YOUTH STUDY SERBIA

2018/2019

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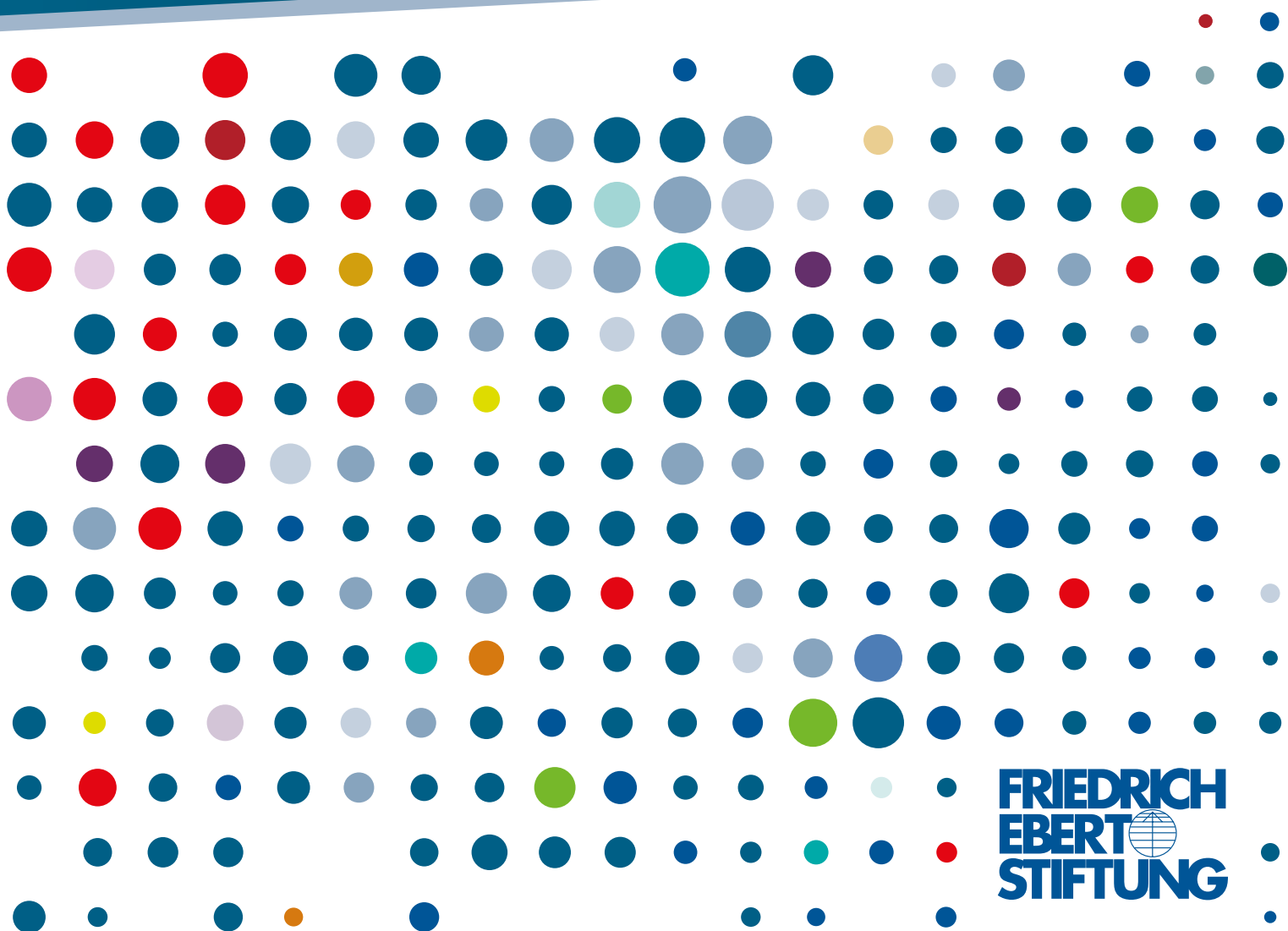STIFTUNG

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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is the oldest political foundation in Germany, with a rich tradition in social democracy dating back to 1925. The work of our political foundation revolves around the core ideas and values of social democracy – freedom, justice and solidarity. This is what binds us to the principles of social democracy and free trade unions.

With our international network of offices in more than 100 countries, we support a policy for peaceful cooperation and human rights, promote the establishment and consolidation of democratic, social and constitutional structures and work as pioneers for free trade unions and a strong civil society. We are actively involved in promoting a social, democratic and competitive Europe in the process of European integration.

YOUTH STUDIES SOUTHEAST EUROPE 2018/2019:

"FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019" is an international youth research project carried out simultaneously in ten countries in Southeast Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The main objective of the surveys has been to identify, describe and analyse attitudes of young people and patterns of behaviour in contemporary society.

The data was collected in early 2018 from more than 10,000 respondents aged 14–29 in the above-mentioned countries who participated in the survey. A broad range of issues were addressed, including young peoples' experiences and aspirations in different realms of life, such as education, employment, political participation, family relationships, leisure and use of information and communications technology, but also their values, attitudes and beliefs.

Findings are presented in ten national and one regional study and its accompanying policy papers, which have been published in both English and the respective national languages.

YOUTH STUDY SERBIA 2018/2019

Dragan Popadić, Zoran Pavlović, Srećko Mihailović

1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

— Young people primarily engage in socialising and entertainment in their free time. The focus is on private life-family/friends and consumerism prevail over social engagement and self-development. Certain forms of social anomie and pathology are considered widespread and even normal for society. This perception, however, is not enough to trigger a revolt or an attempt to change this state by personal engagement.

— The family is a significant source of support for young people during the period in which they grow up; it provides them with financial, emotional and social support. However, the family takes on obligations that should have been assumed by the state, which places a heavy burden on rather scarce family resources. As a consequence, young people neglect the role of social institutions as well as their own responsibility for the position they are in, just as they overlook their own responsibility for changing the society they live in.

— There is a widespread desire among young people to leave the country; young people in Serbia lead the way in this aspect compared to other countries in the region. The main reason for emigration is the desire for a better standard of living, but the intensity of this desire is more related to a pessimistic view of the future of the Serbian society than to the difficulty of the current financial situation in which youth find themselves.

— Completion of a higher level of education by young people of different socio-economic status is unequally distributed. Higher socio-economic status "guarantees" a higher completed level of education, higher academic aspirations, a more positive status of the degree and a successful career. The system directly encourages precariousness of both work and the worker, as has also been confirmed through analysis of the factors affecting job choices – salary and job security are the dominant factors.

— Young people are not interested in politics; they do not discuss the topic, nor do they seek information on politics. Institutions of society and the state are not something that warrants the trust of young people, and this is especially true of the political parties. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the state of democracy and the status of democratic values in Serbia; nevertheless, there is support for the democratic political system in general. Serbia's accession to the European Union evokes positive associations and a view that it would have positive effects on the Serbian economy, political system and cultural identity.

2

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND CORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The important role that youth play in every society is even more prominent in societies in transition, such as Serbian society, where creativity and enthusiasm of young people may well play a key role in social reconstruction and the development of a democratic society.

Young people in Serbia canvassed in this study constitute a very diverse social group. The cohort 14 to 29 years of age encompasses some very dynamic developmental changes that occur during this age – changes which are accompanied by dramatic changes in social roles.

More importantly, there are equally dramatic differences in the context of growing up between these generations of young people. The oldest generation was born in 1988, in the country known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The break-up of the country with all the social turbulence associated with it came soon after this: the civil war that raged in the area, economic sanctions and impoverishment, the 1999 war, NATO air-raids and the so-called 5th October Overthrow. Born in the SFRY, these young people changed their citizenship four times without even changing their address: first they lived in the SFRY, then in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia beginning in 1992, in the state union between Serbia and Montenegro from 2003, and, finally, since 2006, they have been living in Serbia. At the other end of the spectrum, the youngest respondents were born in 2003, after the period of wars, in a time marked by relative political consolidation and economic progress.

What is common among both the youngest and the oldest respondents is that they are citizens of Serbia, while their parents were Yugoslavs who grew up mostly in the post-Tito era. Rather than a mere historical fact, this points to generational differences in socialisation, prevailing values and institutional arrangements in society, as well as the frame of collective identification. Young people from Serbia who are the focus of this study are "the children

of democracy" upon whom the further development and strengthening of the democracy largely depends.

The region-wide empirical study on youth in Southeast Europe, organised and financed by the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, is aimed at offering insight into young Serbian generations' perceptions, awareness, expectations, and approaches towards changing socio-political realities. The study seeks to identify the needs, attitudes, and perceptions of youth when it comes to becoming the agents of change. The focus is on analysing the contribution of youth to the democratic development of Serbian society.

What are the predominant leisure activities, lifestyle and value outlook among young people? Are they trustful of their fellow citizens and tolerant of minorities and underprivileged groups in Serbian society? What are their plans regarding their future in Serbian society, i.e. are they soon-to-be citizens of some other country? How do they perceive educational and employment opportunities? Are there any structural obstacles undermining fairness and equality in education and/or work? How do they evaluate the performance of the state and institutions of civil society? Are they supportive of democracy, willing to participate in politics, as an active and assertive public arena? These are the main questions that governed this study and presentation of the data. The responses to these questions will facilitate analysis of young people's contribution to the democratic development of the Serbian society, as well as young peoples' perception of and identification with Europe. The research on youth is intended to help construct national youth policies which are focused on their needs and improve their participation in the processes of democratic change, as well as develop youth and social policies relating to the topics of education, mobility/brain drain, employment, family and equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, etc.

3

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on data collected in a survey research conducted on a random, stratified, nationally representative sample of Serbian citizens between 14 and 29 years of age. Data were collected by the Centre for Free Elections and Democracy research team. The survey was conducted by *face-to-face* interviews in the period from 22 January to 1 March 2018 at 48 places in Serbia (excluding Kosovo and Metohija).

A total of 1,170 respondents were interviewed, but the data for 49 respondents were excluded from the analysis due to a large number of missing values. The final sample thus includes 1,121 young people in sum total. The survey data interpretation and elaboration of the empirical study were performed by the expert research team which is comprised of the authors of this paper. The expert team was recruited by the Research-Publishing Centre DEMOSTAT.

4

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The study included young people in the age cohort from 14 to 29 (the average age was 22). Table 1 presents the sample structure of young people according to numerous relevant criteria. Gender structure was relatively balanced, as was the structure according to size of community. The majority of respondents described the place they live in as urban; the number of respondents from rural or predominantly rural settlements was lower than the number of those from urban areas. A large majority of those who provided an answer to the questions regarding their nationality stated that they were Serbian. These are also predominantly the children of parents born in Serbia and of Serbian nationality. Ethnically mixed parents are extremely rare. For example, if a father is Serbian, in only 2% of the cases does the mother have a nationality other than Serbian.

TABLE 1: **Sample structure broken down by relevant socio-demographic variables**

		Frequencies	%
Gender	Female	581	51.8
	Male	540	48.2
Age	14–17	160	14.2
	18–21	353	31.5
	22–25	311	27.8
	26–29	297	26.4
Size of community	Less than 50,000	224	20.2
	50,000–100,000	328	29.2
	100,000–500,000	377	33.5
	500,000 and more	192	17.1
Urban/rural description	Rural (village)	135	12.0
	More rural than urban	148	13.2
	More urban than rural	195	17.4
	Urban (city)	588	52.5
Mother's level of education	Primary or less	101	9.0
	Secondary	721	64.3
	University	233	20.8
Father's level of education	Primary or less	62	5.5
	Secondary	767	68.4
	University	213	19.0
Nationality	Serbian	1003	89.5
	Other	55	5

Parents' level of education is most often completed secondary education, while those with a university degree outnumber those with primary school or lower. Fathers seem to be slightly better educated than mothers. More importantly, parents' level of education is in fact for the most part similar.

Families with parents who have a different level of education are, relatively speaking, rare. The most common "combination" is for both parents to have secondary education (56%). Families in which both parents have primary education (3%) or university education (11%) are less frequent in the sample, but an educational imbalance within families is rare. There is also a significant relationship between parent's education and the size of community. Mothers and fathers in larger cities are more highly educated.[1]

A large majority of families are in possession of the most basic financial conditions for living: a house or an apartment, a mobile phone (most often a number of them), a personal computer and Internet connection, and a washing machine (Figure 1). The majority of families also have a car, a bicycle and an air conditioner. An average house or apartment has four rooms. A large number of young people (89%) have their own room in the house/apartment they live in.
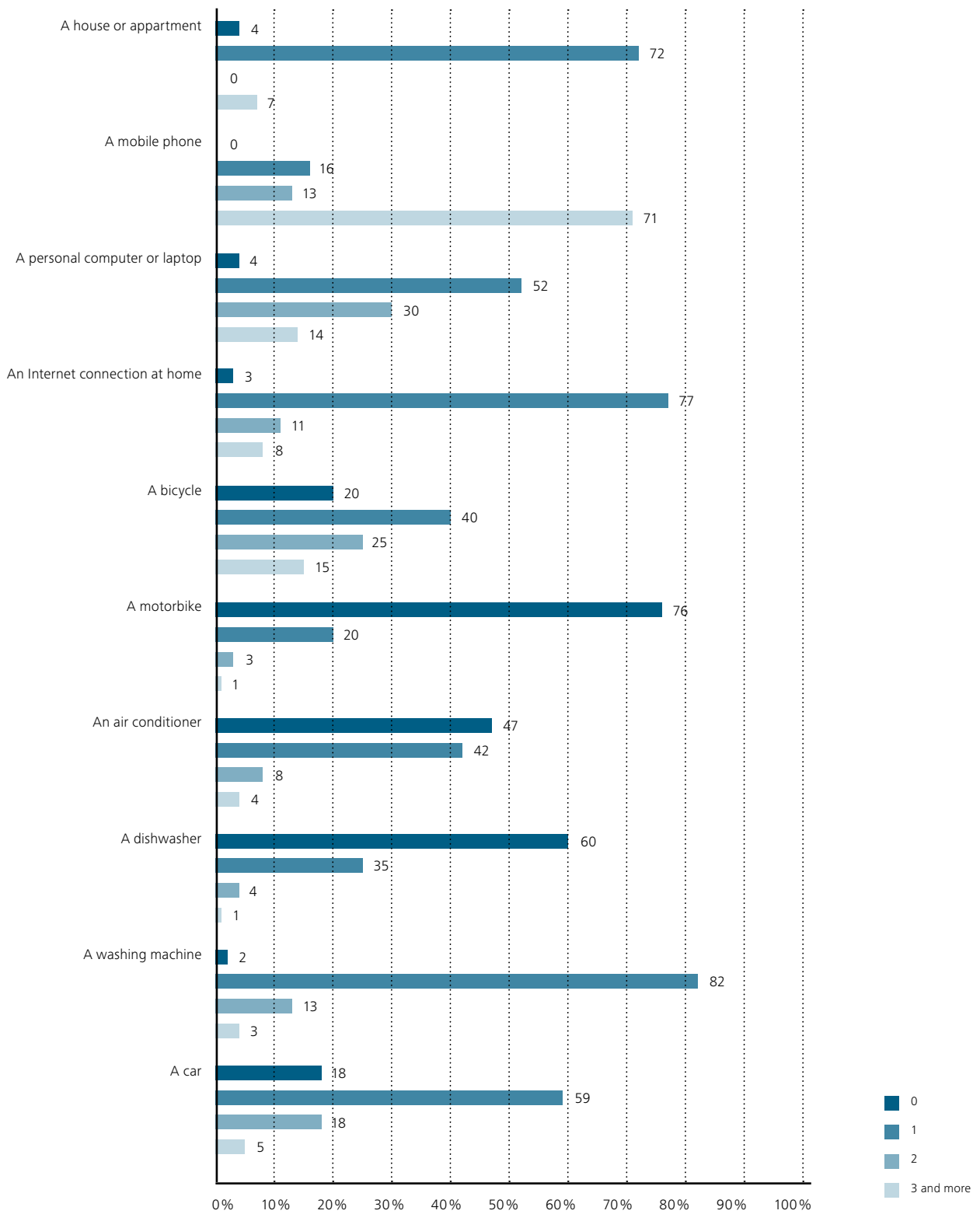
Financial possessions of the family are related to parents' level of education – families more financially well-off are those with more highly educated mothers and fathers.[2] Education is clearly one of the mechanisms of social promotion which, as we have seen, is "self-reproducing". More educated families have more material resources that can be allocated to children's education, satisfying their various social needs, etc. It makes children's attainment of higher education and a more privileged position of familes within the social structure more probable.

It seems that the minimum standard of living is usually attained. Still, when asked to describe their financial situation, young people most often state that they can afford to buy some more expensive things, but not as expensive as, for instance, a car or a flat (41%). One in every ten young persons said that they could afford to buy whatever they needed for a good standard of living (13%). One-third of them (34%) have enough money for food, clothing and shoes, but not enough for more expensive things (a fridge, TV set, etc.). A minority have only have enough resources to pay basic bills (7%), and 4% do not have enough to meet basic needs like food. A more positive description of the family's financial situation was provided by the young people who have a more highly educated mother and father,[3] as well as by those who have greater financial resources.[4] Similarly, young people from larger communities provided more positive evaluations.[5]

Aside from material resources, a different social background is related to differences in cultural capital. One-quarter of young people grew up surrounded by a relatively large number of books (Figure 2). As a rule, more books were present in the families with a more highly educated mother and father[6] and those

FIGURE 1: **How many of each of the following things do you and your parents own? (as a percentage)**

A house or appartment	4
	72
	0
	7
A mobile phone	0
	16
	13
	71
A personal computer or laptop	4
	52
	30
	14
An Internet connection at home	3
	77
	11
	8
A bicycle	20
	40
	25
	15
A motorbike	76
	20
	3
	1
An air conditioner	47
	42
	8
	4
A dishwasher	60
	35
	4
	1
A washing machine	2
	82
	13
	3
A car	18
	59
	18
	5

Legend: 0, 1, 2, 3 and more

X-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

families that are more privileged in financial terms.[7] The importance of cultural capital is probably most aptly described (and is indeed self-explanatory) by the fact that children growing up with more books were, at the time this survey was conducted, more highly educated themselves.[8]

FIGURE 2: **How many books do you have in the apartment/house you grew up? (as a percentage)**
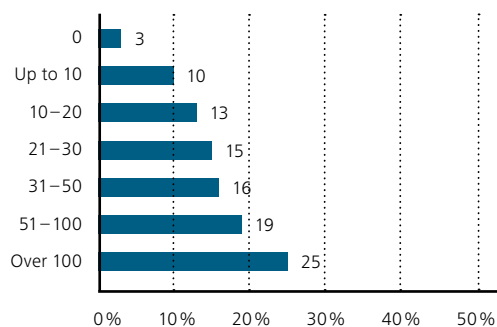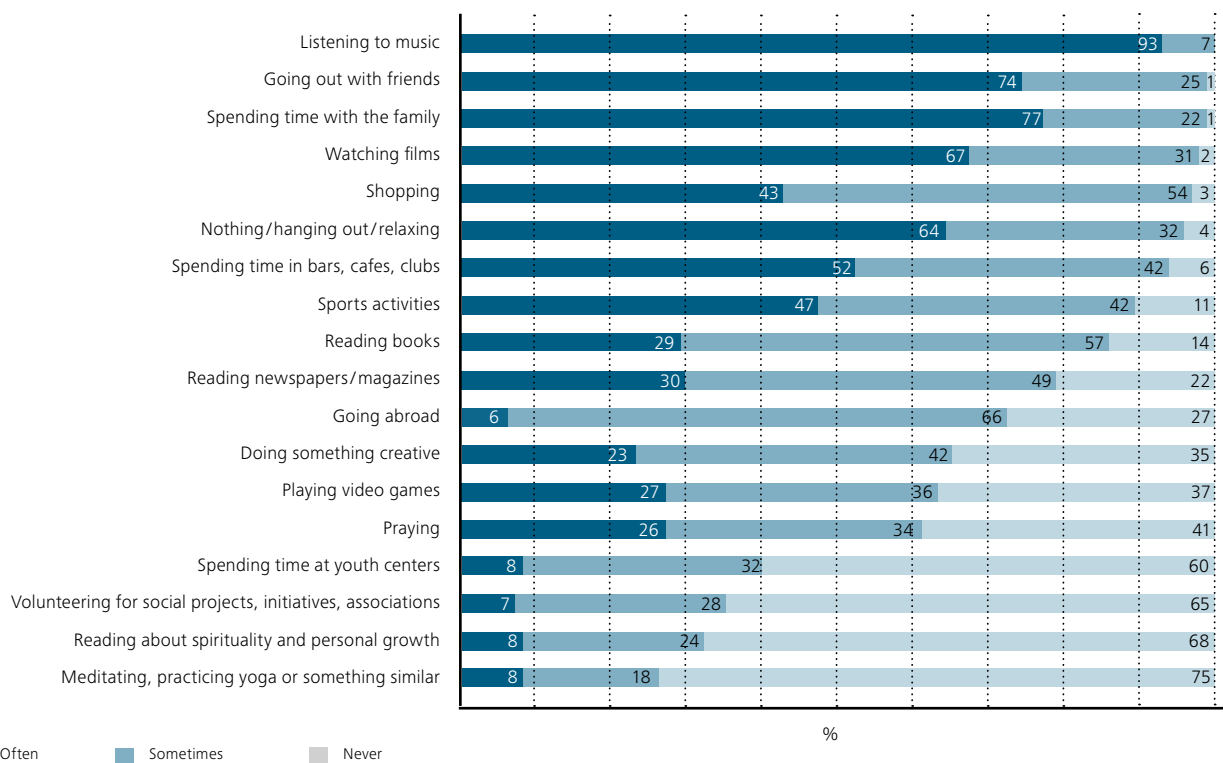
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LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE

Serbian youth were asked how often they engaged in a series of leisure activities. The answers show that in their free time young people are primarily occupied with socialising and entertainment (Figure 3).[9] Activities relating to spiritual development, such as meditation, yoga, reading spiritual literature or praying, are the least popular free-time activities. About half of young people regularly engage in sports activities.[10]

Females were more inclined to read books, especially about spirituality and personal development, and engage in activities such as meditation and yoga, spend time with the family, go shopping, and were less inclined to engage in sports activities, play video games or spend time in cafes.[11]

Younger respondents spend their free time in a variety of ways. Older respondents read newspapers and magazines more

FIGURE 3: **How often do you enage in … (as a percentage)**

Activity	Often	Sometimes	Never
Listening to music	93	7	
Going out with friends	74	25	1
Spending time with the family	77	22	1
Watching films	67	31	2
Shopping	43	54	3
Nothing/hanging out/relaxing	64	32	4
Spending time in bars, cafes, clubs	52	42	6
Sports activities	47	42	11
Reading books	29	57	14
Reading newspapers/magazines	30	49	22
Going abroad	6	66	27
Doing something creative	23	42	35
Playing video games	27	36	37
Praying	26	34	41
Spending time at youth centers	8	32	60
Volunteering for social projects, initiatives, associations	7	28	65
Reading about spirituality and personal growth	8	24	68
Meditating, practicing yoga or something similar	8	18	75

%

often than younger ones and travel abroad, while younger persons are more likely to engage in sports, listen to music, go out with friends, do something creative, play video games, and spend time with the family.[12]
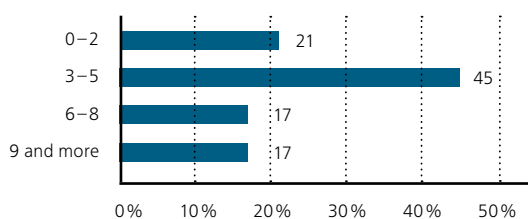
SPENDING TIME ON THE INTERNET

The Internet is accessible to virtually everyone – only four per cent of respondents say it is not available to them. A total of 64 per cent of respondents are online all the time, while 32 per cent are online every day or almost every day.

Using the Internet was not related to gender, age or size of the community.

Spending time on the Internet is not only an everyday activity for young people – it is an activity to which they dedicate a lot of time. It is not easy to determine precisely how much time they spend on the Internet because when asked they responded that it is from 0 to 24 hours.

Every fifth respondent uses the Internet up to two hours a day, while one-half use it for three to five hours, and one-third of them stated that they spent six hours or longer on the Internet (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: **How many hours do you spend on the Internet daily? (as a percentage)**

The time spent on the Internet was not related to gender or size of the community. Younger respondents spent more time on the Internet,[13] as did those with a higher socio-economic status.[14]

In terms of time spent on the Internet, young people in Serbia are at the top of the list in comparison to other countries. If the percentage of young people who spend 6 or more hours on the Internet is taken as a criterion, then only Montenegro and Macedonia are in front of Serbia (Figure 5).

Previous studies have showed a narrow range of online activities among children and adolescents, with the most frequent activities being socialising, entertainment and learning (UNICEF 2017). The same conclusion can be drawn from our research (Figure 6). Young people use the Internet predominantly for communicating with others.

Use of social networks among young people is very widespread. Only four per cent do not use a social network. The number of friends on social networks is measured in the hundreds. Only a small number of young people (six per cent) say that they have fewer than 50 friends on social networks, while a relatively small number (14 per cent) have up to 200, and most have between 200 and 500 (30 per cent) or even over 500 friends (34 per cent). Six respondents said they did not know, and 10 per cent did not answer this question.

However, when asked to estimate how many friends from social networks they considered to be close friends in everyday life, numbers are considerably lower. Out of those interviewees who provided any information – 32 per cent of the answers were DK (don't know)/NA (not applicable) – one-half of respondents listed fewer than 20 friends.

WATCHING TV

As has been seen, the Internet has become not only a mediator in communication, but also a place for finding information, watching and listening to various content, and, along these lines, it has largely takes over the role of television. Young people spend much more time on the Internet than in front of the TV screen. While 15 per cent of them do not watch television at all, one-half watch it for an hour or two; every fourth respondent spends 3 – 5 hours watching TV, while those who watch TV for six hours or longer are rare.

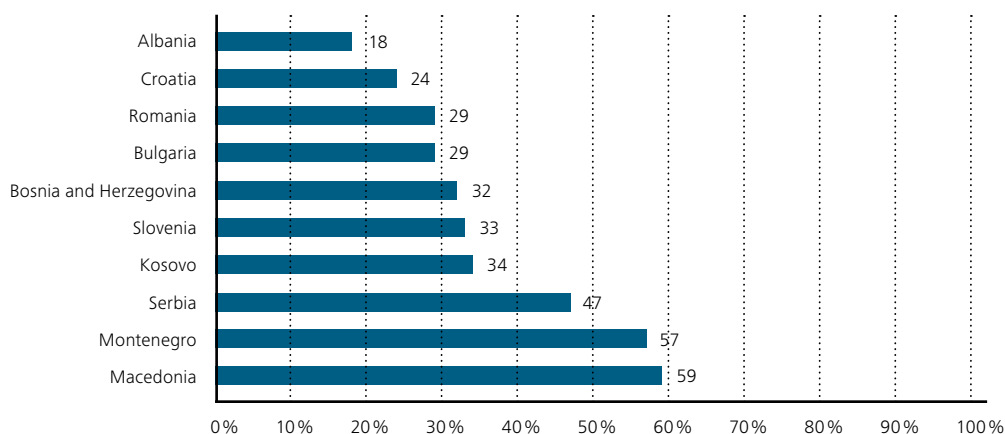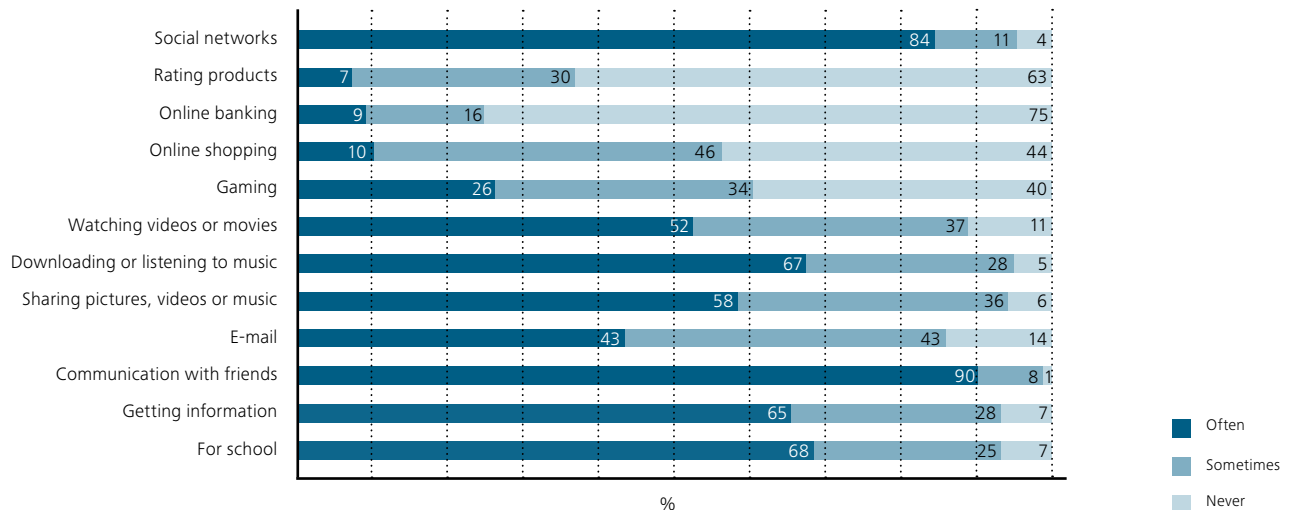FIGURE 5: **Percentage of persons who spend 6 hours or more on the Internet**

FIGURE 6: **Internet usage (as a percentage)**

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Social networks	84	11	4
Rating products	7	30	63
Online banking	9	16	75
Online shopping	10	46	44
Gaming	26	34	40
Watching videos or movies	52	37	11
Downloading or listening to music	67	28	5
Sharing pictures, videos or music	58	36	6
E-mail	43	43	14
Communication with friends	90	8	1
Getting information	65	28	7
For school	68	25	7

%

In terms of watching TV, young people in Serbia are at the bottom of the list compared to young people from other countries. If we compare the percentages of young people watching TV for 3 hours or longer, only young people in Slovenia spend less time in front of the TV than youth in Serbia (Figure 7).

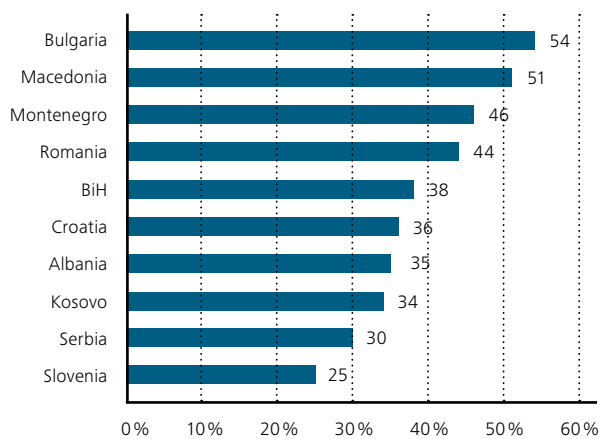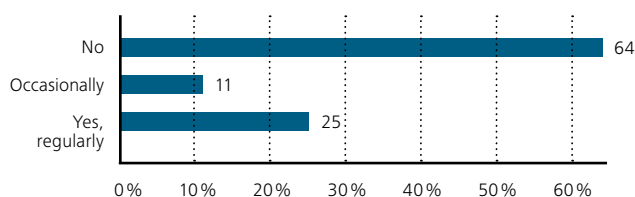FIGURE 7: **Percent of those who watch TV 3 hours or more daily**

Country	%
Bulgaria	54
Macedonia	51
Montenegro	46
Romania	44
BiH	38
Croatia	36
Albania	35
Kosovo	34
Serbia	30
Slovenia	25

FIGURE 8: **Do you smoke? (as a percentage)**

	%
No	64
Occasionally	11
Yes, regularly	25

SMOKING

In everyday life, the message that smoking is bad, as communicated in frequent anti-smoking campaigns and bans on smoking in public indoor areas, constantly competes with the message that smoking is a normal part of life, manifested for instance by the fact that in many restaurants the space for smokers is larger than the space reserved for non-smokers, as well as in the fact that cigarettes are easily accessible and cheap. It is not surprising that almost 40 per cent of young people are smokers, with one in every four being a regular smoker (Figure 8). The percentage of smokers is even higher when only adults are considered, as among minors the number is significantly lower. However, in terms of health risks, it is still worryingly high, as 13 per cent of minors are smokers. Otherwise, in terms of the percentage of smokers among young people, Serbia does not stand out from other countries covered by the survey. The percentage of smokers is only two per cent higher than the average for all countries.

Among minors, 84 per cent say they have never smoked (Figure 9). Smoking is equally prevalent among young males and females. There are also no differences in terms of the size of the community. Smoking is slightly more common among young people who have a lower socio-economic status (SES)[15]: among young people with a low SES, 42 per cent were smokers and among those of with a higher SES, only 28 per cent.

Smoking was more prevalent among young people who were less satisfied with themselves.[16]

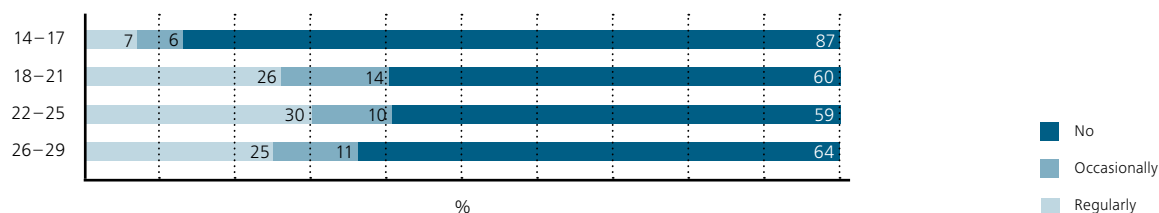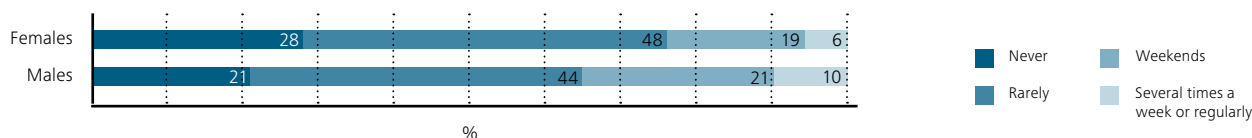FIGURE 9: **Do you smoke? By age (as a percentage)**

	No	Occasionally	Regularly
14–17	87	6	7
18–21	60	14	26
22–25	59	10	30
26–29	64	11	25

%

FIGURE 10: **Do you consume alcoholic drinks? (as a percentage)**

	Never	Rarely	Weekends	Several times a week or regularly
Females	28	48	19	6
Males	21	44	21	10

%

ALCOHOL

Drinking alcohol is much more widespread than smoking. Only one-quarter, or 24 per cent of young people, never drink, 44 per cent do so rarely, 21 per cent only on weekends, 10 per cent drink several times a week and one per cent of respondents drink alcohol every day. Drinking alcohol is not considered bad, and only 19 per cent of young people would consider it unacceptable. Among minors, 39 per cent drink alcohol, and in the oldest group (26–29 years old), as many as 86 per cent. Considering the number of those persons who drink, young people from Serbia are in third place, after Slovenia and Bulgaria. Data were even more worrying in the previous study (Tomanović and Stanojević 2015), in which only 17 per cent of young people did not drink, and 15 per cent stated that they drank alcohol several times a week or every day.

Alcohol consumption is prevalent among both young males and females, with a slightly lower share of females who drink compared to males (28 per cent versus 21 per cent). It was also found that females who drink do not drink as often as males (Figure 10).

Apart from being significantly related to gender, alcohol consumption was significantly correlated with age.[17] Among young people from larger communities, alcohol consumption was more frequent than among young people from smaller communities (rho=0.09*), while there was no significant correlation with the SES. The consumption of alcohol was more prevalent among young people who are less satisfied with themselves.[18]

USE OF MARIJUANA

A total of seven per cent of young people admitted to having tried marijuana, which is twice as many as the number obtained in the previous research. Among minors, three per cent have tried marijuana, while this holds true for 10 per cent of older respondents. Among those who tried marijuana, males (10 per cent) are more numerous than females (5 per cent), which also goes for those persons with a higher SES (13 per cent) compared to those of low SES (4 per cent) as well as those from larger communities (13 per cent) compared to those from smaller communities (5 per cent). Persons more prone to use marijuana were less satisfied with themselves.[19]

SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

About 30 per cent of the respondents did not answer this group of questions, and another 22 per cent said they were uncomfortable responding. Out of those who did respond (less than one-half of the total sample), 71 per cent have had sexual experience (62 per cent of females and 78 per cent of males). The percentage of young people who have had sexual experience was slightly lower than in the previous study, in which this percentage was 80 per cent, but slightly higher than in other countries in the survey. In other countries, 66 per cent of respondents have had sexual experience – 58 per cent of females and 75 per cent of males.

Size of the community and SES did not correlate with sexual experience, although gender and age did.

Among minors, seven per cent of females and 20 per cent of males have had sexual experience, while this goes for 75 per cent of adult females and 90 per cent of adult males (Figure 11).

The age at which young people have their first sexual experience ranges from 12 to 25, with the average being 17.7 years of age (17.2 for males and 18.2 for females). These values are exactly the same as the average for the other countries.

Only 42 per cent of respondents say they use contraception regularly (out of the 42 per cent who answered this question), and females use contraception slightly more often (46 per cent) than males (38 per cent).

FIGURE 11: **Have not had sexual intercourse (as a percentage)**
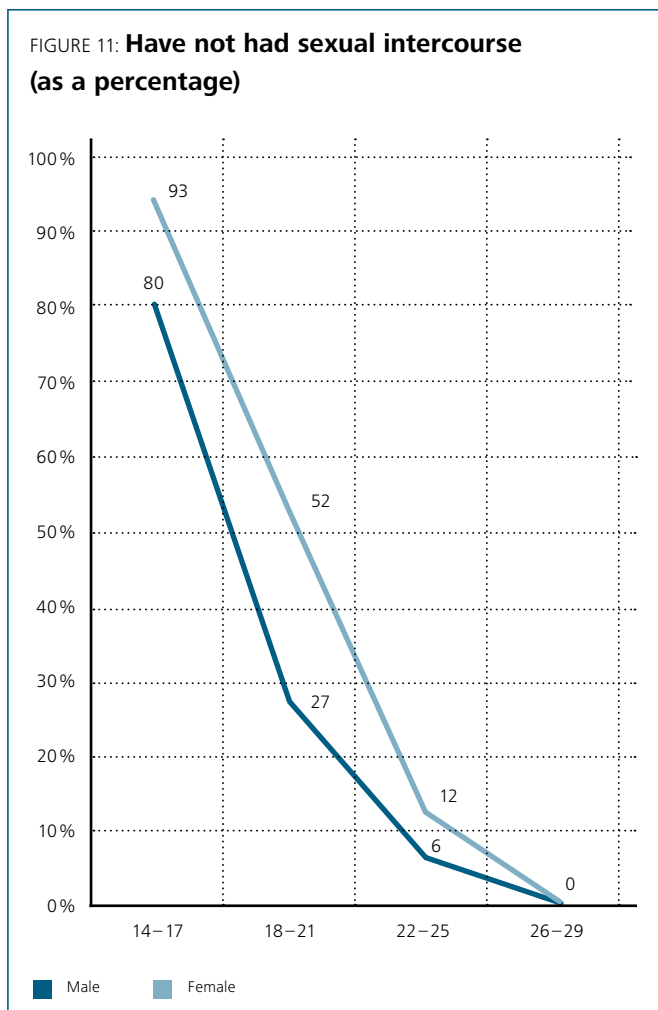
A total of 43 per cent of young people did not respond to the question regarding abstinence before marriage. Out of those who provided an answer, 85 per cent consider this concept outmoded and unnecessary.

KEY FINDINGS

— Listening to music and socialising with peers are the most frequent activities during free time, and engaging in spiritual activities is the least frequent.

— Practically everybody uses the Internet – four-fifths for three hours or more every day. The Internet is used mainly for communication and entertainment.

— Compared with youth in the region, young Serbians come in third place, following Macedonia and Montenegro, with regard to the average time spent on the Internet. Compared this with time spent watching TV, Serbia comes in last place, after Slovenia.

— One-quarter of young people do not drink alcohol at all (61 per cent of minors and 18 per cent of adults). Considering the number of young people who smoke, Serbia is somewhere in the middle of the list; however, considering the number of those who consume alcohol, it is among the first countries in the region.

— A majority of young people have their first sexual experience upon entering adulthood. Less than 50 per cent use contraception regularly.

6

VALUES, RELIGION AND TRUST

VALUES

The most important values for youth are those relevant to direct interpersonal communication: loyalty to one's partner and loyalty to friends, independence and responsibility. The most highly ranked values are children and marriage, as well as a successful career. The values that received the lowest ranking include wearing branded clothes and two values relating to public activities in the community: being active in politics and participating in civic activities. Once again, not only disinterest, but also the indifference of young people to politics and social activism is striking (Figure 12).

ROLE MODELS

Young people in Serbia hesitate to claim that they have any role models. When asked about role models, 39 per cent of the sample answered "I do not know" or "no answer". A total of 49 per cent (or 30 per cent of the total sample) of remaining respondents said they did not have a role model (Figure 13). A total of 315 respondents (28 per cent of the entire sample) named a person, and provided an explanation of who they were. One hundred and eighteen out of 349 (37 per cent) named someone from their family. A total of 57 sportsmen, 26 statesmen, and 37 public
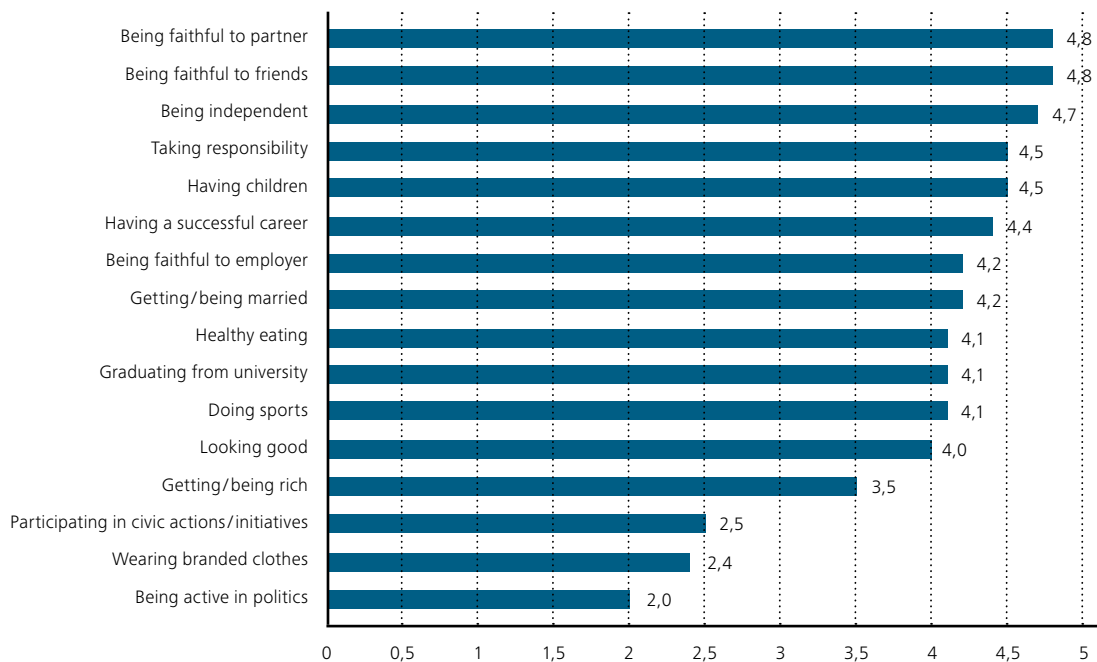
FIGURE 12: **How important to you is …**
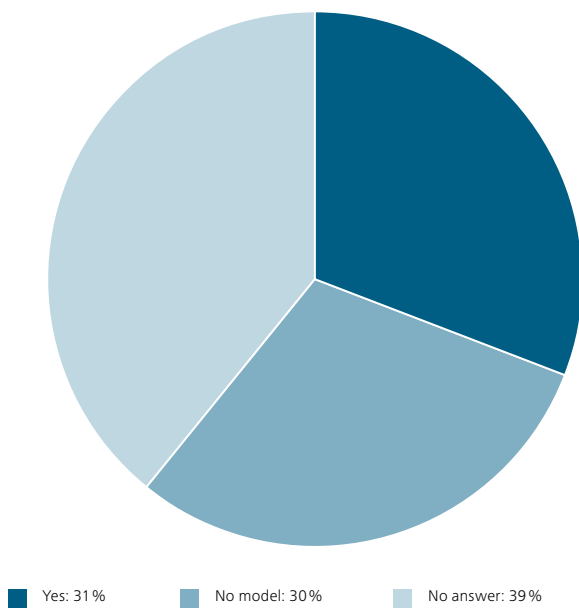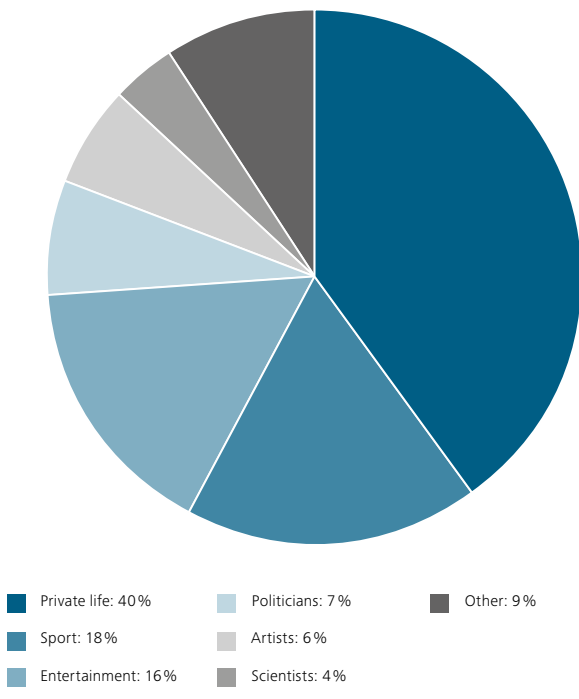
FIGURE 13: **Do you have a role model?**

■ Yes: 31 %   ■ No model: 30 %   ■ No answer: 39 %

FIGURE 14: **The area the role model is part of**

■ Private life: 40 %   ■ Politicians: 7 %   ■ Other: 9 %
■ Sport: 18 %   ■ Artists: 6 %
■ Entertainment: 16 %   ■ Scientists: 4 %

figures from the entertainment business were named. A small number of role models mentioned were scientists, artists and other people with higher levels of education (Figure 14).

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

On the average, young people in Serbia declare that they are very satisfied with their lives: on a scale from 1 to 5, the average score is 4.2, which is exactly the average calculated for other countries. Young people are very satisfied with their circle of friends (M = 4.4), family life (M = 4.3) and education (M = 4.1), and are only slightly less satisfied, but still closer to 4, with their job (persons who are employed; M = 3.6).

Satisfaction with oneself and one's life was higher among those with a higher SES, as well as among younger persons.[20] Females were somewhat more satisfied than males.[21]

In general, young people are optimistic about their own future (Figure 15). When asked about how they saw their lives in 10 years, 13 per cent of interviewees did not know how to respond, only two per cent said it would be worse than now, six per cent said it would be the same, and as many as 78 per cent were convinced that it would be better. There were no differences according to gender, age or size of community, and greater optimism was expressed by those with a higher SES.[22]

Still, when it comes to the future of the society, young people are much more reserved. Although one-third think it will be better, 23 per cent believe it will be the same, and 21 per cent of respondents expect that it would be worse than it is now. There were no differences among young people according to gender, age or SES; still, young people from smaller communities showed greater optimism.[23]

In other countries, young people showed greater optimism regarding the progress of the society in which they live: 11 per cent could not predict future development, 17 per cent believe it will be worse, 27 per cent think it would be the same, while 44 per cent of the respondents think it will be better.

FEARS

The most commonly expressed fears among youth include both those affecting them personally, such as fear of serious illness and fear of losing a job, and those affecting society as a whole, such as corruption, social injustice and growth in poverty (Figure 16).

APPROVAL OF VARIOUS TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR

As the scale offered ranged from 1 (do not approve at all) to 10 (completely approve), the actions cited were for the most part not approved (Figure 17). Forty-one per cent of young people do not approve of homosexuality at all, while 15 per cent completely approve of it. A relative polarisation of attitudes can also be seen when it comes to using connections to find a job (25 per cent of respondents do not approve of this practice at all and 13

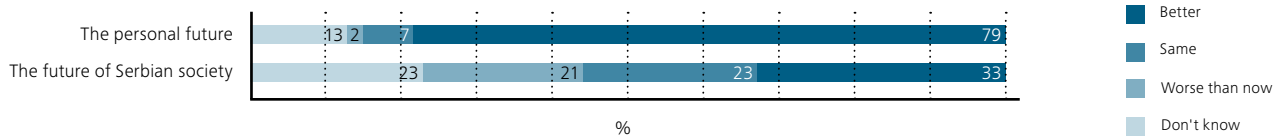FIGURE 15: **How do you see in 10 years … (as a percentage)**

	Better	Same	Worse than now	Don't know

The personal future: 13, 2, 7, 79
The future of Serbian society: 23, 21, 23, 33

%

FIGURE 16: **To what extent are you frightened of …**

	A lot	Somewhat	Not at all
Corruption	45	35	20
Social injustice	45	37	18
Too many immigrants and refugees	28	40	32
Increasing poverty in society	42	41	17
Pollution and climate change	31	43	26
War in the region/the world	30	36	34
Terrorist attack	25	31	44
Having no job	46	35	19
Getting seriously ill	49	30	21
Getting robbed by someone	23	44	33
Being a victim of physical violence	22	38	41

%

FIGURE 17: **Approval of various types of behaviour**

	Value
Homosexuality	3,38
Connections	3,23
Conections for employment	3,17
Abortion	2,99
Cheating on taxes	2,56
Bribe	2,46

0   0,5   1   1,5   2   2,5   3   3,5   4   4,5   5
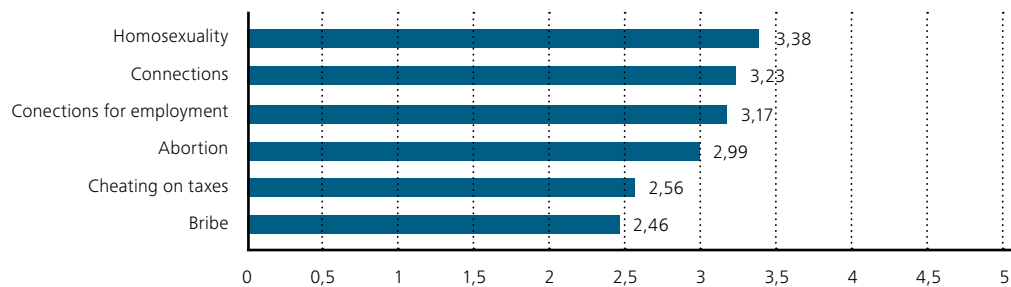
FIGURE 18: **Approval of homosexuality by gender**

	Never	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Always
Male	52	7	6	4	10	3	2	3	2	11
Female	31	6	7	6	15	3	5	6	4	19

%
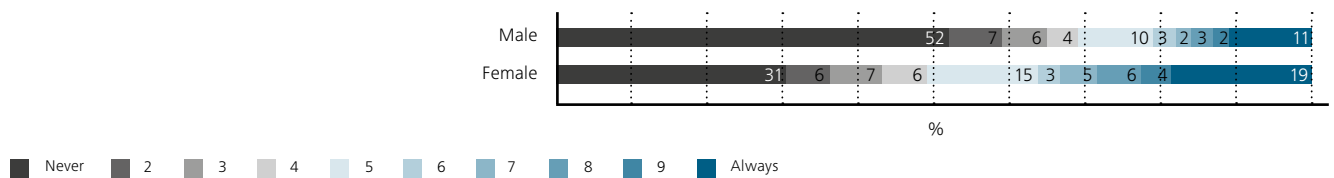
per cent approve completely) and bribery (23 per cent do not approve of this practice at all, while 16 per cent say that they completely approve).

Females are significantly more tolerant of homosexuality than males (Figure 18). While 52 per cent of males do not approve of homosexuality at all and 11 per cent completely approve of it, up to 31 per cent of females do not approve of it at all and 19 per cent approve of it. Attitudes of females and males did not differ on other matters.

Older respondents and those with a higher SES were more tolerant of homosexuality.[24] There were no differences when it comes to size of the community.

Compared to other countries, young people in Serbia are more likely to condone abortion, homosexuality and bribery.
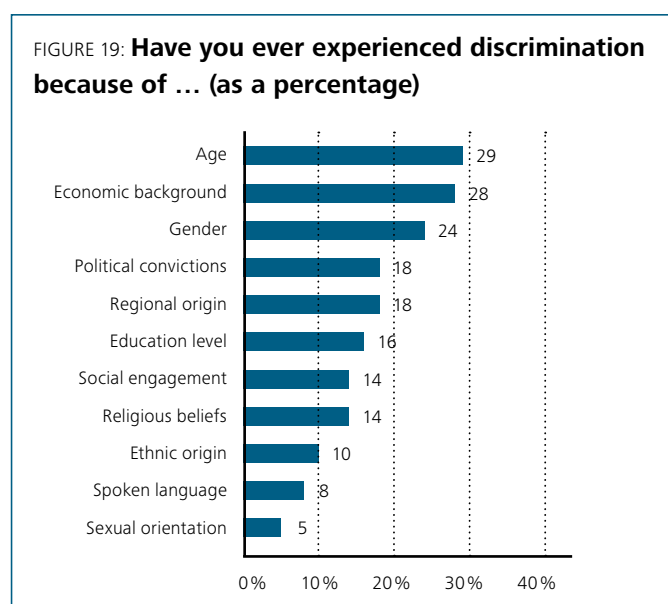
TRUST IN OTHER PEOPLE

Young people generally express great trust in other people. When asked to state a level on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) how much trust they had in different people, the highest confidence was expressed in close family members, with friends ranking very high as well. The respondents had very low levels of confidence in political leaders.

TABLE 2. **Trust in different categories of people**

To what degree do you trust…	Mean
Immediate family members (mother/father, sister/brother, wife/husband, partner)	4.8
Friends	4.0
Extended family members (relatives)	3.6
Classmates, course mates, or colleagues at work	3.2
People of other nationalities	3.2
People of other religions	3.0
People with different political convictions	2.7
Neighbours	2.6
Political leaders	1.5

DISCRIMINATION

One-half of young people (50 per cent) experienced at least one of the 11 forms of discrimination they were shown. Most of them (almost one in every three) have experienced discrimination because of their age or economic status at least once or several times. Over 20 per cent have sometimes or often experienced discrimination because of their gender (31 per cent of females and 16 per cent of males), economic situation or age. Other forms of discrimination are rare (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: **Have you ever experienced discrimination because of … (as a percentage)**

Age	29
Economic background	28
Gender	24
Political convictions	18
Regional origin	18
Education level	16
Social engagement	14
Religious beliefs	14
Ethnic origin	10
Spoken language	8
Sexual orientation	5

Experience of discrimination is within the average range for all countries.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Young people were not asked whether they were religious or not, but rather how important God was in their lives, on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10. If we consider those who circled number 1 as not religious, then for the group of the respondents who provided an answer to this question (5 per cent of respondents did not answer), eight per cent are not religious. Thirty-four per cent of respondents gave the maximum rating of 10, while the average score was 7.1. Despite these high levels, it is slightly below the average for all countries (7.5), while Serbia ranks 7th among the countries surveyed.

There was no difference according to gender and age in the degree of religiosity. Younger people with a lower SES appear to be somewhat more religious.[25] Religiosity was significantly related to the religiosity of parents.[26]

It is positively correlated with authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, ethnic distance and trust in social institutions.[27] Religiosity was not associated with antisocial behaviour.

CONTACTS WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Young people failed to show any pronounced openness to the world. About one-quarter of young people between the ages of 14 and 25 had no one among their friends who was different from them in terms of nationality, religion or language (Figure 20). The percentage was only lower (14 per cent) in the oldest age group.

The number of those respondents who did not know anyone of different nationality, religion or language was higher among members of the lower SES group,[28] and among young people living in bigger communities.
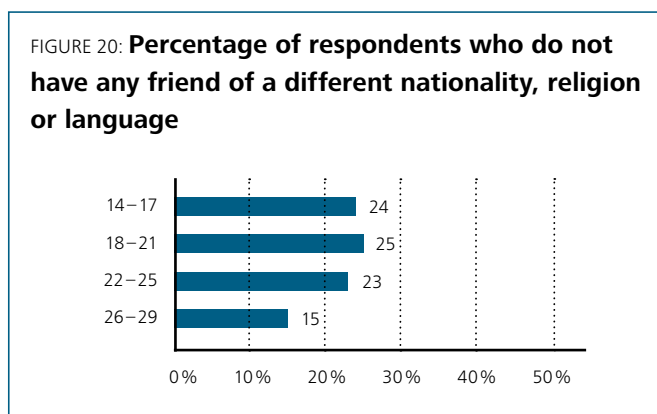
FIGURE 20: **Percentage of respondents who do not have any friend of a different nationality, religion or language**

14−17	24
18−21	25
22−25	23
26−29	15

FIGURE 21: **Perception of personal safety in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Very safe		Unsafe
Safe		Very unsafe
Neither safe nor unsafe		

Kosovo: 43, 24, 20, 7, 6
Croatia: 21, 20, 27, 18, 15
Bosnia and Herzegovina: 8, 9, 22, 28, 34

%
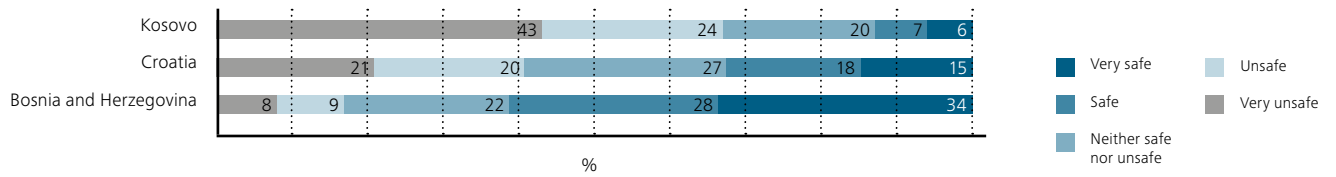
FIGURE 22: **Ethnic distance toward the members of different ethnic groups (as a percentage)**

A SERB
Friendship: 0,7 / 93,8
Marriage: 0,6 / 93,3

A CROAT
Friendship: 14,8 / 75,0
Marriage: 34,6 / 47,9

AN ALBANIAN
Friendship: 33,7 / 51,2
Marriage: 54,8 / 25,9

A ROMA
Friendship: 24,3 / 63,0
Marriage: 53,7 / 26,8

A BOSNIAK
Friendship: 11,9 / 77,4
Marriage: 32,3 / 50,6

A MONTENEGRIN
Friendship: 4,2 / 87,9
Marriage: 11,5 / 75,4

A MACEDONIAN
Friendship: 5,3 / 85,6
Marriage: 17,0 / 67,9

Yes, I would mind
No, I wouldn't mind

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
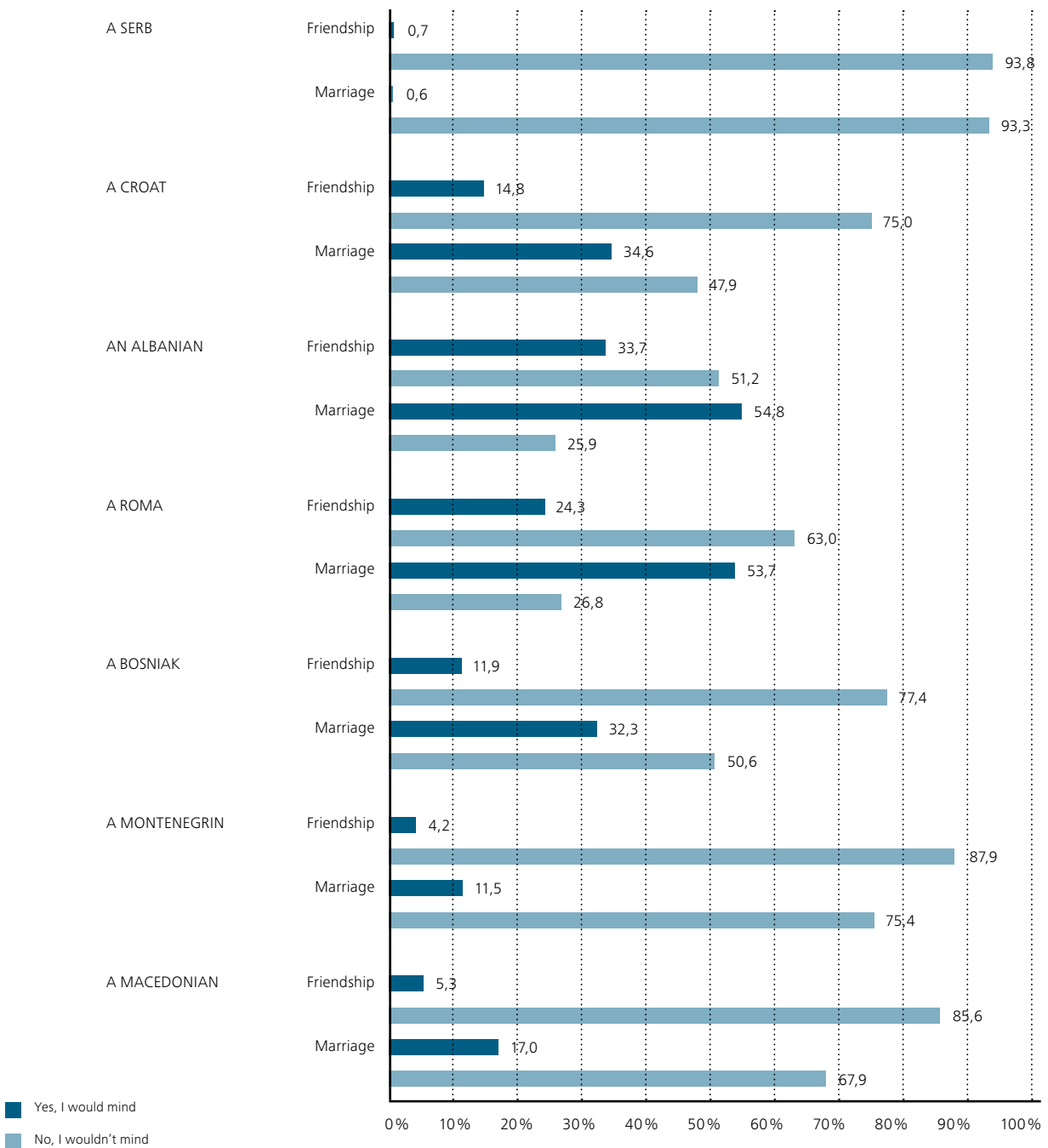
Note: sum up to 100 per cent includes the responses "I don't know" and "no answer".

The answer provided to the question about the languages young people speak may serve as an indicator of being hemmed in within the boundaries of one's own homogeneous environment.

Of the number of respondents who answered this question, 17 per cent do not speak any language other than their mother tongue. English is spoken by 69 per cent of the respondents,

German by 13 per cent, while Russian and French are spoken by seven per cent of respondents each. Practically no respondent was attempting to learn the language of their neighbours. Only one respondent stated that he spoke Albanian (his father is Albanian), two said that they spoke Roma, while the numbers speaking other languages were also small – 4 respondents stated Slovenian, 15 Bulgarian, 7 Macedonian, and 11 respondents Hungarian.

Very few young people in the sample have travelled abroad, and there is a widespread fear of travelling to neighbouring countries with which there is in general a pronounced ethnic distance.

When young people were asked how safe they would feel travelling to the parts of the former Yugoslavia affected by the war in the 1990s, it is evident that a large proportion of young people still consider these areas to be insecure. Almost one-half would feel very insecure travelling across Kosovo; every fifth respondent would feel very unsafe in Croatia, and the lowest number would feel unsafe in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 21).

The insecurity index, calculated from the above three statements, was not significantly correlated with the socio-demographic variables of gender, age, SES and size of the settlement, but it was correlated with the psychological variables such as ethnic distance, social distance, ethnocentrism and trust in others.[29]

Ethnic distance was measured by the question of whether the respondent would object if they or members of the close family became friends with or got married to a member of a different ethnic group (Figure 22).[30]

Serbs expressed the lowest distance towards persons with Montenegrin and Macedonian ethnicity. On the other hand, the distance of young Serbs towards Bosnians, Croats, Albanians and Roma is more pronounced. About every fifth young person in Serbia (21 per cent) accepted both relations with all six ethnic groups. Two per cent were extremely intolerant, i.e. did not accept any relationship with any group. Despite the fact that the youngest respondents were spared of being brought up in a society stricken by ethnic conflicts and war, they did not show any lower ethnic distance than the young people who grew up in the period of ethnic conflicts.[31]

KEY FINDINGS

— The most valued traits are those important for close relationships. The least valued are participation in civic activities and politics.

— Youth in Serbia are optimistic regarding their future, but much more sceptical when it comes to society (independently of age, gender and SES).

— Less than 10 per cent of young people say that God is not important at all in their lives. Religiosity was positively correlated with authoritarianism, ethnocentrism and ethnic distance, but unrelated to antisocial behaviour.

— The younger the respondents, the greater the ethnic distance and social distance towards various groups of people (refugees, Roma family, homosexuals).

— Every fifth person in the sample does not have among his/her friends anybody who is either of different nationality or religion or who speaks a different language.

— 17 per cent of young people do not speak any other language. Practically no one speaks any language of minorities or Serbia's neighbours (Albanian, Roma, Macedonian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, etc.).

7

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

It could be expected that the picture people have of family life significantly changes over the age ranging from 14 to 29. First of all, there is a clear difference between minors, who are still children and are still taken care of by their parents, and those older than 18, who are no longer children and can live autonomously. In addition, the situation is different in another respect; namely, in younger age groups, young people are still included in the education system while in older age groups young people have completed schooling and are able to find jobs and establish their own families. We therefore present the results separately for two age groups: for minors (14 – 17 years old) and for adults.

Minors live almost solely with their parents (98 per cent live with one or both parents, 83 per cent with both parents, and 15 per cent with one parent). The situation is different with adults –76 per cent live with one or both parents and 24 per cent are separated from them.

Adults are already able to establish their own family; still, the majority of adult respondents are neither formally married, nor do they cohabitate with anyone (84 per cent). In terms of the number of young people (adults) who live in a formal marriage or cohabitation, numbers for Serbia are below those of all the other countries surveyed. Approximately the same percentage is present in Macedonia and Montenegro, while this number is twice as great in Bulgaria and Romania and significantly higher in Slovenia.

It would appear that the main reason for leaving one's parental home is (formal or informal) marriage. Out of those adults who are not formally married or cohabite (and this is 84 per cent of such adults), a great majority (83 per cent) live with their parents, while a vast majority of those who are married or cohabite live separately from their parents (88 per cent).
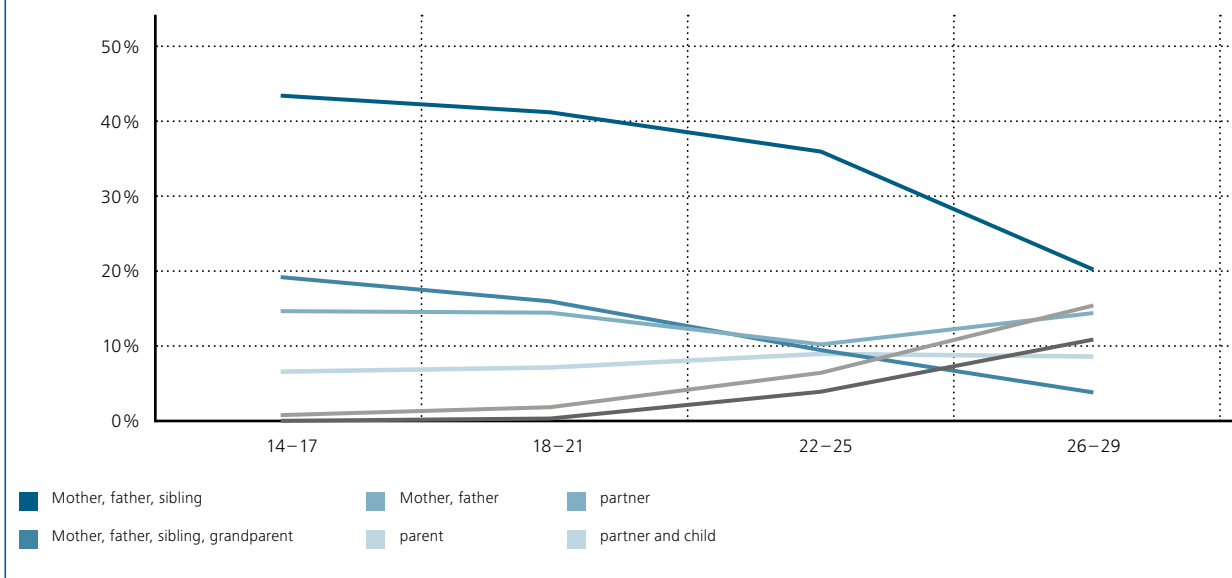
FAMILY STRUCTURE AND AGE

As far as the family structure is concerned, at all ages the most frequent structure of the family is the one in which the respondent lives with both parents and a brother/sister, but this percentage decreases with age and is not in an absolute majority at any age (Figure 23). The percentage of families where young people live only with their parents or with only one parent remains approximately the same in all age groups, which means that the decrease in the percentage of families where they live along with the parents, with a brother/sister or a grandfather/grandmother is mostly due to the death of older family members and because siblings leave the family, or because there has been a slight increase in the number of families with several children during the decade. In the oldest age group, one-quarter of young people started their secondary family, in which they live only with a partner (15 per cent) or with a child (11 per cent).

On the average, young people live in four-member households (36 per cent). In the smallest communities, households are larger (4.2 members) in comparison with larger communities, where households are slightly smaller (3.7). Only 20 per cent of respondents in Belgrade and 38 per cent of respondents from the smallest communities live in households with 5 or more members.

Among those who are married, 66 per cent have children. Seven per cent of respondents who cohabitate have children (44 per cent of respondents living either in a formal marriage or cohabitating have children).

FIGURE 23: **Family structure (as a percentage)**

Legend:
- Mother, father, sibling
- Mother, father, sibling, grandparent
- Mother, father
- parent
- partner
- partner and child

FAMILY RELATIONS

Young people have good relations with their parents. One-third (31 per cent) say that they get along very well (although in all other countries this percentage is higher, with the average being 46 per cent), 62 per cent say they have some differences in opinion with their parents, while eight per cent do not get along well with them. Basic socio-demographic variables (gender, age, SES, size of community) are of no significance here.

Of those respondents who live with their parents, this is the most convenient solution for almost one-half (49 per cent). This answer is more common among single respondents (55 per cent) than those who are married (45 per cent), in a relationship (41 per cent), and especially those cohabitating (18 per cent), where the most common answer is that they do not have other financial prospects (64 per cent). This response is more frequent at younger ages (67 per cent in the youngest group versus 34 per cent in the oldest age group). In older groups, living with parents is a result of financial constraints. While only eight per cent of young people would live alone if they could, one half of the oldest group (49 per cent) would like to live separately, but lack the financial resources to do so.

One-third of those who live with their parents (31 per cent) would live separately if their financial circumstances allowed them to, and only two per cent live with their parents because they have to.

In general, young people perceive their financial situation to be relatively good. About three per cent of young people claim that they live in extreme poverty because their families do not provide enough for them to meet their basic needs, and 14 per cent live in extremely good conditions and can afford everything they want. One should add here that the perception of the family economic situation in most of the surveyed countries was even more favourable, and only Bulgaria and Albania had a higher per-

centage of persons living in extreme poverty and a lower percentage living in extremely favourable conditions.

Furthermore, most young people (62 per cent) estimate that their financial situation compared to the situation of their peers is average. One-quarter (24 per cent) think their situation is below average, and 15 per cent estimate that it is above average.

Practically all households have a house/apartment, computer (41 per cent more than one), the Internet and washing machine; 83 per cent of households have a car, and 22 per cent have two or more cars. Out of those respondents who live in a parental home, 91 per cent have their own room. In the total sample, this number is 90 per cent.

Young people who live independently describe their economic situation as being worse than that of young people living with both parents. While 30 per cent of respondents from the first group think that their financial situation is below the average and 44 per cent state that they can afford relatively expensive things, 19 per cent of respondents in the second group assess their financial situation as below the average, while 62 per cent can afford expensive things.

Generally good relations with parents are further attested by the fact that 22 per cent of respondents would raise their own children in the same way, 53 per cent almost the same, 19 per cent differently and five per cent completely differently. There is no difference here in terms of relevant socio-demographic variables.

Young people do not perceive their living with parents to mean a loss of autonomy. Only a small percentage – three per cent – claim that their parents make decisions about everything; 52 per cent say that they decide together with their parents, and 45 per cent make decisions on their own (8 per cent of respondents did not answer this question). Autonomy increases with age.[32] At the youngest age, 18 per cent of young people make decisions independently, and at the oldest, as many as 64 per cent (Figure 24).

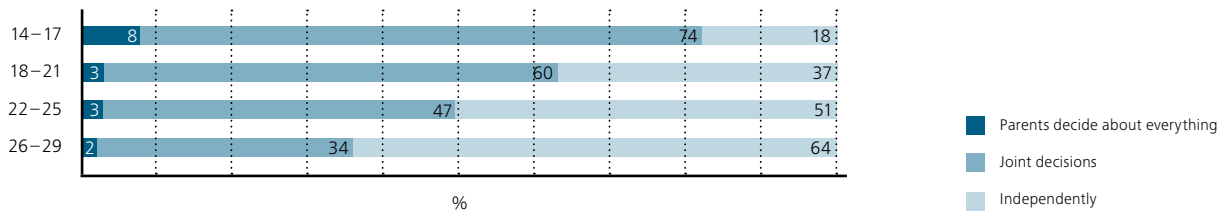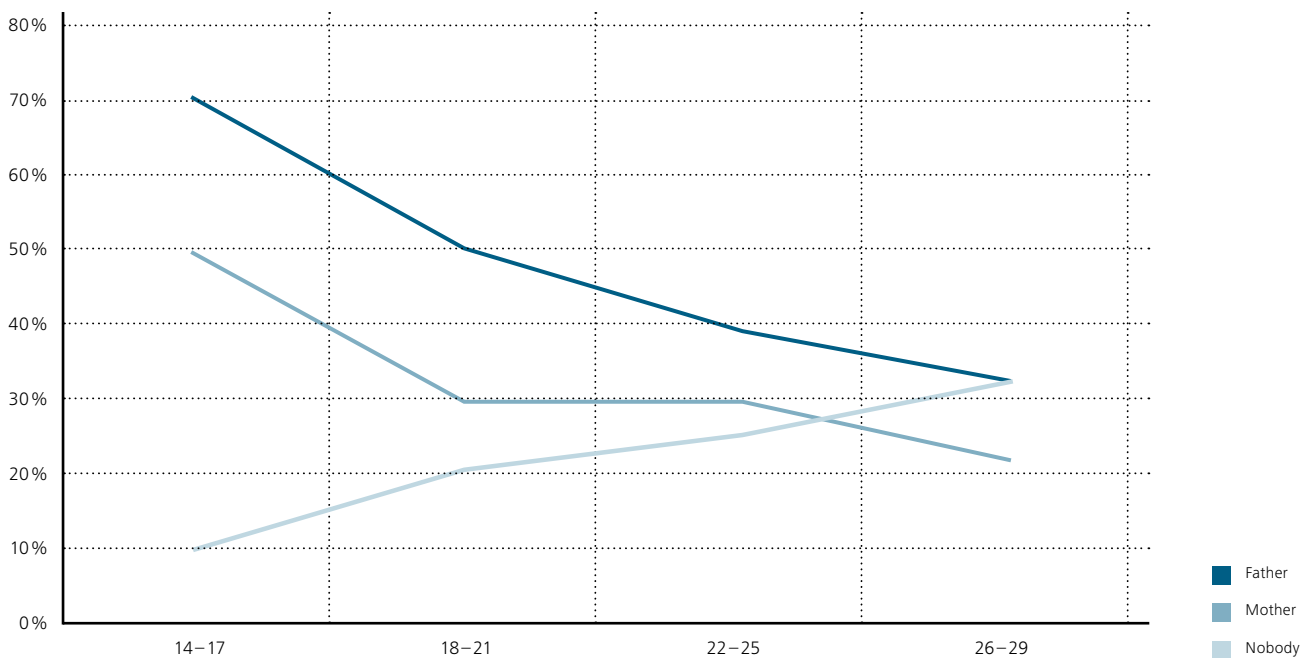FIGURE 24: **Do your parents influence important decisions about your life?**

14−17	8	74	18
18−21	3	60	37
22−25	3	47	51
26−29	2	34	64

%

- Parents decide about everything
- Joint decisions
- Independently

FIGURE 25: **Who has most influence on your important decisions? (as a percentage)**

- Father
- Mother
- Nobody

It is important to note that there was no difference between the genders. There was a very small difference according to SES: young people with a lower SES were slightly more likely (2 per cent) to decide on their own compared to young people with a middle and upper-level SES (41 per cent).

The most common answers to the question about who had the most influence on the respondent's decisions were: mother (46 per cent), father (30.2 per cent), and nobody (23 per cent). The role of the father in making decisions decreases with age, from 49 per cent among minors to 22 per cent in the oldest age group (Figure 25). The role of the mother also declines with age (70 per cent to 33 per cent), and this does not depend on gender or size of the community.

Assessing the role of a brother/sister in making decisions was not easy because many respondents do not have a brother/sister. If we single out those who answered the question about family members, and within this group focus on those who have a brother or sister, we see that 21 per cent of respondents say that their brother or sister has the greatest influence.

All things considered, family is the source of both material and emotional support to the majority of young people when they grow up. An average family is not seen as a patriarchal structure with a dominant parental (primarily father's) authority, which children want to escape as soon as possible.

The family mitigates the negative impact of the "frozen-transition" period on young people, but some negative effects of such a role by a family should also be considered. By ensuring financial security and child-raising, the family assumes obligations that should have been taken on by the state. These obligations certainly drain family resources, and the question is how much longer they will be perpetuated if the economic situation in society does not improve significantly. This also reinforces expectations that the family can and should take care of youth as they grow up – rather than state institutions. Thus, young people do not assume state institutions will play a role, nor do they assume any responsibility of their own for the position they are in, just as they overlook their own responsibility for changing the society they live in. In addition, prolonged dependence on the family leads to a delayed transition to adulthood, which also involves demographic risks.

STARTING ONE'S OWN FAMILY

A large number of young people perceive the establishment of their own family as a given stage of life. When asked about how they saw themselves in the future, 18 per cent of them did not know how they saw themselves, while the other 92 per cent (75 per cent of the total sample) saw themselves as being married and having a family. In different variants, only two and four per cent of them, respectively, see themselves as being without children.

When asked what was the best time for marriage, almost one-quarter of young people did not provide any answer. Those who responded felt that for men the best age was on average 28.5, and 26.3 for women. For older respondents, this age increased by a year or two compared to the youngest cohort. The difference according to gender is only half a year. The size of community and SES played no significant role here. Among female respondents who are older than the best age specified (26–29 years old), 29 per cent are married, and in the group of adults younger than the given age, six per cent are married.

The questions regarding children also yielded a large number of "I do not know" and "no answer" responses, with percentages being roughly equal in all age groups. Six per cent of respondents have children (58 per cent of them have one child). The average age when they had their first child was 23 (this is also the median). Those who have not had children nevertheless think that the best age for this is 28 on average (45 per cent did not answer this question). Only four per cent of those who do not have children say they do not ever intend to have children. When asked about the preferred number of children, 30 per cent of respondents did not answer. The others most commonly say two children (52 per cent) or three children (32 per cent), while less than five per cent plan to only have one child. When asked at what age they planned to have a child, as many as 49.2 per cent failed to answer. Fifty-six per cent of male respondents did not provide an answer to this question. Among the others, the median is 27 years, and the most common answer is the age of 30.

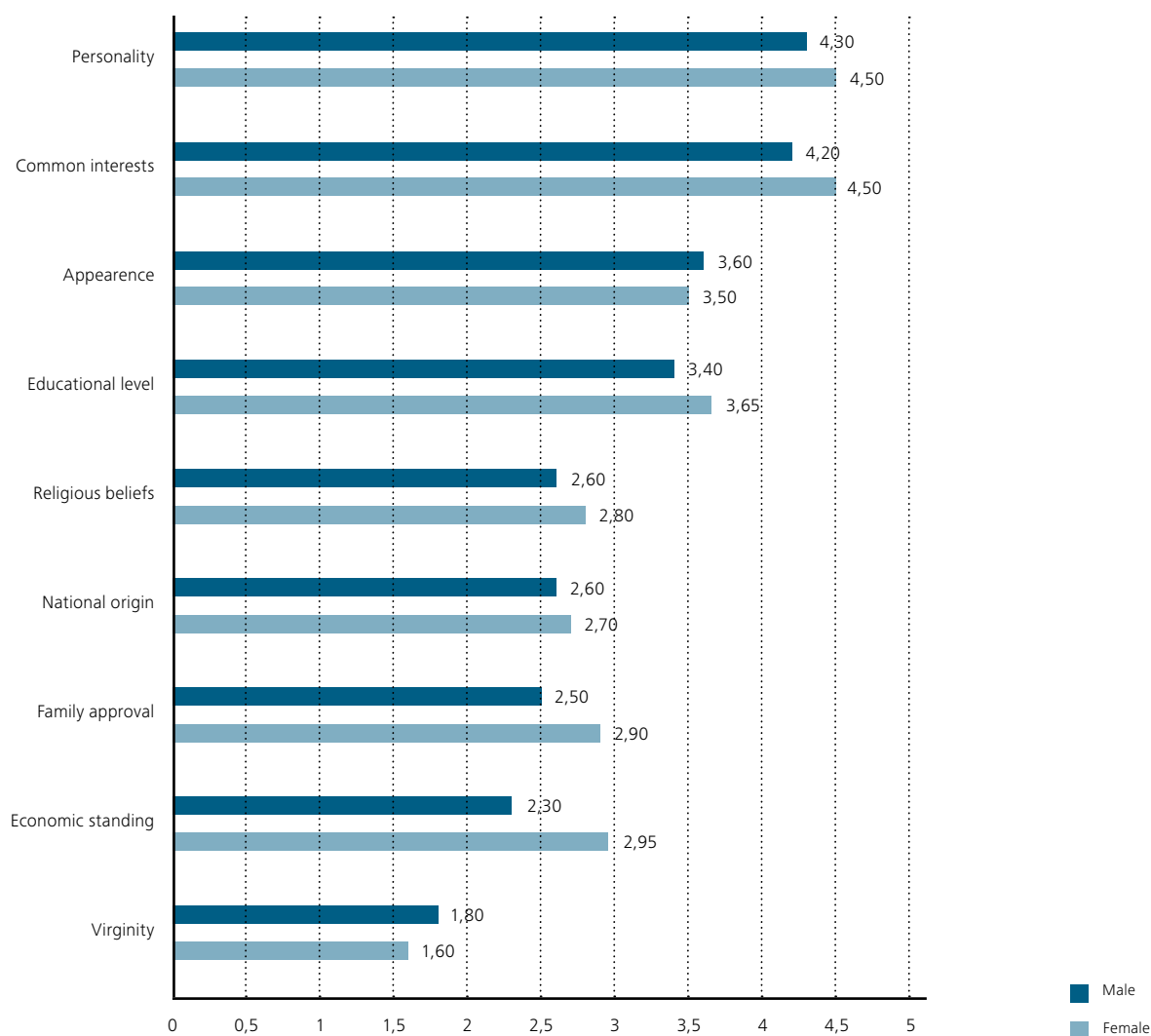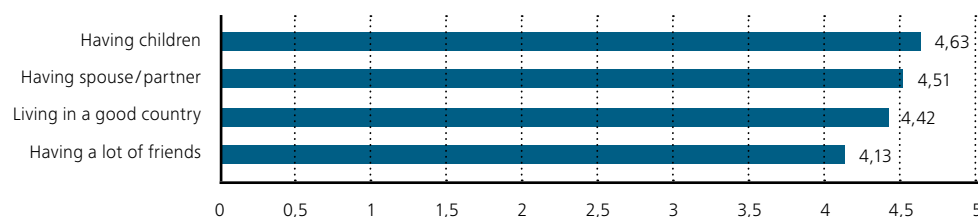FIGURE 26: **What is important in choosing a marriage partner?**

	Male	Female
Personality	4,30	4,50
Common interests	4,20	4,50
Appearence	3,60	3,50
Educational level	3,40	3,65
Religious beliefs	2,60	2,80
National origin	2,60	2,70
Family approval	2,50	2,90
Economic standing	2,30	2,95
Virginity	1,80	1,60

FIGURE 27: **How important for a happy life is …**

Having children	4,63
Having spouse/partner	4,51
Living in a good country	4,42
Having a lot of friends	4,13

0   0,5   1   1,5   2   2,5   3   3,5   4   4,5   5

WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT MARRIAGE?

For young people, marriage is primarily a relationship that meets their emotional needs. Psychological factors such as partner personality and common interests are the most important factors with marriage. Group identifications (religious beliefs, national origin) and traditional requirements (family approval, virginity) have a value below 3 on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) (Figure 26).

Being married and having children are seen not only as social roles that are required, but as very desirable roles, as is evident from the answer to the question as to what is important for a happy life. Having children is very important for 77 per cent of respondents, regardless of age and gender, and having a partner is very important for 69 per cent (Figure 27).

KEY FINDINGS

— In terms of the number of young people (adults) in formal marriages or cohabitation (every sixth), young people in Serbia rank below the other countries surveyed.

— While almost all young people under the age of 18 live with their parents, three-quarters of those older than 17 live with their parents, while one in six is married or cohabitating with a partner. Two-thirds of those formally married and seven per cent of those cohabitating have children.

— Approximately three per cent of young families live in extreme poverty, while 14 per cent live in extremely good conditions. The countries with a higher per cent of extreme poverty and a lower per cent of extreme wealth than Serbia are Bulgaria and Albania.

— The majority of young people (62 per cent) evaluate their financial situation as average compared to that of their peers; one-quarter see their financial situation as below average, and 15 per cent as above average.

— Relations with parents are mainly good and harmonious. Parents provide children with emotional and economic support and try not to stifle their independence. A great majority, equally for males and females, say that they make decisions jointly with parents or independently. Mothers have a greater say in decisions than fathers.

8

MOBIILITY

Serbia is traditionally a migrant society, and in the last two and a half decades, as a result of socio-political developments in the country as well as general migration trends in the world, migration has intensified significantly (Bobić et al. 2016). There are no reliable data, but experts estimate that more than 240,000 citizens of Serbia left the country in the period from 2008 to 2015 and warn that this phenomenon significantly contributes to the demographic, social, economic, technological and cultural diversification of the country, as migrants are generally a younger, more lively, educated and more adaptive part of the population (Bobić in press).

The majority of youth do not stay abroad long. Only 15 per cent spend more than 6 months outside Serbia . The percentage of those who have stayed abroad for a longer period of time was not significantly related to either the socio-demographic variation or level of education.

Still, the focus of our interest was not so much on young people's previous stay abroad as much as their desire or intention to travel abroad and stay there longer. How strong is desire of youth to emigrate? Every fourth respondent (25 per cent) did not want to emigrate, while among the other three-quarters this desire was quite prominent, with 29 per cent expressing a strong or very strong desire to emigrate.

The desire to emigrate is most marked among minors: every third respondent had a strong or very strong desire to emigrate, and only one-quarter did not think about it. The number of those who do not plan to emigrate increases with age, reaching 30 per

cent in the oldest age group, while one-quarter strongly or very strongly desire to emigrate (Figure 28). We assume that, with age, young people assume different social roles which makes it difficult for them to emigrate.

Among pupils, two per cent do not intend to emigrate, and 34 per cent desire to do so strongly or very strongly. Among university students (including those attending master and PhD programmes), 21 per cent do not plan to emigrate, and 30 per cent strongly or very strongly desire to emigrate. Among those outside the education system, 34 per cent do not intend to emigrate, and 23 per cent desire to strongly or very strongly.

The percentage of young people who intend to emigrate is higher than the average in other countries covered by the regional survey. Moreover, in terms of the number of young people who want to or intend to emigrate, Serbia ranks among the first of the countries surveyed (Figure 29).

The desire to emigrate did not depend on gender or size of the community. It was stronger among those who were more open to the world (i.e. who display a smaller ethnic distance and lower ethnocentrism and are more dissatisfied with themselves and their lives).[33] The wish to emigrate was also greater among young people with higher educational aspirations.[34] The desire to leave the country was most closely associated with pessimism regarding the future situation in the country.[35]

Since the desire to emigrate is interpreted as an intention to emigrate, in the next question those who expressed at least a

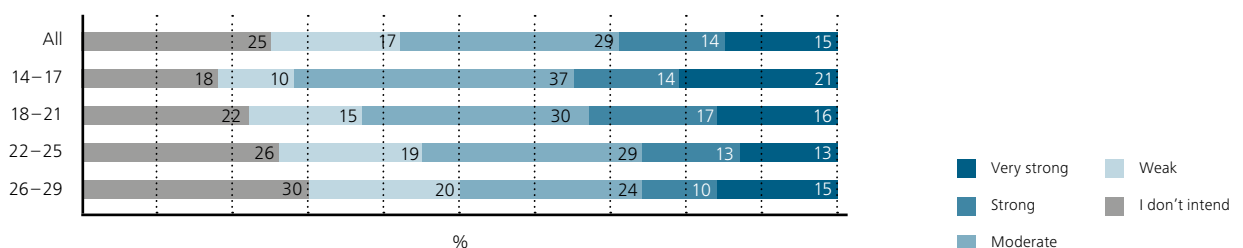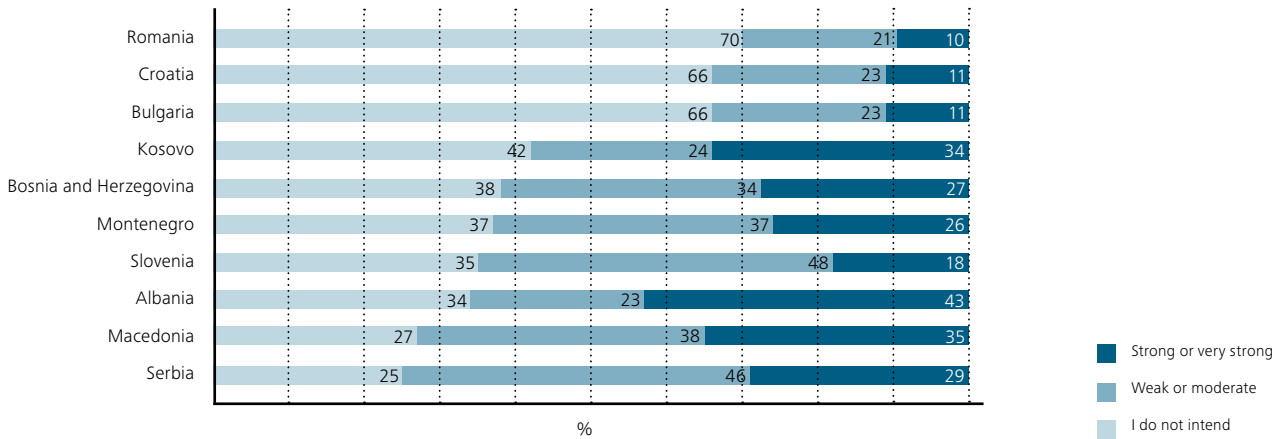FIGURE 28: **Desire to emigrate by age (as a percentage)**

FIGURE 29: **Desire to emigrate by country**

Country	I do not intend	Weak or moderate	Strong or very strong
Romania	70	21	10
Croatia	66	23	11
Bulgaria	66	23	11
Kosovo	42	24	34
Bosnia and Herzegovina	38	34	27
Montenegro	37	37	26
Slovenia	35	48	18
Albania	34	23	43
Macedonia	27	38	35
Serbia	25	46	29

weak desire were asked about the time when they intended to emigrate. Only 14 per cent of respondents stated they wished to emigrate in the next 6 months, 26 per cent within two years, 31 per cent within five years, 22 per cent in 10 years, and six per cent of respondents intend to emigrate in ten years or more. This period is associated with the strength of the desire to emigrate. Out of those with a very strong desire, one-half intend to emigrate within the next 6 months or two years, and among those with a weak desire 31 per cent intend to emigrate during that period and 29 per cent in more than ten years.

The younger respondents move emigration plans further into the future. Nineteen per cent of minors and 55 per cent of the oldest respondents plan to emigrate within a period of two years or earlier.

Those who intend to emigrate disagree about how long they would stay abroad. Almost one-half of those who provided an answer to this question do not know how long they would stay.

Among those who answered, there is an equal number of those who would stay for up to five years (20%) and those who would stay for more than twenty years or for a lifetime (21%).

The stronger the desire to go abroad, the longer the stay that is planned.[36] The planned duration of the stay is not related to either gender or age or to SES. Among pupils, 14 per cent would like to stay abroad less than one year and 36 per cent would stay permanently, while among university students, 20 per cent would stay for one year and 24 per cent would stay for a lifetime.

Where would young people like to emigrate? Approximately one-quarter of respondents have no clear idea of where to emigrate. The most common target country is Germany, regardless of whether we take into account the first or all three choices (Figures 30 and 31). Germany is traditionally a country with the most focused migration flows from Serbia.

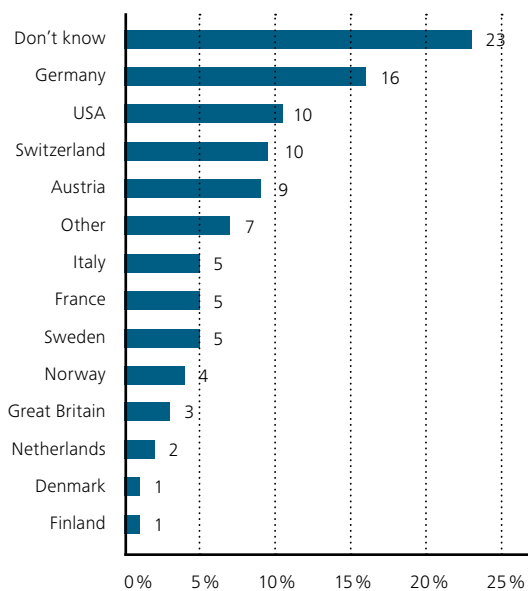FIGURE 30: **Country to emigrate – the first choice (as a percentage)**

Don't know	23
Germany	16
USA	10
Switzerland	10
Austria	9
Other	7
Italy	5
France	5
Sweden	5
Norway	4
Great Britain	3
Netherlands	2
Denmark	1
Finland	1

FIGURE 31: **Country to emigrate – three choices (as a percentage)**

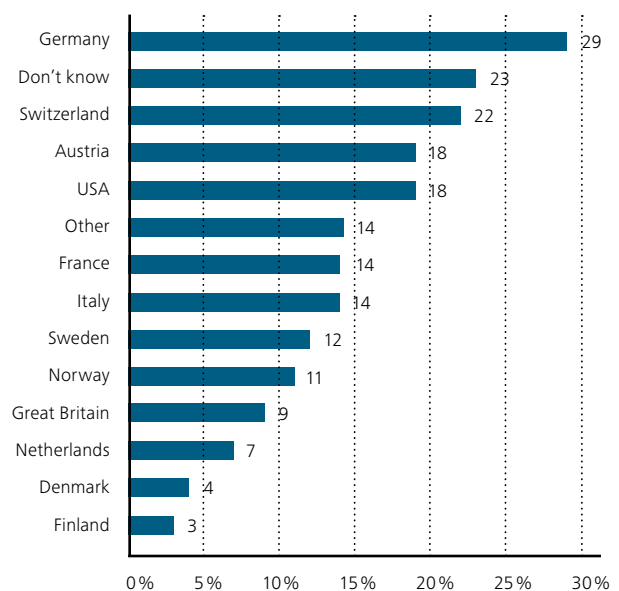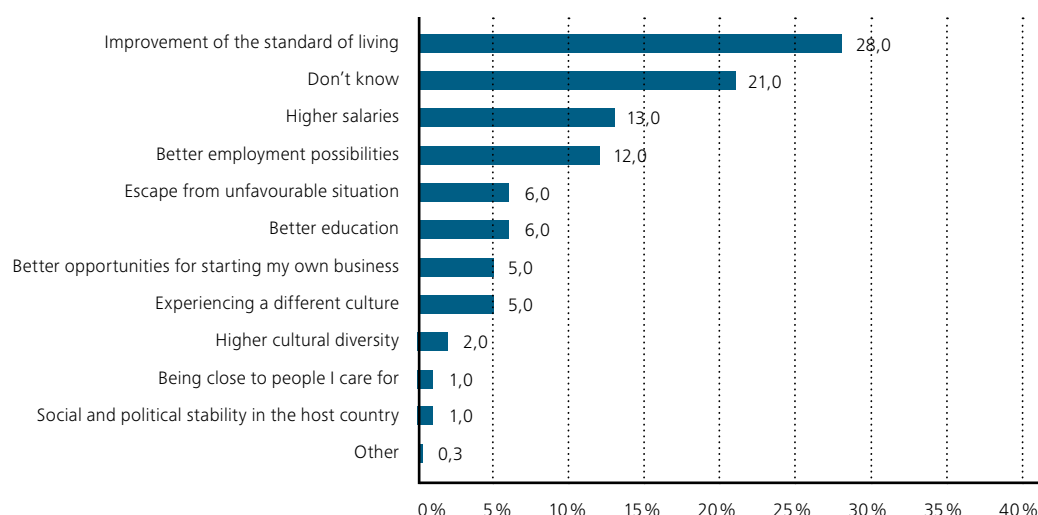|	
Germany	29
Don't know	23
Switzerland	22
Austria	18
USA	18
Other	14
France	14
Italy	14
Sweden	12
Norway	11
Great Britain	9
Netherlands	7
Denmark	4
Finland	3

FIGURE 32: **Country to emigrate – three choices (as a percentage)**

The main reasons for the intention to emigrate can be reduced to a desire to improve one's financial situation (Figure 32). If we assume that it includes a desire to improve the standard of living, higher salaries, better job opportunities, and better opportunities to start one's own business and employment, then 57 per cent of those who wish to emigrate state this as the reason. Considering that one-fifth of respondents did not provide any reason, then three-quarters (73 per cent) of all of the above reasons can be subsumed under the desire to improve one's economic situation. The desire for better education would be the next pull factor, but it is not very widespread. The main push factor is the desire to escape from a bad situation. Push and pull factors cannot be clearly separated here because the reasons classified as pull factors can be interpreted as a desire to escape from a hopeless situation in terms of employment and standard of living.

Still, the question remains as to the extent to which the stated intentions of departing from the country can be understood to be a firm statement of plans and to what extent merely a desire. Some indicators show that a certain percentage of respondents, apart from the expressed intention, would make no actual efforts to emigrate.

When, for example, we consider how much those respondents who are supposedly planning to emigrate are acquainted with necessary or useful information, it would appear that their awareness of all factors is relatively low. About one-quarter of such questions are answered with "I do not know". Additionally, one-quarter of respondents answered that they were not familiar with the possibilities available at all. Only every fourth or every fifth respondent tried to be well informed (i.e. circled 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 to 5). Even among those who said they were planning to emigrate within six months, less than one-half circled 4 and 5 when evaluating their awareness of educational opportunities (48 per cent), healthcare (47 per cent) and social benefits (46 per cent).

In the group of respondents who stated that they intended to emigrate, those who actually did something about it are very rare. Only two per cent contacted the embassy, five per cent contacted potential employers, four per cent contacted potential faculties/schools, two per cent paid tuition fees and 15 per cent contacted friends or relatives to help them, while 48 per cent said they had not done anything. Even among those who intend to emigrate in the next six months, only 13 per cent contacted the embassy, 25 per cent contacted a potential employer, 10 per cent contacted a potential school/university, and eight per cent paid tuition fees. Most of these respondents (40 per cent) contacted a relative or a friend to help them go abroad.
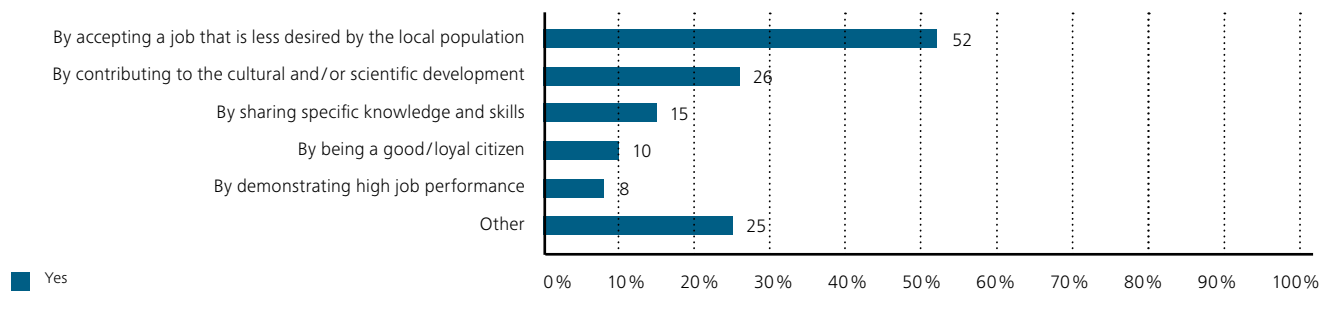
Among those who intend to emigrate, 11 per cent have excellent and 12 per cent good knowledge of the host country, 37 per cent have basic knowledge and 18 per cent do not know the language (17 per cent did not answer this question). Even among those who plan to emigrate within 6 months, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) have only basic or no knowledge of the host country language.

If we assume that we are really dealing with an intention and not only with the desire to emigrate, we can conclude from the data that potential emigrants will face difficulties on their way, but also that the host countries will have to "deal" with potential immigrants who are not completely ready for the process of immigration and integration into the new environment.

Presumably, young people rely heavily on the support of relatives or friends who went abroad earlier and live there. This is indicated by the preliminary data that the persons most frequently contacted during preparations are friends or relatives abroad, as well as by the fact that 50.3 per cent of those who answered the question whether they had an invitation or support from someone they personally know answered affirmatively.

The young people who indicated an intention to emigrate were then asked about their opinion on how they would contribute to the development and prosperity of the host country. One in every

FIGURE 33: **Would you say that you will/would contribute to the development and prosperity of the hostcountry (as a percentage)**

	Yes
By accepting a job that is less desired by the local population	52
By contributing to the cultural and/or scientific development	26
By sharing specific knowledge and skills	15
By being a good/loyal citizen	10
By demonstrating high job performance	8
Other	25

fourth respondents failed to answer this question, however. Out of those who did respond, one-half did not think that they would be able make their own special contribution in the new environment, except that they would take over the lower paid jobs. Others believed that they would contribute primarily as experts in their field (Figure 33).

KEY FINDINGS

— Three-quarters of Serbian youth express a desire/intention to emigrate, which places Serbia first among the countries in the region in which, on average, one-half want to emigrate.

— Among those who would leave the country, one-fifth would leave for year or two, and one-fifth would stay abroad for twenty years or a lifetime.

— The most attractive country to emigrate to is Germany, followed by Switzerland, Austria and the USA.

— The main push factors for leaving the country include the bad situation and pessimism regarding improvement of social conditions. The main pull factors are a desire to improve one's financial situation and better education.

— The intention to emigrate was not associated with various indices of SES, but it was positively correlated with the pessimism expressed about the future of Serbian society as well as educational aspirations.

— Even those who wish to emigrate within the next nine months are poorly informed about the required facts. The main help is expected from friends and relatives who live abroad.

9

EDUCATION

A modern developed society, like the one that Serbia aspires to be, is not conceivable without a quality educational system and educated people. The concept of the *knowledge-based society* perhaps best highlights the indispensable role of education for those who will soon be the pillars of the society and work in the economy often referred to as *Industry 4.0*. The modern world is predominantly, if not entirely, a place in which "people think more than they do" (Fukuyama 2002: 116), and, therefore, education becomes capital in the true sense of the word.

The educational system of Serbia is burdened with internal problems, such as hesitant or insufficient reforms or a lack of resources (people, money). This results in the failure of reforms of the educational system of Serbia to achieve its goals (Maksić & Pavlović 2017). As such, the system is in a somewhat paradoxical situation: even though insufficiently modernised itself, it is supposed to be an instrument for further modernisation of society (Maksić & Pavlović 2013). Instead of being a means for transformation of the society and a guarantee of fairness, the educational system is often exactly the opposite: a machinery for the reproduction of inequality. Numerous recent sociological studies (e.g.

Tomanović and Stanojević 2015; Tomanović et al. 2012; Vujović et al. 2008) indicate that both the social "elite" and poverty are practically renewed through the educational system. Among students, those coming from the families of highly educated parents, those who are of higher SES and those who come from urban settlements are disproportionately represented (Tomanović and Stanojević 2015).

Bearing all this in mind, young people who are still in the process of education or have recently completed their education can provide valuable information about this aspect of the functioning of Serbian society.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH

The structure of youth education at the time when the survey was conducted (Figure 34) indicates that the majority have completed secondary vocational school. Every fifth young person is at the level of primary school or below, while one-quarter have

FIGURE 34: **What is your highest level of education completed so far? (as a percentage)**

Category	Value
No formal education/incompleted primary school	2
Primary school	17
Vocational or technical secondary school	41
Secondary school: university-preparatory type	15
University-level education: Bachelor degree or …	17
University-level education: Higher than bachelor …	6
Doctoral or post-doctoral degree	0
No answer	2
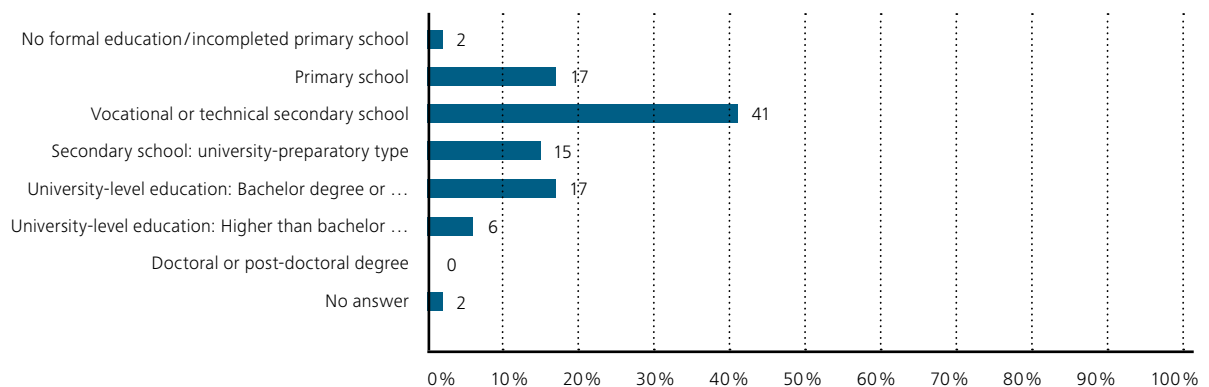
FIGURE 35: **What is your current status in terms of education? (as a percentage)**

I am in school/high school/vocational school	28
I am an undergraduate student	25
I am a student in a Master's or Doctor's degree …	9
I am enrolled in some other form of education or …	2
I am not in any kind of education or training	31
Don't know	1
No answer	3

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%
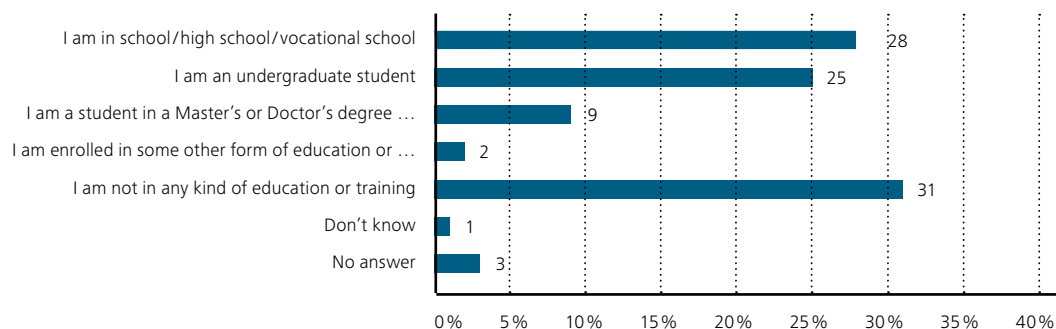
attained university level. If we take into account the age range that was a focus in the study, such data are expected and, to some extent, only provisionally "accurate" since this is the highest *completed* level of education, and a large percentage of respondents have not yet completed their education.

Approximately one-third of young people have completed their education, while among the remainder approximately one-quarter are still at the primary or secondary level of education, and one-third are university students (Figure 35).

The relationship between the educational level and basic socio-demographic indicators can provide important information on the possible disproportional representation of certain categories of young people at different educational levels. First of all, we are interested in relationships between socio-economic status, the size of the community and level of education because they may indicate certain structural obstacles to access to education. The data show that young people of higher SES and living in larger communities have higher levels of education.[37] These findings, however, should be taken cautiously. The relationship between levels of education and socio-economic status can indicate that education *leads* to a better socio-economic position, so there is consequently a significant relationship. Similarly, the relationship between the size of community and the level of education may imply that there are structural barriers for young people from smaller and rural areas on the way to higher levels of education, but also that larger communities are the places where highly educated young people eventually end up and find a job. However, some additional information may help us clarify this correlation.

First of all, the relation between respondents' level of education and education of parents (which, unlike socio-economic status as operationalised in this study, cannot be the consequence of an individual's level of education) makes it possible to partially overcome this problem of interpretation. The higher the level of personal education, the higher the education of the mother and the father.[38] Parents' level of education is a measure of differences in families' cultural, material and social capital, indicating its importance in children's education as well as the low probability of upward social mobility through education. If the child's educational achievements are somehow cast in stone and determined

by parents' education, those with less-educated parents are unlikely to "out-school" their parents and improve their social position. Education seems to reproduce social inequality instead of decreasing it, which is quite in line with recent studies (Tomanović & Stanojević 2015; Tomanović et al. 2012).
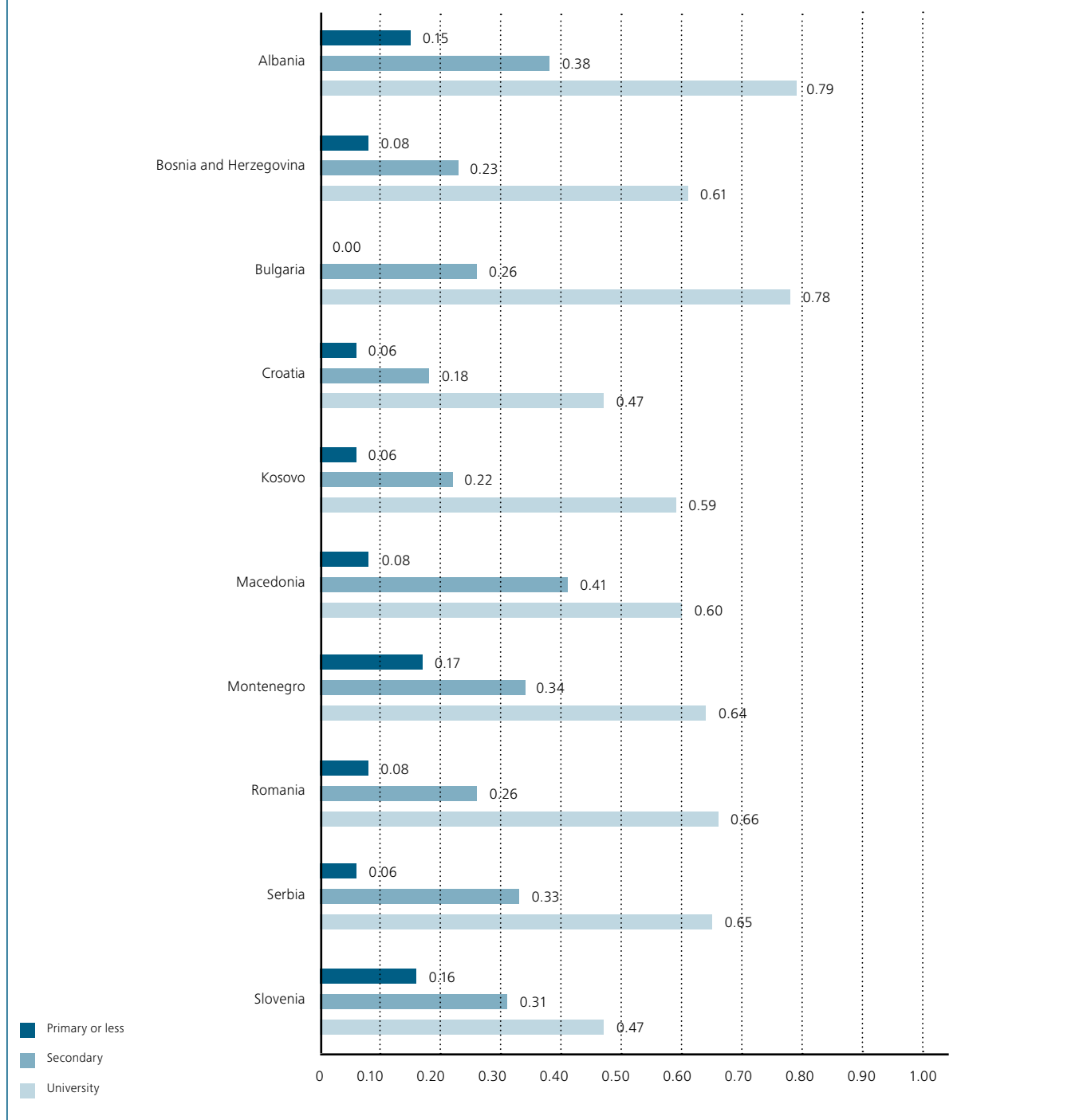
Additionally, a subcategory of those persons who are not in the process of education is particularly important in this respect. Their socio-demographic profile is particularly descriptive and important. First of all, most young people who have completed education belong to the group with the lowest SES (42 per cent), while only one-fifth are in the group with the highest SES (20 per cent). These data indicate that among those persons who have finished their education, young people with a higher SES are actually underrepresented, or, to put it differently, poorer young people finish their education earlier, staying at lower levels of education. This evidence suggest a structural imbalance in access to higher levels of education between young people of different social backgrounds.

If we focus only on the relationship between the level of parental education and the level of completed education of young people who are not in the process of education, it can be concluded that parental education is highly predictive for the educational achievement of their children.

Once again, inequality in access to education is visible in this respect in Serbia (Figure 36).[39] A young person with a university-educated father is ten times more likely to obtain a university degree than a person whose father only completed primary school.[40] This fact casts serious doubt on the notion that the educational system in Serbia is fair and just, offering equal opportunity to all, irrespective of social background.

Similar patterns can be observed in the other countries. In each country, those persons who come from families with fathers who have higher levels of education have much better prospects of being university-educated themselves. The higher the education of the father, the greater the chances of a young person being university educated him/herself. However, the variability between countries in this regard is quite evident. There are noticeable differences between three groups of young people in terms of the father's education in some countries (e.g. Albania and Bulgaria), and less prominent differences in other countries

FIGURE 36: **Predicted probabilities of completed university education according to the father's level of education**
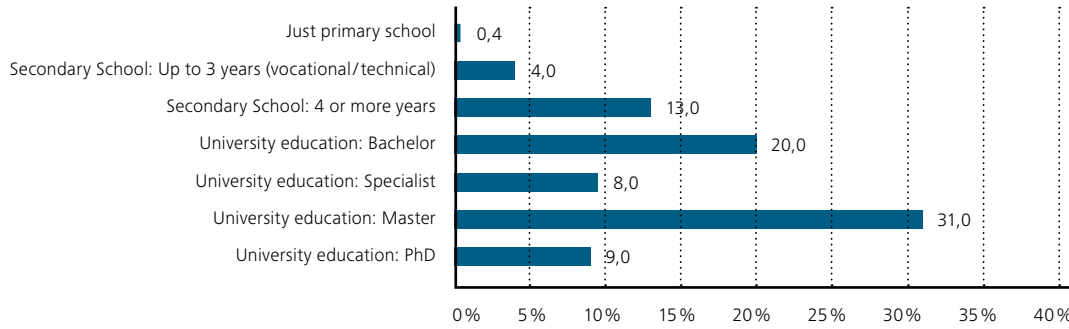

Albania — 0.15 / 0.38 / 0.79
Bosnia and Herzegovina — 0.08 / 0.23 / 0.61
Bulgaria — 0.00 / 0.26 / 0.78
Croatia — 0.06 / 0.18 / 0.47
Kosovo — 0.06 / 0.22 / 0.59
Macedonia — 0.08 / 0.41 / 0.60
Montenegro — 0.17 / 0.34 / 0.64
Romania — 0.08 / 0.26 / 0.66
Serbia — 0.06 / 0.33 / 0.65
Slovenia — 0.16 / 0.31 / 0.47

Primary or less
Secondary
University

(e.g. Croatia and Slovenia). This potential indicates the importance of differences between countries' educational systems, their quality, budgets, etc.

In addition to the current level of education, the issue of educational aspirations of young people is perhaps even more important – to which level of education do they aspire? The vast majority of young people aspire to a university level of education (Figure 37). Almost one-fifth of them wish to complete only secondary school. A majority of the others tend to want to obtain a master's degree, and every tenth respondent plans to obtain a PhD. Especially relevant in this respect are the findings which indicate that higher aspirations are shown by young people of higher socio-economic status.[41] One-third (37 per cent) of youth with the lowest SES only have ambitions of completing secondary education, as opposed to 21 per cent of those with middle and only eight per cent of those with the highest SES. This is particularly important since it points to indirect "suppressor" effects of poverty, reflected in the lower level of educational aspirations of those who are economically underprivileged.[42]

FIGURE 37: **What is the highest level of education you are aspiring to? (as a percentage)**

Just primary school	0,4
Secondary School: Up to 3 years (vocational/technical)	4,0
Secondary School: 4 or more years	13,0
University education: Bachelor	20,0
University education: Specialist	8,0
University education: Master	31,0
University education: PhD	9,0

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

As pointed out previously, a majority of young people are currently in school. In this section, we hence focus only on this major group. Generally speaking, young people from this group are hard-working and good pupils and students. Pupils spend less time doing homework every day than university students (Figure 38); the majority of pupils most often study up to two hours a day, while the majority of students spend 3 or more hours a day studying. This is especially true for students at the level of master and PhD studies.

FIGURE 38: **How many hours on average do you spend studying (after classess/at home) per day?**

School/high school/vocational school student: 27, 26, 32, 14
Undergraduate student: 15, 21, 28, 37
Master's or Doctor's degree student: 16, 19, 26, 40

■ 0−1 hours   ■ 2−3 hours
■ 1−2 hours   ■ More than 3 hours
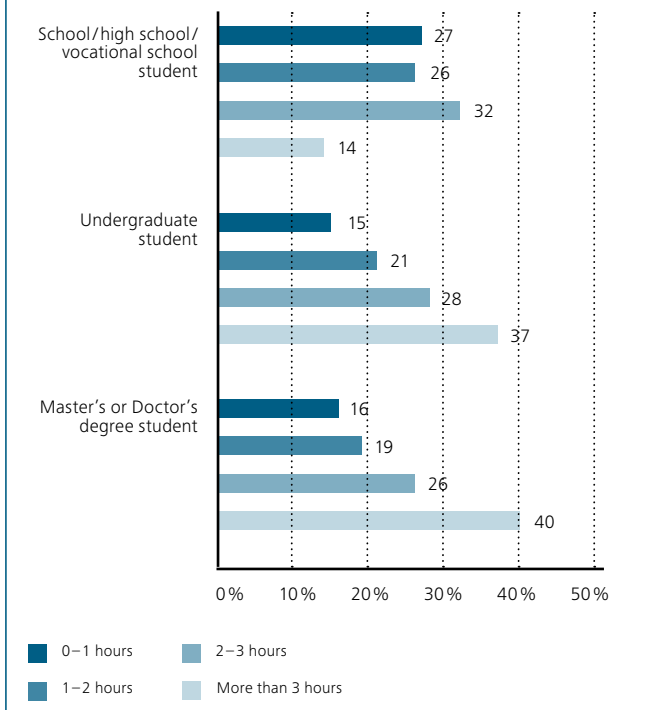
On the other hand, based on the grades achieved in the last academic year, it would appear that pupils are more successful, regardless of the less effort invested that they report (Figure 39). Half of them reported a grade point average of between 4 and 5. Only every tenth pupil has a grade point average between 2 and 3. The situation is somewhat reversed with university students. Al-

most one-half of undergraduate students report (below-) average educational achievement and a grade point average between 7 and 8. One-fifth of them belong to the category of the most successful (with a grade point average between 9 and 10). When it comes to Master and PhD levels, the grades reported are much higher, with the majority of students having achieved a grade point average of between 8 and 9. Hence, if we use the average grade level as a measure of achievement and performance, problems appear to be the greatest at the level of undergraduate studies.

There are also some notable differences among youth in terms of success in school and dedication. The data indicate that females study more and achieve better grades.[43] Similar goes for respondents of higher socio-economic status and those from smaller communities, who achieve better grades,[44] although there is no difference between them considering the time spent studying. Besides higher SES, which implies having more resources that can be allocated to schooling, a more positive value being attached to educational attainment and higher educational aspirations can

FIGURE 39: **What was your average grade during the last academic year?**

School/high school/vocational school student: 4, 8, 37, 52
Undergraduate student: 2, 44, 32, 21
Master's or Doctoral degree student: 0, 27, 44, 29

■ Mostly 1−2/5−6   ■ Mostly 3−4/8−9
■ Mostly 2−3/7−8   ■ Mostly 4−5/9−10
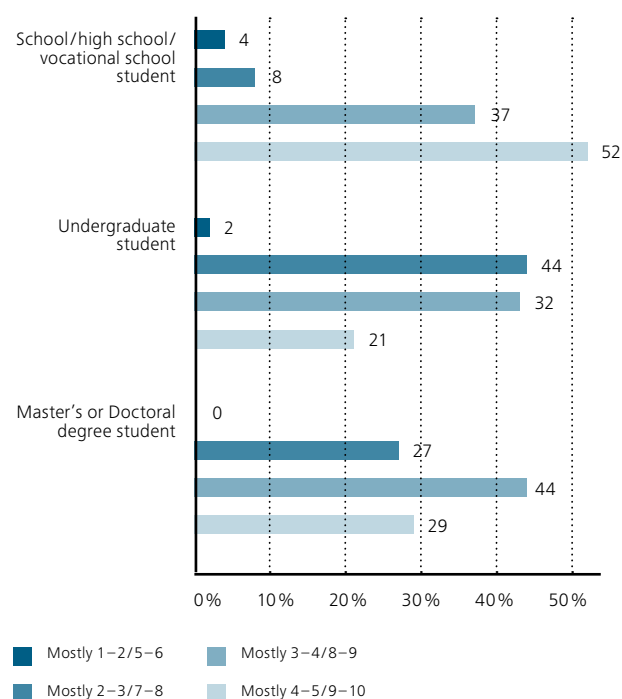
FIGURE 40: **In your opinion, what is everyday life like at your school / university?**

School / high school / vocational school student	9	8	51	27	5
Undergraduate student	6	20	56	15	4
Master's or Doctor's degree student	7	16	62	13	2

%

- ■ Very easy and completely stress free
- ■ Easy and not particularly stressful
- ■ Hard and stressful to some extent
- ■ Quite hard and stressful
- ■ Very hard and stressful
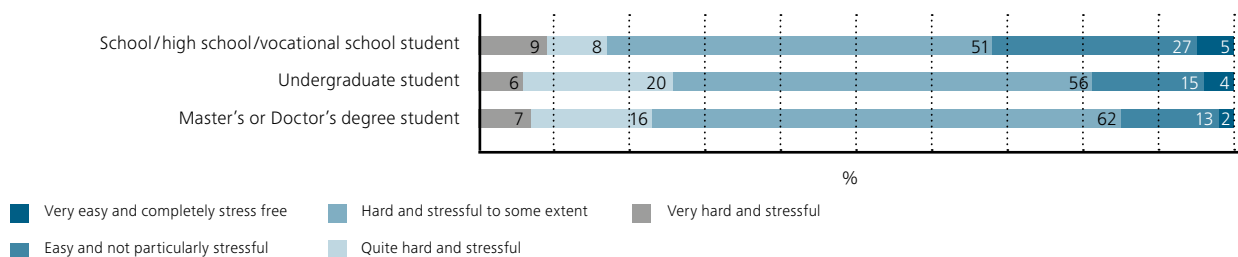
also lead to higher academic achievements. It is not only that those who are better off outnumber economically underprivileged young people at the tertiary stage of education – they also outperform them in terms of academic achievement. This can additionally deter young people of lower SES from continuing education.

School life is predominantly seen as at least somewhat stressful and difficult; a minority of pupils and students consider it highly or extremely stressful and difficult (Figure 40). The assessment of the difficulty of education is associated with a number of factors. Females are more inclined to view schooling as more stressful,[45] as are young people from bigger cities.[46] Similarly, pupils and university students who invest more time and effort studying every day tend to be more inclined to view school life as stressful and difficult.[47] In other words, this assessment is a consequence of a personal experience that a lot of effort is required for schooling (hence perhaps a more negative assessment by females who were shown to invest more time and effort) and that there are some "objective" differences in the amount of obligations (hence, possibly, the difference between pupils and university students).

PERCEPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Young people are quite divided in their views on the quality of education in Serbia (Figure 41). Those who are satisfied outnumber those who are dissatisfied and a significant number of young people are actually somewhere between these two options.

FIGURE 41: **How satisfied are you generally with the quality of education in Serbia?**

- ■ Very satisfied: 11 %
- ■ Satisfied: 32 %
- ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 30 %
- ■ Not satisfied: 18 %
- ■ Not satisfied at all: 9 %
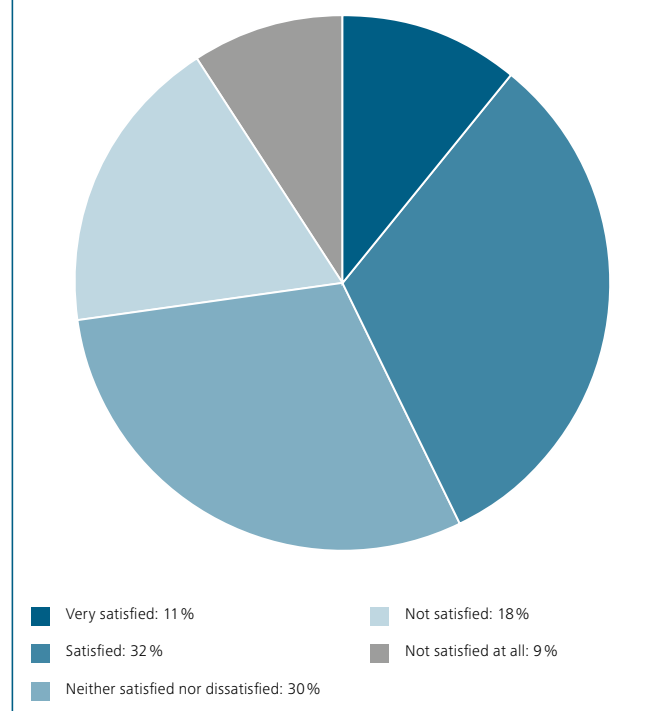
Although predominantly satisfied, the vast majority of young people agree with the statement that there are cases of 'purchasing grades and exams in the Serbian educational system (Figure 42). Given the prevailing satisfaction with the educational system, the perception of corruption should probably be understood as a belief that such isolated cases certainly exist there, but that this issue is not systemic in nature. Nevertheless, the perception of corruption in the educational system is an important generator of dissatisfaction among young people when it comes to the Serbian educational system. Those who are more convinced that there

are cases where grades are 'bought' are also more dissatisfied with the educational system as a whole.[48]

FIGURE 42: **Do you agree that there are cases where grades and exams are ´bought´ in institutes/universities in Serbia?**

- Very much: 61%
- Fairly: 19%
- Somewhat: 13%
- A little: 3%
- Not at all: 4%
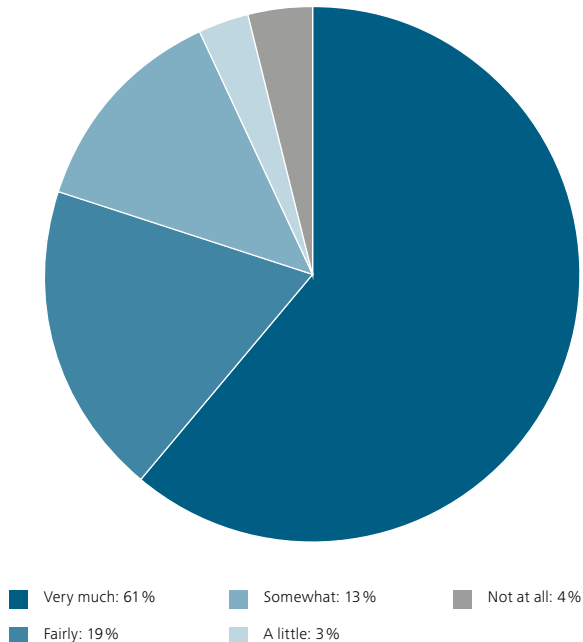
In addition, youth from Serbia together with young people from Albania and Macedonia are the ones who are most convinced that there is widespread corruption in the educational system (Figure 43). Numerous on-going cases of purchasing diplomas and plagiarising doctoral theses in Serbia, which received prominent media coverage, certainly justify and explain such opinions. Such views, aside from generating dissatisfaction with the educational system, definitely constitute part of the reason for widespread belief in a discredited and delegitimised nature of educational achievements in Serbia (Fiket, Pavlović & Pudar 2017).

FIGURE 43: **Average level of agreement that there are cases where grades and exams are 'bought' in institutes/universities by country**

Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.39
Romania	3.40
Croatia	3.44
Slovenia	3.56
Kosovo	3.75
Montenegro	3.84
Bulgaria	3.89
Macedonia	4.12
Serbia	4.13
Albania	4.19
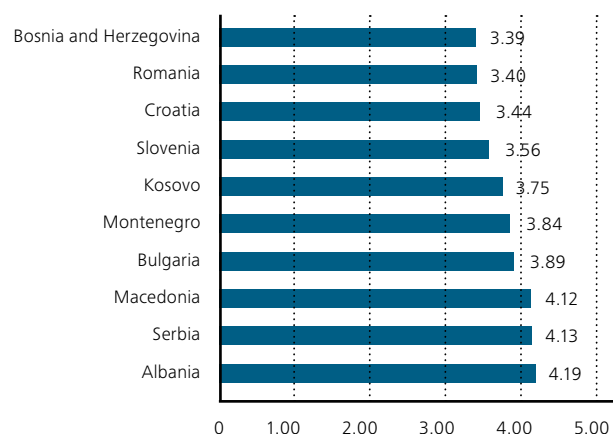
Similarly, most young people (53 per cent) believe that the educational system cannot respond well to the needs of the labour market. One-fifth of respondents (22 per cent) think that the educational system is well adapted to the labour market, while a quarter stated that they did not know or did not answer. Satisfaction with the educational system has its partial origin in the perception of its compatibility with the labour market – those who consider it more adequate in that regard are the ones who are actually more satisfied with it.[49]

However, youth are generally optimistic about the possibility of finding jobs after completing their education. Approximately half of respondents who are still in the process of education (58 per cent) answered that finding a job would be easy or very easy; one-third (33 per cent) are pessimistic in this respect. Interestingly, young people of higher SES think that they are more likely to find a job,[50] while the level of personal time and effort invested in schooling and academic achievements (i.e. the average grade level) is not related to the evaluation of employability. It is possible that young people may think that some other things are more important to employment opportunities, and they actually specify these when asked about these aspects of personal life.

KEY FINDINGS

— Young people with higher socio-economic status are more highly educated, have higher educational aspirations, and better average grade levels. Socio-economic status hugely determines the chances of obtaining a university degree level of education. Upward social mobility is low and the educational system continues to produce educational and social inequality.

— Young people are more satisfied (43 per cent) than dissatisfied (27 per cent) with the educational system in general. However, a large majority of young people (80 per cent) agree that there are cases of corruption at institutes and/or universities (where grades and exams can be bought).

— The majority of young people (53 per cent) think that school and university education are not well adapted to the current world of labour. Still, in their opinion, this will not be an important obstacle on the road to finding a job after graduation.

10

EMPLOYMENT

A young person becomes an adult when he/she starts working and earning a living. Preparation for work (i.e. education in various forms) marks the period of growing up and the entire socialisation, and employment is the key to adulthood. With employment, the transition from youth to adulthood is completed; a young person becomes an adult because by finding a job and employment he/she has gained an opportunity to independently create the conditions for his/her own autonomous existence.

In the classic course of growing up, there has been a continuity in education and work, as well as their clear timeline. First one studies, prepares for work, and then gets hired and starts working; symbolically, it is the path from apprenticeship, then assistant, and all the way to master.[51]

In neoliberal capitalism, formal education and employment (labour) are the only important indicators and key landmarks on a seismically discontinuous path where periods of education, unemployment, additional education and employment change several times.

In this research, it was found that young people are in the process of education and work at the same time; some are not even able to say which one predominates, whether they work while studying or study while working. Such findings were also obtained in other studies. In the *Eurostudent V* study, 61 per cent of respondents answered, "I'm primarily a student in addition to other activities", 31 per cent "I'm primarily employed, and in addition I'm studying" and eight per cent stated "I'm primarily engaged in other activities in addition to studying" (Jovanović et al. 2016: 76). In this context, it is reasonable to talk about educational-employment status as a relatively new concept that has combined, until recently, binary terms – the concept of education for work and the concept of work itself.

The structure of youth employment in the sample cannot be determined based on one question because of the natural differences that exist between young people across the age range and based on their participation in the educational system. Minors, who are also pupils, cannot be expected to search for a job. Students should also be excluded from the group of the unemployed because they are in the educational system and therefore do not seek employment. On the other hand, linking responses to involvement in education and involvement in labour produces a mildly "odd" result. It turns out that, among the students of undergraduate, master and doctoral studies, less than one-half (45 per cent) are neither employed nor looking for a job (which is logical), while 12 per cent are looking for a job (which is possible), and even 38 per cent of them actually have a job (it is quite "strange" that two out of five students have a job).

We have collated answers to questions about educational and employment status so that they are comparable to the study from 2015 (Tomanović & Stanojević 2015) in order to determine changes and significant trends (Table 3).

TABLE 3: **What is your current employment status? (as a per cent)**

Research year	2015.	2018.
Permanent employment	19	16
Temporary employment	15	29
Unemployed, looking for a job	17	10
Not looking for a job/passive	49	45
Total	100 %	100 %

The comparison of the number of working and inactive persons in 2015 and 2018 does not yield significant differences, and the same holds true for the comparison of the number of young people in permanent employment. However, there are significant differences in the numbers of unemployed – we see a decline from 17 per cent to 10 per cent, with a more significant difference in the number of young people in temporary and occasional employment – this grew from 15 per cent to 29 per cent. And while the fall in the number of the unemployed, as confirmed by official statistics, is a positive phenomenon, double the number of young employees in occasional jobs – an increase from 15 per

cent to 29 per cent – indicates a rise in the precariousness of youth labour.

The trends mentioned are confirmed by the structure of the working respondents: the decline in the number of the unemployed, the decline in the number of permanent employees (from 37 per cent to 29 per cent) and very high growth in temporary employment, from 29 per cent to 52 per cent (Table 5).

TABLE 4: **Employment status of respondents**

	Year 2015	Year 2018
Permanently employed	37	29
Temporarily employed	29	52
Unemployed	34	19
Total	100 %	100 %

TABLE 5: **Educational-employment status according to research in 2015 and 2018**

Year	Sample from 2015			Sample from 2018		
Age	15−19	20−24	25−29	15−19	20−24	25−29
Education only	88	51	12	80	42	14
Education & work	1	9	12	12	23	28
Work only	4	21	51	4	27	47
NEET[52]	7	19	25	4	8	11
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

It is evident that job security declines with growing flexibility of labour and employment, with this having been confirmed by the results of both surveys.

Youth are the biggest victims of precariousness of labour, whether they are reduced to early specialisation in accordance with current market needs (dual education), to "*labour-based education*" (work done to provide the economic basis for further education), flexibility of work (including flexicurity), to uncertain employment or "only" to a precarious position. Here are the arguments based on the answers to the questions from this research:

1) Almost half of working respondents (47 per cent) have a temporary employment contract or have a part-time job or occasional job(s), all of which are indicators of precariousness of labour and life.

2) Difficult and impossible employment, one of the indicators of precariousness of labour, leads to anomie and moral degradation. "Using connections to find a job" – as many as 37 per cent of respondents condone this – more than the number of respondents who condemn it.

3) Only one-third of respondents who reported how many hours a week they worked work strictly according to the law, i.e. 40 hours a week. About one-quarter of respondents work fewer than the stipulated number of hours, and more than two-fifths of respondents work longer than the standard amount. If standard working time is extended to what the law tolerates, from 36 to 48 hours a week (from part-time to maximum hours allowed by the legal provision stipulating that an employee cannot work overtime for more than eight hours a week), then three-fifths of the respondents fall within such an extended standard; less than one-fifth of respondents work more hours than permitted, and less than one-quarter work below the standard number of working hours. Given that the number of working hours per week is one of the important indicators of precarious labour, one can say that

two-fifths of young working people fall into the category of precarious workers.

4) There is a discrepancy between the occupation for which young people have been trained and the job that they perform. This is a process of deprofessionalisation. As many as 54 per cent of respondents do not work in the occupation that they have been trained for, and 45 per cent say they perform work within their occupation or jobs that are close to their occupation (48 per cent in 2015).

5) There is a discrepancy between the education of respondents and the work they do. As many as two-fifths of respondents work at positions that require lower qualifications than the ones they have, and six per cent are in positions which require higher qualifications than the ones the respondents have. As many as 55 per cent of respondents are employed at positions which require their level of education.

6) There is a disconnect between the sectors in which respondents work and the sectors in which they would like to work. For example, 16 per cent of respondents were working in the public sector at the time of the interview, while one-half of the sample said they wanted to work in the public sector. Seventy-one per cent of respondents were working in the private sector, but only 32 per cent of respondents expressed a desire to work in this sector. This begs the question: Why is the public sector so attractive and where does this distance to the private sector come from? In this context, a comparison with findings for the period 2015−2018 is instructive. We see a substantial decline in the attractiveness of the public sector from 62 per cent to 50 per cent, and a slight increase in the attractiveness of the private sector from 26 per cent to 32 per cent.

7) Employment is a highly desirable personal value for young people. As many as 63 per cent of respondents cited employment among their three top-ranking values (the next highest-ranking

value is mentioned by 42 per cent of the respondents). On the other hand, 75 per cent of respondents said that their employment status was very bad or bad as a value in Serbia, and only six per cent of respondents said that their status was good or very good. Given this, it is only logical that 46 per cent of respondents are quite scared and worried about not being employed or about the possibility of losing a job. And this is the second-ranking fear, immediately following fear of disease (49 per cent of respondents), and above social injustice, corruption, increasing poverty in society and six other values.

8) The supremacy of illegal and more or less illegitimate ways of achieving employment (see also: Tomanović & Stanojević 2015).

9) Comparison of data from this year's survey with the 2015 survey confirms the precariousness of youth labour as well, but also indicates a growth in precariousness, which can be inferred from the decline in the number of permanent jobs and the increase in the number of occasional and temporary jobs.

Our research covered only a small portion of the precariousness indicators, while indicators such as working hours, salary, working conditions, harassment or discrimination were left aside.[53] When asked about their satisfaction with the job, however, three-fifths of respondents stated they were satisfied or very satisfied, almost one-quarter were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and one-fifth of them were dissatisfied. Are young people satisfied with having a job or doing what they like? Whether this is an existential paradox that points to some logical inconsistency – external evaluation of labour, not because of labour as such but because of access to employment and the goods that come from employment – or whether it truly reflects authentic satisfaction with labour itself as the generic substance of a man remains an issue for deeper research that would focus only on the phenomena of labour and un/employment.

Research on youth in 2018 only offers slight indications of the class nature of the new relationship between commodified education and precarious labour. The *educational-employment status of respondents* (EES) is weakly correlated with socio-economic status.[54] The relationship between EES and mother's education is also interesting.[55]

"CHOOSING" A JOB

Although a large number of studies indicated an increase in forced choice of a job (if in this case it is possible to speak of choice in the first place), this research primarily addresses the choice and argumentation, or the reasons for choosing the given job. The attractiveness of several key aspects of a job was tested in practical terms, and two relationships were particularly interesting. Primarily, this is the relationship between the attractiveness of salary and the attractiveness of a secure position. The research has confirmed what we already knew – namely, that both dimensions of labour display a high level of attractiveness.

Another focus of attention in this part of the research was a dimension of labour which was very important in the studies of the 1970s and 1980s – a job as an opportunity for achievement (in this questionnaire formulated as "Have a sense of achieving something"). It should be noted that in spite of a certain decline in attachment to this dimension of labour, it still ranks highly among young people and its mean value is exactly in the middle between "very significant" and "significant" (4.50).

Out of the total of eight dimensions of labour, five dimensions achieved an average score of five, and three dimensions had a score of four. Again, understanding of labour proved to be polyvalent, meaning that labour is not reduced only to the basic way of earning income for survival, although the salary is the highest-ranked dimension of labour. In addition, as we have already indicated, labour did not lose connection to the dimension of self-realisation, i.e. a very large number of young people still see opportunity for achievement that goes beyond the very characteristics of labour in the narrow sense. Additionally, responses emphasise the social dimension of labour, and labour as a form of social relations. It should be noted, however, that the dimension of labour on which socialism was particularly insistent – the work of an individual as a key contribution of that individual to a given society, has declined. We should also mention the possibility that the findings may not have been so positive if the respondents had also been given a chance to evaluate some negative dimensions of today's dominant form of labour. Nowadays, labour has become even more precarious, which has consequently lead to precariousness of life itself.

TABLE 6: **Evaluation of factors affecting the respondent's choice of job**

Factors affecting the respondent's choice of job	very significant or significant	insignificant or not very significant*	Mean
Income/salary	91	2	4.69
Security of the position	89	2	4.62
Free time after working hours	89	2	4.59
Possibility of promotion	89	2	4.57
Sense of achievement	86	2	4.50
Opportunity to contribute to the society	70	6	4.13
Working with colleagues we like	69	7	4.09
"Working with people"	68	9	4.03

* The sum up to a 100 per cent includes respondents who circled mark 3 and those who said they did not know or did not answer this question

The attitude towards labour and the perception of labour is also evident in the answers to two questions about voluntary or volunteer work. One-fifth of respondents stated that they were involved in some form of volunteer work (39 per cent in 2015), which also indicates a positive attitude towards work as such. In any case, the incidence of involvement of youth in voluntary work points to insufficient utilisation of this type of attitude towards work. There was also a decline in the number of young people involved in volunteer work from 39 per cent in 2015 to 25 per cent in 2018, which can be partly explained by significant youth participation in the elimination of the consequences of floods (in 2015, it was found that every fifth young person had participated in these activities). However, schools and faculties (six per cent), youth organisations, various clubs and non-governmental organisations (four per cent) are listed more often than other places for volunteering.

PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYABILITY FACTORS

Current factors of employability and employment in Serbia, according to the perception of young people, can be grouped into four categories: human capital, happiness, social capital and political capital.

Human capital – as an employability factor – usually, human capital includes: (a) knowledge, education and professional development; and then (b) abilities and appropriate skills; as well as (c) the special ability to synergistically integrate knowledge and skills through and in work experience. In our research, the dimensions of human capital are presented in terms of three aspects: "expertise and knowledge", "level of education" and "education or work experience gained abroad".

In the case of employers, a favourite narrative regarding the criteria of excellence is essentially reduced to the principle of "the best candidates do not have employment problems" or, somewhat cynically, to the statement "We chase the best, and the average chase us!" However, the fact that not everyone can be the best seems to be forgotten here. The neoliberal narrative about "the full responsibility of every individual for his/her own

FIGURE 44: **How important are these factors in finding a job?**
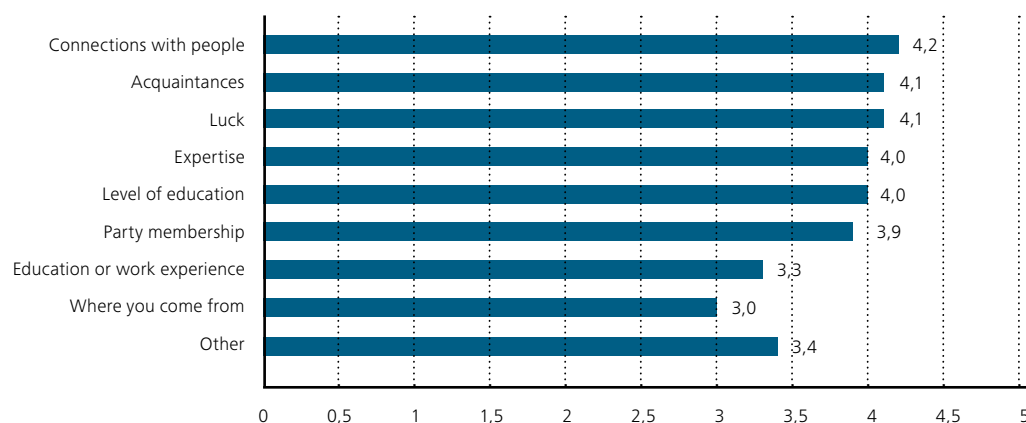
career" sums up this employer strategy. In practice, this thesis is even more vulgarised, and the exclusive responsibility of the individual is introduced.

In the last two to three decades, the applicable dimension of human capital has been particularly emphasised. It is a category of skills and competences: communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical skills and basic knowledge of science and technology, and digital competences.

Great importance is attached to skills and knowledge, as well as the level of education, but equally great importance is attached to the factors that do not have any connection with human capital. The greatest importance is attached to the relations with people in power, while happiness, party affiliation and acquaintances have the same importance as skills and level of education, and rank even higher than education or work experience abroad (Figure 44).

"Skills and knowledge" as a factor that influences employment of young people in Serbia was stated by 69 per cent of the respondents to be significant or very significant, while 10 per cent of respondents attached little or no importance to this factor when it comes to employment. "The level of education" was evaluated as a "significant" or "very significant" factor that affects employment by as many as 68 per cent of respondents, which is almost the same as "skills and knowledge", while every ninth respondent affirms the limited importance of the level of education (which is by no means negligible). The influence of education and/or work experience acquired abroad was cited considerably less frequently – 43 per cent of respondents gave the two highest assessments of this factor's impact, and 24 per cent the two lowest assessments. The mean score is 3.3 – the next-to-last place on the ranking list of factors that are important with regard to employment.

Older respondents have a more pessimistic, or cynical, attitude towards the factors that affect employment. Compared to the answers of older respondents, younger respondents attach greater importance to skills and the level of education, and lower importance to party affiliation, connections with people in power and acquaintances and relatives.[56]

Social capital, though a very broad concept, can also be applied in the case of job candidates, as the platform for a general group of employability factors. Numerous studies have shown that involvement in formal and informal social networks that correspond to employment opportunities is a powerful factor receiving a high ranking from job candidates. Involvement in social networks at a more ethical level provides an unemployed individual with information that can influence employment. In a standard moral assessment, and some argue in strict moral terms, the aspect of social networking that produces a direct impact on employment does not count as a principle underlying a "good society", so it can also be viewed as a specific type of corruption.

The impact of social capital and social networking involves two indicators, an assessment of the importance of employment of acquaintances, friends and relatives, and an assessment of the impact of regional affiliation ("an extended arm of the homeland").

In the opinion of 71 per cent of respondents, the influence of acquaintances, friends and relatives on employment is significant or very significant; and eight per cent of respondents do not see any significance or are of the opinion that it is limited. The mean score of importance is 4.1 and this impact is ranked second on the ranking list of factors. The influence of regional origin, a favourite stereotype in the earlier period, is not a discernible influence for our respondents. This is the only one of the eight factors examined for which minor influence was noted more often than significant influence. Almost one-quarter of respondents (23 per cent) think that the impact of this factor is significant or very significant, and merely one-third (31 per cent) think that it is minor.

Luck, in the opinion of our respondents, is an important factor governing a positive outcome in a job search. It is logical that employment is in a positive correlation with the feeling of luck, just as unemployment is associated with the absence of luck. However, in our case, we are faced with a large number of respondents who see luck as a significant factor in employment. Whatever "luck" means for an unemployed individual, it is stated as the basic or as an additional factor on which employment depends. "You need luck; having a diploma is not enough" – this is usually called a favourable set of circumstances that will support "our case". Just over two-thirds of respondents (69 per cent) argue that luck is significant or very significant in finding employment. Only 10 per cent of respondents think differently. The average score for luck is 4.1 and it is ranked third on the list of factors.

Political capital in this research has been operationalised through the evaluation of the influence of "connection with people in power" and "political party membership" on employment.

"Connections with people in power", in the opinion of young people, are a sure-fire way of getting a job. Thus, three-quarters of respondents (74 per cent) see the impact of this factor on employment as significant or very significant – in contrast to one in every ten respondent who did not think this was the case. The average estimate of the importance of being connected with those who have power is 4.2, which places the influence of this factor at the top of the list of factors affecting employment.

Membership in a political party, or membership in the ruling party, is a "path more often taken" because it significantly increases the possibility of employment. At least this is the opinion of two-thirds of respondents, while 16 per cent disagree with this. The average score is 3.9, and this factor is ranked sixth on the list of factors influencing employment.

Young people see four groups of factors that significantly affect employment, stating that they are very influential. Six out of eight factors had a mean score of influence near 4 (between 3.9 and 4.2), and only two factors were given a mark of 3 as a mean value. Nevertheless, political capital has a dominant influence, while the impact of human and social capital, as well as luck, is relatively uniform and fairly high.

KEY FINDINGS

— There is a discrepancy between one's profession and one's job. Around one-half of young people perform jobs that do not conform to their field of educational training. There is a discrepancy between the education of respondents and their jobs. As many as two-fifths of respondents do jobs requiring lower qualifications than their's.

— Although the majority of employed persons work in the private sector, the public sector is the most-preferred option.

— Factors ranking highest when it comes to accepting a job include salary, job security and free time after work. Social capital and political ties are considered to be more important factors in employment than expertise and the level of education.

— Difficulty in obtaining employment as an indicator of the growing precariousness of labour giving rise to anomie and moral degradation. Only one-third of respondents who stated how many hours a week they worked work strictly according to the law, i.e. 40 hours per week. "Using connections to find a job" is for 77 per cent of respondents justified at least sometimes.

11

POLITICS

Democratic political theory places great demands on ordinary citizens in terms of their involvement in political life. Citizens living in a democratic political system are expected to be informed and interested in public affairs, to have developed a loyalty to the institutions of society and the state, to be devoted to democratic norms and values, and above all – they are expected to be politically active.

Contrary to theory, the reality of people's political actions consistently indicates that "an ordinary man" is far from the ideal of a political animal, and more a private animal, or at least an animal that is generally distanced from politics. Low levels of political knowledge (Campbell et al 1960; Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996), low levels of political activism (e.g. Verba & Nie 1987), weak or ambivalent dedication to some of the basic democratic norms (Peffley & Rohrschneider 2003; Gibson 1992; Mondak & Sanders 2003) are typical findings even in developed democratic societies. Such considerations are particularly relevant in post-socialist and post-conflict societies, such as Serbia, which have too little experience with democracy, and too much experience with different types of authoritarian political systems, and in which the majority of citizens are socialised for norms that are often incompatible with democracy.

Therefore, it is of essential importance to discuss the relationship between youth and politics in the context of Serbian society. The young people who are at the focus of this study are "the children of democracy" in a certain sense, and prospects for democratisation of society largely depend on them. A system without youth on its side does not have, or only has an uncertain, future. In this section, we therefore address many questions relating to the relationship between youth and politics which would ultimately describe the quality of the political culture of young people and their democratic capacities.

INTEREST IN POLITICS

Interest in politics, i.e. a readiness to follow political issues and phenomena (Lupia & Philpot 2005), is one of the basic indicators of attitudes towards the world of politics. Citizens should be a critical audience, a corrective instance with regard to the practices of political elites, while passive, uninterested citizens are an ideal basis for authoritarian regimes of a conservative type (Lipset 1969). The crucial importance of at least a minimum level of political interest in a democratic society is virtually undeniable.

In the section on the values of youth, we have already seen that for young people participation in civic initiatives and participation in politics are at the bottom of the list of priorities for values. Young people in Serbia are also for the most part uninterested in politics and its various aspects (Figure 45). Between two-thirds and three-quarters of young people state that they have little or no interest in politics. Interest in local and national politics is, understandably, more pronounced than in the politics of the European Union (EU), the United States of America (USA) or Russia. Most informative in this regard is without a doubt the fact that almost one-half of young people interviewed (49 per cent) have no interest in any of the six aspects of politics. Numerous previous studies have yielded similar findings (e.g. Pavlović 2012). Still, the disinterest expressed in politics is more pronounced compared to the results of the previous youth study in Serbia (Tomanović and Stanojević 2015) (the average value on the five-point scale in 2015 was 2.55, and in 2018-2). The privatisation of life – i.e. predominance of personal issues and unwillingness to participate in public life – is widespread among young people in Serbia in line with recent studies (Fiker, Pavlović & Pudar 2017; Jarić, 2013; Tomanović & Stanojević 2015).

FIGURE 45: **The level of interest in politics (as a percentage)**

Note: The sum accumulating up to 100 per cent includes the answers "I don't know" and "no answer".
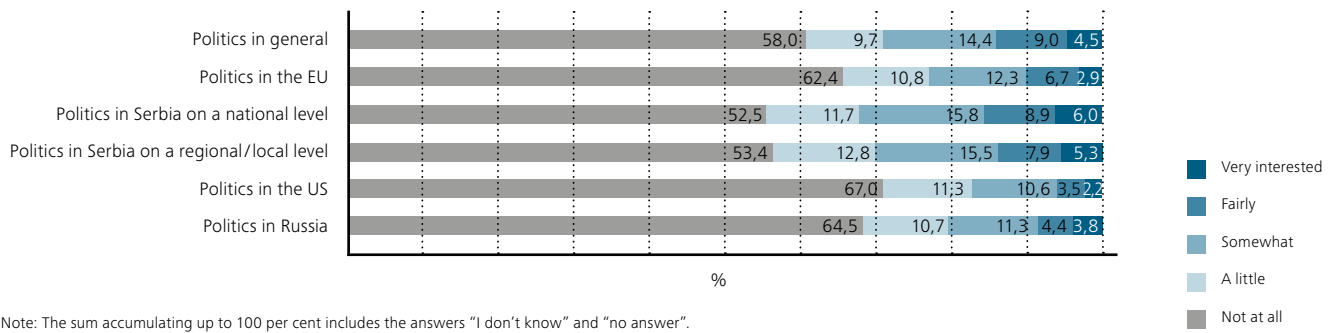
Males are more interested in politics in general compared to females, as are persons who are older and educated, those of higher SES and individuals living in larger communities.[57] These findings serve as a reminder of a well-known thesis of the civic voluntarism model of political activity: "people of higher economic and social status dominate politics" (Verba et al., 1979, p. 2) because they have a lot more resources crucial to participation such as time, money and civic skills. Participation to influence the redistribution of power within society is, possibly, heavily skewed, benefiting more those who are already more privileged within the social structure. In addition, young people who are dissatisfied with themselves are less interested in politics, as are more authoritarian persons, people who are more ethnocentric and less trustful of other people generally.[58] Young people with a more distinct sense of relative deprivation and certain politically demotivating characteristics are those who maintain a greater distance to politics. It would appear that dissatisfaction does not generate a potential to be active and change unsatisfactory social conditions, instead making a young person more distanced from politics.[59]

In this context, it is not surprising that politics is not discussed at all in the most intimate interpersonal relationships (with family and friends) (Figure 46). This is another indication of the depolitisation of life. One-third of young people say that politics is never discussed, while only few discuss politics often. More frequent discussions of politics is characteristic of young people who are generally interested in politics.

As with interest in politics, discussions on politics are more frequent among certain sub-categories of young people. Politics is more often discussed among males,[60] older[61] and educated[62] respondents as well as those persons with a higher socio-economic status.[63] Hence, it may be argued that politics is obviously of different importance to different categories of young people.[64]

FIGURE 46: **Frequency of discussing politics with family members and friends (as a percentage)**
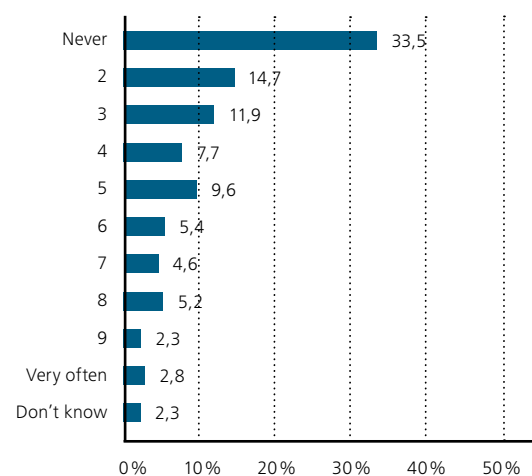
The most common sources of information on politics are the Internet and television; new media, evidently, have primacy (Figure 47). The majority of young people (41 per cent) actually get information only from one source, most often from one of the two mentioned. Responses to these questions indicate that, in some sense, young people do follow politics after all. The prevailing disinterest, considering the fact that people are informing themselves about things they do not care about, suggests that it is more a matter of negative sentiment attached to politics than a real lack of interest or information. Similarly, preference of the Internet as a source of political information additionally supports the view of an increasing relevance of the Internet in young people's political participation, and some sort of generational specificity. On the other hand, a significant percentage of respondents (16 per cent) said they did not use any of these sources to obtain information on politics. Those who are more interested in politics use more sources for collecting political information.

FIGURE 47: **Frequency of usage of different sources for collecting political information (as a percentage)**

Source	No	Yes
Internet	44,0	56,0
TV	55,1	44,9
Daily newspapers	83,9	16,1
Radio	95,5	4,5
Discussions within the family	88,3	11,7
Conversations with friends	85,3	14,7
Online social networks	82,4	17,6
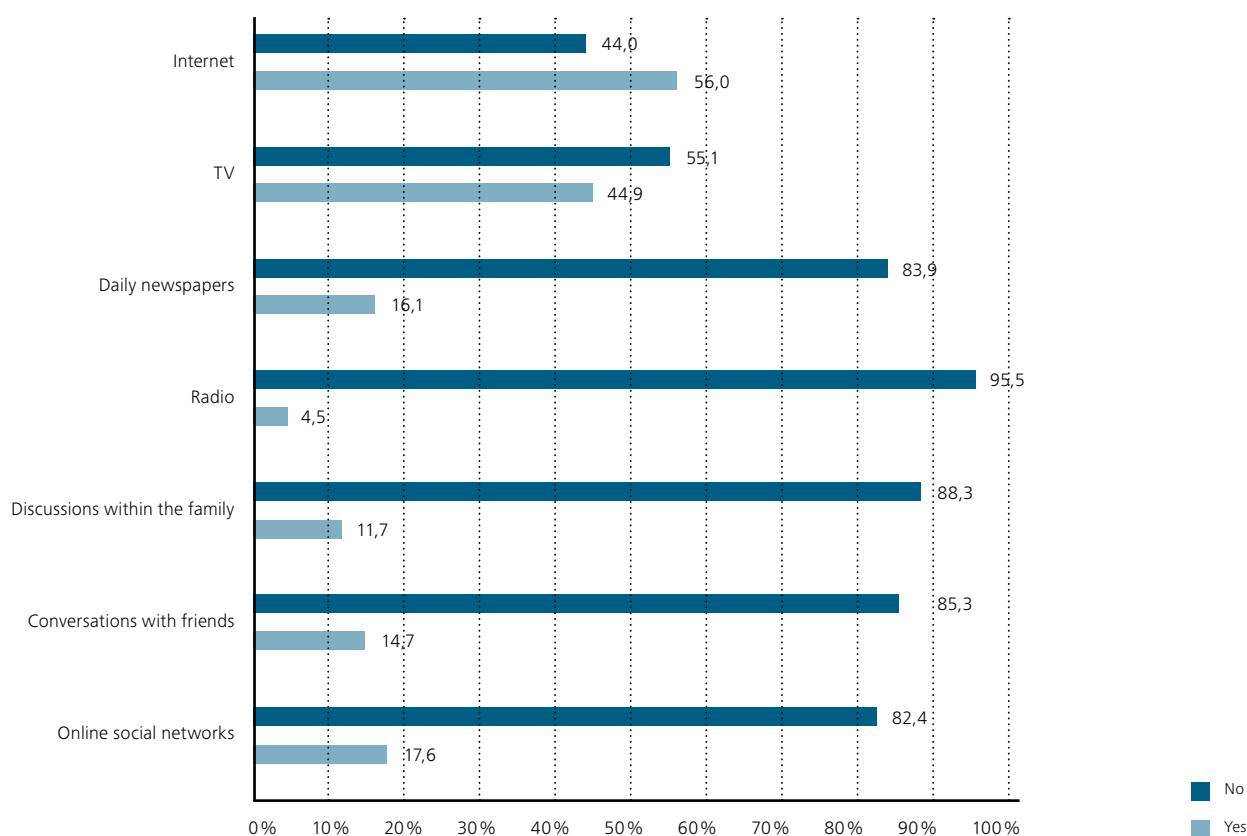
FIGURE 48: **Perceptions of political efficacy (as a percentage)**

Statement	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
I know a lot about politics	12,5	20,3	44,5
I don´t think politicians care about young people´s opinions	58,3	15,1	8,8
Young people should have more possibilities to speak out in politics	58,3	15,9	6,2

Note: sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".
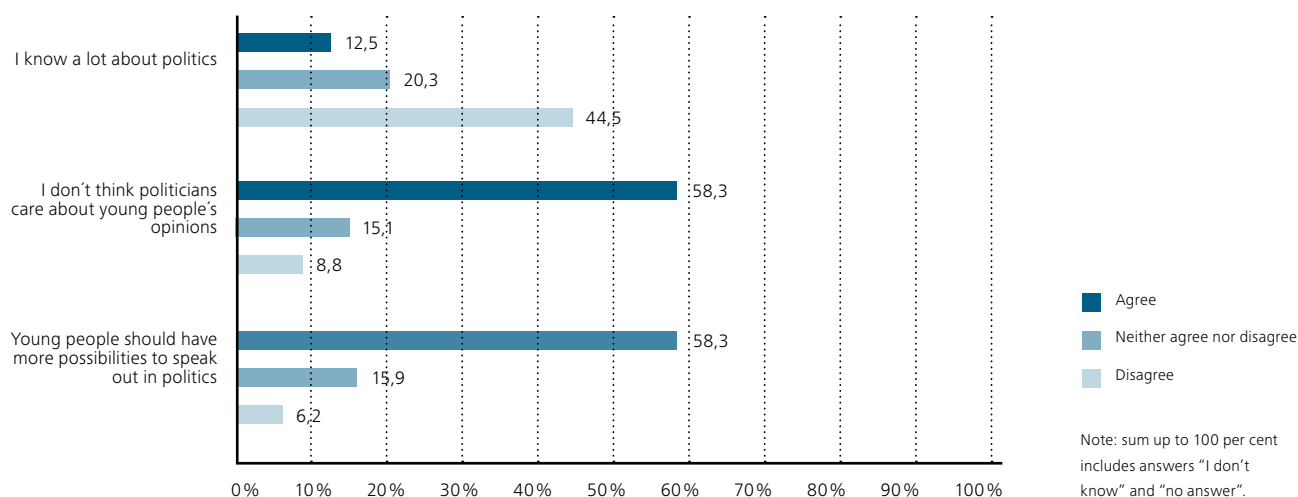
The lack of interest and unwillingness to collect political information probably results in a low level of political knowledge and sophistication, which, consequently, can lead to a sense of political inefficiency as well as to doubts as to one's own capacities to understand the world of politics. Young people actually do make such a self-assessment (Figure 48). About one in ten young persons says that he/she knows a lot about politics, while almost one-half of them say they do not know much about politics. Internal political efficacy of youth is, therefore, at a low level. Confidence in one's political competence in this sense is closely related to an interest in politics – those who are more interested in politics are more positive in the assessments of their own knowledge;[65] this is probably due to the fact that they are most likely to be more informed. The findings indicate that young people obviously lack the capacity to make informed political decisions and deal with the world of politics in a coherent and reasonable way.

More importantly, young people seem to be additionally demotivated when it comes to improving their skills and competence.

FIGURE 49: **Turnout in previous elections and willingness to vote in the future (as a percentage)**

DID YOU VOTE IN THE LAST ELECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT?
- Yes — 44,6
- No, although I had the right to vote — 14,5
- No, I didn't have the right to vote yet — 34,6

IF ELECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT WERE TO BE HELD AND YOU WOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, WOULD YOU GO TO VOTE?
- Yes — 59,2
- No — 16,5
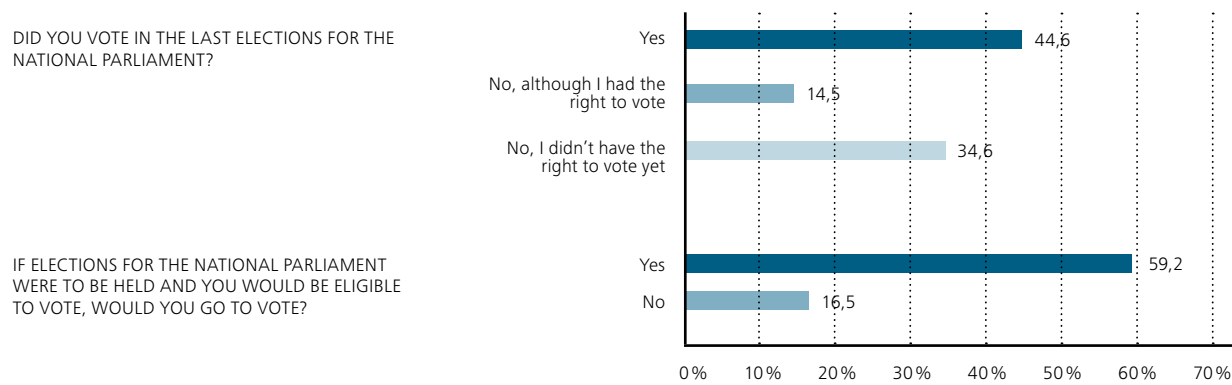
Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

We could say that the distance of young people from politics is partially due to "exogenous" reasons, i.e. that it stems from their predominant perception of a non-stimulating political context for their participation in the world of politics. The majority of young people think that politicians do not care much about their opinion, and that there is not enough opportunity to engage in political activities themselves. Political cynicism of this sort, often found in research (Fiket, Pavlović & Pudar 2017; Pavlović 2012), indicates a very negative and judgmental view of political elites. When convinced that no one cares about what they have to say and that politics itself is a "dirty business" (Pavlović 2012) governed by particular interests and not by care for the common good, depolitisation is a rational and understandable consequence for youth.

Finally, political efficacy is also a function of other kinds of resources. Males as well as older and more educated respondents[66] are more confident about their knowledge of politics. Those persons who already have more power in society are more likely to believe that things can be influenced. All this in addition makes the presence of a participation gap among different categories of youth more probable.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Political activism is definitely a basic indicator of attitudes towards politics. We proceed from a somewhat broader definition of political participation that includes not only classical and instrumental forms of behaviour, but, generally speaking, "the activities of citizens who are trying to influence the structure of government, the choice of authority or policies" (Conway, 1990: 3–4). Hence, we analyse participation or readiness to participate in conventional terms (e.g. voting) as well as other forms of activities that are often referred to as unconventional – various studies indicate that there has been a decrease in participation in conventional forms of activity, while participation in unconventional forms of political activism is on the rise (Listhang & Gronflaten, 2007), especially among young people (e.g. Norris 2004; Quintelier 2007).

Regardless of the relative distance to politics indicated by the data already presented, the basic form of political activism – voting – is widely practiced among young people (Figure 49). The majority of young people stated that they had voted in the previous elections. Bearing in mind that one-third of young people did not have the right to vote at that time (35 per cent), we could say that turnout among young people was very high; three-quarters (75 per cent) of those who were eligible to vote in the elections did actually vote. Some categories of young people were more inclined to participate in the elections; those who were older at the time voted more often.[67]

When asked whether they would vote in hypothetical elections if such were held next week, the majority of young people declared they would be willing to vote. It could be said that readiness to participate in elections is a relatively stable characteristic of young people. The vast majority (95 per cent) of those who had the right to vote in previous elections and exercised it stated that they would vote in the next elections. Similarly, the majority (71 per cent) of those who did not vote in the previous elections would not do so in hypothesised future elections. Compared to the previous survey conducted in 2015, the number of those who are not willing to participate in future elections is almost two times lower, dropping from 46 per cent to 22 per cent.[68]

In addition, there is widespread awareness among young people of the importance of political activism in a democratic political system (Figure 50). Two-thirds of young people think that it is a citizen's obligation to vote, while the minority of young people disagree with such a view.

Bearing in mind a prevailing lack of interest in politics, the absence of politics as an issue in close personal relationships and low confidence in one's capacities to understand politics, a high turnout might appear rather intriguing. It would appear that it can be understood more as a form of social obligation, the result of social pressure or motivated by other, "non-political" reasons more than any expression of authentic political views or sense of civic duty.

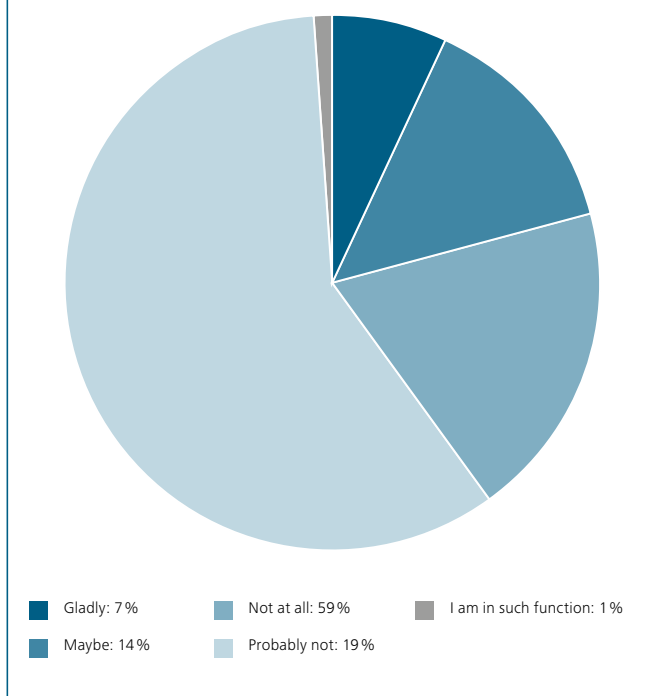FIGURE 50: **It is the duty of every citizen in a democracy to vote**

Agree: 64% ■ Neither agree nor disagree: 20% ■ Disagree: 16%
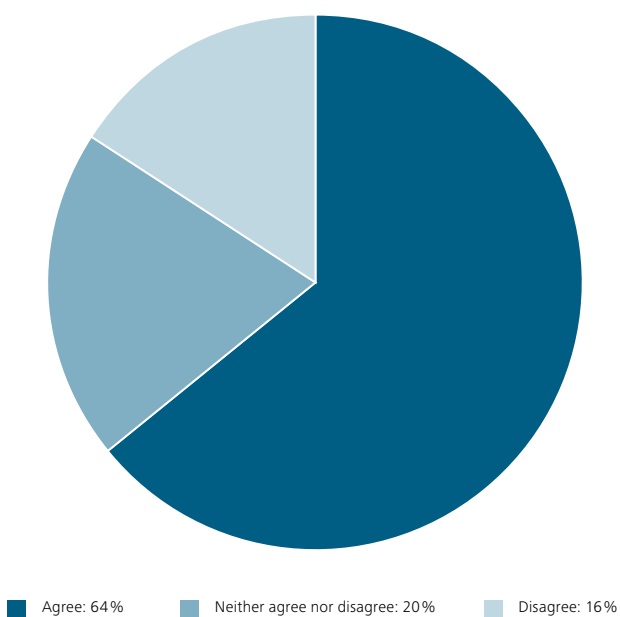
This data in this chart shows that while voting in elections is relatively "popular", there are countervailing trends with regard to other, unconventional forms of political behaviour (Figure 51). So far, a minority of young people have participated in some of the forms of politics analysed, most frequently at rallies, with online petitions and in volunteer activities. One-half of young people (50 per cent) have participated in at least one form of unconventional activism. In other words, more private, direct and engaging forms of political activism, which might be understood to constitute an expression of citizenship agency, are not widely practised by young people. For each of the forms of political activism analysed, a slightly higher percentage of participants in the study indicated a willingness to participate, i.e. they responded with 'I did not participate, but I could'. This finding is very important since it indicates that the potential for civic activism is present, but in a sense "blocked". This is possibly due to a belief in the non-responsiveness of political elites, which make the effects of such non-institutionalised and unstructured forms of political activism questionable and futile.

FIGURE 51: **Frequency of participation in unconventional forms of political activism (as a percentage)**

Participated in political activities online / in social networks: 6,3 / 13,0 / 64,5

Stopped buying things for political or environmental reasons: 5,9 / 13,9 / 61,9

Worked in a political party or political group: 3,7 / 13,6 / 67,0

Participated in volunteer or civil society organization activities: 13,8 / 27,6 / 43,4

Participated in a demonstration: 12,0 / 19,0 / 54,1

Supported an online petition: 13,5 / 20,2 / 48,7

■ I've done this
■ I haven't yet, but I would
■ No
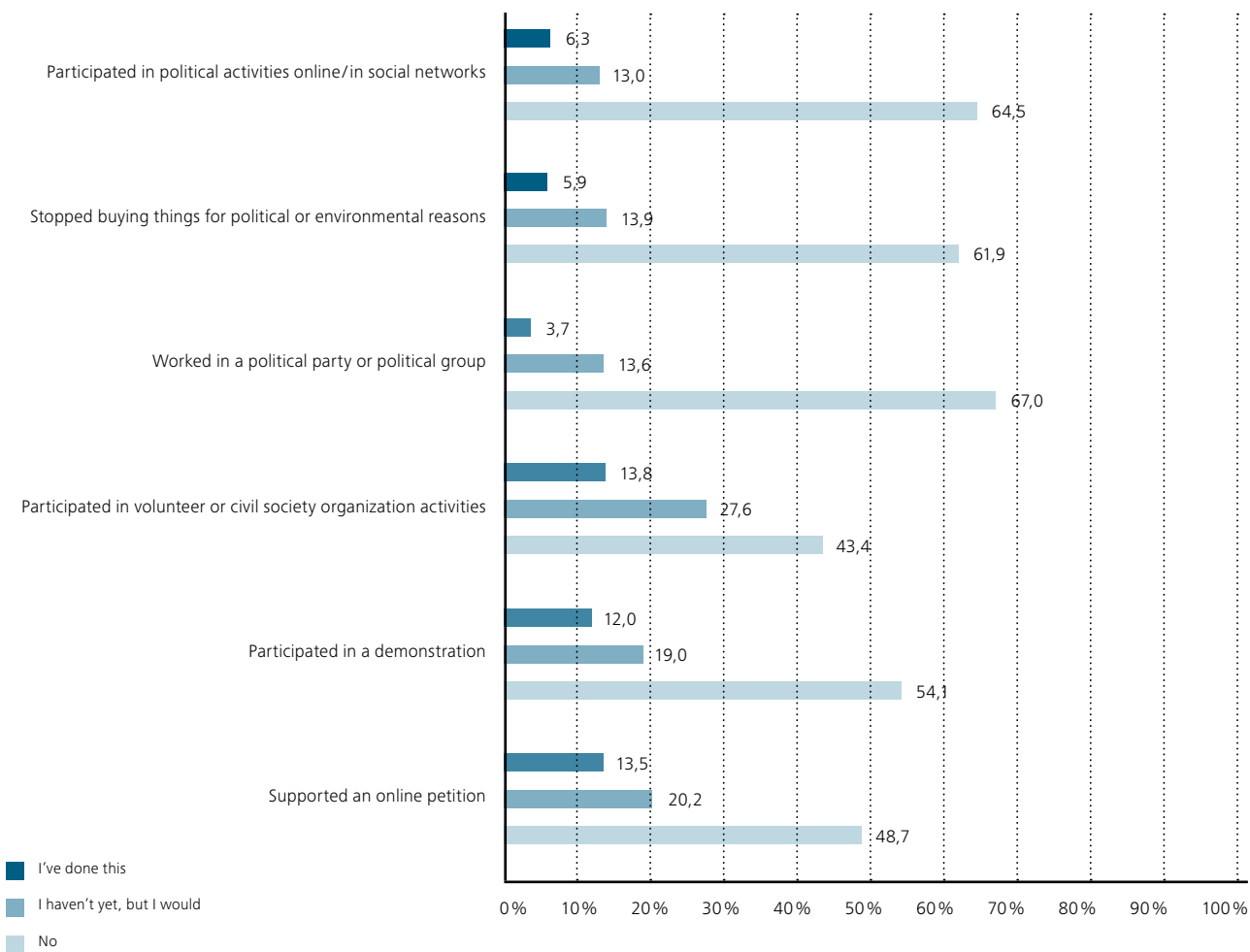
Note: sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

FIGURE 52: **The willingness to take on political function**

- Gladly: 7%
- Maybe: 14%
- Not at all: 59%
- Probably not: 19%
- I am in such function: 1%

Nor would the vast majority of young people be willing to assume certain political functions (Figure 52). When asked if they would be ready to perform a political function, more than three-quarters of young people responded negatively (less than one per cent of respondents were already in such a position). This is probably the final "proof" that the area of politics is of no interest to a large majority of young people.

Once again, it is evident that willingness to engage in political activism is broader among the males and that politics is considered to be "a man's job". Although both young males and females are generally unprepared to take on any political function, males are still considerably more inclined to do so.[71] In addition, those who are active both in the conventional and unconventional[72] sense[73] would prefer to perform political functions.

The final goal of any democratic society is to ensure mass participation by ordinary citizens in politics. Based on the findings, youth in Serbia are far from this ideal. It would appear that a minority of them effectively use their democratic rights. The patterns of participation are unevenly distributed among youth, indicating that they are partly shaped by social, political and economic "forces" beyond the control of young people themselves. Ultimately, this calls into question the fair representation of interests of different categories of youth in politics.

Similar to voting, there are some systematic differences among young people in terms of activism of this type. Older people, the highly educated and those of higher SES are more active in unconventional terms.[69] Hence, unconventional and conventional forms of political activism are, in turn, very related. Those who voted in previous elections or would vote in future election are also more active in this way.[70] The social structure variable thus influences not only political motivation but political activism as well.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Trust in institutions suggests that "citizens feel that their interests will be guaranteed even if the authorities are subjected to minimal control" (Easton, 1975: 447). In a certain sense, it indicates satisfaction with the way in which a country is governed as a whole and represents a basic indicator of the legitimacy of a system (Easton 1975; Slavujević and Mihailović 1999). It is of special relevance to democratic governance because democratic institutions cannot be imposed on people who do not want them.

Previously, we have seen that trust in different categories of other people is lowest in the case of people with different political convictions and political leaders. Similarly, it would seem that almost all institutions are perceived by young people as illegitimate, since the attitude towards institutions is characterised by strong distrust (Figure 53). The majority of young people do not trust the institution of the president, parliament, government, media, unions and all international institutions analysed – the EU, the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The strongest distrust was expressed towards political parties; more than two-thirds of young people do not trust political parties, one-half of them do not trust them at all, while only four per cent have partial or complete trust. The best illustration of animosity towards political parties is the fact that distrust towards them is in practical terms more pronounced than that towards

NATO, which is traditionally one of the most loathed institutions in Serbia. Similarly, respondents have greater trust, i.e. lower distrust, in large companies and banks than in institutions of the state. Dissatisfaction with those who should represent and protect young people's interests is definitely another reason for the political passivity and apathy registered.

The only two institutions that deviate somewhat from this trend are the army and church. These are the only institutions for which the number of those who have trust is greater than the number of those who are distrustful, which is in line with numerous previous surveys (e.g. Slavujević 2010).

It is a well-established empirical fact that trust can be generated by the political and economic performance of system institutions – people develop trust and confidence in those institutions that have positive pay-offs (Mishler & Rose 1997). Bearing this in mind, young people's mistrust is partly understandable due to poor performances of some of the most basic institutions of democracy in Serbia. More worryingly in this connection is young people's unwillingness to act in a way challenging elites, making them more accountable and effective.

Trust in institutions is also a function of certain personal and psychological characteristics of young people. Young people who are satisfied with different aspects of their own lives generally have more trust in institutions such as political parties, the army, the judiciary and the police.[74] Similarly, authoritarianism and ethnocentrism are associated with greater confidence in the institutions of traditional authority: the church, the army, and

FIGURE 53: **Trust in institutions (as a percentage)**
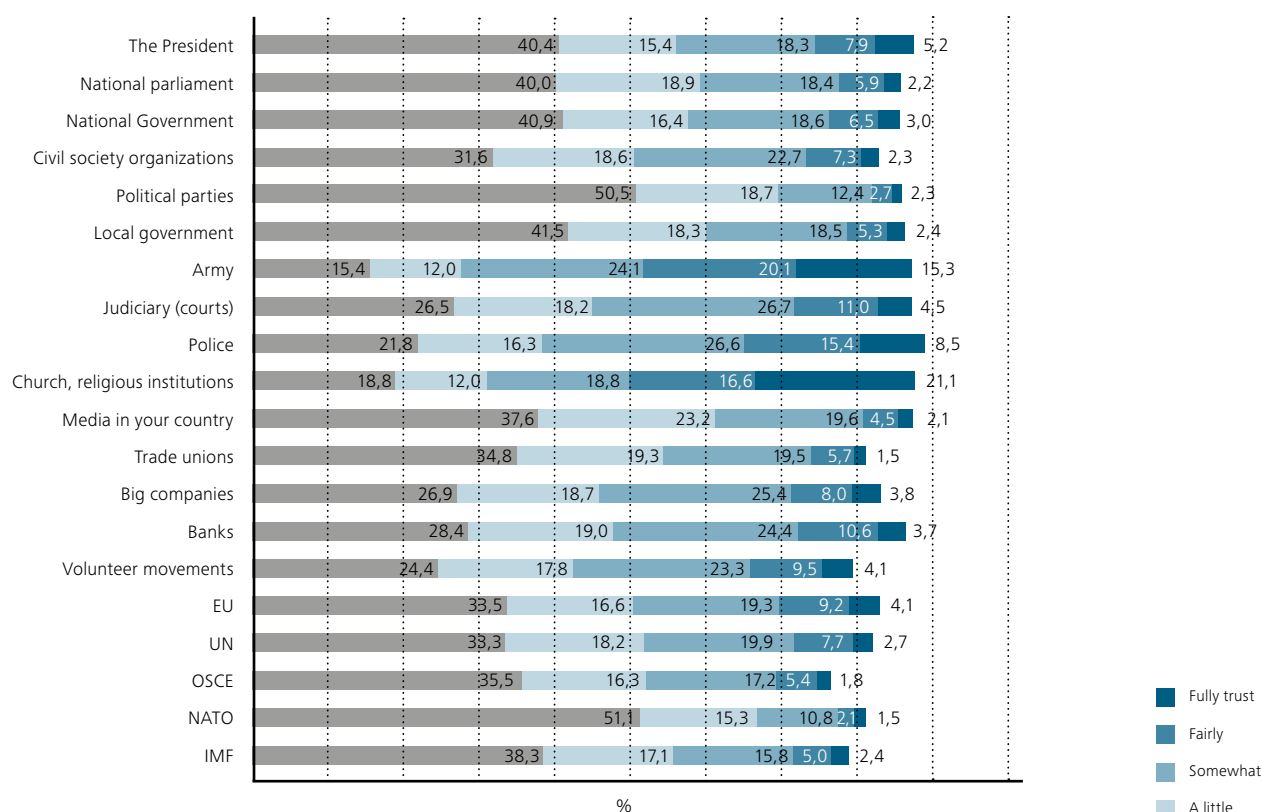
Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

the police.[75] The most important variable related to trust in institutions is interpersonal trust.[76] Except for the church, in all other cases, those who are characterised by higher interpersonal trust are also characterised by higher institutional trust. The higher level of interpersonal trust seems to be transferred to trust in institutions. The dynamics of the relationship between interpersonal and wider social and institutional trust is usually explained in this way – an individual learns to trust other people at the level of a micro-relationship, and this is then transferred to secondary groups (Welch et al. 2006).

Similarly, interpersonal trust is often regarded as an indicator of social capital and the basis of civic political culture (Almond & Verba 1963, Inglehart 1990, Pavlović 2009; Putnam 1993). Yet, the well-known differentiation between bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 1993) is often used in conceptualising the relevance of social trust in democracy. As we have seen, some sort of a culture of distrust in different categories of people, i.e. all those outside the closed circle of family and friends, implies that interpersonal trust is a matter of trust within the group, exclusive, inward-looking, with people who are similar. Similar to evidence presented elsewhere (Fiket, Pavlović & Pudar 2017; Tomanović & Stanojević 2015), Serbian youth tend to be characterised by bridging social capital, which has smaller democratic pay-offs (Putnam 1993). When unable to build trust between different social groups, society becomes segmented and divided. In such a situation, (young) people find it hard to identify with the state as a political community and grow confidence in its institutions, which results in a sort of "crisis of legitimacy".

If we compare our data to data collected in the previous survey, it is evident that youth's trust in the previously mentioned institutions is at a relatively stable level;[77] there has only been a slight change related to an increase in distrust of the judiciary (Figure 54).

FIGURE 54: **Trust in institutions among Serbian youth in 2015 and 2018**
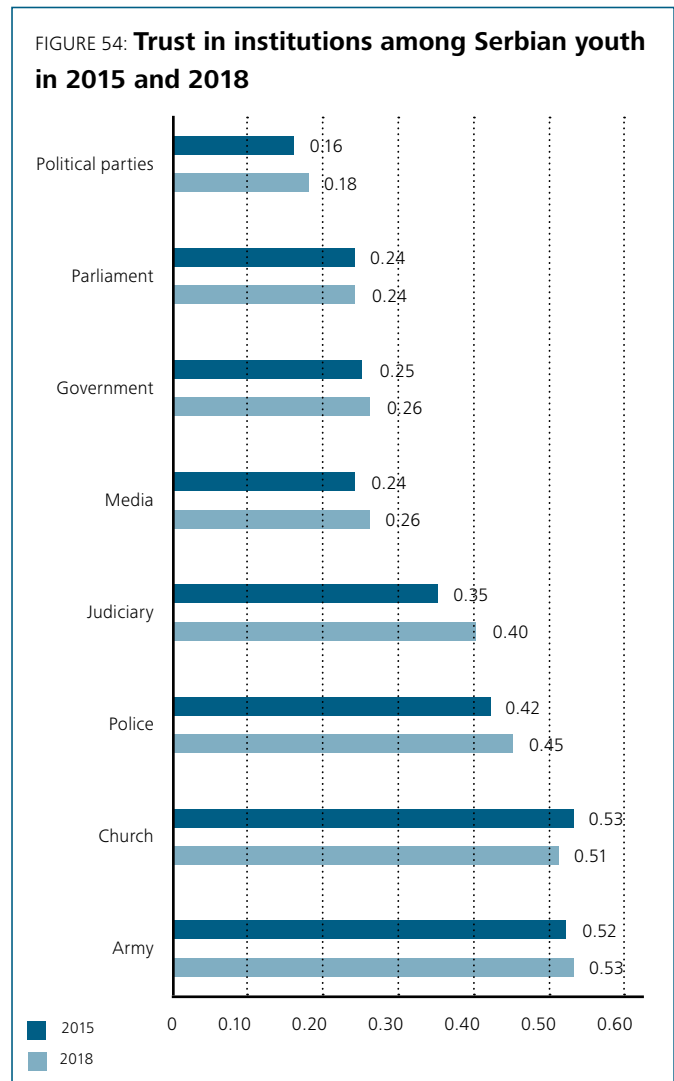
However, far more important than specific "figures" are specific trends or typical patterns of trust. The institutions of traditional authority enjoy the greatest support among young people in both cases, followed by the institutions of "force" (e.g. police), while the government, parliament and political parties have the lowest level of support. Institutions do not gain legitimacy over time.

Looking at the results from a comparative perspective, data relating to the level of trust in some of the key institutions of the state and society show that young people in Serbia belong to that group of persons who are somewhat more distrustful of the institutions of the president, the government or the parliament, and have more trust in the army. The main unique aspect of responses by young people from Serbia is that they do not trust the media or political parties (Figure 55). This certainly applies to the media to a greater extent, bearing in mind that young people from any country generally do not have any trust in political parties.

FIGURE 55: **Trust in political parties and media in ten countries**

Serbia
Political Parties: 1,66
Media: 1,97

Montenegro
Political Parties: 2,01
Media: 2,27

Macedonia
Political Parties: 2,00
Media: 2,32

Slovenia
Political Parties: 2,03
Media: 2,35

Albania
Political Parties: 1,65
Media: 2,45

Kosovo
Political Parties: 1,74
Media: 2,53

Romania
Political Parties: 1,65
Media: 2,57

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Political Parties: 1,88
Media: 2,71

Croatia
Political Parties: 1,99
Media: 2,79

Bulgaria
Political Parties: 1,95
Media: 2,91

■ Political Parties
■ Media

0   0,5   1   1,5   2   2,5   3   3,5   4   4,5   5

ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

In light of chronic distrust of the fundamental institutions of a democratic society, the data indicating that young people are largely dissatisfied with the state of democracy in Serbia are not surprising (Figure 56). Just over one-third of young people are very or somewhat dissatisfied, while only about one in ten respondents is somewhat or completely satisfied. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that a quarter of young people cannot evaluate the extent to which they are satisfied with democracy. Compared to the previous study, youth's dissatisfaction with the state of democracy is at about the same level.

In spite of this negative evaluation of the state of democracy in Serbia, youth predominantly support the democratic political system (Figure 57). There are twice as many young people who agree than those who disagree with the statement that democracy is the best form of government. Additionally, 43 per cent of young people think that opposition is necessary for a healthy democracy, while rejection of violent resolution of conflicts is very

FIGURE 56: **Satisfaction with democracy**

■ Satisfied: 12 %
■ Dissatisfied: 37 %
■ Undecided: 26 %
■ Don't know: 25 %
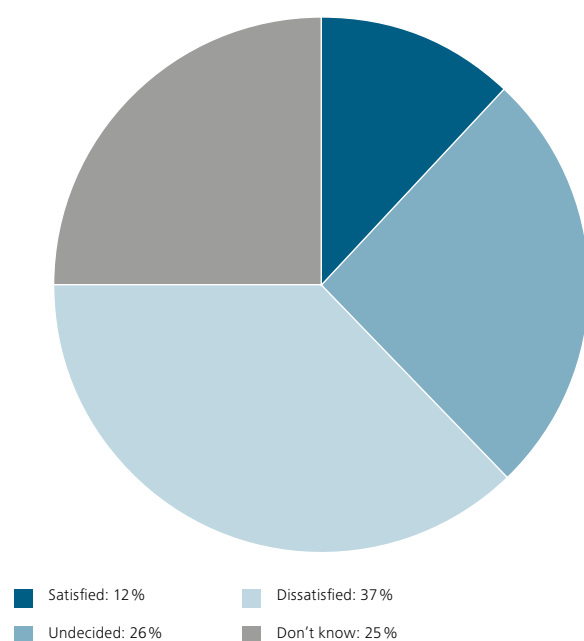
FIGURE 57: **Evaluation of different aspects of the democratic political system (as a percentage)**

There are conflicts in every society, which can only be solved by violence	61,6	9,4	8,1
A political opposition is necessary for a healthy democracy	10,5	19,7	42,6
A strong party representing the common folk in general, is what we need in Serbia right now	17,3	19,5	39,6
We should have a leader, who rules Serbia with a strong hand for the public good	25,3	17,5	36,2
Under certain circumstances dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy	45,3	15,6	16,1
Democracy is a good form of government in general	17,0	25,2	36,8

■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree

Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

FIGURE 58: **Preference for democracy vs. strong leader (as a percentage)**
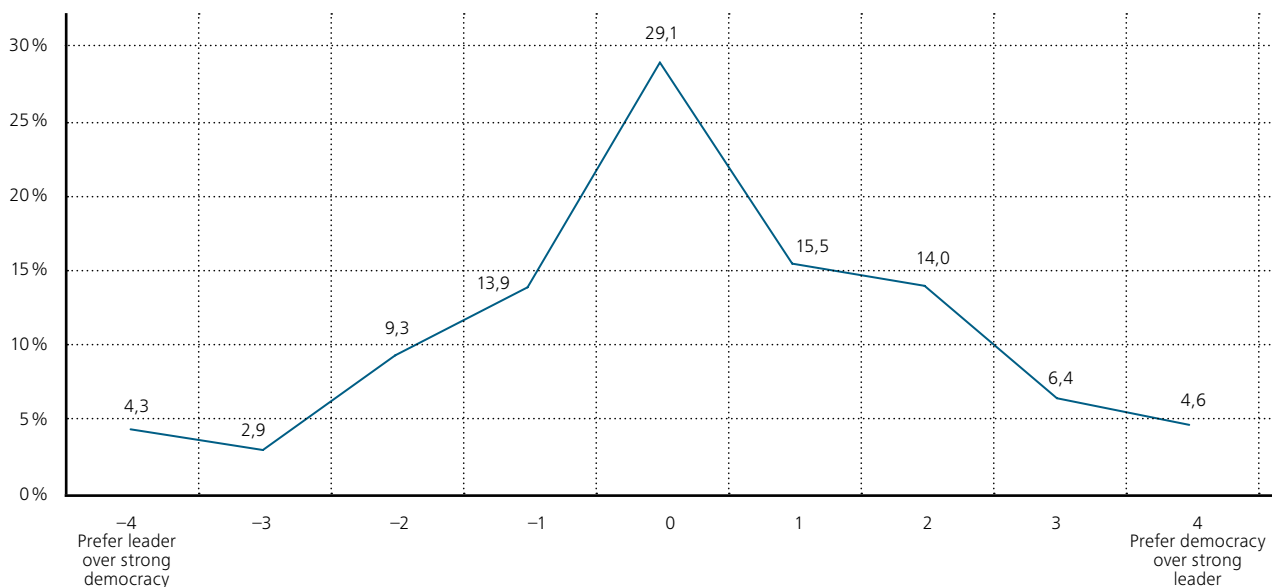
pronounced. Finally, the majority of young people disagree with the statement that dictatorship is sometimes better than democracy. Support for democracy in general and dissatisfaction with the state of democracy might be interpreted as a sign that young people distinguish between democracy in actual practice (which is unsatisfactory) and democracy as a norm (which is preferable).

Still, there are some opposite tendencies among young people in this respect. Contrary to the support for some elements of the democratic system, there are notable preferences for certain not so democratic features that suggest the presence of authoritarian and populist tendencies. Most young people prefer a strong political party that would represent ordinary people as well as rule by a strong leader. Differences related to socio-demographic characteristics are rare and, when present, they show that the preference for *catch-all,* populist parties is more pronounced among categories of young people who are usually targeted by populist messages – those with the lowest level of education, the lowest SES and who come from smaller communities.[78] In those cases,

the classic populist mechanism – dissatisfaction with democracy leads to a preference for non-democratic political option and practices (Todosijević & Pavlović 2017) – may be at play. In other words, preference for a strong hand and a political party that represents ordinary people is a reaction to numerous problems and disquiet in society, and thus stems from a perception that the interests young people are being ignored rather than from any principled, dispositional-value-based preference for a non-democratic type of governance.

The confusing orientations with respect to the preferable type of political system are further illustrated by the relative support for democracy as opposed to rule by a strong leader. Approximately the same number of young people support/reject democracy and a strong leader when these variables are analysed separately. Yet, "true" or genuine support for democracy would imply support for democracy while at the same time rejecting a strong leader/autocracy. If we compare the answers given on these two items by the same respondents, we obtain a measure of relative

FIGURE 59: **Satisfaction with democracy, support for democracy and a strong leader in ten countries**

Serbia
- Satisfaction with democracy: 2.4
- Democracy is good form of government: 3.4
- What this country needs is a strong leader: 3.2

Albania
- 2.4
- 4.2
- 4.1

Kosovo
- 2.5
- 3.9
- 3.9

Macedonia
- 2.5
- 3.9
- 4.1

Romania
- 2.6
- 3.7
- 3.7

Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 2.7
- 3.7
- 4.0

Slovenia
- 2.8
- 3.5
- 2.8

Bulgaria
- 2.8
- 4.1
- 3.9

Montenegro
- 2.9
- 3.8
- 3.8

Croatia
- 3.0
- 3.9
- 3.5

- Satisfaction with democracy
- Democracy is good form of government
- What this country needs is a strong leader

support for democracy as opposed to autocracy (Figure 58).[79] The extreme values on the index derived are of special relevance since they describe a combination of support for democracy *and* rejection of autocracy (+3 and +4 scores), i.e. support for autocracy *and* rejection of democracy (−3 and −4 scores). Such "democratic" and "autocratic" types are relatively rare. Approximately 11% of young people are democratic in this sense, while 7% of them are autocratic. Still, young people who at least slightly prefer democracy in relative terms (scores from 1 to 4) outnumber (41%) those who prefer autocracy (30%).

Specific and diffuse support for democracy is relatively low among young people in Serbia compared to youth from other countries (Figures 59). If it is of any consolation, Serbian youth are also among those who least support a strong leader. It could be said that democracy has the weakest support among young people in Serbia, although this is not necessarily associated with an increased preference for non-democratic governance.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Although, as we have just seen, acceptance of the democratic political system is not in and of itself unconditional or based on an assessment of democracy as a value *per se*, it appears that young people are aware of the problematic status of some basic democratic values, especially in the context of the same values in the EU. This sheds new light on data indicating dissatisfaction with the current state of democracy, which is potentially the result of a perception that the values that make up the essence of democracy are poorly realised. The data on the status of a large number of values both in Serbia and Europe are shown in Figure 60, and they provide some very important insight.

FIGURE 60: **Evaluations of the value status in Serbia and EU (as a percentage)**

DEMOCRACY	Serbia	35,3	24,7	8,1
	EU	20,3	20,9	21,6
THE RULE OF LAW	Serbia	35,0	23,0	8,1
	EU	17,0	19,8	24,1
HUMAN RIGHTS	Serbia	34,2	24,0	11,3
	EU	16,3	18,6	28,4
ECONOMIC WELFARE OF CITIZENS	Serbia	48,4	16,3	4,1
	EU	12,6	15,5	36,3
EMPLOYMENT	Serbia	53,4	13,8	3,9
	EU	11,5	13,8	41,5
EQUALITY	Serbia	38,7	22,1	8,0
	EU	14,5	20,6	22,7
SECURITY	Serbia	28,9	23,9	17,1
	EU	19,2	22,9	23,2
INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM	Serbia	30,3	21,9	16,7
	EU	14,6	19,5	29,2

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

■ Good or very good   ■ Neither bad nor good   ■ Bad or very bad

Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

The most notable fact is that the status of each and every analysed value in Serbia is assessed as being far worse than in the EU. The percentage of young people who think that the actual value is in a good position is lower when it refers to Serbia than when it refers to the EU, and this goes for every analysed value. The assessment of the status of these values in the EU is more balanced – the numbers of those who evaluate them positively or negatively are relatively close, but the number of those who rated the value positively is, as a rule, higher than the number of those who rated it negatively. When it comes to Serbia, there is no value whose status is assessed as good or very good by the majority of young people. The economic welfare of citizens and employment – the issues which are particularly important to citizens of Serbia, whether young or not, – obtained the most negative assessments. Approximately one-half of young people think that the status of these two values in Serbia is bad. On the other hand, security and individual freedoms have the most "positive" rating. Although still perceived as having a low status, these two values are characterised by the highest number of positive evaluations, i.e. the lowest number of negative ratings, which, it should be noted once again, are still prevalent. Satisfaction with

democracy and general support for the democratic political system are significantly and positively related to the assessment of the status of each of the listed values in Serbia, which means that democracy is supported more by those who believe that basic democratic values are guaranteed to a greater extent in Serbia. This finding also implies that the democratic system generates support in the context of the evaluation of political and economic performance of the system.

Compared to young people from other countries, Serbian youth assigned relatively low ratings to democracy, human rights, individual freedom, economic welfare and unemployment. Serbian youth are among those respondents who generally rated the analysed values more negatively.

A similar pattern of value preference has been obtained with regard to personal importance of these values. Respondents were asked to rank the three most important values from the above list. The largest number of respondents mentioned three values – employment (61 per cent placed this among the top three places), economic welfare (42 per cent) and human rights (41 per cent). When asked to choose one value as most important, the "order" of values was virtually identical (Figure 61). The most commonly

selected value priority is employment, followed by economic welfare and human rights, while all other values were chosen by far fewer respondents.

FIGURE 61: **The most important personal value**

Democracy: 4%
The rule of law: 4%
Human rights: 15%
Economic Welfare of Citizens: 16%
Employment: 28%
Equality: 5%
Security: 6%
Individual Freedom: 6%
Don't know: 16%
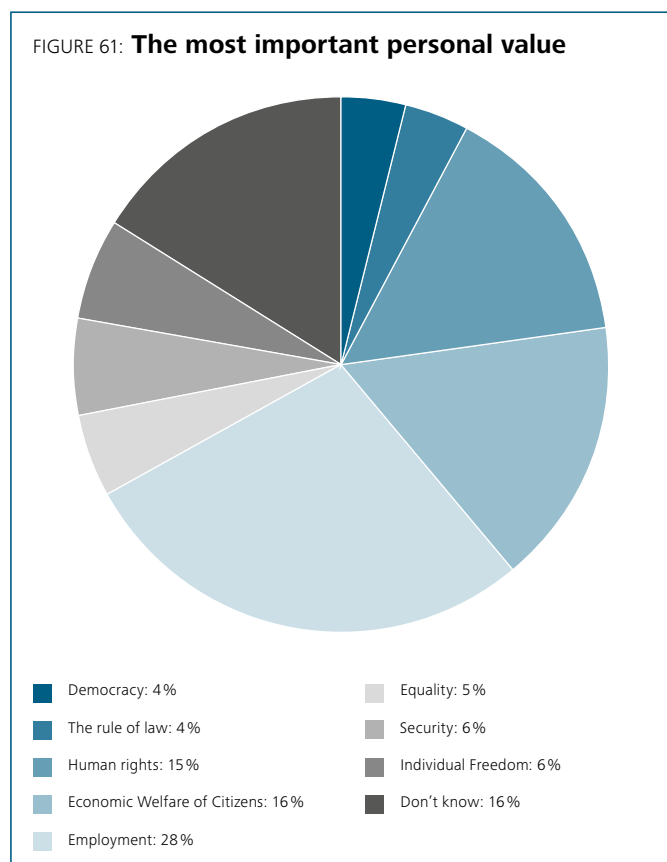
Taken together, these findings could indicate that young people "approve" of sacrificing individual freedoms and the rule of law, even democracy itself, in favour of an improvement in the standard of living. That is bad news for the prospects of strengthening democratic institutions and an indication that young people lack the awareness that nothing but the protection of precisely these values that are being undermined in their view should lead to economic welfare.

THE PERCEPTION OF CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUES

Young people's opinions on what the focus should with regard to the tasks of the state are in line with the considerations of personal value aspirations and perception of the status of values in society (Figure 62). It would not be too wrong to say that, in the opinion of young people, the government's task is to take care of everything (there are no significant changes related to the ranking of priority tasks of the government compared to the data from the previous survey in 2015). For each of the tasks listed, the number of young people who think that this should be the focus of the government is large, although there are some indicative differences in line with the perception of the status of values in Serbia. Accordingly, the primary tasks of the government should be to reduce unemployment and enhance economic growth and development (one should recall previously presented data indicating that the main reasons for the potential emigration of youth are of an economic nature). Top priorities are also the fight against crime and corruption, social justice and human rights and freedom as well as an improvement in the position of young people and environmental protection. Nevertheless, all tasks are considered to be very important at least by two-thirds of young people, which indicates that Serbian society is seen as burdened with problems of different types.

All the aforementioned findings point to a predominantly materialist orientation on the part of youth in terms of focusing on the goals that should lead to an improvement in financial standards and economic progress. This orientation is evident among young people in other ways as well.

Young people are not too optimistic that the economic situation in Serbia will improve in the near future. One quarter (24 per cent) of them cannot say whether the economic situation in the country will change in a positive or negative direction; the same percentage (24 per cent) think that the economic situation will be further exacerbated, while every fifth respondent feels that there will be economic improvement (20 per cent). Approximately one-third of young people (32 per cent) are indecisive on this issue.

It has been shown that there is a widespread preference for social security and economic welfare among young people. When asked more specifically about the topics focusing on egalitarian tendencies, the majority support the reduction of economic inequality; three-quarters of young people believe that the income of the rich and the poor should be made more equal (Figure 63). An even larger number support a socially oriented government policy in which everyone would be taken care of. The majority of respondents think that the state should have bigger control over the economy. It should be pointed out that the role of the state is perceived as positive, but that considerable distrust is shown towards state institutions. Thus, distrust should probably be understood here as dissatisfaction with performance of the system and not rejection of established institutional arrangements.

FIGURE 62: **Valuation of primary tasks of the national government (as a percentage)**

Reduction of unemployment	84,5 / 4,1 / 1,8
Development of private entrepreneurship	73,9 / 8,4 / 3,6
Fostering population growth	75,3 / 9,6 / 3,8
Improving the position of young people	80,1 / 6,7 / 3,1
Improving the position of women	70,4 / 11,8 / 6,7
Social justice and social security for all	80,4 / 5,8 / 3,3
Securing human rights and freedoms	80,4 / 6,1 / 2,8
Preservation of natural environment	79,1 / 7,4 / 2,9
Strengthening of military power and national security	69,2 / 12,8 / 5,4
Economic growth and development	82,4 / 5,0 / 2,1
Fostering national identity	63,2 / 14,4 / 6,9
Fight against illegal immigration of people	66,4 / 14,0 / 5,4
Fight against crime and corruption	80,5 / 5,5 / 4,0

■ Very much
■ Somewhat
■ Not at all or little

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Note: sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

FIGURE 63: **Opinions on state intervention, hard work and competition (as a percentage)**
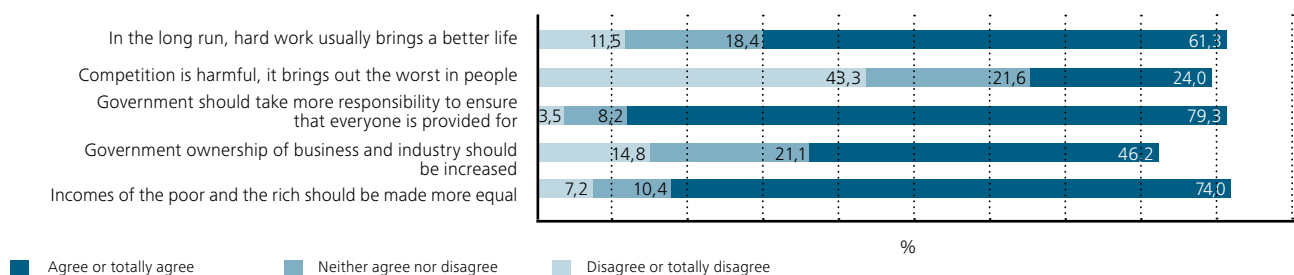
| | Agree or totally agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree or totally disagree |

Note: The sum accumulating up to 100 per cent includes the answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

FIGURE 64: **Left-right self-positioning (as a percentage)**
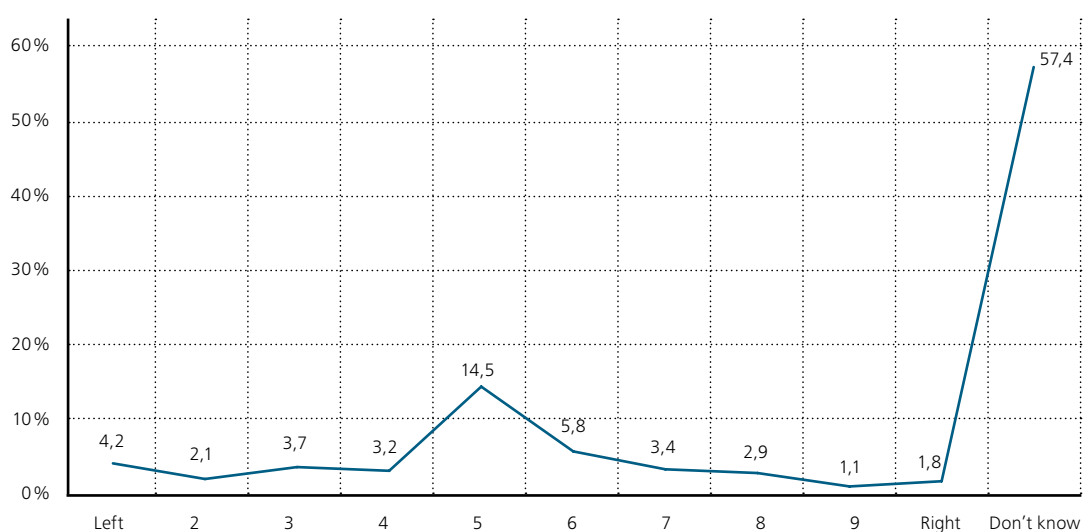
The data show that young people cherish personal initiative and competition, which runs contrary to widespread egalitarian tendencies. Almost two-thirds of young people believe that hard work is worthwhile in the end and that competition is essentially positive.

Young people inclined towards an egalitarian view attach more importance to almost all the tasks of the government, which in fact indicates that reliance on the state and its intervention is at the heart of an egalitarian orientation. In addition, a more pronounced egalitarian orientation is, understandably, present among those groups of younger respondents with a lower socio-economic status,[80] while relationships with other socio-demographic variables are not significant.

This partly suggests that young people are not necessarily oriented towards the left in ideological terms, although reliance on the state is at the core of left-wing ideologies; the data obtained further confirm this conclusion. When asked to position themselves, only a minority of young people could describe their political views in these terms (Figure 64). An answer was provided by 43 per cent of the respondents, while most young people did not offer any answer to this question or stated that they did not know. Those who provided answers most often

positioned themselves along the central part of the scale, while the number of young people on the left or the right wing of the political spectrum is relatively equal. Hence, it may be argued that young Serbians are not political extremists in any sense; instead, they appear to lack profiled and coherent ideological orientations.

The absence of profiled ideological positions is probably best described by the fact that the correlation between ideological self-positioning and egalitarian orientation is not significant in statistical terms. This practically indicates that young people from any part of the political spectrum rely on state intervention. In addition, the ideological orientation of young people is not significantly related to the perception of differences in the primary tasks of government. Although some of the tasks offered are typically left-wing or right-wing topics, meaningful relationships are practically non-existent.[81]

In short, these findings portray young people in Serbia as heavily burdened by economic concerns, which take primacy over issues such as rule of law, human rights and freedoms. Still, this does not make them very eager to take control over things in political life and act accordingly. These concerns account for young people being worried and unsatisfied with government and

FIGURE 65: **Identification with (sub)national and supranational geopolitical entities (as a percentage)**

Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

Legend:
- Not at all or little
- Somewhat
- Fairly or completely
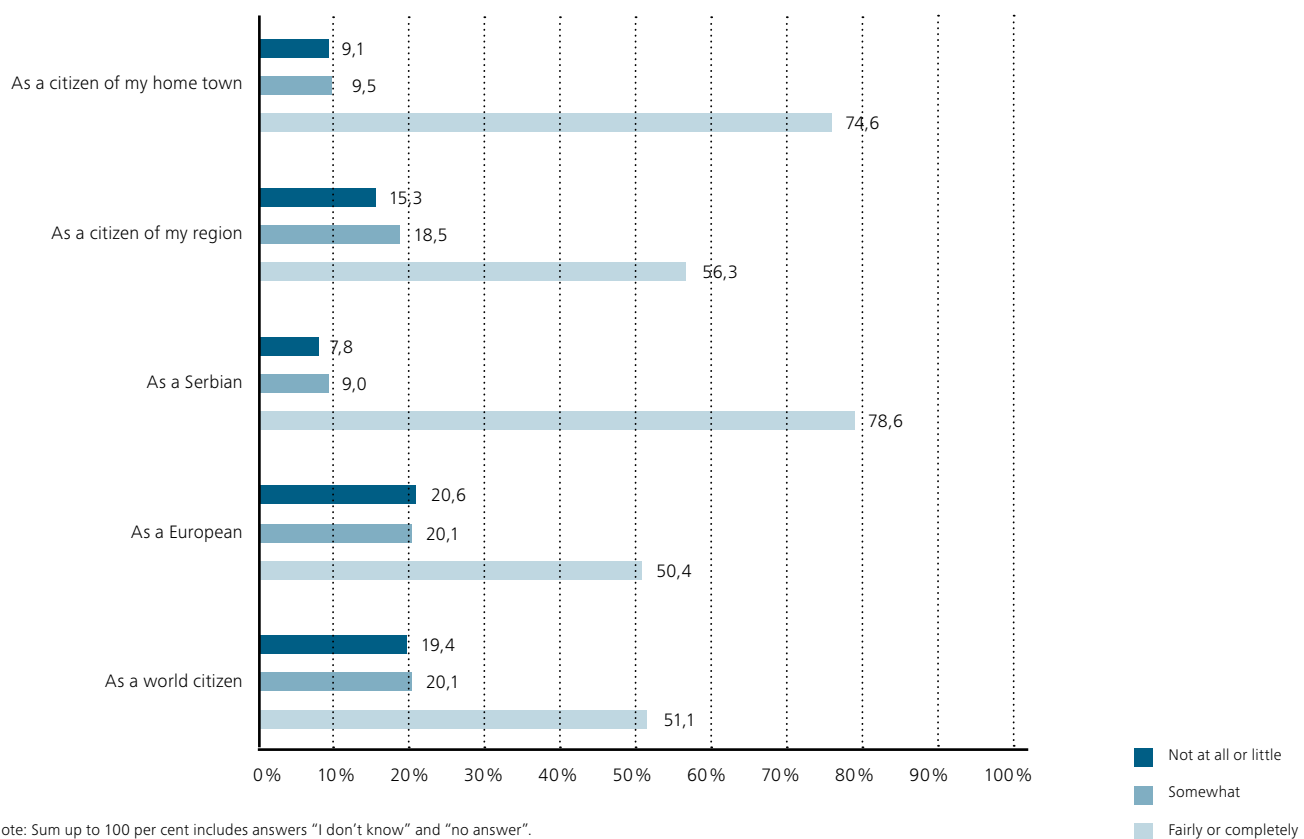
institutional performance, but still focused on state intervention, which they prefer. It is as if youth were saying that things are not well, but it is someone else's job to take care of it.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK, EUROPEAN UNION AND THE KOSOVO ISSUE

Previously presented data indicate that young people in Serbia remain at a distance or express negative sentiments towards important aspects of democracy and state institutions. In this section, we focus on the issue of young people's attitudes towards different aspects of Serbian society, primarily on their attitudes towards the national framework, as well as with regard to some important issues concerning foreign and domestic policies, such as accession to the EU and the issues of Kosovo and Metohija.

GEOPOLITICAL IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH

The commonly used criterion for distinguishing group identifications is their "scope" – from the smallest local-parochial (city), through regional and national, to the broadest continental and mondialist identifications (a citizen of the world, a member of

humanity) (Pantić 1991; Vasović 2000). The "narrowing" of the framework of collective identification to a period of serious social crises and interethnic conflicts (Pantić 2002; Pantić & Pavlović 2009; Vasović 2000) implies that the dominant framework of collective identification is an indicator of the level of social tolerance or openness of society as a whole.

Numerous previous studies have shown that national identification in this sense is very often pronounced (e.g. Vasović 2000), and this is the case in this research to some extent as well. The largest number of young people see themselves as citizens of Serbia on a considerable scale or completely, i.e. they identify with the national framework (Figure 65).

However, local identification (i.e. being a citizen of a city) is also relatively important to young people. Regional, European or mondialist identification is of relatively minor importance. In other words, it appears that identification with the (sub)national framework prevails over identification with the supranational one. Young people in Serbia are rather narrow-minded. We have already mentioned fears about traveling through neighbouring countries, ethnic distance, etc. If we bear in mind the prevailing distrust in institutions, or dissatisfaction with the state of democracy and economy, a sense of belonging to a nation can be understood as an attachment to Serbia in ethnic terms, and not an attachment to the political community. In other words, prevailing dissatisfaction with Serbian society does not undermine the importance of being Serbian.

FIGURE 66: **National pride and opinions on Serbian national interests (as a percentage)**

I am proud to be a citizen of Serbia — 10,3 | 17,7 | 56,6

The international importance of Serbia will rise in th next few years — 25,6 | 25,0 | 20,6

The national interests of Serbia are not emphasized enough in global politics — 14,5 | 21,6 | 30,1

%

■ Agree or totally agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree or totally disagree
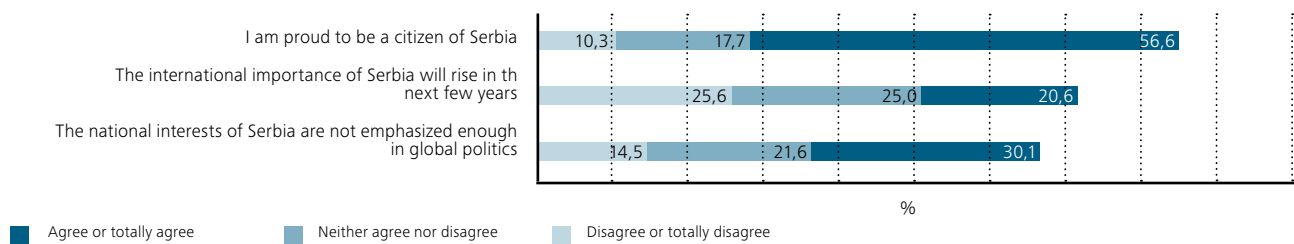
Note: Sum up to 100 per cent includes answers "I don't know" and "no answer".

In addition to the great importance of belonging to Serbia, the majority of young people are proud of being citizens of Serbia (Figure 66).

On the other hand, there is a widespread belief among young people that Serbia's national interests are not sufficiently represented in global politics, as well as a certain pessimism regarding the premise that the international importance of Serbia will grow in the following years.

Differences between young people relating to these issues are relatively negligible. Young males are prouder of being citizens of Serbia, as are persons of lower socio-economic status.[82]

OPINION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONS AND KOSOVO ISSUES

Closely related to the issues of national identity are the two most important questions in Serbian domestic and foreign policy. The first question refers to attitudes towards the Kosovo-Metohija issue and the second to EU accession.

There is virtually no consensus on Kosovo at all (Figure 67). The majority of young people responded that they did not know or provided no answer to this question. Approximately one-quarter believe that Serbia will never recognise Kosovo as an independent state; a slightly larger number think that this will happen anyway. Different projections are only made regarding when this would happen. The prevailing opinion is that it Serbia would recognise Kosovo as an independent state in the next five years. There is no group of young people controlling for relevant socio-demographic characteristics that has significantly different opinions.

The attitude towards Kosovo and Metohija is expected to be related to certain aspects of the attitude towards the Serbian nation and state. Young people with a more pronounced sense of national pride or those who find the affiliation with the national framework more important are more inclined to say that the recognition will not happen soon, or that it will never happen.[83] This is completely understandable bearing in mind the symbolic significance of the Kosovo-Metohija issue for national self-determination.

When asked about whether Serbia should join the EU, young people were equally divided as in the case of Kosovo (Figure 68).

FIGURE 67: **What do you think, will Serbia recognise Kosovo as an independent state**

■ Yes, within the next 5 years: 14 %

■ Yes, within the next 10 years: 9 %

■ Yes, it'll need more than 10 years: 6 %

■ Yes, it'll need more than 20 years: 2 %

■ Never: 27 %

■ Don't know: 31 %
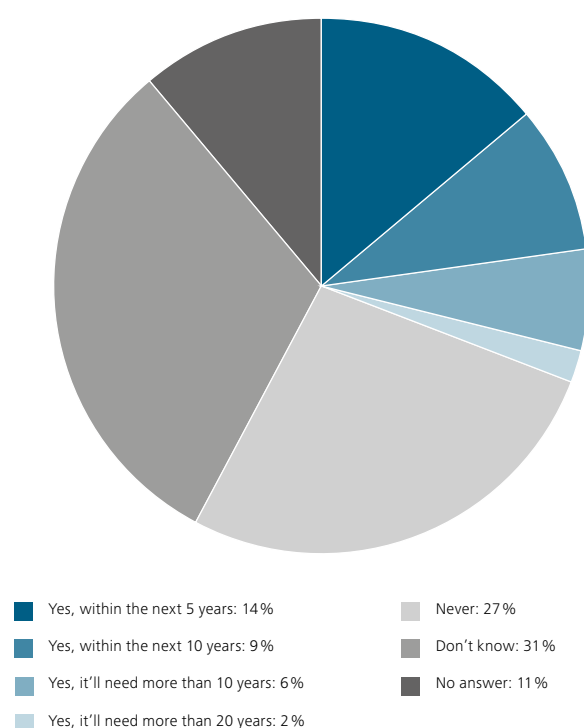
■ No answer: 11 %

One-third were of the opinion that Serbia should join the EU, while more than one-fourth of them did not share this opinion. A large number of young people stated that they did not know or gave no answer. Similarly, no systematic relationships with socio-demographic characteristics of young people could be found. On the other hand, there are significant relationships with some measures of ethnic identity. Young people with a less pronounced sense of national pride and attachment to Serbia are the ones who oppose entry of Serbia in the European Union.[84] Accession is more supported by young people with a more pronounced identification with Europe.[85] Attitudes towards Kosovo and the EU are also significantly related. A more negative attitude towards Kosovo's independence is correlated with a more negative attitude towards the EU, and vice versa.[86]

These pieces of empirical evidence additionally suggest the ethnic notion of national membership. Being strongly identified

Do you think Serbia should join the European Union?

- Yes: 36%
- No: 27%
- Don't know: 26%
- No answer: 11%

When it comes to this topic, we have observed one of the most pronounced differences between young people from Serbia and young people from other countries (Figure 69). In all other cases, support for European integration is a given, with at least three-quarters of young people voicing this desire. In the case of Serbia, just over half of respondents who gave a valid answer to this question stated that Serbia should join the EU. At the same time, young people from Serbia are the greatest opponents of accession (it is worth mentioning that youth from Montenegro and Serbia provided far fewer valid answers to this question).

Yet, a positive attitude towards European integrations of Serbia prevails among young people in another sense (Figure 70). The usual fears relating to Serbia's accession to the European Union, which are reflected in the negative effects on the Serbian economy or national identity, are not that common among young people. Quite the contrary, most young people actually perceive positive effects on the economy, the political system and cultural identity. Although a large number of them did not give a "valid" answer to these questions, young people who see the negative effects of European Integration are in the minority.

A significant and very pronounced factor in perceptions of the effects of accession to the European Union is the initial position on whether Serbia should join the EU or not. Those who believe that Serbia should join the European Union see far more positive effects on the Serbian economy, political system and cultural identity.[87] The question is what "causes" what – does the perception of the effects determine the attitude towards accession, or vice versa? – arises, but the relationships identified are very pronounced.

with the Serbian nation makes one more prone to defend one of the symbolic cornerstones of national identity – Kosovo and Metohija, and reluctant regarding the notion of joining a larger group of nation-states within the EU. Furthermore, two main issues in Serbian foreign affairs are in a sense incompatible in young people's minds. Not accepting the possible independence of Kosovo usually means being anti-EU as well.

Do you agree that your country should join the EU?

Country	Yes	No
Albania	94,5	5,5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	84,9	15,1
Kosovo	88,9	11,1
Macedonia	81,0	19,0
Montenegro	77,2	22,8
Serbia	56,1	43,9
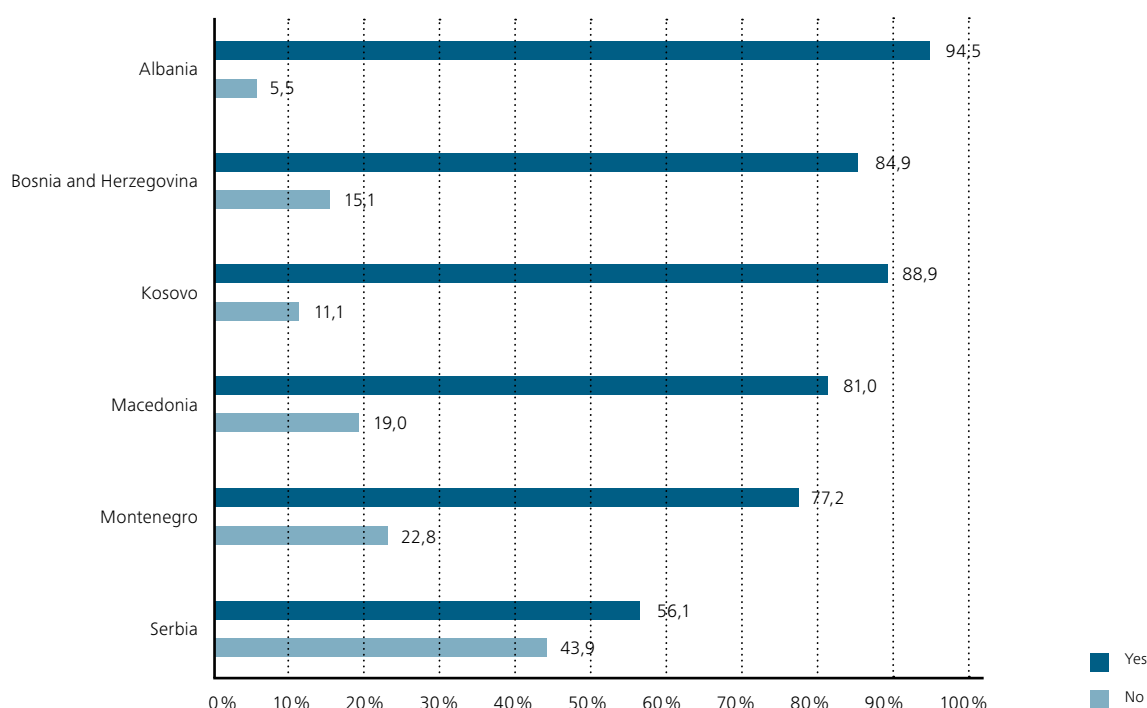
FIGURE 70: **The evaluation of the effects of joining the EU on the Serbian economy, political system and cultural identity (as a percentage)**

- Positive effect
- No effect
- Negative effect
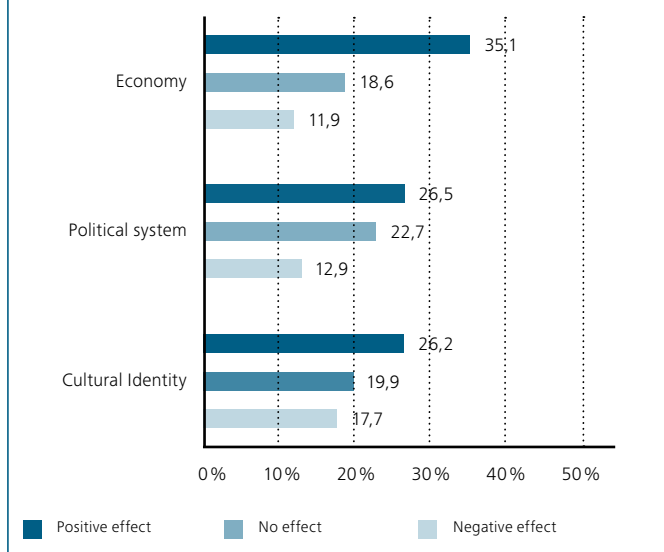
The findings obtained can be partly understood to indicate that the primary concern of young people is employment and economic status, and hence probably the expectation that with the entry of Serbia into the EU these "values" could achieve a slightly better status. On the other hand, as previously discussed, concerns about national identity are relatively weak among young people, which contrasts with the frequently prevailing public discourse on the topic.

KEY FINDINGS

— Young people are predominantly uninterested in politics; they rarely discuss this topic with family and friends and admit that they are not very knowledgeable of politics (44 per cent).

— While three-quarters of those who had a right to vote in the previous parliamentary elections did indeed vote, participation in various forms of unconventional political activism (e.g. signing a petition) is relatively low.

— Distrust in institutions is very prominent; political parties are the least trusted institution– half of young people do not trust them at all (51 per cent).

— Young people are predominantly dissatisfied with the state of democracy in Serbia (37 per cent), although democracy in general tends to receive their support (37 per cent). None of the most important democratic values are assigned a good status in Serbia.

— Young people in Serbia strongly prefer state interventionism in the economy.

— Approximately a quarter of young people think that Serbia will never recognise Kosovo as an independent state; one-third thinks the opposite. One-third believe that Serbia should join the EU.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEN-DATIONS

In the early 1980s, when the parents of our respondents were approximately at the current age of their children and were living in the SFRY, there was a popular song, frequently cited as the political message identifying this generation, entitled "You can count on us!". According to the findings of this study, the message of the Serbian children of formerly Yugoslav parents would be most aptly described by the song title (not yet composed) "Don't count on me!". Overall, the young Serbian generation, although dissatisfied with the state of the society, is unconcerned about political events, not willing to engage in public affairs, and focused on their private lives. They are worried about future and financial matters, but determined to find the way to a better life each for themselves, many of them by emigrating abroad.

Even though there are lot of differences among them according to socio-demographic variables such as gender, SES and place of residence, these differences are less pronounced than are the similarities. It appears that the mass media and Internet manage to unify their life values and opinions to a great extent.

Based on the main findings presented on the previous pages, several recommendations can be formulated, grouped here according to the topics in the research:

LIFESTYLE AND VALUES

— We have also included some recommendations derived from our results.

— The attractiveness of the Internet can be used for more effective communication with young people. The channels to approach young people are becoming increasingly linked to the Internet environment, while campaigns and political communication are moving into the online world. This suggests the importance of developing e-activism of a broad scope and more direct type. Youth initiatives through this channel should be encouraged, nurtured and promoted, as this would encourage young people to become more involved in political life.

— With modest media and computer literacy and a focus on attractive contents which do not require too much attention, the Internet fuels the spread of fake news and populist ideology. In order to reduce this risk, it is necessary to work on increasing media and computer literacy.

— It is very important that young people see their country as a society that respects laws and fights against corruption, and they will see it in such light to the extent the state really respects laws and fights against corruption.

FAMILY

— Decision-makers should be aware that transfer of the state's tasks to the family has its limits and negative effects, and that in such a role families do not see a solution to social problems.
— It is necessary to introduce certain measures in the field of employment and housing policies to improve economic opportunities for young people and to facilitate independence from the primary family.
— In addition, measures to encourage young people to form their own, secondary families are needed.
— It is necessary to enhance social inclusion and youth activism and raise the awareness that other social institutions and young people themselves are more responsible for their successful transition to adult age.
— Measures in this field directly depend on macro-decisions taken in the field of education and employment policies.

MOBILITY

Since documents containing recommendations regarding mobility already exist (e.g. Bobić et al. 2016; Strategy for the development of education in Serbia until 2020), we will only list several recommendations which are corroborated by the results of the research.
— All actions that would enhance the optimistic vision of society's development would serve as an effective obstacle to emigration. Of course, this does not mean propaganda campaigns, but rather specific actions that would herald the possibility of positive trends.
— Especially serious is the brain-drain problem. According to the report by the World Economic Forum for 2017 – 2018, Serbia, among 137 countries, ranks 134th in capacity to retain talent. It is necessary to devise measures in the field of education and employment that would significantly improve its capacities to retain and attract talent.
— The mobility of young people, primarily those who are highly educated, which does not imply a permanent but temporary departure for education, professional development and gaining experience, is a developmental opportunity that should be exploited. Projects should be developed that encourage the mobility of highly educated people, but offer them a perspective other than permanent departure.
— The development of joint research projects and study programmes should encourage the mobility of students, teachers and researchers.

EDUCATION

— It is necessary to take systematic measures aimed at removing obstacles to provide equal access to higher education for different categories of young people. Special or additional incentives for young people from financially disadvantaged families in the form of various resources (e.g. material incentives, financial incentives) are a prerequisite for the removal of systemically generated inequalities within the educational system. Different institutions of the state and part of the government should assume a leading role in formulating the strategic policy agenda, above all the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.
— Equally important is work to raise awareness among non-privileged categories of young people that education is "worthwhile" (for example, by highlighting positive and successful examples of the young and educated people climbing up the social ladder due to higher education), above all among young people of lower socio-economic status. In the educational system, special focus should be on children who are underprivileged in these terms. On the other hand, the role of media could be of special relevance. Media coverage of positive and successful examples of young and educated people climbing up the social ladder due to higher education would eventually lead to a more positive value being attached to educational achievements.
— In this regard, eliminating and resolving all cases of open corruption in the educational system is also very important. This is the domain of the government, which could benefit by gaining credibility. Responsible and objective media coverage could put additional pressure on political elites to establish zero tolerance for any sort of irregularities in the educational system. This would restore or establish faith in and boost satisfaction with the educational system, which would ultimately offer an impetus for raising the level of educational aspirations of all categories of youth.

EMPLOYMENT

— The disparity between their profession and the work that young people do, as well as between the education of respondents and their work, should clearly indicate to decision-makers the need to make the educational system as flexible as possible. The importance of lifelong learning, work-based learning and various forms of non-formal education should be recognised, and their development should be encouraged.
— Also, it is necessary for the strategy of education to consider the real needs of society for certain positions, as well as plans for development.

POLITICS

— There is certainly potential for conventional or unconventional civic activism among young people. The fact that this is not fully developed indicates the importance of mobilising young people. Young people are potentially open to a type of politics which would be clearly profiled and modelled according to their burning problems, concerns and interests. Political parties should formulate policy measures that specifically target the younger segment of the Serbian population, which is, in the latter's view, currently underrepresented in government policy. Youth civic activism can and should be encouraged by different government initiatives within the educational system (e.g. through civic education courses), appeals through the media as well as propaganda and civil society initiatives.

— The message young people want to hear has actually been formulated in this research by them. The government, in the opinion of youth, should reduce unemployment, eradicate corruption, and guarantee social protection and human rights. The transformation of this "wish list" into a clearly defined political agenda is a political task under the auspices of the state of welfare and social democracy to which young people are receptive. Such a policy is rather more thematic than ideological, and a significant percentage of young people are political "realists" of sorts. The eradication of corruption, the issue of Kosovo and European integration are major topics that require "big cuts" and difficult decisions, but youth have in some way positioned themselves here. Young people embrace the idea of social democracy and the welfare state. All political parties that wish to attract young voters could benefit by offering policy positions that aim at solving problems which young people are burdened with. In addition, acceptance of European identity, a positive opinion of the status of democratic values in the EU and the positive effects of accession suggest that a clearly articulated notion of Europe would find potentially fertile ground among young people. This is one of the ways in which young people's aspirations towards a regulated society are shaped into concrete policies, and young people are encouraged to engage in civic and political activism.

— Above all, a more consistent and more all-embracing systemic protection and promotion of democratic values within society is necessary. This would lead to greater achievements by the system itself in political and economic terms, and thus greater satisfaction among youth with institutions and the state of democracy. Commitment to democracy in principle would become more intense, and support for some undemocratic practices which are consequences of the unsatisfactory state of democracy in Serbia would become less certain.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dragan Popadić is a social psychologist and Professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade. His area of research covers a wide range of social psychological issues including political and legal socialisation, value orientations, ethnocentrism, social conflicts and violence. He has been involved in international projects dealing with regional research of youth and education for democracy as well as in national research projects about the impact of social transition on individuals and groups and forming new competences in a changing society.

Zoran Pavlović, PhD, is a social psychologist and Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade. His main field of scientific interest includes the study of human values, political behaviour and political culture. He has published numerous papers in scientific journals, book chapters and (co)authored nine monographs.

Srećko Mihailović is a sociologist who spent his working days at the Institute of Social Sciences and is now retired. He is a researcher of public opinion, especially focused on the sociology of youth, sociology of politics, sociology of elections and sociology of work. He published numerous articles in scientific journals and proceedings. He also edited a dozen publications containing the results of sociological research and authored several books.

FOOTNOTES

[1] $rho = .19^{**}$ and $rho = .15^{**}$ respectively.

[2] $rho = .23^{**}$ and $rho = .20^{**}$ respectively.

[3] $rho = .21^{**}$ and $rho = .20^{**}$ respectively.

[4] $rho = .34^{**}$.

[5] $rho = .08^{**}$.

[6] $rho = .33^{**}$ and $rho = .28^{**}$ respectively.

[7] $rho = .24^{**}$.

[8] $rho = .13^{**}$.

[9] The category "often" includes the answers "at least once a week" and "every or almost every day," while the category "sometimes" includes the answers "once a month or less" and "several times a month".

[10] When comparing the frequency of certain activities, it should first be taken into account that some activities may overlap (for example, listening to music can overlap with most other activities, socialising with visiting cafes, etc.), and that by the nature of things, all of the listed activities cannot be equally frequent (e.g. traveling abroad or participating in social projects).

[11] The correlation between gender and the analysed variables are as follows: reading books $rho=-0.20^{**}$; reading about spirituality and personal development $rho=-0.10^{**}$; engaging in activities such as meditation and yoga $rho=-0, 12^{**}$; spending time with the family $rho=-0.12^{**}$; shopping $rho=-0.13^{**}$; and engaging in sports activities $rho=0.22^{**}$; playing video games $rho=0.38^{**}$; spending time in cafes $rho=0.09^{*}$.

[12] Reading newspapers and magazines $rho=0.24^{**}$; travelling abroad $rho=0.10^{**}$; engaging in sports $rho=-0.22^{**}$; listening to music $rho=-0.15^{**}$; going out with friends $rho=-0.14^{**}$; doing something creative $rho=-0,08^{**}$; playing video games $rho=-0.14^{**}$; spending time with the family $rho=-0.10^{**}$.

[13] $rho=.15^{**}$.

[14] $rho=.15^{**}$.

[15] Cramer's V=0.10*.

[16] $rho = -0.20^{**}$.

[17] $rho=0.26^{**}$.

[18] $rho=-0.11^{**}$.

[19] $rho= -0.10^{*}$.

[20] $rho=.24^{**}$ and $rho=-.10^{**}$, respectively.

[21] $rho=-.09^{*}$.

[22] $rho=.11^{*}$.

[23] phi=-18*.

[24] $rho=0.12^{**}$ and $rho= .18^{**}$, respectively.

[25] $rho= -.14^{**}$.

[26] $rho= .46^{**}$.

[27] Correlation with authoritarianism $rho=, 22^{**}$, with ethnocentrism $rho=.14^{**}$, with ethnic distance $rho=.20^{**}$, and with trust in social institutions $rho=.13^{**}$.

[28] Cramer's V=0.12**.

[29] Correlation with SES $rho=-0.11^{*}$; with ethnic distance $rho=0.37^{**}$; with social distance $rho=0.17^{**}$; with ethnocentrism $rho=0.16^{**}$; with trust in others $rho=0.14^{**}$.

[30] The data are presented only for the young people who declared that they were of Serbian nationality, which is actually the vast majority of the analysed sample (93 per cent).

[31] The correlation between ethnic distance and age was $rho = -0,08^{*}$.

[32] $rho=0.30^{**}$.

[33] $rho=-14^{**}$, $rho=-11^{**}$, and $rho=- .10^{*}$, respectively.

[34] $rho=.17^{**}$.

[35] $rho=-.23^{**}$.

[36] $rho=.45^{**}$.

[37] $rho=.14^{**}$ and $rho=.09^{*}$ respectively.

[38] $rho=.17^{**}$ and $rho=.16^{**}$, respectively.

[39] The data presented refer only to the categories of young people who have completed their education. The Figure shows the predicted probability that a young person would graduate from the faculty depending on the level of father's education. The data are based on the binomial regression model, with the education of the father as a predictor and the binary criterion variable of the education level (1. university education / 0. education be-

low university level).

[40] Identical probabilities were also found in relation to the mother's level of education.

[41] *rho*=.37**.

[42] It is worth recalling the previously presented data on the findings that indicate that young people of higher SES assign more value to obtaining a degree and having a successful career.

[43] *rho*= −.25** and *rho*= −.21** respectively.

[44] *rho*= .16** and *rho*= −.12* respectively.

[45] *rho*= −.18**.

[46] *rho*= −.11*.

[47] *rho*= −.25**.

[48] *rho*=−. 41**.

[49] *rho*=.41**.

[50] *rho*=.15**.

[51] There are forms of education which cancel out the discontinuity of education and labor. The so-called dual education system combining education and work, which is based on good practice and experience in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (stable countries with strong economies), is now being implemented in Serbia as well (Serbia can use its earlier experience of the *school of pupils* in the economy).

[52] According to MOR, NEET (*Not in Education, Employment and Training*) represents the age group of persons 15–24 years of age who have completed education but are not employed or involved in any training. NEET does not include young people who are unemployed, but actively search for a job, or young people who are economically inactive for various reasons.

[53] In investigating the precariousness of journalists and physical workers with no job in 2015, we used more than 40 performance indicators for precariousness of labour categorised into nine groups (Mihailović et al. 2016).

[54] Cramer's V= 0.15**.

[55] Cramer's V=0.16**.

[56] Correlation with skills *rho*=−17**; with the level of education *rho*=−20**; with party affiliation *rho*=.24**; with people in power *rho*=.16**; with acquaintances and relatives *rho*=.14**.

[57] Gender differences t(1069) = −4.94 **; correlation with age *rho*=.11**; with education *rho*=.14**; with SES *rho*=. 17**; with the size of settlement *rho*= .08*.

[58] Correlation with interest in politics *rho*=−.09*; with authoritarianism *rho*= −10*; with ethnocentrism *rho*= −.12**; with trust in other people *rho*= .19**.

[59] *rho*=.67**.

[60] t(1093) = −3.99**.

[61] *rho*= .13**.

[62] *rho*= .16**.

[63] *rho*= .12**.

[64] *rho*= .31**.

[65] *rho*= .58**.

[66] Gender differences t(865) = −4.05**; correlation with age *rho*= .11*; with education *rho*= .10*. The relationship between education and belief in one's own competence is also not significant here when controlled for the age of respondents.

[67] χ² (2) = 10.97 *, Cramer's V = .13.

[68] The question was not identical in the two surveys, but identical alternatives to the questions were compared.

[69] *rho*= .18**, *rho*= .14** and *rho*= .14**, respectively.

[70] t(521) = 3.1* and t(674) = 3.36* respectively

[71] *rho*= .15**.

[72] Cramer's V = .17**.

[73] *rho*= .25**.

[74] *rho*= .09*, *rho*= .09*, *rho*= .16** and *rho*= .13** respectively.

[75] Correlations significant at the level of .001.

[76] All coefficients are significant at .001 and greater than .13.

[77] Regarding the question of trust in institutions, there is one important methodological difference in two studies. In the study from 2015, young people expressed their confidence on a four-point scale, and in 2018 on a five-point scale. In order to overcome the difficulty of comparing data, the responses of young people in both cases were recoded on a scale with a range of 0 to 1 to be directly comparable.

[78] *rho*= −10*, *rho*= −13* and *rho*= −.16** respectively.

[79] Respondents' score for the item "We should have a leader" was subtracted from the score on the question "Democracy is the best form of government". The positive values on the given figure imply that young people prefer democracy over a strong leader and *vice versa*.

[80] *rho*= −.11*.

[81] It is important to note that such analyses have been carried out only on part of the overall sample, which includes young people who gave some kind of response to the question on left-right orientation.

[82] t(946) = −2.91* and *rho*= −.10*.

[83] *rho*= .22** and *rho*= .17** respectively.

[84] *rho*= −.11* and *rho*= −.18** respectively.

[85] *rho*= .30**.

[86] *rho*= .10*.

[87] *rho*= .78**, *rho*= .68** and *rho*= .64** respectively.

TABLE OF FIGURES

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