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# **SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, VALUES AND EMIGRATION INTENTIONS OF RUSSIAN YOUTH**

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## **SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, VALUES AND EMIGRATION INTENTIONS OF RUSSIAN YOUTH<sup>2</sup>**

This research defines the relatively new concept of socio-psychological capital and examines the interrelation between socio-psychological capital and emigration intentions of Russian youth. Socio-psychological capital is seen as a resource of psychological relations, available to individuals belonging to a group. Socio-psychological capital includes trust, national identity, ethnic tolerance. The research also deals with the theory of planned behaviour, applied to emigration intentions. The empirical database is presented by the sample of Russian students (N=203). The results of structure equation modelling show that the model of planned emigration behaviour differs from the original theoretical model. We also found a negative relationship between national identity, institutional trust and emigration intentions. The results advance the understanding of the psychological nature of emigration intentions and highlight the potential of the socio-psychological capital concept.

Keywords: emigration intentions, socio-psychological capital, value orientations, trust, national identity

JEL Classification: O15

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## Introduction

In recent years globalization processes have increased (Smirnov, 2001). Due to these processes, the level of population mobility in the whole world has greatly increased over the past few years. For example, in 2010, 56.7 million people migrated from Europe, most of them moved to other European countries, others to the United States and Asia (Data Migration Policy Institute). As for Russia, the emigration rate has dropped significantly over the past 10 years. While in 2000, 145,720 people left Russia, in 2009 the number of emigrants decreased to 32,458 people (data from Rosstat). Smirnov wrote that at the beginning of 21st century we can expect an explosion of migration (Smirnov, 2001). The process of increasing mobility can be considered as an indispensable condition and consequence of the transition to an open society. National borders are becoming more open. Labour and educational migration becomes a natural process. Over time, most states are becoming multicultural.

In light of the increasing level of mobility migration processes are increasingly becoming a topic of various studies, mostly in sociology, economics and anthropology (Morozova, 1996; Akhiezer, 1999; Platonov, 2000).

Macro-level factors influencing emigration are mainly studied by sociology and economics, and in some cases, by political science. Among these factors we distinguish: the state of economy, satisfaction with the legal and political system, the level of employment and unemployment and also income (Morozova, 1996).

We conclude that among the main factors influencing the desire of young people to emigrate the socio-political situation is the main cause of emigration. More recent research suggests the range of motives for emigration activity has grown considerably (Frolova, 2010). While earlier Russian emigration motives had primarily political and ethnic character, at the beginning of the 21st century there has been a shift to economic and social motives (Krasinets, 1997). Based on this thesis, a search for the psychological causes of emigration such as personal and institutional trust, group affiliation, attitudes toward migrants and others are quite logical. This phenomenon is a representation of the relationship resources called socio-psychological capital.

The relationship between emigration intentions and different socio-psychological phenomena has not been widely studied in psychology, although it has been studied extensively in sociology in recent years. However, this research has focused primarily on the demographic and economic determinants of emigration (Morozova, 1996; Akhiezer, 1999; Platonov, 2000) as opposed to the psychological motivation (Boneva & Frieze, 2001; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001). Our research stands on up to date theories in social psychology – concept of socio-psychological capital (Tatariko, 2013), and theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1987; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). We conduct a more detailed analysis of emigration intentions.

The research examines aspects of the relationship between emigration intentions, socio-psychological capital and basic values to describe and analyse how socio-psychological capital and basic values influence emigration intentions of the youth. We further observe, describe and analyse emigration intentions of youth in Russia to understand the relationship between socio-psychological capital and emigration intentions.

A test for emigration intentions is introduced to examine the explanatory power of the theory of planned behavior (TPB). Studies of youth emigration intentions are intended to offer opportunities for further investigations and to be easily adapted for practical purposes. The findings of this study could be used to develop state programs aimed at the self-actualization of youth in Russia. Further, it will help advance the understanding of the relation between socio-psychological theories and social reality. The results of this research could also help us better understand the dynamics of modern society.

*Socio-psychological approach to the problem of emigration*

Any human behaviour is preceded by decision making. The final decision is influenced by many factors. The most important are internal constructs such as beliefs, values, attitudes, and stereotypes. However, the question of whether our behaviour is preceded by our internal constructs or behaviour effects them is one of the key issues of social psychology and psychology in general.

The majority of researches in social psychology study the motivational component of emigration intentions. They found that geographically mobile individuals in most cases are highly successful professionals or students (Boneva & Frieze, 2001; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001). Boneva and Frieze consider that one of the most common characteristics of people who want to emigrate is their dissatisfaction with the present place of residence. This dissatisfaction can be caused by many factors. One of the most important is a disorder of the basic motives.

Social psychologists have been trying to understand the nature of the emigration motivation for many years (Berry, Kim, Minde, Mok, 1987; Eisenstadt, 1954; Winter-Ebmer, 1994). It is assumed that emigration attitudes are determined by unsatisfied social needs, especially in case of economic downturn, or high unemployment. There are only few attempts to study other socio-psychological factors that influence emigration attitudes. The role of socio-psychological factors is worth taking into consideration, especially in today's Russia. Despite the decline in emigration, according to various polls from 40 to 60 % among the younger generation want to leave the country. Thus, we see that the social environment and the attitudes towards it may be one of the key factors that influence emigration intention.

### *Socio-psychological capital*

Studies on social capital are a strong case for social psychology. The term "social capital" was first used in Hanifan (1916) to describe communities in rural areas. However, this concept became popular through the works of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993). The theory of social capital has widespread appeal in social psychology (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001; Cook, 2005). However, social psychologists have studied mostly separate components of social capital: trust, group identity, tolerance to members of out-groups, or cohesion. Despite the fact that all socio-psychological phenomena which are covered by the concept of social capital are studied there are no investigations of their integral action (Tatarko, 2011). For a better understanding and to study it in social psychology it is necessary to consider socio-psychological capital as the basis of social capital. The focus on social relations that have fruitful benefits seems are a universal characteristic for many definitions of social capital. From this point of view social capital is defined as a resource found in social networks and available to the participants. In other words, this concept has two important components: resources (kept in social relations); access to and use of these resources which actors possess (Tatarko, 2012). A better explanation of such phenomena gives us the concept of socio-psychological capital. Socio-psychological capital is a resource of psychological relations contained within groups and available for the individuals. The core components are: trust (general, social and institutional), national identity and ethnic tolerance (Tatarko, 2012). To separate social capital and socio-psychological capital, the bearer of social capital is the group and not an individual, but social capital becomes a resource because of the "contributions" of each individual member of that group. The actual contribution is the attitude of the actors to the other members of the group and the attitude to the group as a whole, which can be defined as "social-psychological capital" (Tatarko, 2012).

Socio-psychological capital of separate people at the group level leads to the emerging of community characteristics based on which it is categorized as having high social capital. In this case, the social community as a whole system begins to possess social capital as a certain set of tools for achieving its goals: compliance without sanctions, self-organization (community

cohesion), and political activity. However, people's attitudes are at the heart of social capital: attitudes towards the social environment (trust, tolerance); attitudes towards the community as a whole (perceived social capital, social trust); attitudes towards one's belonging to a community (identity). All these types of attitudes are the socio-psychological capital of the group. They are "invested" into a group by separate people, but belong to the group as a whole.

Nestik (2004) considers the individual attitude towards the social relations as a specific resource turns them into social capital. Only if something having a value for the individual and the definite possibility of production, maintenance or use can be considered capital. In the absence of such value it does not matter how diverse and extensive your circle of acquaintances, friends and co-workers is, it will remain in the socio-psychological space which has no economic measurement.

As noted above, socio-psychological capital is a resource of psychological relations contained in groups, accessible for the individuals. Relationships are formed under the influence of 2 factors: individual (values, beliefs, upbringing) and public (economic and political systems). Society (environment) can therefore be a socio-psychological factor for emigration intentions, especially for youth.

After analysing the results of the socio-psychological research on emigration motivation, it can be assumed that because of the frustration of needing to belong (low and negative national identity), the individual will try to change their place of residence to meet their social needs.

#### *Basic individual values as a factor for emigration intentions*

In social psychology, the concept of basic values became popular in the second half of 20th century, Because of the growing popularity of research involving factors regulating human behaviour and relationships between people. An enormous number of studies developed several typologies and tests of (Pochebut & Meyzhis, 2010, p. 209).

One concept of cultural and individual values is by Schwartz (1992) which makes it possible to consider the sociocultural predictors of behaviour. In this paper, we analyse the individual values of young people, so we will not dwell on the description of cultural values.

In the individual approach Schwartz claims that one of the main aspects of the content, which allocates different values is the type of motivation that they reflect (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2010). For example, Schwartz grouped individual values in blocks (like motivation) that have a common goal. The main idea is that all the basic human values, regardless of culture, reflect a set of universal human needs (e.g., biological needs, social, etc.) as a conscious purpose. After analysing the previous typologies of values from various religious and philosophical writings in different cultures, Schwartz grouped them into ten basic types of motivation. According to Schwartz, the blocks of values determine the direction of the specific actions of the person, as well as determine the direction of vitality in general.

We assume that there could be a completely different motivation for emigration basic individual values which are not correlated with certain elements of planned emigration behaviour (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, emigration intention).

#### *Emigration intentions and TPB*

While the debate over emigration attitudes seems to gain popularity some vital aspects of reasons to emigrate are omitted or poorly understood. The research describes and analyses how socio-psychological capital and emigration intentions of the youth are interrelated. This study uses TPB, advancing our understanding of the psychological nature of emigration intentions.

The most detailed system "attitude-intention-behaviour" was considered in the theory of reasoned action developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). Later, the authors created the most coherent and complete theoretical model called the TPB (Ajzen, 1985). This theory is not only one of the most frequently tested in recent years in social psychology, but also it has been

successfully applied to explain different types of behaviour (Allen, Davis & Soskin, 1993; Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 1994; Goldenhar & Connell, 1992-1993; Jones, 1990; Hartshorne & Ajjan, 2009).

The TPB is an extension of the theory of reasoned action, and suggests that a person in a situation of decision making reviews and evaluates the likely consequences of the available alternatives (behavioural beliefs); a person also weighs the normative expectations of significant others (normative beliefs); considers necessary resources for the implementation of the action, as well as potential obstacles and barriers (control beliefs). These views or beliefs give rise to the formation of attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms in relation to the behaviour and perceived behavioural control. It is assumed that people form behavioural intentions based on their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These constructs form an intention that leads to behaviour.

According to the theory, intention covers individual motivational factors that influence behaviour. Intention is an indicator of how much people want to try and how much power they are willing to spend and invest to implement behaviour. In other words, stronger intention increases the chance that the behaviour will be implemented.

The basic idea is that when individuals form the intention, they take into account their attitude towards the behaviour of, the prevailing subjective norms related to behaviour (opinion of significant others) and their perceived behavioural control (the assessment of the availability of facilities and resources for the implementation of behaviour).

In accordance with the theory of planned behaviour, we assumed that people's intention to emigrate depend on attitudes towards emigration, subjective norms towards emigration and perceived behavioural control, which in turn influences actions for implementation of behaviour (*hypothesis 1*). It should be noted, in this research real emigration behaviour is not measured, but only actions that a person has done or is going to do to emigrate.

These elements mediate the relationship between socio-psychological capital and emigration intention. The higher the socio-psychological capital of personality, the more negative attitudes towards emigration, lower level of perceived behavioural control and subjective norms (*hypothesis 2*). However, in our view, the main role is played by the components of socio-psychological capital, which reflects the relation of a person to his environment—trust and national identity.

We also hypothesize that basic individual values are not correlated with emigration intentions or this correlation is weak (*hypothesis 3*).

## **Methods**

### *Participants of the study*

The survey polled 203 young people from 18 to 25 (mean 20) (periodization by: Morgun & Tkachev, 1981). The sample consists of 59 males, 144 females. Most respondents live in Moscow and the Moscow region (96%), the others live in Saint Petersburg, Glazov, Irkutsk, Tolyatti, Samara, Izhevsk and Cheboksary (4%). 90.1% of respondents have higher education.

### *Procedure*

Respondents were recruited online on a voluntary basis using the snowball technique. Predominantly respondents were the students of Higher School of Economics (87%). The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

### *The variables and their indicators*

In the study respondents filled in a questionnaire to measure the elements of socio-psychological capital, attitudes and subjective norms regarding emigration, perceived behavioural control, intentions, and actions necessary to leave the country and also to measure basic values.

**Socio-psychological capital.** As indicators of socio-psychological capital we used (Tatarako, 2012):

*Generalized interpersonal trust.* Respondents were asked to assess the extent of their agreement with the statement "Most people can be trusted" and "Most people always act honestly".

*Social trust.* Respondents were asked to assess the extent of their agreement with the statement "I trust my colleagues at work", "I trust my neighbours" and "I trust the people of other nationalities".

*Institutional trust.* Respondents were asked to assess the extent of their agreement with the statement "I trust the federal authorities", "I trust the regional authorities" and "I trust the authorities of the city/area in which I live".

*Ethnic tolerance.* Respondents were asked to assess the extent of their agreement with the statements "What about people of different nationalities, makes life better" and "I do not mind to live among people of different nationalities".

*National identity.* Respondents were asked to assess the extent of their agreement with the statement "I would rather be a citizen of Russia and not any other country", "I strongly feel that I belong to Russia", "I am proud that I am a citizen of Russia", "It is very important to me to feel belonging to Russia"

All indicators were scaled from 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree.

As indicators of **the planned emigration behaviour** were measured (a technique created by: Ajzen, 2010):

*Attitude toward emigration.* Respondents were asked to evaluate statements on a scale from -3 to +3: "For me, the idea of emigrating over the next two years ..." (very bad / very good), "For me the idea of emigrating in the next two years ..." (very stupid / very clever), "For me, the idea of emigrating in the next two years ..." (very inappropriate / very appropriate).

*Subjective norms.* Respondents were asked to evaluate statements on a scale from -3 to +3: "Most of the people that are important to me think that I should emigrate in the next two years" (strongly disagree / strongly agree), and "A lot of people that I know want to emigrate in the next two years"(strongly disagree / strongly agree).

*Perceived behavioural control.* Respondents were asked to evaluate statements on a scale from -3 to +3: "For me to emigrate in the next two years..." (very difficult / very easy) and "to emigrate in the next two years is not in my power" (strongly disagree / strongly agree).

*Intention to emigrate from Russia.* Respondents were asked to evaluate statements on a scale from -3 to +3: "How likely is it that you will emigrate from Russia in the next two years?" (very unlikely / very likely), "I want to begin preparation for emigration during the next two years" (strongly disagree / strongly agree), "I'm going to start preparing for emigration over the next two years" (strongly disagree / strongly agree).

*Actions to implement the emigration.* Respondents were asked to answer the question "Do you have any idea how to emigrate from Russia?" By choosing one of the options: (1) No, I have no idea; (2) Have no certain ideas, only general ideas; (3) There are some ideas, but not very clear; (4) There is an idea, but it still needs to consider and develop; (5) Yes, there are already well-thought-out ideas. Respondents were also asked to answer the following question "At what stage in respect to the following part of the planning of emigration are you now?" and had to answer this question referring to three aspects of planning of emigration: a) Search for country of residence and place of work/study; b) Development of an action plan for the emigration from Russia; c) Accumulation of money for emigration. Respondents should choose one of the options for each aspect of emigration plan: (1) I'm not going to do it; (2) I'm going to do it some time in the future; (3) I'm going to do it in the near future; (4) I just started doing it; (5) I'm actively doing it / have already made (the scale is from 1 to 5).

**Individual value orientations.** Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) contains 21 items of value descriptions. The respondent is asked to rate how characteristic each value is of him/her using a scale from 1 to 6.

The average score is calculated for the 10 scales corresponding to the 10 types of motivation (individual motivation goals) identified by Schwartz: Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism (Schwartz, 1992). Russian variant of SVS was taken from European Social Survey (2010).

Table 1 presents items of scales and their designations that will be used in models. This table presents designations of items that are introduced in final models.

Table 1. Designations of items, presented in models

Scale	Item	Designation
<i>Emigration attitude</i>	"For me to emigrate in the next two years ..." (very difficult / very easy)	at1
	"For me the idea to emigrate in the next two years ..." (very stupid / very clever)	at2
	"For me, the idea to emigrate in the next two years ..." (very inappropriate / very appropriate)	at3
<i>Subjective norms</i>	"Most of the people that are important to me think that I should emigrate in the next two years"	sn1
	"A lot of people that I know want to emigrate in the next two years "	sn2
<i>Perceived behavioural control</i>	"For me to emigrate in the next two years..." (very difficult/very easy)	pb1
	"Emigrate in the next two years - it is not in my power"	pb2
<i>Emigration intention</i>	"How likely is it that you will emigrate from Russia in the next two years?"	in1
	"I want to begin preparation for emigration during the next two years "	in2
	"I'm going to start preparing for emigration over the next two years"	in3
<i>Actions to implement the emigration</i>	"Do you have any idea which can serve as a basis for emigration from Russia?"	imp1
	"At what stage in respect to the following part of the planning of emigration are you now?"	imp2
<i>National identity</i>	"I strongly feel that I belong to Russia"	cid2
	"I am proud that I am a citizen of Russia"	cid3
	"It is very important to me to feel belonging to Russia "	cid4
<i>Institutional trust</i>	"I trust the federal authorities"	it1
	"I trust the regional authorities"	it2
	"I trust the authorities of the city/area in which I live"	it3

## Results

The results were analysed using structural equation modelling in AMOS (valuation method ML). It should be noted, that some items from scales were excluded, as they had low factor loadings. The number of items per scale in some models does not correspond to the number of items in questionnaire. During the testing of the hypotheses we created several models.

As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, some items of the scales were excluded from further analysis. In the first model we tested the planned emigration behaviour model (Fig. 1). The structural equation model presented in Fig. 1 shows that emigration attitude has the greatest predictive power with respect to emigration intention. According to this model, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have virtually no effect on the intention to emigrate. Therefore, in future models, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control were excluded from the analysis. In general, it is clear that this model explains 71% of the variance of action for the implementation of emigration. Quality indices of the model ( $p = .019$ ,  $CMIN / DF = 1.44$ ,  $CFI = .990$ ,  $RMSEA = .047$ ,  $PCLOSE = .552$ ,  $\chi^2 = 56.9$ ,  $df = 37$ )

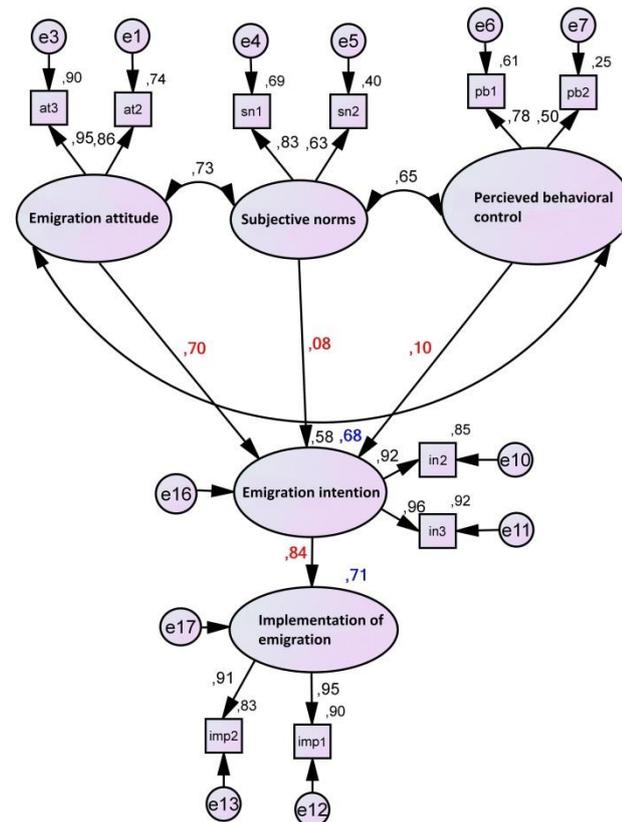


Figure 1. Model of planned emigration behaviour (blue – explained variance, red –  $R^2$ )

The Second model included almost all elements measured in the study: socio-psychological capital, values, attitude toward emigration, intention to emigrate from Russia and actions for the implementation of emigration. Quality indices of the model were very low ( $p = .075$ ,  $CMIN / DF = 3.354$ ,  $CFI = .763$ ,  $RMSEA = .032$ ,  $PCLOSE = .434$ ,  $\chi^2 = 86.3$ ,  $df = 83$ ). Moreover, there were many insignificant correlations therefore we excluded some elements of socio-psychological capital from the analysis (ethnic tolerance, general and social trust) and individual values (all values except hedonism). The third model included only those variables that were significantly associated with planned emigration behaviour. It is composed of national identity, institutional trust, value of hedonism attitudes towards emigration, the intention to emigrate and actions for the implementation of emigration (Fig. 2). This model has the best statistics ( $p = .040$ ,  $CMIN / DF = 1.311$ ,  $CFI = .990$ ,  $RMSEA = .039$ ,  $PCLOSE = .790$ ,  $\chi^2 = 94.4$ ;  $df = 72$ ) and explains 70% of the variance of action for the implementation of emigration.

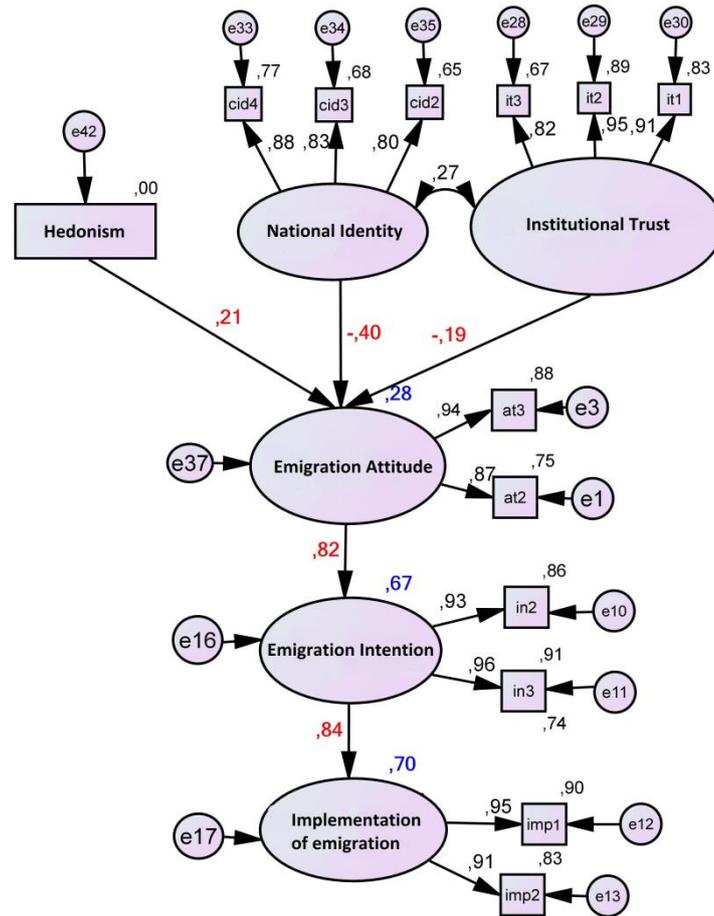


Figure 2. Model predicting the influence of socio-psychological capital and values of youth emigration intentions (blue – explained variance, red –  $R^2$ )

According to this model, national identity and institutional trust together with value of hedonism predict attitudes toward emigration: the weaker level of socio-psychological capital, the more positive attitudes towards emigration; the value of hedonism leads to stronger attitudes towards emigration. Attitudes predict a person's intention to emigrate from Russia, and the intention, the action to achieve this goal. These results fully support the hypothesis 1 and partly hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3. Other individual values have no significant correlations with elements of planned emigration behaviour (from .05 to .12).

### Discussion

First of all, the model of planned emigration behaviour has undergone some changes. From the model we have excluded subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on emigration, due to the weak predictive power of emigration intentions. Thus, we conclude that in the decision to emigrate subjective norms about emigration and the evaluation of abilities and capabilities required for emigration does not play a special role. The main factor determining the intention to emigrate is the attitude toward emigration, is it good or bad, appropriate or not, is it a smart idea or not. It is important to note that emigration attitude longitudinally strongly influences the intention of emigration ( $R = .70$ ). In general, the percentage of explained variance of the emigration is also quite high 71%.

We found that only some components of socio-psychological capital, in particular, national identity and institutional trust have a strong negative impact on emigration attitude. In other words, an increasing level of national identity and institutional trust can have a negative impact on attitudes toward emigration and as a consequence on emigration intention. These results repeat the results of our study in 2012: by regression analysis, we also revealed a strong negative correlation between national identity and emigration attitudes. This may be due to the

fact that the unexpressed attitude to their membership in the group is able to guide the individual to search for a group in which he could have stronger sense of belonging, realizing the social need to belong, and to invest in the development of positive relations in the group. Moreover, according to some studies, social identity is the cause of certain changes in economic behaviour, for example, in the propensity to invest in the common good, the willingness to cooperate and others. (McLeish, Oxoby, 2007). Consequently, a low level of national identity as one of the key components of social identity is able to reduce a person's willingness to co-operate and collaborate. The low level of national identity promotes the formation of emigration attitudes. A person ceases to feel like a member of society and looks to leaving the country to fill their need for affiliation, and to find a new group in the development of which person would be willing to invest, while improving their own situation.

We found that other elements of socio-psychological capital are not correlated with planned emigration behaviour and its elements. We suppose that general and social trust are quite stable and fundamental constructs/beliefs and emigration intentions do not depend on these basic beliefs about the people around. As for ethnic tolerance, we suppose that people's attitude toward people from different ethnic groups does not influence emigration intention because of ethnic heterogeneity of Russian society. We suppose, that students from our sample are used to a multicultural environment, so ethnic tolerance has almost no effect on intention to emigrate.

We also found that with an increasing value of hedonism the attitude towards emigration becomes more positive. A person who seeks to obtain pleasure from the life has a positive attitude towards emigration and believes that this is a good idea. It is likely that a positive attitude towards emigration in this case, can be explained by the finding of positive feelings, more favourable conditions for life and the desire to live life as fully as possible. However, the impact of hedonism on emigration attitude is rather weak. The absence of correlations between other values and elements of planned emigration behaviour can be due to the fact that values, according to the Schwartz theory represent motivational orientations that guide a person through their whole life. We believe that people who want to emigrate may be guided by entirely different motives, pursuing completely different purposes.

We come to the consideration of the general research model that predicts the impact of socio-psychological capital and values on the emigration intention. According to the general model national identity and institutional trust, together with the value of hedonism affect emigration intention. Together they account for 28% of the variance in intention to emigrate. This study supports the idea that different components of the socio-psychological capital can serve different purposes in different contexts.

We can conclude that the socio-psychological resource of relations affect the emigration intention by means of attitudes towards emigration. The most important role is played by the sense of belonging to a group and the relation to them. One of the main factors influencing the intention to emigrate among youth is a social need to belong and have security. People strive for a sense of belonging and pride in it, at the same time they consider it important to feel the secure in the state (through institutional trust). These results allow us to conclude that we are currently witnessing the displacement of emigration motives from economic and social to socio-psychological. But we should not forget that there is a great gap between intention and real behaviour in social sciences. Intention to emigrate does not mean that a person will emigrate.

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