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Social capital development after migration: The role of employment, children and gender factors for Russian post-2022 migrants

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Social capital development after migration: the role of employment, children and gender factors for Russian post-2022 migrants

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Abstract

A significant part of Russian migrants, who fled the country after February 2022, are qualified professionals, and almost half have moved with their partners and children. For them, the social capital required for integration in the host country is closely linked to family issues and daily routines. Defining social capital as a combination of relationships and attitudes, this study examines the role of employment, children, and gender in its development after migration. Empirical data were obtained from online surveys conducted among Russian migrants around the world, as well as among those who stayed in Russia. Quantitative analysis of the data shows that employment, children, and gender are related to the formation of migrants' social capital. In addition to the role of employment, we show that in migration women are more sociable and open to interaction, and having children widens their social circle and increases the number of acquaintances, which in turn contributes to the formation of social capital. Based on the above, it can be concluded that migrant families with children have a great potential for integration into the host society.

JEL-classification: F22, J12, J13, J15, I31

Keywords: Migration, social capital, integration, families, gender

1 Introduction

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has led to high out-migration from both countries affected by the conflict. Recently there have been quite a number of studies devoted specifically to Ukrainian refugees (De Coninck 2023, Kohlenberger et al 2023, Elinder et al 2023), however, the number of works highlighting the problems of Russian out-migration over the last 2.5 years is disproportionately smaller. In most cases migrants left Russia without careful preparation and thoughtful choice of the destination, moving to the one that suited their personal motives or where it was easier to legalize, at least temporarily. One of the features of the current flow of Russian emigration is its relative homogeneity – most migrants are skilled and qualified professionals with a fairly high level of education and above-average income (Kostenko et al., 2023). Such homogeneity allows us to compare and analyze the factors that form the social capital of Russian migrants regardless of the country of residence.

Integration tightly depends on social capital in the host country, which helps migrants engage in social activities (Giusta & Kambhampati, 2006). After migration the number and quality of social ties decrease, and further social capital development depends not only on professional relationships but also on family circumstances and gender roles.

Researchers have shown (Goel & Lang, 2019) that, on average, employed migrants have more social ties compared to unemployed migrants, at least because of the high role of informal contacts in job search. (Topa, 2011). However, we cannot ignore the fact that after the COVID-19 pandemic, most professional communication, even in office, switched to a remote format. These digital patterns intensified in the post-pandemic period (DeFilippis et al., 2022), and for migrants, it may have an impact on social capital development in the host country, leading to an increase in new online professional and social contacts.

Not just employment, but family in general, and children, in particular, may help to enhance a migrant's social capital outside the family. However, being a part of society, each family is important, though not always a sufficient source of social capital, since “an individual will feel more settled the bigger the size of the social networks that he/she can access, the greater the number of overlaps with other networks, and the better the support from government institutions” (Giusta & Kambhampati, 2006). Since 63% of Russian post-2022 migrants left with their partners, and 19% have underage children (Kostenko et al., 2023), the role of children in adults' social capital transformation may be substantial. Moreover, taking into account the peculiarities of gender roles in Russian families (Wegren et al., 2015), we can assume that the

role of men and women in social capital development differs, and this difference, probably, also matters.

Therefore, we aim to assess the role of employment, children, and gender in the development of the social capital of Russian post-2022 migrants, as well as to explore its specifics.

As social capital includes not only “more or less institutionalized relationships” (Richardson & Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998) among individuals, but also “the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000), we measure relationships and attitudes for migrants in the host societies according to the employment status, presence of children, and gender. To test whether the statistically significant factors of social capital development apply only to migrants, we test them for those Russians who stay in their home country, since the social capital of the stayers may differ, as the latter play a noticeable role in wealth production (Rose, 2000) and redistribution support (Borisova et al., 2017) in Russia.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1 Social Capital

The debate about the nature and role of social capital has been going on for decades. Social capital is traditionally differentiated from other forms of capital, such as human, cultural, and economic (Coleman, 1988), but at the same time, all these forms of capital can interflow.

Social capital is an actual or potential resource, which links to the possession of a network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Richardson & Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). Having no single definition, it can be assessed as a combination of different components: either as obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms (Coleman, 1988); or as trust, social norms, and social links (Putnam, 2000).

In the framework of this study, we consider migrants' social capital as an intangible asset that helps to integrate into the host society. Therefore, we view social capital from two perspectives: as relationships and as attitudes.

Relationships include acquaintances and friends, as well as in-person and online interactions with strangers. For our purposes, social norms and information channels are taken into account when assessing relationships.

Acceptance and general trust in people, that is, when they are perceived to be honest and open, are the basis for creating different types of relationships in society (Putnam, 2000). The role of trust is crucial for migrants, whether temporary or contextual, depending on personal experience (Essex et al, 2022). It is necessary to distinguish between trust in people in general,

and residents of the host country in particular (Bilodeau & White, 2016). Several recent studies show that immigrants exhibit higher levels of acceptance and trust in public institutions than natives (Röder & Mühlau, 2012).

2.2 Determinants of migrants' social capital

For migrants, social capital is not only an important factor in making decisions about migration and choosing host country (Portes, 1998), but also an important indicator of the quality of life of migrants (Adedjei, 2021), and a condition for their integration in the host society (Giusta & Kambhampati, 2006). Social capital decreases immediately after migration. It can be recovered during the integration process (Rüdel & Steinmann, 2024), but the very possibility of its recovery can be influenced by various factors. It is important to understand which factors make possible the development of social capital after migration, and which become obstacles.

The development of a migrant's social capital depends on pre-migration determinants, such as age, education level, previous migration experience and the availability of migration-related information, as well as post-migration determinants, including occupation, length of stay in the host country and intention to return or migrate to another (Fokkema & De Haas, 2011). Additionally, an important role may belong to employment as a source of formal professional links (Lu et al 2013; Cheung & Phillimore 2014; Wang & Shen 2022; Holbrow & Nagayoshi, 2016), children as a source of informal social links (Sime & Fox, 2015), and gender factor, since female migrant networks and male migrant networks have different impacts on migration outcomes (Curran et al., 2005).

2.2.1 Employment

The role and characteristics of migrants' social capital have traditionally been analyzed in relation to migrants with lower levels of education and wealth prior to immigration than in host countries: Turkish immigrants in Sweden (Behtoui, 2015), Moroccan and Senegalese immigrants in Spain, and Egyptian and Ghanaian immigrants in Italy (Fokkema & De Haas, 2011). For these migrant groups, it is shown that access to employment, services and benefits is reduced when social ties are absent (Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013; Cheung & Phillimore, 2014), bridging ties of social capital create opportunities for upward mobility in the labor market (Granovetter, 1973; De Graaf & Flap, 1988), whereas bonding ties lead people to work within diaspora instead of going to the open market (Kracke & Klug, 2021; Gërxhani & Kosyakova, 2022).

About 21% of the respondents and/or their partners have moved abroad with a job offer in the host country or having a remote job contract with pre-migration or new employer either in

Russia or in the host country (17.5%). However, a quick and sudden move without careful preparation did not imply extensive social ties in the host country. It turns out that, when moving to a new country without social ties, it is the country's resident colleagues or migrants who can become the main source of social capital formation. Thus, the formation of new social ties will begin through employment, and in this case, the nature of job (on/off-line, for the previous/new employer) can potentially affect the relationships being formed, and the very existence of official employment and working conditions contributes to the formation and maintenance of migrants' social capital.

Therefore, our first hypothesis is related to the relationship between employment and social capital of Russian post-2022 migrants:

H1.: Social capital is higher for employed migrants.

We do not check the relationship between employment and social capital development for stayers since for the latter social capital, being a multidimensional asset, is not so interrelated with the fact of employment itself. For migrants, we also check whether working online or in an office in the host country makes a difference. The format of work – online or in office – can affect the number of acquaintances and friends for employed migrants. This is important for this study because a significant part of skilled Russian migrants, mainly IT specialists, have relocated with their foreign employers and continue to work in the same business environment as before migration – for the same employer, but in a new country, in hubs or online. In both cases, however, they keep in touch with their former colleagues from Russia, regardless of the country the latter moved to after the invasion of Ukraine began. Thus, the conditions and needs to create a common communicative field for closer interaction with the local population may not be present. Therefore, for those with the opportunity to work online, regardless of the location of the employer, the level of social capital in the host country may be lower than for those who work in an office.

If there is no or limited professional contact with host country nationals, interaction with the local population is limited to occasions related to household needs (shopping, domestic issues, entertainment, etc.) and childcare (if any). Thus, the second factor of social capital development to be tested is the presence of children in the family.

2.2.2 Children

Various previously conducted studies consistently emphasize the crucial role of friends and family in integration processes (Koser Akcapar, 2010). Being the first circle of relationships (Furstenberg, 2005; Parcel & Bixby, 2016), children may positively impact the social capital development of family members (Leonard, 2005).

The role of children can be both direct, where they create new kinship ties through friends and their families, and indirect, where parents have to forge new social ties to re-establish a familiar way of life lost after migration. The presence of children often requires adult family members to establish social ties with the local community and official institutions, e.g. nurseries, schools, health facilities, etc.

Therefore, our second hypothesis is related to the relationship between the presence of children and the level of social capital of Russian migrants:

H2: Social capital is higher for migrants with children.

In checking this assumption, we also test whether the age of the children matters. We hypothesize that the role of parents in integration may be greater for preschool-aged children, so having an infant (under 3 years old), a preschool-aged child (4-6 years old), a school-aged child (7-18 years old), and an adult child (over 18 years old) may have different effects on the number of acquaintances and other components of parents' social capital. We also compare the relationship between the presence of children and social capital development for migrants and stayers to test whether the identified relationships are characteristic of migrants only.

2.2.3 Gender

The discussion of women's role in the development of social capital is ambiguous even beyond the issue of migration and depends on the importance given to gender roles. The perception is that women are assigned the role of homemaker, responsible for children and family, and are therefore mostly involved in informal social relationships, unlike men who participate in broader and more formalized professional social networks (Ganapati, 2012). Therefore, it is often assumed that men and women develop and exploit different kinds of social ties (Côté et al. 2015). Moreover, generally among migrants, men tend to create or join social and professional networks, while women are more likely to develop kinship ties (see, for example, the case of educated migrants from China to Canada, discussed in (Salaff & Greve, 2004)). In addition, given the traditional view of gender roles in the majority of Russian families (Doğangün, 2020), it is worth assuming that it is women who are most often responsible for the development of social capital related to daily routines.

Women play an active role in relief and recovery after disasters (Enarson, 1999), and, since forced migration is a kind of disaster as well, the role of women in the integration into the host society should not be underestimated. Women show higher adaptability in overcoming various social, cultural and economic obstacles during migration (Fokkema & De Haas, 2011). Traditionally, men feel more confident in their territory and familiar surroundings, while women are more likely to explore new conditions and get used to them through social

interaction (Tomova et al., 2014). Possible reasons may also lie in different reactions to stress determined by gender: men become more self-centered when experiencing stress, while women show an increased ability to empathize with others and improve social interaction skills (Tomova et al., 2014).

Taking all of the above into account, we formulate the third hypothesis about the relationship between gender and the formation of social capital of migrants in the host country:

H3.: Social capital is higher for women.

In testing this hypothesis, we do not distinguish between those women who moved with their partners and/or children and those who moved on their own. To check whether gender is significant for social capital development immediately after migration, we test the hypothesis for the stayer subsample as well.

3 Data and methods

3.1 Data and samples

The empirical analysis of the study is based on the data drawn from two similar online surveys carried out by the authors in May – October 2023, which provided us with a total sample of 491 respondents. The first survey sampled those who left Russia. Within the migrant subsample (303 respondents, 61.7%), we can derive two groups of respondents: 266 (54.2% of the total sample or 87.8% of migrant subsample) who left Russia after the outbreak of the armed conflict (post-2022 migrants), and 37 (7.5% of the total sample or 12.2% of migrant subsample) who migrated before the invasion of Ukraine (the old-wave migrants). The second survey, which is a control group, sampled those who stay in Russia (“stayers”, 188 respondents, 38.3%). In the current analysis, we do not differentiate between the date of migration among our respondents.

The survey for migrants was shared in Telegram channels for Russian migrants (Kovcheg, Scholars Without Borders, etc.), and Facebook and Telegram channels for Russians abroad (including channels for parents). The survey for stayers was distributed in city-district and parental groups in V Kontakte (Russia's largest social network). Additionally, both surveys used the snowball method to find respondents.

All respondents were asked questions about socio-demographic characteristics, employment, marital status and presence of children. For the migrant subsample, we also asked questions about the date of migration and country of stay. Both groups answered questions related to trust, acceptance, social links, and ways to access the information needed for daily routines. To assess respondents' financial stability, we asked questions related to subjective

income, that is, their own assessment of their wealth. Another indirect measure of the wealth of migrants is the city of their pre-migration employment (or the city of the current employment for stayers) – they were asked about the city of residence in Russia. It is important since the quality of life significantly differs for the capital and other metropolitan cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg agglomerations). For migrants, working in megacities before migration may result in a greater loss of subjective income than for those who lived in urban centers of less administrative importance. This factor may also affect social capital and integration in the new country.

The survey did not include any questions regarding respondents' attitudes towards Russia's policy or military activities in Ukraine. This was done in order to interview those who show no direct interest in politics and/or any type of activism. Neither the political views of the stayers are of our interest, since the research is solely related to their daily routines, associated with social capital.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Dependent variables

To access the social capital of our respondents, we use five dependent variables as measures of social capital for relationships and attitudes:

- Relationships (in the host countries for migrants, and in Russia for stayers)
 - Number of acquaintances. We recorded this objective variable to categorical for the better interpretation aggregating some smaller categories. It now ranges from 0 – when the respondent has no acquaintances, to 3 – when they have more than 7.
 - Online and in-person communication with strangers. Questions about the frequency of communication with people the respondent does not know well. We observe communication in-person and online separately. For this and other subjective variables we use the 5-point Likert scale (from 1 – never to 5 – very often).
- Attitudes:
 - Trust. Question: “Do you think you can trust most people?” (5-point scale from 1 – one should be careful to 5 – you can trust people).
 - Acceptance. Question: “Do you think most people would take advantage of you, if you let them, or rather behave honestly?” (5-point scale from 1 – one should be careful to 5 – you accept the way people treat you).

Since all dependent variables range from the lowest to the highest number, we can consider them as ordinal variables, and, therefore, use the linear models for testing the hypotheses.

3.2.2 Independent and control variables

The main independent variables approximate our hypotheses.

For *Hypothesis 1*, two binary independent variables show the employment status of the respondents: (a) *employed* (1 – yes if employed, 0 – if unemployed); (b) *work_in_the_host_country* (1 – if the respondent's employer resides in the host country, 0 – if not).

For *Hypothesis 2* we also use two variables: (a) binary *have_children* (1 – respondent has at least one child, and 0 – childless respondent); (b) categorical *childrens' age* (split by age groups 0-3 years old, 4-6 years old, 7-18 years old, and older than 18).

For *Hypothesis 3* the binary independent variable *gender* (1 – female, 0 – male) is used. In the first two hypotheses, the *gender* variable plays the role of a control variable.

We control for a battery of universal control variables: *age* (continuous variable), *gender* (1 – female, 0 – male) (except for Hypothesis 3), *marital_status* (1 – lives with a partner, regardless of the official status of the partnership, 0 – lives separately or has no partner), *university_degree* (1 – bachelor's or higher, 0 – lower levels of education), *resided_in_capitals* (1 – resided in capitals before migration: Moscow and St. Petersburg agglomerations, 0 – smaller towns and settlements), *subjective_income* (5 point scale to observe the levels from the lowest to the highest).

For *Hypothesis 2* we also control for the variable *children_stayed_in_Russia*, which denotes whether children migrated with the respondent or stayed in Russia, or in a country other than the respondent's current country of residence (from the response to the direct question in the survey).

More details on the control variables are presented in Table 1.

4. Data testing and results

Before testing the hypotheses, balance tests were conducted for differences between migrant and stayer subsamples on socio-demographic characteristics. Table 1 shows that there are some differences between migrant and stayer subsamples in several socio-demographic characteristics: gender (a higher share of women in the stayer subsample), number of children (a higher number of children for respondents in the stayer subsample), subjective income (migrants prove to be subjectively wealthier than stayers), and education levels (however, even taking into consideration the significantly higher share of migrants with the university degree compared to the stayers, both subsamples show high levels of education). Age, marital status, and place of residence (residence before migration – for migrants) did not demonstrate significant differences in any of the subsamples.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of socio-demographic characteristics of migrants and stayers

	Mean		Median		p
	Migrants	Stayers	Migrants	Stayers	
Number of children	0.85	1.3	0	1	<0.001*
Age	36.3	37.1	35	36.5	0.146
Subjective_income (from 1 - the lowest level to 5 - the highest level)	4.37	3.83	5	4	<0.001**
University_degree	92.70%	84%			0.002**
Marital_status	76.60%	74.20%			0.55
Resided_in_capitals	70.90%	68.10%			0.52
Gender (female)	50.80%	88.30%			<0.001**

* - Mann-Whitney, ** - Chi-square

Source: compiled by authors

The basic u-test (Mann-Whitney test) demonstrates some differences in the measures of social capital for migrants and stayers (see Table 2).

Table 2. Differences between social capital measures for migrants and stayers

	Stayers		Migrants		t-test
	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	
Relationships					
Number of acquaintances	2.08	0.75	1.52	0.90	>0.001
In person communication with strangers	3.17	1.18	3.01	1.18	0.153
Online communication with strangers	2.56	1.22	2.59	1.18	0.785
Attitudes					
Trust	2.64	1.15	3.07	1.12	>0.001
Acceptance	2.95	0.93	3.23	0.85	>0.001

Source: compiled by authors

The number of acquaintances for migrants is significantly lower compared to that for stayers: 1.5 versus about 2 (the figures themselves should not be interpreted directly, as we are working with the merged categories rather than continuous figures the figures themselves), which is obvious, as migrants did not have enough time to build new social ties. Nevertheless, the level of trust is higher for migrants: more than 3.07 versus 2.64 (for trust) and 3.23 versus 2.95 (for acceptance). The reasons for demonstrating greater trust could vary from self-selection to certain euphoria after the relocation and are not the subject of the study.

We also found that, compared to stayers, migrants tend to interact a little more with strangers online (the difference is 0.03) and a little less in-person (the difference is 0.16), but these differences are insignificant.

Other researchers have also demonstrated a higher level of trust among migrants compared to stayers (Sergeeva & Kamalov, 2024). There may be some selectivity among migrants in terms of social capital. However, the stayer subsample is used as a placebo to test whether hypotheses 2 and 3 are confirmed for both samples or only for migrants.

In Appendix Table A1, we show that dividing into post-2022 migrants and old wave migrants does not make sense as there is no significant difference between them, so we use a subsample of all migrants in our analysis.

Technically, we use the linear regression models. As there could be different environments in various host countries, we apply standard errors clustered by country subsamples to the migrant sample. For stayers, we use the regression with robust standard errors (as they stay in the same country).

5 Results

While testing *Hypothesis 1* about the correlation between employment and social capital, we found no significant differences for employed and unemployed migrants (regardless of the residence of the employer) in such measures of social capital as the number of acquaintances, in-person communication, and trust (see Annex Table A2).

If migrants are employed (regardless of the residence of the employer), only online communication and acceptance are higher compared to those who are unemployed, and these results are significant at a 5% level (see Table 3).

Trying to distinguish whether the person is employed in the host country, office based or online, we failed to find any significant difference in social capital measures.

Therefore, we can statistically approve *Hypothesis 1*, but under the consideration that communication online and acceptance do not necessarily facilitate the development of social capital in the host country.

Table 3. Hypothesis 1 testing. The results of the regression analysis for acceptance and communication online as dependent variable^V (non-standardized β -coefficients)

	Communication online				Acceptance			
Control variables	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
Work_in_the_host_country	0.0898		0.120		0.144		0.161*	
	(0.121)		(0.109)		(0.0927)		(0.0912)	

<i>Employed</i>	<u>0.370**</u>				<u>0.298**</u>			
	(0.142)				(0.131)			
St. errors clustered by countries	+				+			
Observations	302	302	303	303	302	302	303	303
R-squared	0.048	0.062	0.002	0.011	0.032	0.047	0.009	0.019

Hereinafter Robust st. errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

^v – Hereinafter we report non-standardized β -coefficients

Source: compiled by authors

To test *Hypothesis 2* about a higher level of social capital for the migrants with children, we compare the results for the migrant and stayer subsamples. We are interested in the relationship between children and the measures of social capital, and the children of particular age groups, as the social inclusion of parents could differ accordingly. We also control for the regression equation in the migrant subsample for the variable “*children_stayed_in_Russia*” (as in some cases, the respondents have children both staying in Russia and with them in migration).

Acceptance, online and in person communication with strangers did not demonstrate any significant correlation with the child factor. The results for non-significant variables are available in the Annex Table A3.

However, we found a significant difference between migrants with and without children (*no-children* variable) for trust level (see Table 4) and the number of acquaintances (see Table 5). If person migrated with children, trust level occurs to be higher (the non-standardized β -coefficient = 0.223, $p < 0.05$), while in the stayer subsample respondents with children demonstrate lower (but statistically insignificant) level of trust compared to childless respondents, which means that the hypothesis works only for the migrant subsample.

Table 4. Hypothesis 2 testing. The results of the regression analysis for the trust level as a dependent variable

	migrants with children less and above 18 y.o.	migrants with children, split by age groups	migrants with children and childless	stayers with children less and above 18 y.o.	stayers with children, split by age groups	stayers with children and childless
Control variables	+	+	+	+	+	+
Children_stayed_in_Russia	0.327	0.317	0.283			

	(0.345)	(0.330)	(0.335)			
Ref. childrens' _age (0-18)						
<u>No children</u>	<u>-0.207**</u>			<u>0.209</u>		-
	<u>(0.102)</u>			<u>(0.286)</u>		-
Children older than 18	-0.475			-0.0706		
	(0.303)			(0.360)		
Ref. childrens' _age (7-18)						
No children		-0.144		0.329		
		(0.206)		(0.338)		
Children older than 18		-0.445		-0.0835		
		(0.303)		(0.366)		
Childrens' _age (4-6)		0.168		0.0603		
		(0.274)		(0.277)		
Childrens' _age (0-3)		0.0353		0.204		
		(0.267)		(0.284)		
<u>Have children</u>			<u>0.223**</u>			<u>-0.198</u>
			<u>(0.101)</u>			<u>(0.282)</u>
St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	-	-	-
Observations	302	302	302	186	186	186
R-squared	0.045	0.047	0.040	0.007	0.011	0.007

Source: compiled by authors

Table 5. Hypothesis 2 testing. The results of the regression analysis for the number of acquaintances as a dependent variable

	migrants with children less and above 18 y.o.	migrants with children, split by age groups	migrants with children and childless	stayers with children less and above 18 y.o.	stayers with children, split by age groups	stayers with children and childless
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Social capital development after migration: the role of employment, children and gender factors for Russian post-2022 migrants

Control variables	+	+	+	+	+	+
Children_stayed_in_Russia	-0.790*** (0.294)	-0.804*** (0.274)	-0.776*** (0.287)			
Ref. childrens' _age (0-18)						
<u>No children</u>	<u>-0.0595</u> <u>(0.0996)</u>			<u>0.455**</u> <u>(0.183)</u>		
-						
Children older than 18	0.156 (0.295)			0.0787 (0.265)		
Ref. childrens' _age (7-18)						
No children		-0.187 (0.143)			0.354* (0.212)	
Children older than 18		0.153 (0.300)			0.0688 (0.266)	
Childrens' _age (4-6)		0.0104 (0.198)			-0.138 (0.179)	
Childrens' _age (0-3)		-0.349** (0.163)			-0.134 (0.188)	
<u>Have children</u>			<u>0.0542</u> <u>(0.0980)</u>			<u>-0.467***</u> <u>(0.179)</u>
St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	-	-	-
Observations	293	293	293	182	182	182
R-squared	0.058	0.071	0.057	0.053	0.058	0.053

Source: compiled by authors

The age of the children does not play a significant role in the level of trust. Only for the number of acquaintances, the age group 0-3 compared to the age group 7-18 reduces this

number (β -coefficient = -0.349, $p < 0.01$), see Table 5. For the stayer subsample results are opposite: the number of acquaintances drops for the respondents with children (β -coefficient = -0.467, $p < 0.01$) and grows for the childless.

To sum up, for people staying in Russia parental routine reduces chances of building or maintaining social capital, while for the migrant subsample activities associated with children provide opportunities to gain social capital. This might be related to the urge to find necessary information in a new environment and the need for advice, which makes migrants with young children interact with others more often.

Our results show that having children regardless of their age is related to a significantly higher level of trust and the number of acquaintances (contrary to the stayers subsample), while the other indicators are not significant.

We can argue that respondents with children are more likely to collaborate with others to get more information about services related to childcare (such as education and health). In addition, respondents with children, unlike childless respondents, tend to seek information for everyday needs in different sources, including those not related to childcare. See Annex Table A 4.

To test *Hypothesis 3* about higher level of social capital for women, we add three additional control variables: (1) *have_children*, which equals 1 when children live together with respondent, and 0, when they live separately; (2) *employment*, which equals 1 when the respondent is employed, and 0 when unemployed; (3) *work_in_the_host_country*, which equals 1 when the respondent's employer is a resident of the host country, and 0 in any other case, including unemployment.

For all measures of social capital, except for trust, women show higher statistically significant differences compared to men (see Table 6). This effect is observed only for the migrant subsample. For the stayer subsample there are no significant differences between men and women on all measures of social capital (see Table A5 in Annex).

Therefore, we can conclude that women tend to demonstrate higher levels of acceptance, have more acquaintances, and interact with strangers both online and in-person more often (the non-standardized β -coefficient in the equations belongs to the diapason 0.126 – 0.425).

Table 6. Hypothesis 3 testing. The results of the regression analysis with gender as an independent variable

	Acceptance	Number of acquaintances	Communication offline	Communication online
Work_in_the_host_country	0.144	-0.0912	0.0303	0.0898

	(0.0927)		(0.144)		(0.151)		(0.121)	
<u>Gender (female)</u>	<u>0.126*</u>	<u>0.160**</u>	<u>0.205*</u>	<u>0.225**</u>	<u>0.425***</u>	<u>0.425***</u>	<u>0.254**</u>	<u>0.302**</u>
	(0.0723)	(0.0750)	(0.112)	(0.0984)	(0.125)	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.120)
Have_children	0.0534	0.0620	-0.00212	-0.00172	0.0166	0.0172	0.195	0.205
	(0.106)	(0.117)	(0.116)	(0.113)	(0.241)	(0.240)	(0.206)	(0.195)
Employed		0.319**		0.0536		0.0167		0.370**
		(0.154)		(0.127)		(0.200)		(0.142)
Control variables	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Observations	302	303	293	293	302	302	302	302
R-squared	0.032	0.009	0.031	0.029	0.058	0.058	0.048	0.062

Source: compiled by authors

Since migration, especially when coupled with political changes, is inseparable from stress, the cause of higher social capital measures for women may be behavioral gender patterns in response to migration-related stress. Women demonstrate a greater capacity for adaptation, which is confirmed by our calculations. For example, security (question “Do you feel secure in the place you live?”) for women is lower than for men, but this difference is higher and statistically significant at the level of 10% for stayers, while for migrants it is lower, but the difference is statistically insignificant. In other words, the relative feeling of security for migrants among women and men is almost the same, while for stayers the difference is significant.

Women are also more enthusiastic than men in both migrant and stayer subsamples, but the difference is higher and statistically significant for migrants. Women also tend to feel less lonely than men (for migrants both women and men feel lonely abroad more often) and the difference is 10% level significant, while in Russia they are a bit more lonely in comparison to men (but the difference is insignificant). Women claim to receive various kinds of assistance, related to children's health and education. Regarding services of a different nature, women are also more likely to receive support. In this case, we refer again to *Hypothesis 2* about the

positive role of children in social networks (to get more detailed information about child care services, one should interact more with others). For more details see Annex Table A6 and A7.

6 Discussion and conclusion

While in recent studies on Russian migrants after 2022, one of the key elements is the political aspect (Kostenko et al., 2023; Sergeeva and Kamalov, 2024), the novelty of our study lies in the assessment of aspects crucial for the transformation of social capital, namely employment, gender and the child factor.

Other issues should be taken into consideration with initial differences in the social capital of migrants among others. On the one hand, a number of researchers assume that people with higher social capital are more likely to migrate (Garip, 2008; Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011). On the other hand, others show that social capital is negatively associated with short moves and has no significant impact on long-distance moves (Clark & Lisowski, 2019). However, in studies on social capital and migration, some authors analyze the impact of already existing cross-border diaspora networks and labor migration. It is partly true, as, for example, individual characteristics, such as the number of acquaintances in the country of origin, significantly increase the number of acquaintances in the host country (see Table A5 Annex). In any case, the role of social capital and social ties in shaping migration flows cannot be overestimated, whether they are driven by purely political factors or not. However, the initial social capital in the host country does not necessarily affect the choice of destination in case of migration under shock conditions. Migrants have to form new social ties and kinship after the relocation, so, accordingly, various factors might be of importance. For the Russian post-2022 migrants, we found evidence that employment, children, and gender are correlated with social capital formation.

Employment provides many opportunities for building various relationships for those migrants working in a mixed environment in the host country, especially for the office-based work. For example, corporate events might facilitate closer contact between employees, which leads to the formation of social capital directly in the host country. Remotely employed migrants might also have more online interaction, as they would strive to build a new or expand the old network of contacts due to changes in working conditions and relocation. Thus, we assume that for employed migrants both online and office based jobs suggest more interaction, be that with their compatriots or members of the host community. Peer support may increase the level of social capital for those who are employed, helping them to integrate into the host country. At the same time, we admit that there may be an inverse relationship, where employment is possible precisely because of social capital.

Family migration – when the family accompanies the principal migrant – appears to be a significant proportion of Russian post-2022 migrants (Kostenko et al., 2023). Therefore, we can assume that if, after fleeing the home country, the partner, who stays unemployed, takes greater responsibility for the family and children's integration into the host society. Empirical data analysis confirms that having children increases the number of acquaintances for migrants, which, in turn, contributes to the formation of social capital. It is worth mentioning that for migrants with 0-3-year-old children, the number of acquaintances is lower than for those with 7-18-year-olds, while for the stayers, on the contrary, having children decreases the number of acquaintances compared to the childless. From the above, a hypothesis for further research follows that migrant families with children have a greater integration potential into the host society than the childless. Here, the case of men with and without children as opposed to women can also be studied. However, our findings do not exactly explain the importance of children for social capital as we lack data on how parents and children build ties with larger communities, especially in the migrants' families (Furstenberg, 2005).

The hypothesis on the role of gender in the development of social capital after migration was based on the assumption that migrant women primarily develop social capital through daily routines as they are engaged in informal sector care work including household chores (Anderson, 2000). The research confirmed that all measures of social capital except trust are significantly higher for women, even though we didn't consider the nature of the channels for establishing social ties or gaining social capital. Since Russian migrant women are also skilled and qualified, their social capital development might be affected both by daily routines and professional networks. Thus, further research to find out the explanation for the mechanisms of social capital development is needed both for employed and unemployed women.

Some of our findings resonate with other studies (Fokkema & De Haas, 2011), while the conclusions on gender and employment do not. One explanation may be the difference in the level of education and qualifications of Russian migrants compared to migrants from other recent outflows in various regions.

To sum up, all three factors can potentially affect closer interaction and mutual understanding between people. This, in turn, increases two most important indicators of a migrant's possible inclination to integrate – the degree of trust (especially towards the local population) and the degree of acceptance. Also, in case of a substantial increase in the sample, it is possible to analyze the impact of the institutional environment on the mechanisms of social capital development.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Annex

Table A1. Regression analysis of the differences between migrants from the old and new waves

	trust	Acceptance	Acq-ces	strangers offline	strangers online
Control variables	+	+	+	+	+
Migrant new wave (ref)					
<u>Stayer</u>	<u>-0.511***</u>	<u>-0.335***</u>	<u>0.543***</u>	0.0184	-0.110
-	(0.115)	(0.0882)	(0.0818)	(0.121)	(0.126)
Migrant old wave	-0.127	0.00832	0.326*	0.277	0.0655
	(0.221)	(0.161)	(0.174)	(0.189)	(0.223)
St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	+	+
Observations	488	488	475	488	488
R-squared	0.047	0.044	0.112	0.050	0.023

Source: compiled by authors

Table A2. Hypothesis 1 testing (not confirmed results). The results of the regression analysis for the migrants only (non-standardized β -coefficients)

	Trust				Number of acquaintances				Communication offline			
Control variables	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
Work_in_the_host_country	0.0926		0.111		-0.0912		-0.0891		0.0303		0.0195	
	(0.0992)		(0.103)		(0.144)		(0.128)		(0.151)		(0.132)	
Employed		0.272		0.203		0.0536		-0	0.0166	0.0172		
		(0.189)		(0.179)		(0.127)		(0.153)	(0.241)	(0.240)		
St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		0.0167		-0.102
										(0.200)		(0.191)
Observations	302	302	303	303	293	293	294	294	302	302	303	303

R-squared	0.034	0.041	0.002	0.005	0.031	0.029	0.002	0.000	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.001
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Source: compiled by authors

Table A3. Hypothesis 2 testing (not confirmed results). The results of the regression analysis for the migrants only (non-standardized β -coefficients)

	Acceptance			Communication offline			Communication online		
	children less and above 18 y.o.	children, split by age groups	children and childless	children less and above 18 y.o.	children, split by age groups	children and childless	children less and above 18 y.o.	children, split by age groups	children and childless
Control variables	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Children stayed in Russia	-0.0950 (0.210)	-0.100 (0.218)	-0.0998 (0.215)	-0.146 (0.383)	-0.136 (0.373)	-0.168 (0.379)	-0.0567 (0.316)	-0.0455 (0.328)	-0.0391 (0.331)
Ref. childrens' _age (0-18)									
No children	-0.0578 (0.127)			-0.0274 (0.226)			-0.193 (0.227)		
Children older than 18	-0.0510 (0.343)			-0.232 (0.406)			0.188 (0.405)		
Ref. childrens' _age (7-18)									
No children		-0.00797 (0.110)			-0.247 (0.264)			-0.180 (0.298)	
Children older than 18		-0.0325 (0.348)			-0.288 (0.385)			0.168 (0.383)	
Childrens' _age (4-6)		0.103 (0.167)			-0.310 (0.234)			-0.116 (0.251)	
Childrens' _age (0-3)		0.0524 (0.194)			-0.349 (0.240)			0.128 (0.264)	
Have_children			0.0595 (0.126)			0.0352 (0.223)			0.186 (0.225)

St. errors clustered by countries	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Observations	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
R-squared	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.059	0.067	0.058	0.049	0.052	0.048

Source: compiled by authors

Table A4. Have you received any support from anybody for the following questions (% of positive answers). Cross tabulations.

	Both with and without children	Without children	With children	p
Any service (for all the respondents)	11.84	28.48	20.13	<0.001
Any healthcare (for all the respondents)	53.95	60.93	57.43	0.22

p -differences between genders, based on Chi-sq for the crosstabs

Source: compiled by authors

Table A5. The role of gender comparing the migrants' and the stayers' sample (non-standardized β -coefficients)

	Trust		Acceptance		Number of acquaintances		Communication offline		Communication online	
	migrant	non-migrant	migrant	non-migrant	migrant	non-migrant	migrant	non-migrant	migrant	non-migrant
Have_child ren	0.147** (0.0716)	0.240** (0.0977)	0.0529 (0.0668)	-0.00533 (0.0850)	0.0640 (0.0803)	-0.0860 (0.0619)	0.0712 (0.0859)	0.0688 (0.110)	0.0362 (0.106)	0.302*** (0.105)
Gender (female)	0.121 (0.0953)	-0.187 (0.278)	0.114* (0.0676)	-0.0575 (0.170)	0.216** (0.102)	0.0306 (0.164)	0.424*** (0.123)	0.352 (0.246)	0.257** (0.119)	0.0108 (0.240)
Other control*	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
St. errors clustered by countries	+		+		+		+		+	

Observations	302	186	302	186	293	182	302	186	302	186
R-squared	0.034	0.032	0.027	0.016	0.032	0.022	0.060	0.030	0.043	0.102

Source: compiled by authors

* - as a control for employment we use work at the same country

Table A6. Have you received any support from anybody for the following questions (% of positive answers). Cross tabulations.

	Both genders	Men	Women	p
School for children (only for respondents with children)	58.28	49.21	64.77	0.056
Healthcare for children (only for respondents with children)	67.55	58.73	73.86	0.05
Any service (for all the respondents)	19.93	13.51	26.14	0.006
Any healthcare (for all the respondents)	57.48	47.30	67.32	<0.001

p -differences between genders, based on Chi-sq for the crosstabs

Table A7. Have you received any support from anybody for the following questions (% of positive answers). Cross tabulations.

		Both genders	Men	Women	p
I fell secure	Migrants	4.21	4.26	4.17	0.182
	Stayers	3.45	3.77	3.41	0.07
I feel enthusiastic	Migrants	3.31	3.20	3.41	0.046
	Stayers	3.28	3.18	3.30	0.332
I am not lonely	Migrants	3.52	3.41	3.63	0.061
	Stayers	3.74	3.86	3.73	0.323

p -differences between genders, based on u-test