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Changes in Work Orientations in Postsocialist Serbia

Abstract. The subject of this study is work orientations, their change over time, as well as their distribution among the economically active citizens of Serbia. Particular attention is paid to work-motivated spatial mobility. The aim of this study is twofold: firstly, to determine which work orientations have been the most important for economically active individuals in the period of consolidation of the capitalist system in Serbia and to explore and explain the changes in their choices that have occurred since 2000; and secondly, to examine whether there are differences in prioritizing work orientations among actors with various social characteristics. The method of comparative analysis used in this paper was possible due to survey data collected during longitudinal research conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research in Belgrade over the last twenty years.

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Introduction

This study provides a comparative perspective on work orientations, that is, their distribution among the economically active citizens of Serbia, with a special focus on general work-motivated spatial mobility. Although there is no single definition of work orientations, they are mostly viewed from the perspective of contemporary rational choice theories and defined as preferences or preferred values in relation to work arrangements.

On a global level, the domain of labor has experienced numerous changes in the past several decades, spanning from the sectoral and territorial distribution of the workforce to the transformation of modes of working time, working conditions, and also labor content. The transformation of modes of working time refers to the flexibilization of employment in all its forms, from the externalization of business processes (outsourcing) to the reduction of working hours. The transformation of working conditions refers to the creation of an ecosystem for innovation and creativity and the deformation of space. Finally, the transformation of labor content includes a rise in requirements for the intellectual

component and access to knowledge bases.¹ In postsocialist countries, changes in the domain of labor have been even more turbulent, given that they resulted from the collapse of state socialism and its inherent career stability on the one hand, and the inclusion of these countries in the global, dynamic, and post-Fordist economy on the other. Hence, studying the readiness of citizens to adapt to changes is highly important in order to gain insight into the capacity of a society to successfully maintain a balance in its labor market.

During the 1990s, Serbia was a society of 'blocked transformation', which, among other factors, was characterized by the fact that a part of the state socialist nomenclature successfully replaced its social monopoly with an interconnected economic and political dominance, thus postponing the introduction of market economy and political competition.² In the domain of labor, the distinctive characteristics of Serbia's 'blocked transformation' included insufficient ownership and sector restructuring, a rise in unemployment, an increased scope of the informal economy, but also a rise in entrepreneurship.³ After 2000, the year in which Slobodan Milošević's regime came to an end, transformation processes were 'deblocked', and the labor market was affected by two distinct groups of factors. The first group refers to the restructuring of enterprises, which coincided with wider social reforms. The second group refers to the impact of the economic crisis following the last quarter of 2008, which also led to a deep systemic crisis and new recessions. Both groups of factors compelled the workforce to adapt to new conditions and adjust their economic strategies to fit the altered opportunity structures in order to find or retain employment. After the Serbian economy emerged from the last recession, a period of relatively moderate economic growth and increased employment rates ensued.

The aim of this study is to explore the readiness of actors to adapt to the aforementioned changes in the labor market in Serbia. The method of comparative analysis used was made possible due to the survey data collected during longitudinal research conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. The previous cycles

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¹ Ulyana Antolyevna Nazarova / Aigul Sharifovna Galimonova / Albina Eduartovna Galina, Transformation of Labour and Labour Values. A System of Social-Labour Relations and Its System Features, in: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference 'Far East Con' (ISC FEC 2018), Vladivostok 2019 (Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research 47), 1149–1154, DOI: 10.2991/iscfec-18.2019.259. All internet references were accessed on 6 August 2020.

² Mladen Lazić / Slobodan Cvejić, Promene društvene strukture u Srbiji. Slučaj blokirane post-socijalističke transformacije, in: Anđelka Milić, ed, Društvena transformacija i strategije društvenih grupa. Svakodnevnica Srbije na početku trećeg milenijuma, Belgrade 2004, 39–70.

³ Marija Babović, Post-socijalistička transformacija i socio-ekonomske strategije domaćinstava i pojedinaca u Srbiji, Belgrade 2009.

were carried out after the 'deblocking' of the transformation, in 2003,⁴ and during the period of large economic recession in 2012.⁵ My goal is to establish whether and how the work orientations of economically active individuals in Serbia have changed since 2000. The study is motivated by my desire to continuously monitor changes in the value orientations in the labor market, which are important not only from an academic but also an economic policy standpoint and can answer questions about labor market development. The specificity of this article is reflected in the fact that internal and international mobility, a very important cause of both labor market development and depopulation, is observed in a wider value-oriented context.

Theoretical Framework

Approaching Work Orientations

Work orientations became the subject of studies in industrial sociology during the 1970s and 1980s. Empirical studies have shown the extent to which motivations, values, and attitudes are important for determining labor market behavior, occupational status, and even earnings.⁶ The reason why subjective factors were taken into consideration was the fact that scholars acknowledged the impact that elements of the cultural system have on shaping economic action.⁷ Although there is no single definition of work orientations, a common view is that they 'reflect individuals' prioritizations of different rewards from employment which shape their work attitudes and behavior by providing meaning to their responses to work situations'.⁸ Such an understanding stems from the classic rational choice theory, whereby preferences are perceived as hard-wired mental dispositions. Critics of this approach believe that if preferences are viewed as rooted dispositions, reason, rational thinking, and choices become mere instruments for realizing the states assumed by our permanent mental preferences. This would mean that all our choices are essentially preconceived. According to contemporary theoreticians of rational choice, a well-arranged set

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⁴ Silvano Bolčić, Post-socijalistička transformacija i nove radne orijentacije. Srbija 1990–2003. godine, in: Anđelka Milić, ed, Društvena transformacija i strategija društvenih grupa, 110–150.

⁵ Marija Babović / Irena Petrović, Povezanost radnih i vrednosnih orijentacija društvenih aktera u uslovima ekonomske krize u Srbiji, *Teme. Časopis za društvene nauke* 38, no. 1 (2014), 151–176.

⁶ Catherine Hakim, Grateful Slaves and Self-Made Women. Fact and Fantasy in Women's Work Orientations, *European Sociological Review* 7, no. 2 (1991), 101–121, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordjournals.esr.a036590.

⁷ Slobodan Cvejić, Društvena određenost ekonomskih pojava, Belgrade 2011.

⁸ Min Zou, Gender, Work Orientation and Job Satisfaction, *Work, Employment and Society* 29, no. 1 (2015), 3–22, 4, DOI: 10.1177/0950017014559267.

of preferences is usually the result of a successful inspection, rather than its precondition. However, even after the redefinition of the classical approach, that is, the inclusion of cultural elements and an altered causality whereby values precede preferences, the aforementioned theoretical framework has remained dominant when explaining work orientations.⁹ So, despite the fact that work orientations are sometimes equated with work values and work preferences, in this study I focus on the concept of work orientations precisely so as to emphasize the difference between wider socially defined values and economically perceived preferences.

Today, the concept of work orientation is used most frequently for the purpose of analyzing and explaining the differences in job satisfaction expressed by actors in the labor market. Prior to the introduction of the concept, employment satisfaction had been explained either through psychological approaches, which emphasized the personality of a worker, or through economic approaches, which focused on the characteristics of the job itself, and predominantly on income. Catherine Hakim uses the concept of work orientation to explain the higher job satisfaction of women compared to men, even though their positions in the labor market are objectively worse. According to Hakim, the answer to the question why women have higher job satisfaction than men lies in the 'dispositional' factors inherent to women and expressed through preferences, rather than the 'situational' factors related to their jobs.¹⁰ Although her studies were subject to much criticism for their neo-traditionalist perspective, essentialization of gender, and a deterministic approach to women's preferences, this author was among the first to conclude that gender differences in job satisfaction primarily stem from individuals' job values.¹¹ Consequently, as the overlap of what workers want and what jobs offer is greater among women, the perceived tendencies are explainable.

Nowadays, numerous studies on job satisfaction take work orientations as their starting point. Matt Vidal states that individual orientations are at least as important for determining employee satisfaction as job descriptions, while Michael Rose suggests that job satisfaction is the product of both work orientations and real working conditions, such as employment contracts, working hours, and financial stimuli.¹² In that sense, work orientations are perceived

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⁹ James Doughney / Mary Leahy, Women, Work and Preference Formation. A Critique of Catherine Hakim's Preference Theory, *Journal of Business Systems, Governance and Ethics* 1, no. 1 (2006), 37–48.

¹⁰ Hakim, Grateful Slaves and Self-Made Women, 101.

¹¹ Cf. for example Doughney / Leahy, Women, Work and Preference Formation, 44–46; Zou, Gender, Work Orientation and Job Satisfaction, 5.

¹² Matt Vidal, Lean Production, Worker Empowerment, and Job Satisfaction. A Qualitative Analysis and Critique, *Critical Sociology* 33, no. 1–2 (2007), 247–278, 271, DOI: 10.1163/156916307X168656; Michael Rose, Good Deal, Bad Deal? Job Satisfaction in Occupa-

as intermediary variables between comprehensive value orientations and real economic action. Apart from the fact that the concept is viewed as culturally defined, it is also linked to the participants' class, family/marital status, life cycle stage, as well as to wider structural conditions.¹³

Work orientation is often operationalized as people's readiness to accept certain hypothetical jobs. Studies that do so measure the (im)balances in the labor market that emerge from inconsistent job vacancies and the (un)willingness of workers to accept offered jobs. In other words, they measure the flexibility of individuals in the labor market. Moreover, these research projects place a special focus on people's readiness to accept spatial mobility for employment purposes, combining rational choice theories with lessons from the new economics of labor migration, human capital theory, and structural approaches. While rational choice theory is modeled on the subjective expected utility that perceives migrations as rational actions reached solely if individuals see in them the maximization of net utility, the new economics of labor migration has pointed to the fact that individuals often make decisions within the family context, rather than independently. Human capital theory has indicated how individual characteristics such as education, skills, and physical ability affect migration costs and benefits. And finally, structural approaches have highlighted the fact that social structures significantly shape actors' obstacles and possibilities, thereby, too, surpassing their individual characteristics. As a consequence, today's comprehensive models include individual and household characteristics in their mobility determinants, particularly those related to demographic and socioeconomic variables, social and cultural norms, personality factors, such as risk appetite or adaptability, but also structural restraints and opportunities.¹⁴

The findings of previous empirical studies indicate a partial inflexibility of the workforce. For example, quantitative research conducted in Germany shows that unemployed persons are more likely to accept hypothetical job offers than their employed counterparts. However, apart from this general tendency, the authors did not find any significant differences in the manner in which unemployed persons assess the characteristics of inter-regional job offers compared to their employed colleagues. The sole statistically important

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tions, *Work, Employment and Society* 17, no. 3 (2003), 503–530, 526, DOI: 10.1177/09500170030173006.

¹³ Babović / Petrović, Povezanost radnih i vrednosnih orijentacija društvenih aktera u uslovima ekonomske krize u Srbiji, 155.

¹⁴ Gordon F. De Jong et al., International and Internal Migration Decision Making. A Value-Expectancy Based Analytical Framework of Intentions to Move from a Rural Philippine Province, *International Migration Review* 17, no. 3 (1983), 470–484, DOI: 10.1177/019791838301700305; Sonja Haug, Migration Networks and Migration Decision-Making, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34, no. 4 (2008), 585–605, DOI: 10.1080/13691830801961605.

difference is that unemployed persons accepted short-term contracts more frequently than those who were employed. Similarly, the study failed to confirm that long-term unemployed persons are more likely to accept jobs with objectively less favorable characteristics. On the contrary, long-term unemployed people seemed discouraged when offered demanding positions, and the costs and risks of household moving presented a great obstacle to them.¹⁵

A survey conducted in thirty-seven countries by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which delivers annual surveys on beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, covering topics relevant to social sciences, also showed a low propensity for spatial mobility among respondents.¹⁶ The 2015 survey on work orientations indicated that the lowest percentage of respondents opted for a change of residence. Respondents were most willing to accept jobs that require the acquisition of new skills (81 %), followed by a disposition towards temporary employment (60 %). A longer commute to work (48 %) and lower-level and lower-paid positions (42 %) received medium-level support, while the lowest number of respondents expressed willingness to move within the country (26 %) or abroad (22 %).¹⁷

Research on Work Orientations in Serbia

In Serbia, the concept of work orientations was explored in quantitative research conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research in 2003, 2007, 2012, and 2018.¹⁸ The longitudinal approach allowed for the tracking of changes in work orientations among Serbia's citizens, starting from the moment of 'unblocking' the transformation process to the consolidation of the capitalist system of social reproduction that is still underway today.¹⁹

The initial research from 2003 was conducted after the 'deblocking' of the transformation, with the end of Milošević's regime in October 2000. This was a period of intensive reforms.²⁰ In a widely defined economic sense, the changes

¹⁵ Martin Abraham et al., Unemployment and Willingness to Accept Job Offers. Results of a Factorial Survey Experiment, *Journal for Labour Market Research* 46, no. 4 (2013), 283–305, DOI: 10.1007/s12651-017-0229-1.

¹⁶ Regina Jutz et al., The ISSP 2015 Work Orientations IV Module, *International Journal of Sociology* 48 (2018), 95–102.

¹⁷ Hannah Volk / Markus Hadler, Work Orientations and Perceived Working Conditions across Countries. Results from the 2015 ISSP Survey, *International Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (2018), 103–123, DOI: 10.1080/00207659.2018.1446116.

¹⁸ Bolčić, Post-socijalistička transformacija i nove radne orijentacije; Babović / Petrović, Povezanost radnih i vrednosnih orijentacija društvenih aktera u uslovima ekonomske krize u Srbiji.

¹⁹ Mladen Lazić, Uvod, in: Mladen Lazić, ed, *Ekonomska elita u Srbiji u periodu konsolidacije kapitalističkog poretka*, Belgrade 2014, 9–36.

²⁰ Mladen Lazić, Čekajući kapitalizam. Nastanak novih klasnih odnosa u Srbiji, Belgrade 2011.

brought about transformation of ownership, in the form of devastation of the public sector and privatization, but also of the distribution of the workforce across economic sectors. What ensued was a flexibilization of production processes and work organization within enterprises. The socioeconomic transformation also had an impact on the domain of labor: it primarily led to the formation of a liberal labor market, and it also affected the scope of employment. The previous socialist pattern of secure and permanent employment managed by the state transformed into less secure forms of employment. These changes led to a temporary or permanent removal of actors from the domain of labor, and increased the rates of unemployment and informal employment.²¹

These changes required a transformation of values with regard to work arrangements, but actors in the domain of labor did not find it easy to alter their work orientations and adapt to the new circumstances. Their ambivalent expectations were the initial motivation for the methodological long-term research approach. Silvano Bolčić grouped the readiness of Serbia's citizens to accept new forms of employment into four categories: 1) readiness to change between types of employment more frequently, which included readiness to do any paid work, work simultaneously for multiple companies, work below one's qualifications, and acquire new qualifications, knowledge, and skills; 2) readiness to increase work intensity, including working long hours and accepting additional part-time jobs; 3) readiness to accept less secure employment, such as leaving permanent employment in order to do contractual work for a higher compensation; and 4) readiness to accept independent forms of employment, while accepting greater responsibility for finding, or creating, a job through self-employment and entrepreneurship.²²

The findings regarding the subsample of employed persons suggest that employed individuals in the labor market were partially ready to accept the current changes: they opted to accept increased work intensity and to retain the regime of secure employment. At the same time, they refused the regimes of unsteady, flexible work or independent forms of employment. Readiness for a more intensive engagement was shown by employees of all occupations, employed or unemployed, while younger respondents were more inclined towards flexible forms of employment. Bolčić concludes that the increase in unemployment in the early years was a result not only of objective reasons, such as ownership restructuring, the loss of previous markets, and technological and organizational modernization, but also subjective factors, that is, the insufficient readiness of actors to change the type and mode of employment they were used to in the socialist period.²³

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²¹ Bolčić, *Post-socijalistička transformacija i nove radne orijentacije*, 113–115.

²² Bolčić, *Post-socijalistička transformacija i nove radne orijentacije*, 127.

²³ Bolčić, *Post-socijalistička transformacija i nove radne orijentacije*, 145.

In the subsequent period, Serbia was marked by contrasting trends in the economic domain. The period of favorable macroeconomic growth rates between 2001 and 2008 was accompanied by a decline of indicators in the labor market, and their subsequent increase. The employment rate dropped from 50.3 % in 2001 to 40.4 % in 2006, after which it subsequently rose to 44.4 % in 2008.²⁴ After the eruption of the world financial crisis, the effects of which were evident by late 2008, the rate of employment went into a continuous decline until 2012, when it reached its lowest point. That year, the employment rate was 35.5 % and the unemployment rate was 23.9 %.²⁵ Despite the fact that recovery began in that same year, with the employment rate going from 42 % to 47.6 % between 2014 and 2018,²⁶ this was only partially generated by the reduction of the percentage of unemployed persons; the second contributing factor was the increase in the percentage of the inactive population. The analyses for 2015 show that the increase in informal employment in absolute figures was higher than the drop in unemployment, whereas the share of so-called 'vulnerable employment', which includes self-employment and unpaid work in households, constantly amounted to around 30 %. Also, the share of temporary workers within the total number of paid workers in 2016 was 23.6 %, which is significantly higher than the European Union (EU) average.²⁷

During the same period, two more cycles of longitudinal research were conducted—in 2007 and 2012. Marija Babović and Irena Petrović compared the results with the aim of examining whether the initial period was followed by (further) changes in the work orientations of the working-age population. The results suggested that in all three observed periods—2003, 2007, and 2012—readiness to do any paid job was the most widely represented work orientation, yet its frequency as a key option declined even after the breakout of the crisis. The data show that work orientations follow trends in the economic domain: when objective indicators improve, citizens' propensity for work flexibilization increases. With regard to the differences between the groups' sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics, the authors conclude that, 'to a large

²⁴ Republički zavod za statistiku, Anketa o radnoj snazi u Republici Srbiji, Belgrade 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008. It should be noted that between 2001 and 2008, the methodology of the Labour Force Survey changed several times, so data comparison needs to be done with caution. Cf. Gordana Matković et al., *Uticaj krize na tržište radne snage i životni standard u Srbiji*, Belgrade 2010, 14.

²⁵ Institut za teritorijalni ekonomski razvoj (InTER), *Economic Indicators Infographic*, 2017, http://regionalnirazvoj.org/upload/News/Documents/2017_04/Economic_indicators_infographic.pdf.

²⁶ Republički zavod za statistiku, Anketa o radnoj snazi u Republici Srbiji, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018.

²⁷ Mario Reljanović et al., *Analiza efekata primene izmena i dopuna Zakona o radu*, Belgrade 2016, 29; Maja Jandrić / Dejan Molnar, *Kvalitet zaposlenosti i tržište rada u Srbiji. Koliko je Srbija daleko od EU?*, Belgrade 2017, 11–12.

extent, the participants profiled their orientations by taking into account the circumstances and structural opportunities, linked to their personal characteristics'.²⁸

Simultaneously, a detailed analysis of the participants' readiness to accept spatial mobility indicated that a change of residence for work purposes was not widely accepted as a flexible employment strategy. Given that the number of economically active respondents open to this option has remained nearly unchanged since 2003, it is impossible to conclude that there is a linear correlation between the reactions of the working population and economic trends. The strongest sociodemographic predictors for choosing a mobility strategy were age and education level, whereas marital status, owner-occupancy, and local community attachment were identified as important as well, but with a negative sign—they reduced the probability that a change of residence would be an acceptable option for the respondents.²⁹

Numerous changes, both in the economic and the normative domain, were again observed in the period between the two final research cycles realized in 2012 and 2018. Official statistical data since 2014 have indicated that there has been a continuous upward trend in the employment rate and a continuous downward trend in the unemployment rate; however, a direct comparison with the previous period is difficult due to the altered methodology for measuring these indicators (Table 1).³⁰

Additionally, the 2014 amendments to the Labor Law paved the way for a different normative order. The Labor Law was adopted in 2005. Although it has since been amended several times, the 2014 amendments represented the most significant intervention regarding employment regulation, due to the efforts to adjust the legal framework to the altered circumstances in the labor market.³¹ The changes were announced as a comprehensive project to harmonize Serbian labor law with that of the European Union, the main aim of which was to increase employment by developing workforce flexibilization policies. However, critics of these changes claimed that such a law would not have a significant impact on the increase in employment, as this would require the creation of new jobs based on the development of crucial industrialization policies, a more effective public administration, and a reduction of employment costs. In addition, it was highlighted that the creators of the law were referencing

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²⁸ Babović / Petrović, *Povezanost radnih i vrednosnih orijentacija društvenih aktera u uslovima ekonomske krize u Srbiji*, 168.

²⁹ Dunja Poleti, *Mobilnost radno aktivnog stanovništva u Srbiji*, in: Mladen Lazić / Slobodan Cvejić, eds, *Promene osnovnih struktura društva Srbije u periodu ubrzane transformacije*, Belgrade 2013, 140–157.

³⁰ Republički zavod za statistiku, *Anketa o radnoj snazi u Republici Srbiji*, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018.

³¹ Reljanović et al., *Analiza efekata primene izmena i dopuna Zakona o radu*, 6.

Table 1. Key labor market indicators in Serbia – population over 15 years of age

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Employment rate (%)	42.0	42.5	45.1	46.7	47.6
Unemployment rate (%)	19.2	17.7	15.3	13.5	12.6
Inactivity rate (%)	48.1	48.4	46.7	46.1	45.5
Informal employment rate (%)	21.2	20.4	22.0	20.7	19.5
Self-employed without employees (%)	19.7	18.2	20.2	21.4	19.0
Working more than 48 hours a week (%)	15.0	13.3	10.7	9.1	8.2
Temporary workers (%)	18.7	21.8	23.7	22.8	23.0
Part-time workers (%)	12.2	11.9	13.0	12.5	11.3

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, Anketa o radnoj snazi u Republici Srbiji, Belgrade 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018.

the flexibility of labor, fully neglecting the fact that in the European Union this concept had been replaced by the term ‘flexicurity’, which implied ensuring not only flexibility, but also social welfare benefits for jobseekers and a highly differentiated labor market able to absorb this kind of (flexible) fluctuation. The experts’ overall assessment of Serbia’s policy changes emphasized that not only did they aim to reduce the scope and quality of employee rights, but the adoption procedure entailed substantial transparency defects and a lack of social consensus regarding the proposed amendments.³² Taking into account these objective changes, research on Serbian citizens’ readiness to adapt to them has become even more significant. In the following section, I will present the findings from the final research cycle, which will be compared to the results of the previous cycles.

Data and Methodological Framework of the 2018 Survey

The data were collected through a survey of a nationally representative sample from April through June 2018. I focus here solely on the economically active population, aged 15–65, who were employed, self-employed (including agricultural workers), temporarily out of work (due to illness or holiday leave), or active jobseekers.³³ The analysis excludes inactive citizens (pensioners, housekeepers, students and pupils), given that emphasis is placed on the viewpoints of those citizens who directly participate in the labor market. The subsample of the economically active population comprised 1,219 persons. For comparative purposes, the paper uses the empirical data from the surveys conducted in 2003

³² Reljanović et al., *Analiza efekata primene izmena i dopuna Zakona o radu*.

³³ Silvano Bolčić, *Svet rada u transformaciji*, Belgrade 2004.

and 2012, which included 1,761 and 1,418 members of the economically active population, respectively.³⁴

Two hypotheses are tested in this study. The first examines the dynamics of work orientation changes depending on social circumstances. If the economic conjuncture in Serbia, which has generated higher employment, is taken into account alongside the normative restructuring that impacts the quality of employment through labor market flexibilization and reduced employment security, as well as the wider value orientations and dominant public discourses, it can be expected that the economically active population of Serbia has expressed greater readiness to accept more flexible and more independent forms of employment, such as self-employment, entrepreneurship, and temporary or part-time jobs. The second hypothesis aims to establish clear differences in the preferred orientations of actors categorized by gender, age, education level, class, financial situation, employment, and the size of the place and region they live in. Based on human capital theories and structural approaches, it can be assumed that the respondents have profiled their value orientations by taking into account the circumstances and structural opportunities related to their individual characteristics. Specifically, this means that readiness to engage in atypical ventures is higher among the respondents whose costs of moving into more flexible work arrangements are lower, that is, men, young people, respondents with a university degree, employed respondents from the upper classes, and those who live in more developed regions of Serbia.

Work orientations were measured through the readiness of the respondents to accept different types of work arrangements, which was operationalized by the following question: 'In order to provide a better livelihood for you and your family, you are ready to ...', after which the respondents were offered eleven options: change residence for employment purposes; accept any paid job; work longer hours; work for multiple companies simultaneously; work below one's qualifications for a higher salary; opt for a high-paying temporary job instead of permanent employment; do additional part-time work along with a full-time job; do informal work in the grey economy; acquire new skills and qualifications; be self-employed; be ready to start a business. The respondents gave a 'yes' or 'no' answer to each option and were subsequently asked to choose one preferred option. Apart from descriptive statistical methods and measures of association (chi-square), the results were obtained by using factor analysis and binary logistic regression.

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³⁴ Although available, the 2007 data will not be included, as the ratio between the results from the three years 2003, 2007 and 2012 was already described in other studies, and also due to my focus on wider time periods. Cf. Babović / Petrović, *Povezanost radnih i vrednosnih orijentacija društvenih aktera u uslovima ekonomske krize u Srbiji*; Poleti, *Mobilnost radno aktivnog stanovništva u Srbiji*.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The comparison of work orientations in the three research cycles is presented in Table 2. In 2018, members of the economically active population were mostly ready to work below their qualifications for a higher financial compensation (74 %), work longer hours, do additional work, and receive education (both 72 %). However, although all the aforementioned orientations, apart from education, have been dominant, they have nevertheless stagnated or declined compared to the previous period. The comparative analysis clearly shows the changed attitudes of the workforce: accepting any paid jobs, working longer hours, working simultaneously for multiple companies, doing jobs that require lower qualifications for a higher salary, and working informally in the grey economy were, statistically, less frequently chosen than in 2012. Yet the responses about acquiring new qualifications, becoming self-employed, starting a company, and choosing a high-paying temporary job over permanent employment are chosen significantly more often than before. These were, albeit not the most preferred options, much more frequently chosen by the respondents. These findings indicate that, regardless of the fact that flexible and atypical types of employment are still not the main options for the economically active population of Serbia, there has been a gradual change of attitude and a dismissal of the preconceived idea about the normalcy of permanent employment and work in the same profession and organization throughout one's lifetime.

Significantly, over the entire observed period, a particularly low level of respondents' readiness to work informally, that is, in the grey economy, was identified. In the final cycle, this level was additionally reduced by 5 percentage points compared to the previous period. These findings are interesting given the percentage of work activities taking place in this domain. The latest estimates indicate a decline in the scope of the grey economy from 21.2 % of GDP in 2012 to 15.4 % in 2017.³⁵ However, one should take into account that the analysis solely encompasses registered companies and entrepreneurs. Consequently, these percentages represent merely one form of activity in the grey zone, namely that which takes place within the formal sector. The share of unregistered businesses, estimated to be 17.2 %, should be added to the aforementioned indicator. Additionally, informal employment, that is, earnings paid partially or fully in cash, makes up a significantly larger share of the grey economy than undeclared business profit: approximately 62 out of 100 dinars in the grey economy represent undeclared salaries, while the remaining 38 dinars represent undeclared profit.³⁶ Estimates based on the Labour Force Survey

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³⁵ Gorana Krstić / Branko Radulović, *Siva ekonomija u Srbiji. Procena obima, karakteristike učesnika i determinante*, Belgrade 2018, 17–18.

³⁶ Krstić / Radulović, *Siva ekonomija u Srbiji*, 17–18.

Table 2. Readiness to accept different work orientations (in %)

<i>Readiness to:</i>	2003	2012	2018
Change residence for employment purposes	57	57	59
Accept any paid job	63	61	54
Work longer hours	82	80	72
Work for multiple companies simultaneously	48	55	51
Work below one's qualifications for a higher salary	76	78	74
Opt for a high-paying temporary job instead of permanent employment	41	42	46
Do additional part-time work along with a full-time job	73	75	72
Do informal work in the grey economy	36	37	32
Acquire new skills and qualifications	65	68	72
Be self-employed	58	55	60
Readiness to start a business	46	44	53

The respondents were asked to provide a 'yes' or 'no' answer to each option.

(LFS) data show that the rate of informal employment for the population over 15 years of age was 22 % in 2016, 20.7 % in 2017, and 19 % in 2018.³⁷ As a result, despite the fact that at least one-fifth of Serbia's citizens conduct their labor activities in the grey zone, this work orientation is not widely accepted in society.

Table 3 shows the participants' answers to the question about the choice of the most acceptable option. In 2018, starting a company was the most frequently chosen option. Compared to the previous period, its frequency increased by 5.8 percentage points, which is a statistically significant growth. Changing residence for work purposes was the second most frequently chosen option, although statistically it was not chosen more often than in the previous period. Namely, as accepting any paid job completely lost its lead among the options, and as accepting longer work hours experienced a sharp decline, mobility came in second place. Self-employment and work intensification through an additional part-time job were also two prominent options.

The greater acceptance of entrepreneurial work orientations is determined by several factors. On the one hand, business startups and employment result from structural changes, that is, fewer vacancies in the industry and the expansion of the service sector. Additionally, opting for a private business could be an answer to inadequate offers in the labor market. As shown

³⁷ The data for 2016 are from Jandrić / Molnar, *Kvalitet zaposlenosti i tržište rada u Srbiji*, 13.

Table 3. Choice of key readiness factors (in %)

<i>Readiness to:</i>	2003	2012	2018
Change residence for employment purposes	12.1	12.9	14.6
Accept any paid job	23.8	18.5	8.9
Work longer hours	10.8	12.5	7.6
Simultaneously work for multiple companies	3.7	3.7	3.6
Work below one's qualifications for a higher salary	5.6	5.8	8.2
Opt for a high-paying temporary job instead of permanent employment	1.3	1.5	2.5
Do additional part-time work along with a full-time job	13.1	14.7	13.9
Do informal work in the grey economy	0.9	0.6	1.2
Acquire new skills and qualifications	6.0	6.6	10.3
Be self-employed	12.1	14.1	14.2
Start a business	10.5	9.2	15.0
Total	100	100	100

The respondents were asked to choose one preferred option.

in some international studies,³⁸ the readiness of people to accept risk and reduced employment security may stem from a high unemployment rate and strict permanent employment protection regulations. On the other hand, job individualization through self-employment can be encouraged by a neoliberal government aiming to modify norms and values so as to create a national culture of entrepreneurship by focusing on active citizens, personal independence, and the creation of a social, legal, and economic framework designed to alter individuals' attitudes and behavior in the labor market. In that case, reduced business startup costs and greater availability of potential markets due to globalization as well as the availability of information technology can contribute to people's entrepreneurial aspirations. In Serbia, structural changes have led to reduced jobs in the secondary, manufacturing sector, and different governments have tried to compensate for these deficits by encouraging entrepreneurial aspirations through different state programs and by strengthening the public discourse on the desirability of entrepreneurship. For example, 2016 was declared the year of entrepreneurship in Serbia, the aim of which was to show that the

³⁸ Peter Warr / Ilke Inceoglu, Work Orientations, Well-Being and Job Content of Self-Employed and Employed Professionals, *Work, Employment and Society* 32, no. 2 (2018), 1–20, DOI: 10.1177/0950017017717684.

'strategy of the Serbian Government is the development of economic competitiveness, which, as in all developed and successful economies of the modern world, is based on the concept of private initiative, entrepreneurial spirit and social consensus on the important role of the government and the entire society in encouraging such values and long-term policies'.³⁹

Consequently, by promulgating neoliberal values and declaring entrepreneurship and proactivity a general economic development strategy, political actors have managed to promote and establish this type of economic activity as the dominant one.

The first hypothesis proposes that citizens will recognize two groups of orientations among the options—a propensity for secure employment and a propensity for the flexibilization of work arrangements. In order to test this classification into two divergent dimensions, factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted, identifying two factors with characteristic roots above 1. However, three items had low factor loadings—readiness to opt for a high-paying temporary job over permanent employment, readiness to do informal work in the grey economy, both of which are among the least preferred options with a share of merely 3.7 %, and the propensity for spatial mobility, whose factor scores indicated that it almost equally belonged to the first and second latent factor. Consequently, these three answers were excluded from the analysis. The results are presented in Table 4.

The classification into standard and flexible types of employment has proven to be correct, although the respondents evidently perceive not two, but four different groups of orientations. If one solely observes the variables included in the analysis, the first factor includes readiness for intensified labor and deprofessionalization, which can jointly be considered a necessity-driven choice and an orientation towards security. The first factor includes those aspects which lead to an intensification of work, comprising the readiness to 1) do any paid job; 2) work long hours; 3) do multiple jobs simultaneously for multiple companies; 4) work below one's qualifications for a significantly higher salary; and 5) perform additional part-time jobs along with full-time employment. I have named this factor 'intensification of work'. The second group includes learning, self-employment, and business startup, which is rather an opportunity-driven choice and suggests willingness to take risks. I have named the second factor 'entrepreneurial orientation'.

The three options excluded from the analysis due to low component loadings need to be kept in mind though. It is evident that the shift to part-time or informal jobs represents, for the economically active population of Serbia,

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³⁹ Razvojna agencija Srbije, Godina preduzetništva 2016, 20 February 2019, <https://ras.gov.rs/predstavljena-godina-preduzetnistva-2016>.

Table 4. Results of the principal component analysis – factor loadings, 2018

	<i>Components</i>	
	1	2
Readiness to do any paid job	0.660	
Readiness to work longer than 'normal' working hours	0.727	
Readiness to do multiple jobs simultaneously for multiple companies	0.696	
Readiness to work below one's qualifications for a significantly higher salary	0.667	
Readiness to do additional part-time jobs along with full-time employment	0.688	
Readiness to gain new knowledge, skills, and qualifications		0.617
Readiness to start a business		0.891
Readiness to start a company independently or with partners		0.905

a form of full precarization of work orientations, for which they are shown not to be ready. Finally, readiness for spatial mobility ought to be observed as an independent option.

Based on the aforementioned facts, the first hypothesis is partially confirmed. Although certain options related to work environment security and job intensification are still widely accepted, there has been an overall growth trend regarding the choice of independent and atypical employment. In addition to the two described options, the study highlights the most precarious forms of work—temporary jobs instead of permanent employment and work in the grey zone, which are the least preferred options for the working population of Serbia. It also highlights the readiness for spatial mobility which is, after entrepreneurship preference, the most frequently chosen key option. The highly similar component loadings in both dimensions indicate that one part of the workforce sees this option as an escape and a necessity, while the other part perceives change of residence as a proactive strategy.

Further analysis aimed to show the connection of human capital and structural limitations, operationalized through sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics, to work orientations. Based on the most preferred options, the respondents were classified into the four previously described groups. The analysis was initially aimed at those who opted for the responses classified in the two dimensions that resulted from the factor analysis: work intensification and deprofessionalization on the one hand, and entrepreneurship on the other.

The findings indicate an important but relatively weak link between certain characteristics of the respondents and work orientations (Table 5). The variations in different orientations are more strongly related to age and economic position than other characteristics (generational affiliation: $\chi^2 = 50.112$, Cramer's $V = 0.240$, $p = 0.000$; economic position status: $\chi^2 = 38.269$, Cramer's

Table 5. Cross tabulation – characteristics of the respondents and key readiness, in %, 2018

		<i>Types of readiness</i>	
		<i>Intensification of work and deprofessionalization</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship</i>
Age	17–29	6.9	22.0
	30–44	33.7	36.7
	45–59	47.5	32.9
	60+	12.0	8.3
Education level	Primary education	14.0	7.6
	Secondary education	52.5	48.1
	Tertiary education	33.5	44.3
Class	Upper class	8.6	11.4
	Small entrepreneurs	7.5	11.1
	Experts	21.8	27.6
	Clerks	15.1	12.8
	Highly skilled and skilled workers	20.2	22.6
	Semi-skilled and unskilled workers	12.7	7.5
	Small farmers	14.0	7.0
Economic position index	Upper	2.7	5.7
	Upper middle	12.2	21.8
	Middle	21.5	25.8
	Lower middle	41.5	36.3
	Lower	22.2	10.4
Region	Belgrade	24.5	30.8
	Vojvodina	25.4	32.5
	Šumadija and western Serbia	28.5	24.9
	Eastern and southern Serbia	21.6	11.8

Age $\chi^2 = 50.112$, Cramer's $V = 0.240$, $p = 0.000$;

Education level $\chi^2 = 15.631$, Cramer's $V = 0.134$, $p = 0.000$;

Class $\chi^2 = 20.920$, Cramer's $V = 0.169$, $p = 0.002$;

Economic position index $\chi^2 = 38.269$, Cramer's $V = 0.209$, $p = 0.000$;

Region $\chi^2 = 20.254$, Cramer's $V = 0.152$, $p = 0.000$.

$V = 0.209$, $p = 0.000$). The youngest actors in the labor market opt for entrepreneurship more often than work intensification, whereas the second option is more frequently chosen by the older working population, due not only to the

increased risk that comes with age, but also a specific value matrix that reflects onto the youth through socialization. Predictably, respondents with a primary and secondary education level opt for intensification and deprofessionalization more often within their employment, while the most educated respondents prefer professional development and entrepreneurship. The respondents' class scheme consists of seven hierarchical positions: 1) upper class: managers, medium and big entrepreneurs, and politicians; 2) small entrepreneurs and self-employed without tertiary education; 3) professionals, lower managers, and self-employed with tertiary education; 4) clerks: office workers, technicians with secondary school, and self-employed with secondary education (or less); 5) highly skilled and skilled workers; 6) semi-skilled and unskilled workers; 7) small farmers. This class scheme, together with the region respondents live in and their education level, is shown to have an extremely low relevance to the choice of work orientations, despite being statistically significant indicators (class: $\chi^2 = 20.920$, $\Phi = 0.169$, $p = 0.002$; region: $\chi^2 = 20.254$, $\Phi = 0.152$, $p = 0.000$; education: $\chi^2 = 15.631$, $\Phi = 0.134$, $p = 0.000$).

Nonetheless, some tendencies have been observed in relation to these social features. While upper classes, small entrepreneurs, and professionals more frequently opt for entrepreneurial work orientations, those who are lower in the social hierarchy are more likely to choose work intensification and deprofessionalization. The active population of a higher economic status is most likely to have entrepreneurial aspirations, while respondents in the worst economic position tend to choose deprofessionalization and work intensification. The economic position index is a composite index, compiled on the basis of indicators on income, assets, and consumption. It is expressed in the form of a five-level interval scale.

Finally, regional patterns have been noticed: respondents who live in Belgrade and Vojvodina are more often inclined towards entrepreneurship, while those living in western Serbia and Šumadija, as well as southern and eastern Serbia, more frequently opt for work intensification. Gender, urban/rural residence, as well as work activity have no significant impact on the choice of work orientations. The most interesting fact about the variables that have no impact is that there are no differences between the employed and unemployed workforce. This may be due to some factors that have also been recognized in other studies: for example, the unemployed persons' need to be open to all business opportunities clashes with their objectively higher expenses and risks, due to the dispersion of human capital resulting from their distancing from the labor market.

An additional analysis was conducted in order to establish the determinants of spatial mobility as the orientation that was very frequently chosen as a key option in this research cycle. In the binary logistic regression model, the

Table 6. Binary logistic regression, 2018

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Gender—female	0.108	0.398	1.114
Age	0.047	0.000	0.954
Education level			
Primary education	0.028	0.909	0.973
Tertiary education	0.366	0.069	1.441
Employment status—unemployed	0.751	0.007	2.118
Class			
Upper class	0.843	0.028	2.324
Small entrepreneurs	0.415	0.221	1.514
Experts	0.632	0.055	1.880
Clerks	0.052	0.001	2.864
Highly skilled and skilled workers	0.787	0.005	2.197
Semi-skilled and unskilled workers	0.623	0.037	1.864
Economic position index			
Lower	0.235	0.297	1.265
Lower middle	0.173	0.334	1.189
Upper middle	0.452	0.037	1.572
Upper	0.115	0.738	0.892
Region			
Belgrade	0.474	0.008	1.606
Vojvodina	0.438	.0009	1.549
Eastern and southern Serbia	0.456	0.017	1.578
Constant	1.157	0.004	3.179
N	1209		
Cox & Snell R Square	0.122		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.164		

dummy variable, 'readiness for spatial mobility', was the dependent variable (Table 6). Here 0 indicated those who were not willing to move and 1 indicated those willing to change residence in order to find a (better-paid) job. The model included age as an independent variable (youth meaning the independent variable), as well as dummy variables: respondents' gender (reference category: women), education level (reference category: completed secondary education), employment status (reference category: employed persons), class (reference

category: farmers), economic status (reference category: middle class), and region (reference category: western Serbia and Šumadija).

The statistically significant model ($\chi^2 = 157.011$, $p = 0.000$) accounts for 12.2–16.4 % of the variance and accurately classifies 67 % of the cases. Class has the strongest single independent effect in this model. Namely, clerks are around three times readier to change residence for employment purposes than farmers, whereas members of the upper and working classes are about two times readier to do the same. An important predictor is work activity, whose odds ratio indicates that unemployed individuals in the labor market are twice as ready to change residence for employment purposes compared to their employed counterparts. Another statistically important independent variable is age: for each year, the probability that a person is ready to move drops by 4.7 %. The economically active citizens of the upper middle economic status are 1.5 times readier to accept a change of residence compared to members of middle economic status. Regional affiliation has also proven to be significant: compared to the residents of western Serbia and Šumadija, the residents of Belgrade, eastern and southern Serbia, as well as Vojvodina are 1.5 times readier to accept migration as part of their work strategy.

Gender and education level are not shown to be relevant predictors in this model. Therefore, when observing the economically active population, one can say that potential migrants in Serbia include younger and unemployed persons. However, the other important predictors have confirmed the results of the factor analysis which indicate that certain respondents categorize mobility in the work intensification and deprofessionalization dimension, while others associate it with entrepreneurial aspirations. Namely, if the individuals who are willing to move for employment purposes include members of the upper and working classes, as well as residents of the more developed and the poorest regions, one can conclude that this option is acceptable to persons with different levels of human capital who face somewhat different structural obstacles due to the segmentation of migration patterns resulting from the dual labor market. The position of individuals in one of the two labor market segments, one comprising secure, high-paying, and high-ranking jobs with advancement opportunities, and the other comprising '3D positions',⁴⁰ affects the two different perceptions of work mobility: while some see it as a necessity, others perceive it as an opportunity.

All things considered, the second hypothesis has thus been confirmed. There are clear differences in the preferred work orientations among members of the

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⁴⁰ In the mobility studies literature, jobs on the secondary market are often referred to as 3D jobs—dirty, dangerous, and difficult. Jelena Predojević-Despić, Ka razumevanju determinanti međunarodnih migracija danas—teorijska perspektiva, *Stanovništvo* 48, no. 1 (2010), 25–48.

economically active population with different levels of human capital. Individuals substantially profile their choices by considering the circumstances and structural opportunities related to their social features. Actors with a lower level of human capital and an unfavorable position in the labor market, that is, those whose costs of accepting flexible and atypical forms of work are higher, are prone to work intensification and deprofessionalization.

Conclusion

The findings of the final research cycle clearly indicate a gradual change in the work orientations of the economically active population in Serbia. Although still dominant, the orientations related to increased work intensity and deprofessionalization are slowly losing advantage over proactive orientations—education, self-employment, and business startup. Today, the working population opts for any paid job less frequently than for independent work arrangements, even though accepting any job with financial compensation has so far been the preferred option. The consequences of this transformation are unquestionably better quantitative indicators in the labor market, despite the fact that the quality of the increased employment is highly questionable, the normative changes opened the door to employment flexibilization, as well as the promotion of neoliberal values by the ruling echelons.

Contrary to the expectation that work orientations would be observed solely through the distinction between secure and flexible employment, the working population distinguished two further types of work orientations among the offered options. One group includes precarious arrangements, such as accepting temporary jobs over permanent employment, and informal work, which the citizens of Serbia accept unwillingly. Considering that in 2016 one-fifth of employed workers were engaged in the grey economy, it becomes clear that the current situation is in collision with the values expressed by the workforce. The final group includes the orientation towards spatial mobility, which was the most frequently chosen key option in this research cycle. One part of the working population in Serbia perceives it as a necessity and a form of escape from (local) social and economic problems, while the other part sees it as an opportunity for proactive action. Unfortunately, due to the omission of the potential destination in the question, determining whether the respondents referred to internal migration within Serbia or international migration remains a matter of guesswork.

Finally, human capital and structural position largely determine the acceptability of different work options for individuals. While older people and those with lower levels of education are inclined to work more intensively, young persons are much more likely to opt for independent forms of employment.

People with an academic degree are highly inclined towards independent arrangements. Migration is more frequently chosen by younger and unemployed individuals and those in the upper middle economic position, but almost equally by members of the upper class, clerks, and workers, as well as residents of Belgrade, Vojvodina, and eastern and southern Serbia. The work practices that presumably will have the lowest acceptance 'costs', those that are available and known, will be the ones accepted as desirable over time. Very clear divisions of the social structure are reflected in the selection of preferred jobs, which is something that decision makers ought to consider when creating future normative frameworks, institutional solutions, and policies relevant to the labor market.

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