | 2 | 100 |
| Age | < 34 years | 4 | 76 | 15 | 5 | 100 |
| | 35–54 years | 3 | 77 | 18 | 2 | 100 |
| | 55+ years | 2 | 62 | 33 | 2 | 100 |
| Region | Europe: EU | 2 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 100 |
| | Europe: Non-EU | 5 | 74 | 19 | 2 | 100 |
| | UK | 1 | 87 | 9 | 3 | 100 |
| | North America | 7 | 86 | 6 | 2 | 100 |
| | South America | 0 | 59 | 37 | 5 | 100 |
| | Central America | 0 | 67 | 25 | 8 | 100 |
| | Middle East | 5 | 36 | 59 | 0 | 100 |
| | Far East | 2 | 55 | 42 | 2 | 100 |
| | Australia-Oceania | 1 | 91 | 8 | 1 | 100 |
| | Africa | 0 | 31 | 62 | 8 | 100 |

Note: * Yes, even if it means losing their Austrian citizenship; ** Yes but only with the retention of their Austrian citizenship.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate possible reasons why they would like to acquire citizenship of their country of residence. The results are shown in Figure 13.5. Almost half of the respondents either stated that the country had become their

second home or that they would like to take part in the elections (24 and 22 per cent respectively). In addition, the fact that citizenship is accompanied by more rights (12 per cent) and that security of residence is increased (12 per cent) also played a role for the interviewees.

Figure 13.5. Reasons for acquiring the foreign citizenship (in %)



Notes: * The possibility of returning to the host country after leaving it; n=2,403; the individual reasons add up to 100 per cent.

There are interesting interrelationships between several factors: with longer stays in the host country, residence security, career opportunities and the gain in rights become less important for the interviewees. On the other hand, the aspects of feeling at home in the host country and the desire to vote become more important after a longer stay.

Clear differences can be seen between countries of residence. The need for residence security is above average in Central and North America as well as in the Far East. The interviewees in South America and Australia-Oceania hope for better career opportunities through citizenship while the possibility of electoral participation appeals particularly often to the interviewees in Europe. In North America and Australia-Oceania, citizenship providing the opportunity to return to the country of residence after leaving elicited an above-average response. With regards to educational qualifications, differences can be found, above all, because the country of residence has become the second home: this is less true for academics than for persons with a lower educational qualification. As far as gender is concerned, it is also worth noting that slightly more women than men cite participation in elections as a motive for obtaining citizenship. The same patterns as for the length of stay in the host country can be observed for age and the number of years spent in Austria.

4.4 Actions taken by respondents regarding (dual) citizenship

The participants in the survey were asked several questions about the concrete steps they had already taken with regards to their citizenship status, with the questions mainly focused on the extent to which respondents had already made enquiries. The results can be found in Table 13.5.

Table 13.5. Enquiries made by respondents about (dual) citizenship, n=2,403 (%)

| Have you already enquired about ... | Yes | No | Total |
|--|------------|-----------|--------------|
| ... the acquisition of citizenship in your current country of residence? | 60 | 40 | 100 |
| ... the acquisition of dual citizenship? | 52 | 48 | 100 |
| ... the retention of your Austrian citizenship upon acquisition of the citizenship of your country of residence? | 31 | 69 | 100 |

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (60 per cent) said that they have already asked about the requirements for obtaining citizenship in their current country of residence. Those who have lived in the host country for 11 to 20 years have done so more often than the average. Those living in North America and Australia-Oceania, in particular, have often enquired about the conditions for being granted citizenship, while those living in the Middle East, Central America and Africa have asked particularly rarely. People with university degrees have more often made enquiries than those without. There are no gender differences. Fewer enquiries have been made by the over-50s compared to younger people.

Just over half of the respondents (52 per cent) have already enquired about the prerequisites for dual citizenship; the other half did not. With regards to the differences between the various groups of people, the same patterns emerge here as in answer to the question of whether or not respondents have already informed themselves about the requirements for citizenship acquisition in their current country of residence.

The even-more-specific question of whether respondents have already enquired of the authorities whether they can retain Austrian citizenship if they adopt a new nationality is answered positively by one third (31 per cent) of respondents. Here, too, the same patterns emerge as they did with the question of whether respondents had already informed themselves about the prerequisites for citizenship in their current country of residence.

4.5 Meeting requirements for host-country and dual citizenship

Two-thirds of respondents (67 per cent) stated that they meet the requirements for citizenship in their current country of residence, while 13 per cent of respondents answered "No" and 20 per cent do not know. Of those who had lived in the country of residence

for more than 10 years, three-quarters knew that they meet the requirements. Among respondents with a shorter stay, the proportion is much lower, partly because more people do not know whether they meet the requirements. The percentage of respondents who *do* know is above the overall average only in North America and Australia. Here, the proportion of those who do not know whether they meet the requirements is also low. Education does not show any difference although those with a higher level of education are slightly better informed. Persons in the 35–54-year age group are better informed than the other age groups. There are no significant differences with regards to gender.

Another question shows that 83 per cent of respondents felt that the procedure for acquiring dual citizenship was complicated. Those who were better informed about it also agreed. In total 10 per cent of the respondents possess dual citizenship.

5. Summary and interpretation

Our analysis of the responses by the survey participants has shown that the first hypothesis (citizenship is an important issue for Austrians living abroad) can be confirmed. The majority of respondents cling to their Austrian citizenship and only a few are willing to give it up in favour of the citizenship of the country of residence. However, the willingness to acquire dual citizenship is high; the concept itself is also assessed positively by the majority of respondents. These results are consistent with the first hypothesis that there will be a high interest in dual citizenship because it enables Austrians living abroad to participate fully in the public and political life of their country of residence while, at the same time, retaining close links to Austria.

With regards to the factors that influence the opinions and attitudes of Austrians living abroad, the region in which the host country is located and the length of stay are particularly important. In the affluent western regions of North America and Australia, interest in acquiring citizenship is high while, in poorer regions such as Africa and Central and South America, it is low. This confirms the second hypothesis that the interest in acquiring citizenship is higher in the richer and fully democratic Western countries than in those of the global South. We can also see, however, that interest in acquiring citizenship in EU member states is lower. This is reasonable, given the fact that all social and mobility rights are secured for Austrians there. In Germany, in addition, the social and cultural integration of Austrians is easy. Interest in citizenship issues increases with length of stay, particularly among those who have been in the host country for 11–20 years. The interest is lower for people who have been living in the host country for a shorter duration as well as those who have been there for over 20 years. Thus, the third hypothesis is only partially confirmed. One explanation could be that, in their first years abroad, immigrants do not yet know whether they want to spend the rest of their lives in the host country. The more years they spend there, the more relevant the issue of citizenship becomes. After a long time in the host country, immigrants have already made

their arrangements and the importance of the question of citizenship decreases again. Looking at the socio-demographic background of the interviewees, the comparatively high level of interest among younger people and those with a university degree has become particularly apparent. This confirms our fourth hypothesis. In contrast, gender rarely plays a role. Interestingly, which Austrian federal province the interviewee originated from made no difference at all.

Finally, it should be noted that, although a quite large sample size was achieved with 2,403 participants, the representativeness of this group is nevertheless problematic. The interviewees were self-selected members of the *Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund* (AÖWB), an association for Austrians living abroad. Members of this association are probably significantly more educated than the whole group of approximately 570,000 Austrians living abroad.⁵ Most importantly, they probably have a higher interest in Austrian topics and thus also in Austrian citizenship than other Austrians living abroad. The sample is also not representative with regards to geographic distribution: the AÖWB has – in relation to the number of Austrians living in a certain country – more members in Anglo-Saxon countries where probably a large proportion of Austrians are working in highly skilled professional and managerial occupations, whereas the association is under-represented in Germany, where the proportion of low-skilled workers is probably higher. These caveats must be kept in mind when looking at the results, which can therefore be generalised to the remaining members of the AÖWB – however, a generalisation to all Austrians living abroad is not advisable. Nevertheless, the survey did deepen our knowledge on the topic of citizenship and dual citizenship and the results may encourage scientists to conduct follow-up studies.

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⁵ There are no statistics on the educational attainments of Austrians living abroad. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents with a university degree is very high in this survey.

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