



WFD

WESTMINSTER
FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY

Youth emigration and political distrust in Serbia

Western Balkans
Democracy Initiative



Funded by
UK Government

Intro

Dear readers,

Welcome to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy's survey of Serbian citizens' views on emigration, political alienation and their value-based orientations vis-à-vis democracy. This is the second consecutive survey in the past year that we present to you as part of the Western Balkans Democracy Initiative programme. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy's vision is entrenched in the idea of facilitating for political actors in Serbia the evidence-based public policy creation centred on citizen needs, as well as how to communicate it more efficiently to the electorate.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) has been focusing on the issues of political alienation and departure of young people from Serbia since 2018. All our projects are designed to respond to the challenges identified in these surveys. Relying on the past surveys' data and analyses, we have supported the (Re)Turning Point initiative dealing with circular migrations, and, in collaboration with the Serbian Prime Minister's Office, we also backed the Talent MeetUp 2.0 conference in December 2019.

This survey was conducted in February 2020, on the eve of the coronavirus outbreak in Serbia and declaration of a state of emergency in the country. One should bear in mind that the world has changed with the emergence of Covid-19 threat, hence, we would kindly ask you to look at these results in the context of the situation as it was at the beginning of the pandemic. The report itself is divided into two parts. The first sets out descriptions of respondents' views and the values of Serbian citizens extrapolated from a sample of 1,191 interviewees. The second part focuses on the issues of trust in institutions and politicians, political alienation, as well as motives and causes for an increasingly conspicuous trend of young people's departure from Serbia.

The survey was designed and coordinated by Dusan Vucicevic and Nikola Jovic, and supported by Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

WFD would like to express its gratitude for their commitment to this survey and the most valuable analysis that they have provided. We would also like to acknowledge the support from the British Government without which this study would have not been possible. Surveys, such as this one, are important if we are to open a conversation about youth emigration and general political distrust-related issues, as well as to foster informed discussions and create fact-based policies. We hope that this survey will help institutions, political organisations and all the stakeholders concerned to feel the pulse of Serbian citizens, especially the young ones.



Zeljka Pantelic
Country Representative, Serbia
Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Survey Methodology

Time: The survey was conducted from 15 to 22 February 2020

Data collection method: Face to face (F2F), field survey (D2D)

Control of interviewers' work: Google maps (GPS) live location sharing

Type: Pen-and-paper survey

Survey instrument: Personal interview questionnaire comprising 60 questions

Population: 18+ yrs of age (6,724,949 voters)

Sample type: Representative stratified three-stage random sample

Sampling unit: Constituency - polling place territory (number of units: 120)

Stratification criterion: Small, medium-sized and large constituencies

Randomization of respondents: (1) constituency; (2) household; (3) first following birthday

Sample size: 1,191 respondents

Interval of trust: + / - 2,8 for occurrences with expected incidence of 50%

Sample description

- **Age:** Average respondent age is 43
- **Sex:** 50.5% women & 49.5% men
- **Regions:** Percentage of respondents by region

Belgrade	24.3%
Vojvodina	26.6%
Central and West Serbia	29.4%
East and South Serbia	19,7%

- **Type of settlement:** urban 59.8% and rural 40.2%
- **Level of education:**

Primary school or less	28.7%
Three-year secondary school	8.7%
Four-year secondary school	34.5%
College	11.2%
University	14.4%
Master and doctoral degree	2.5%

- **Employment status:**

Employed in public sector	13.7%
Employed in private sector	24.1%
Self-employed	8.7%
Unregistered work	3.5%
Unemployed (actively looking for a job)	8.5%
Unemployed (not looking actively for a job)	9.5%
Pensioner	25.4%
Dependent (secondary school pupils; students)	6.6%

- **Financial situation:**

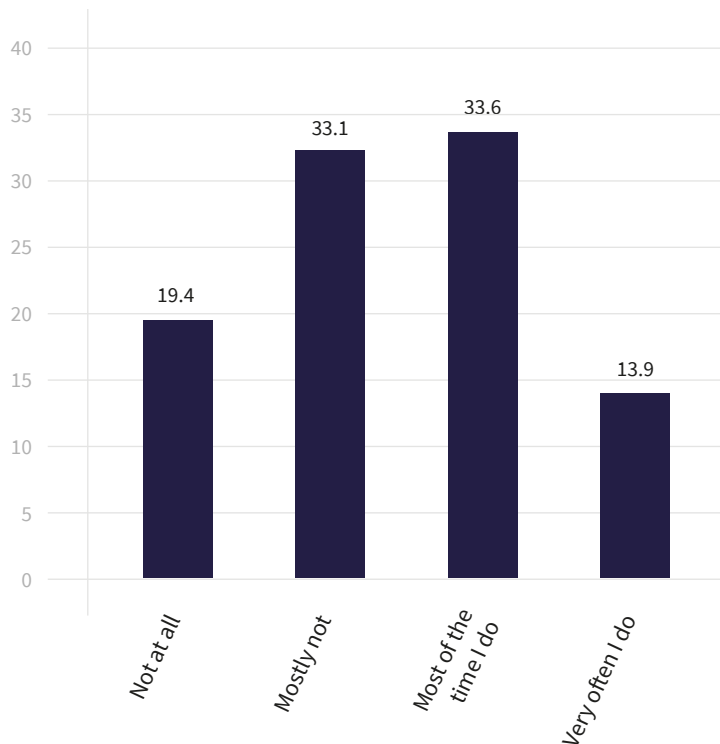
With current earnings, it's very difficult to make ends meet	19,4%
We just about manage, but it's a far cry from any sort of stability	43,6%
It isn't that bad, we've got enough money for our needs	33,6%
It's great, we've got enough money so we don't have to worry about it	3,4%

- **Looking back at my family's experience in the past ten years or so, would you say your family are winners or losers of the transition?**

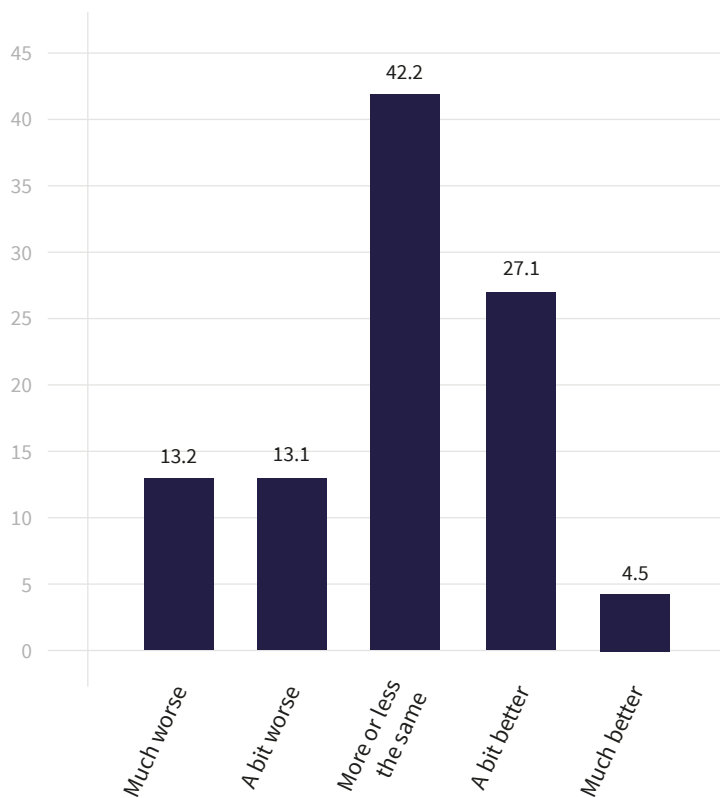
We're totally 'transition losers'	16,1%
We're mostly 'transition losers'	23,4%
We're neither losers, nor winners	49,2%
We're mostly 'transition winners'	9,7%
We're totally 'transition winners'	1,5%

Survey results

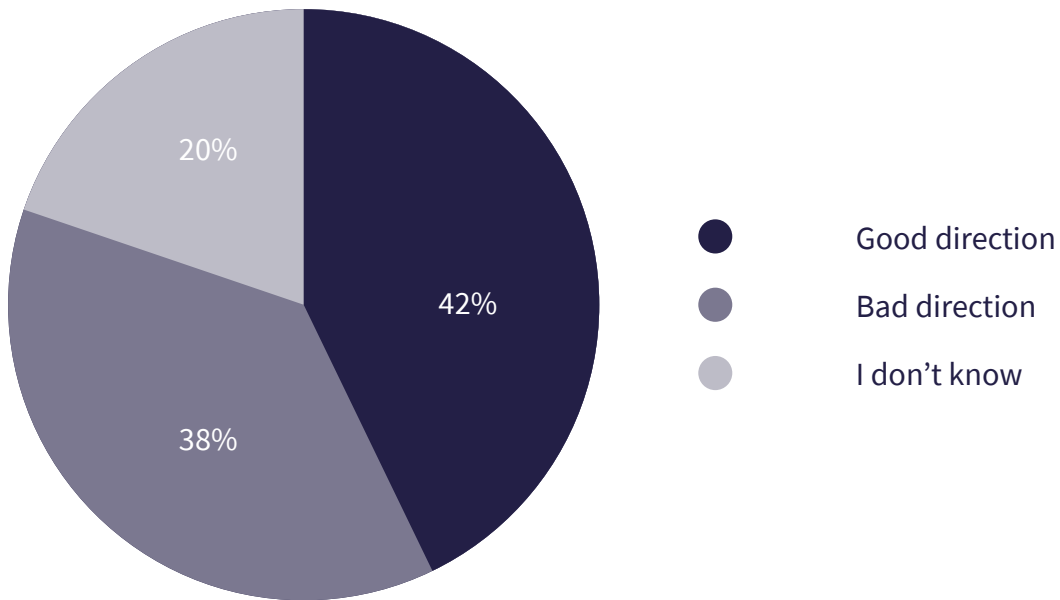
- **How often do you follow political developments?**



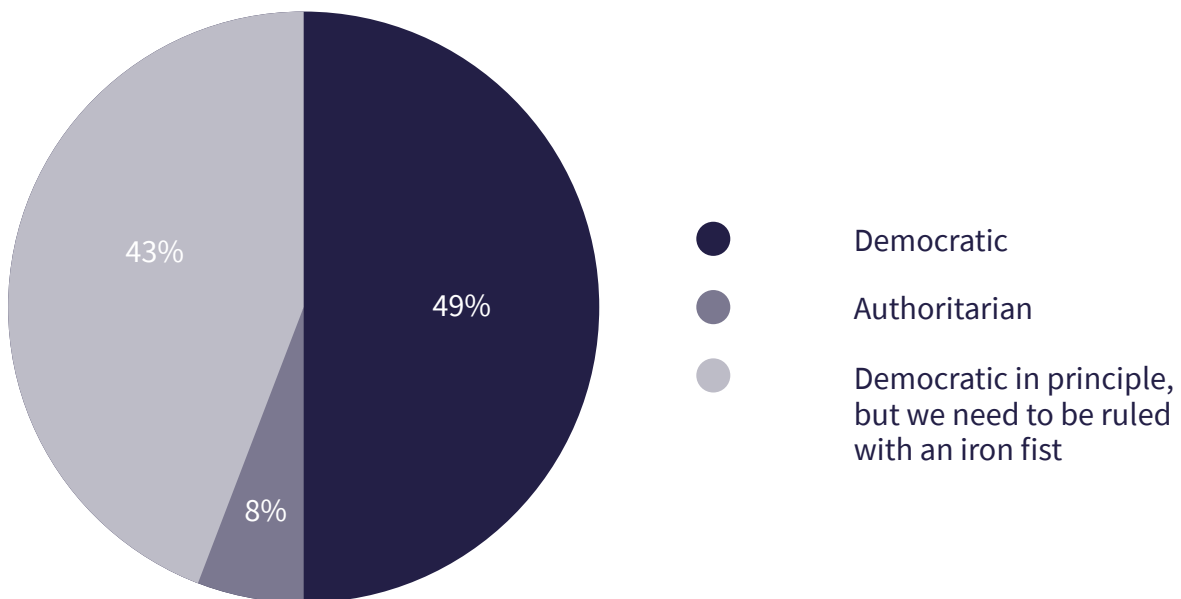
- **What do you think how Serbian economy will fare in the following several years (3-5 years)?**



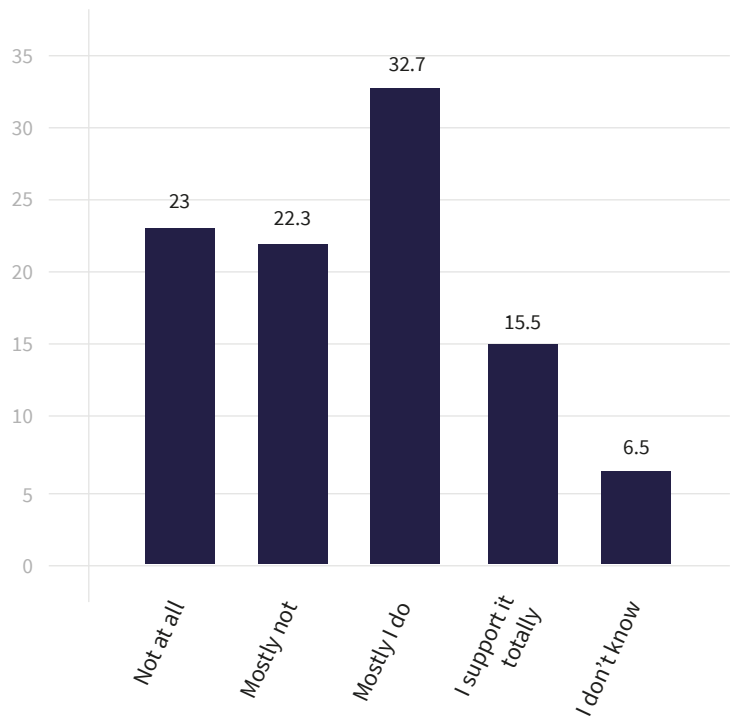
• In general, would you say Serbia is moving in a good or bad direction?



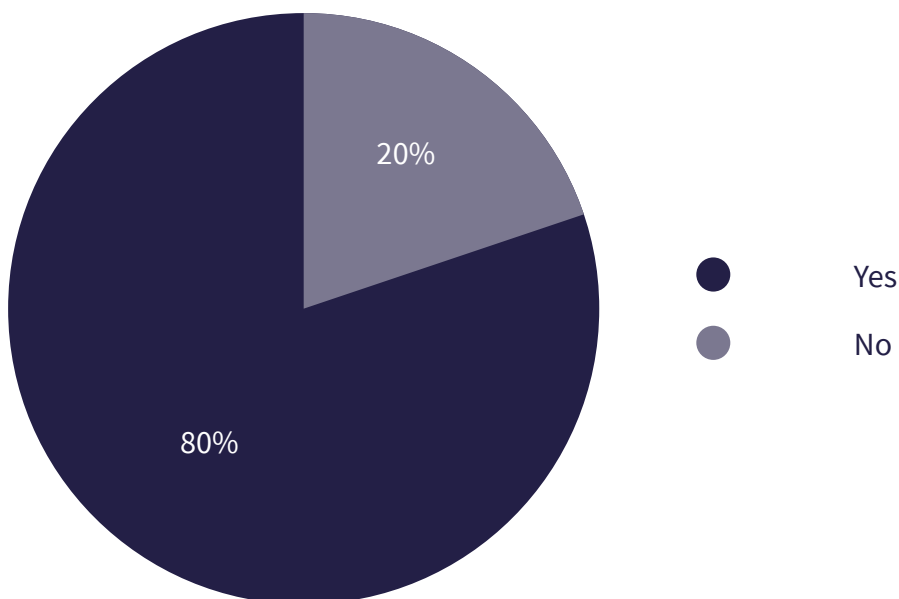
• In your opinion, what type of government would suit Serbia best?



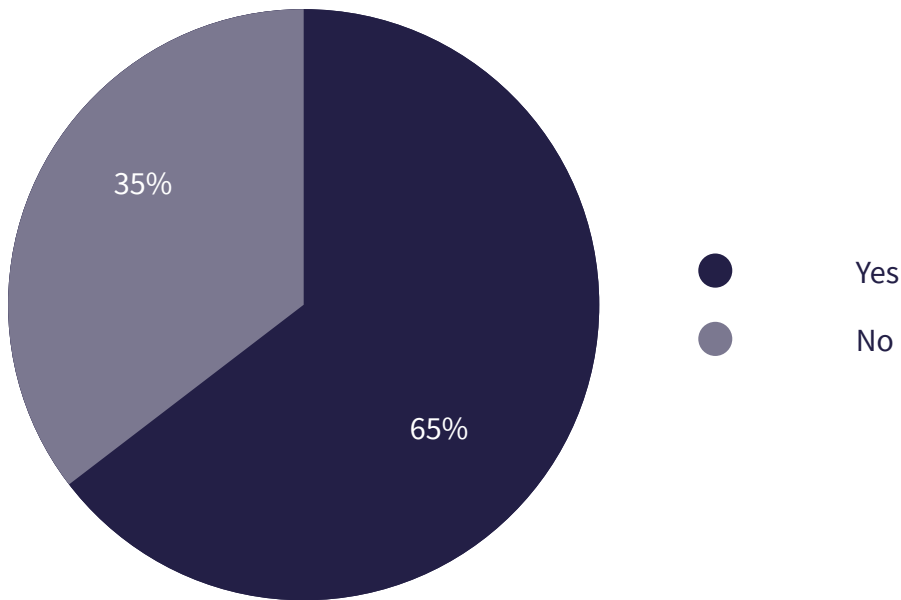
• Do you support Serbia's EU membership?



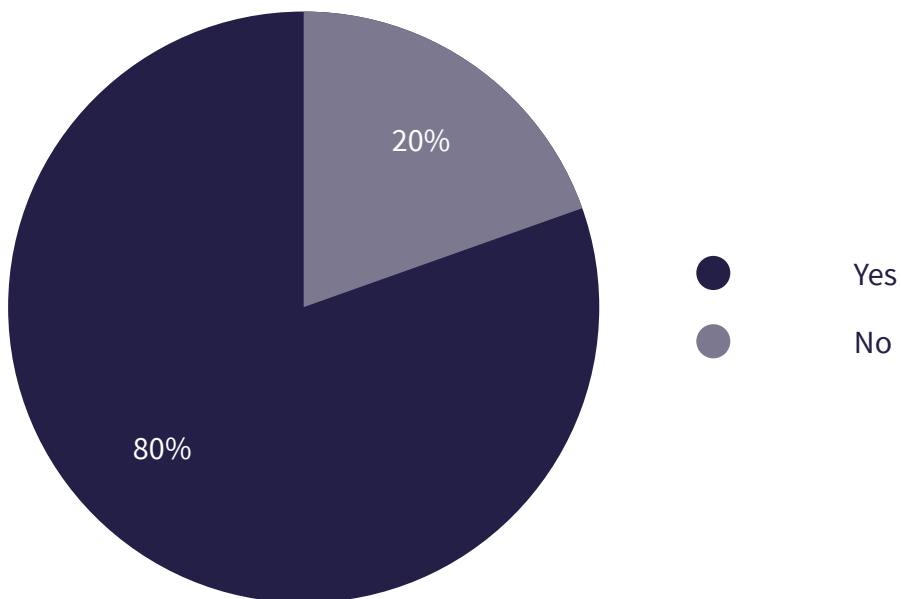
• Are you a member of a political party?



• Do you vote regularly?

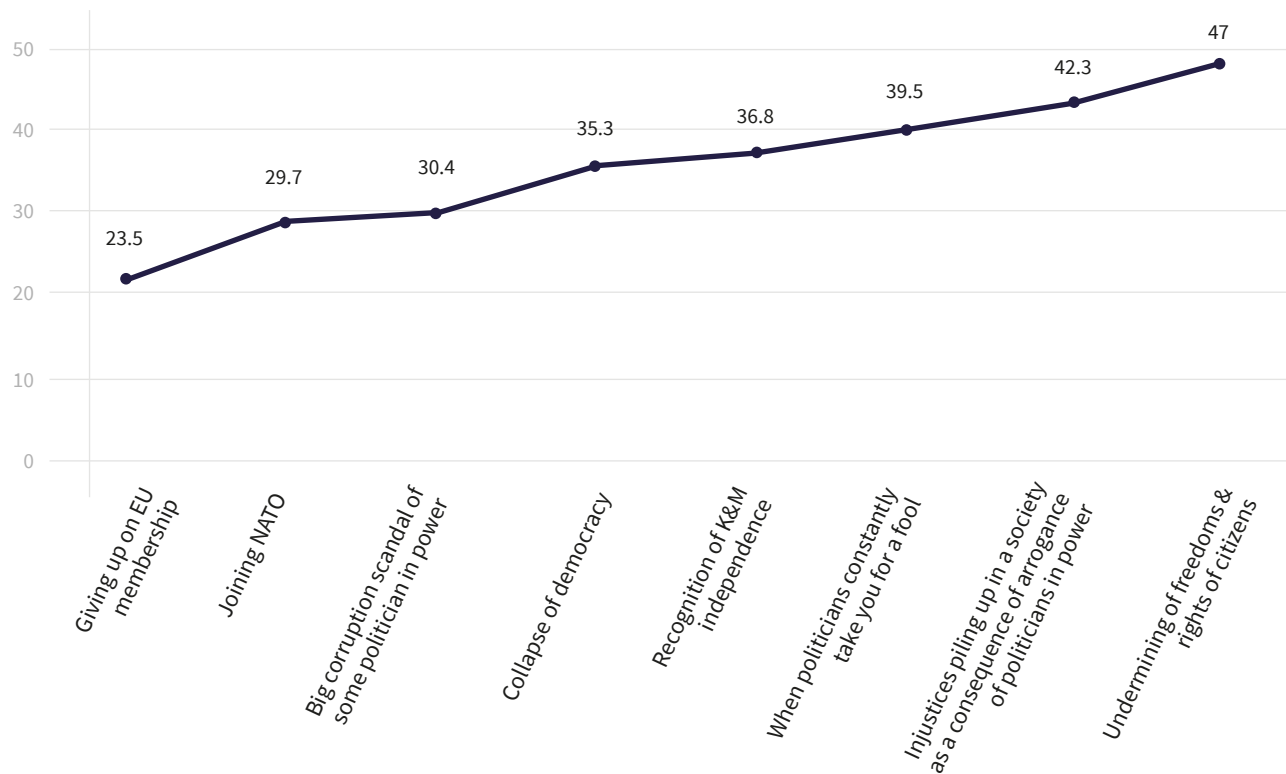


• Do you think voting may change the situation in Serbia?



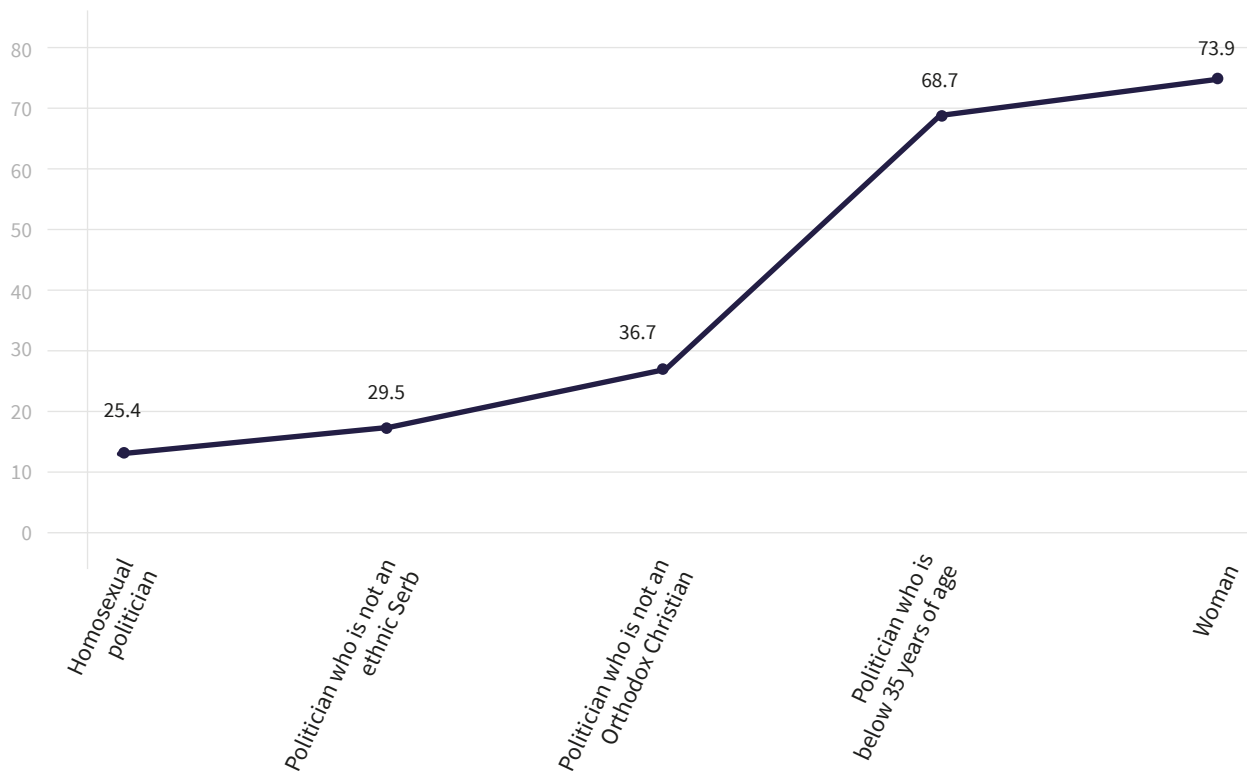
• Which of the following situations might motivate you to become more socially engaged?

	Possible	Not possible
Giving up on EU membership	76,5%	23,5%
Recognition of Kosovo and Metohija's independence	63,2%	36,8%
Joining NATO	70,3%	29,7%
Collapse of democracy	64,7%	35,3%
Undermining of citizen freedoms and rights	53%	47%
Big corruption scandal involving some politician in power	69,6%	30,4%
Injustices piling up in a society as a consequence of arrogance of politicians in power	57,7%	42,3%
When politicians are constantly taking you for a fool	60,5%	39,5%

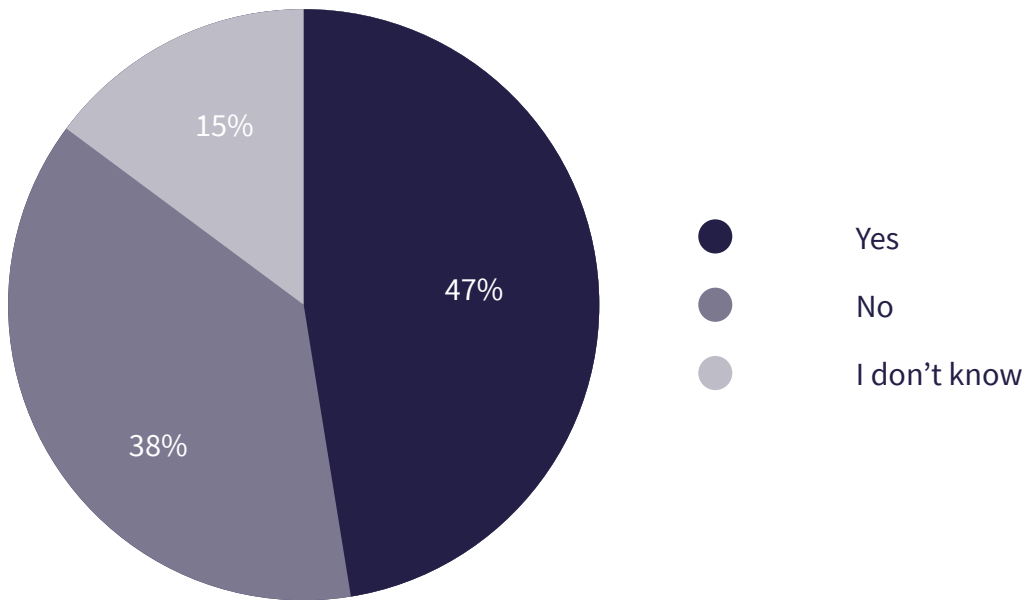


• In the following presidential election, would you vote for...?

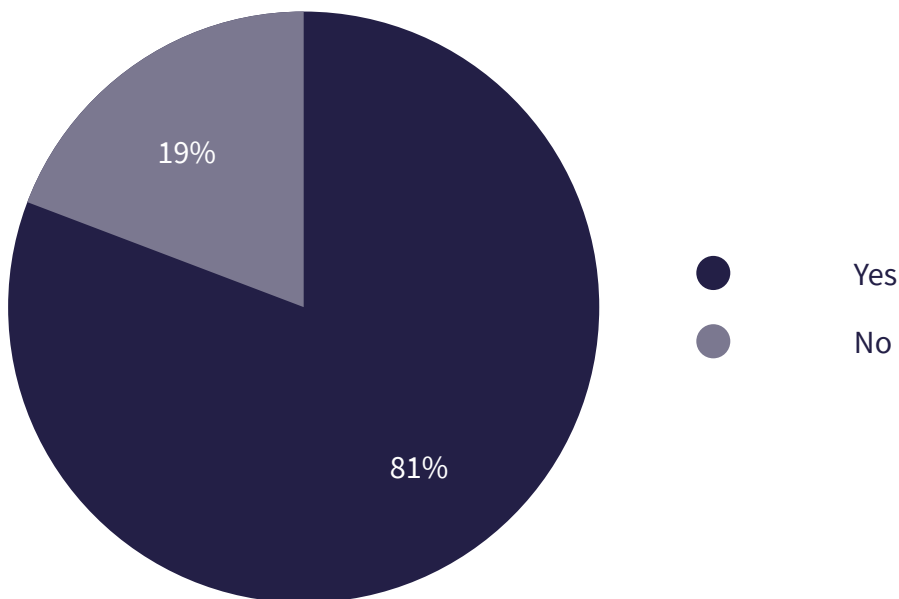
	I would not	I would
Politician below 35 years of age	31,3%	68,7%
Woman	26,1%	73,9%
Homosexual politician	74,6%	25,4%
Politician who is not an Orthodox Christian	63,3%	36,7%
Politician who is not an ethnic Serb	70,5%	29,5%



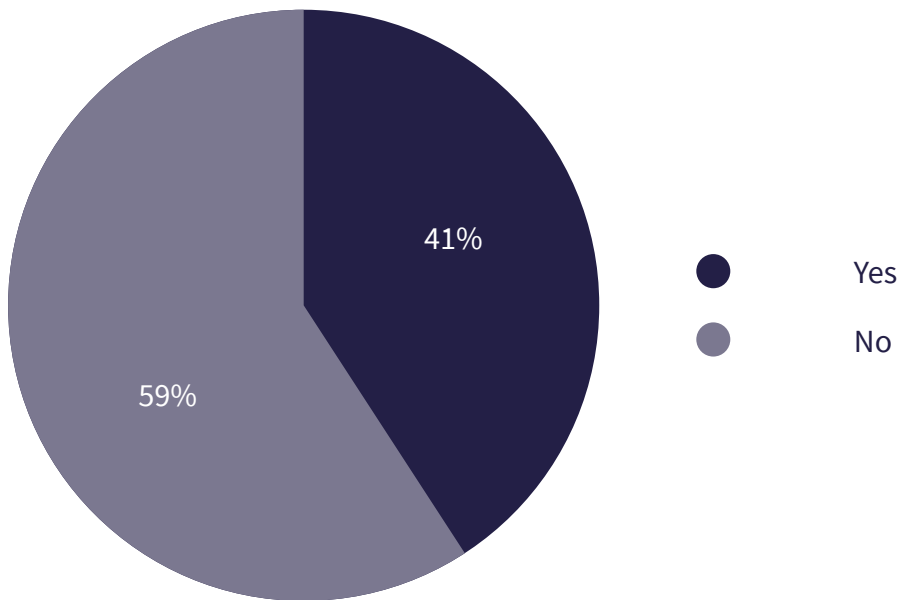
- **Would you vote for a political party with whose views you disagree if this would help you or your family member get a job?**



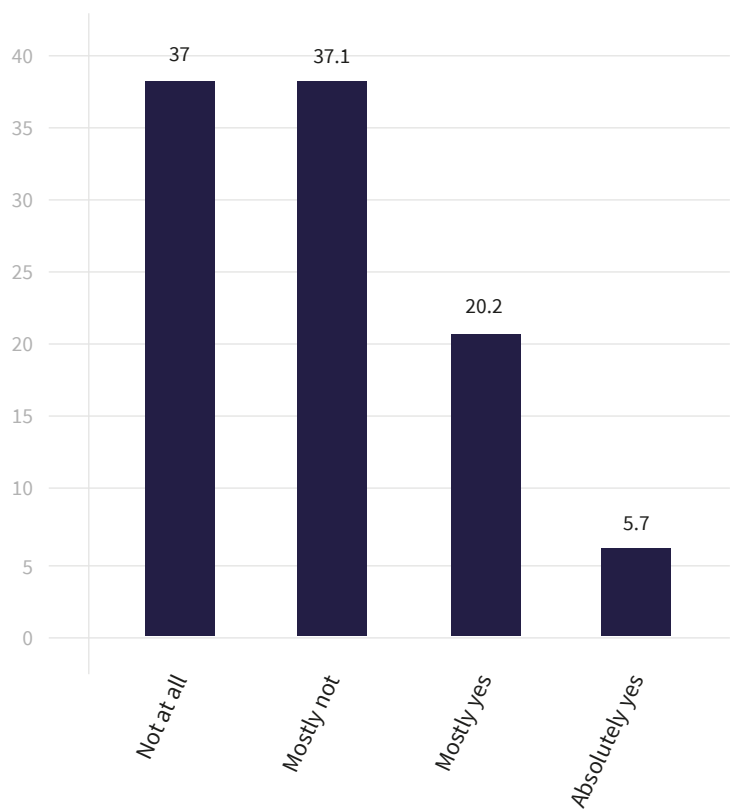
- **Is membership in a political party in Serbia crucial for career advancement, particularly in civil service?**



• Are there politicians in Serbia whom you trust?



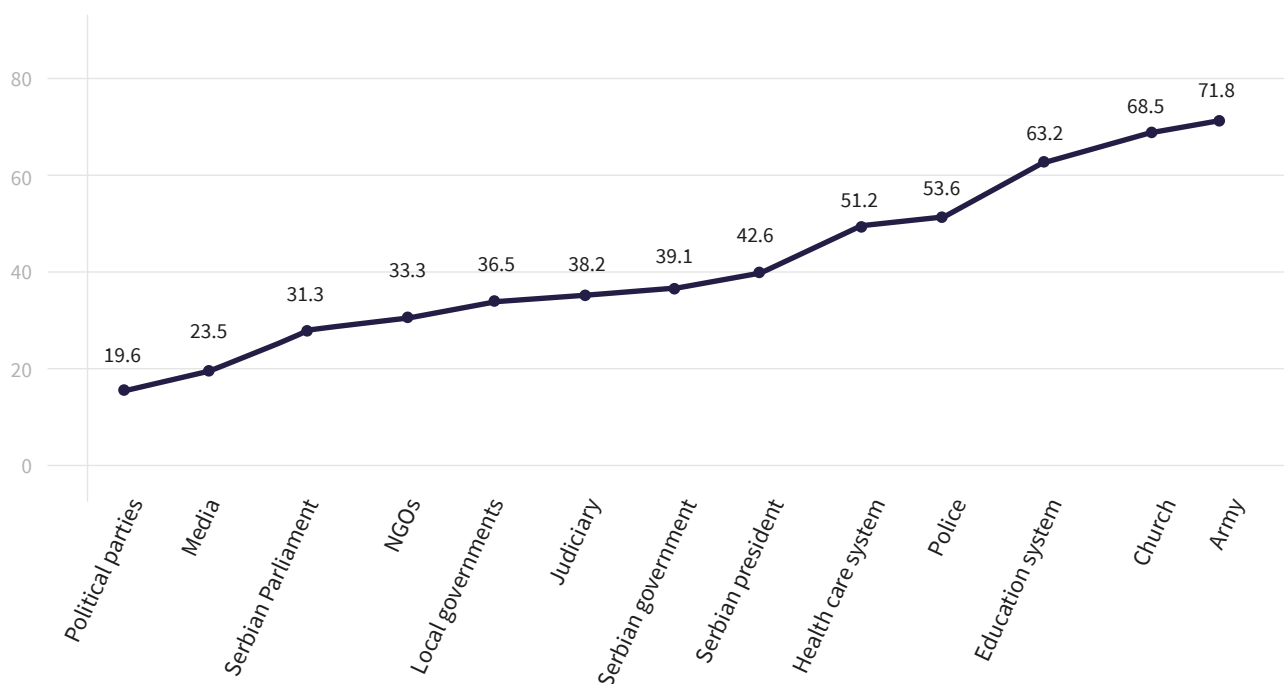
• Do you have a feeling that politicians are addressing you?



• What kind of a leader would you like Serbia to have?

Type of leadership	
<p>Authoritarian type: I'd like to see someone rule Serbia just like generals command the army. I want to see some order, respect for hierarchy, that no one's allowed to do whatever he wants, but that there's someone with authority to make decisions as he sees fit and take responsibility for them.</p>	12,8%
<p>Populist type: I'd like to see a man of the people rule Serbia, someone who's one of us. Precisely because the small elite do not make up the majority of population, I believe it's important Serbia should be ruled by someone who knows the people and their interests the best. Such a leader would say what people think, feel and want without hesitation and he'd know when the people are ready for a decision, without asking.</p>	28,7%
<p>Paternalistic type: I'd like to see someone rule Serbia in a way fathers do that in their families. He should respect us, take care of us and make decisions that are important to us, but, when needed, to make decisions with which we disagree, even to be, at times, strict with us.</p>	15,4%
<p>Democratic type: I'd like to see someone rule Serbia who has respect for institutions and who takes responsibility for his decisions. Such a leader would consult citizens about important stuff and make decisions taking into account citizens' views and his knowledge. Although he's the one taking a decision in the end and taking big responsibility, still I think it's important citizens should take part in it.</p>	43,1%

• To what a degree do you trust following institutions?



• **Questions about democracy and importance of representative aspects of democracy:**

	Average mark on 1-10 scale
How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?	7.6
To what an extent is our country governed democratically today?	5.2
Some people say it doesn't matter at all who's in power. Others say it's very important who's in power. How important is it for you who's in power?	7.9
Some say whom people vote for won't affect at all developments in the country. Others say whom people vote for may heavily affect developments in the country. In your view, how much might whom people vote for influence developments in the country?	7

• **Political alienation**

Total score for political alienation index from 0 (no alienation) to 1 (high degree of alienation) is 0.52.

	I disagree	I agree
One shouldn't fall foul of the government and those in power.	45%	55%
It's up to us to solve social problems in our midst, and not to wait for someone else to solve them.	20,5%	79,5%
One shouldn't air in public one's opinion. You never know if you'll suffer because of that.	43,4%	56,6%
People join political parties mostly to find good jobs.	11,9%	88,1%
Civil society organisations mostly attract people with nothing better to do but complain.	47,2%	52,8%
Between two parliamentary election cycles ordinary citizens can't influence the situation in the country.	29,6%	70,4%
If I were politically active or not, it doesn't matter as this would not have an impact on changes in the society.	34,7%	65,3%
Joining forces and political activism of citizens may well curb arbitrariness of politicians in power.	43,8%	56,2%
Civil society organisations are important for development of democracy and resolving many social problems.	36,9%	63,1%
Even if it isn't certain that important changes will occur, it's still very important to be politically active.	49%	51%

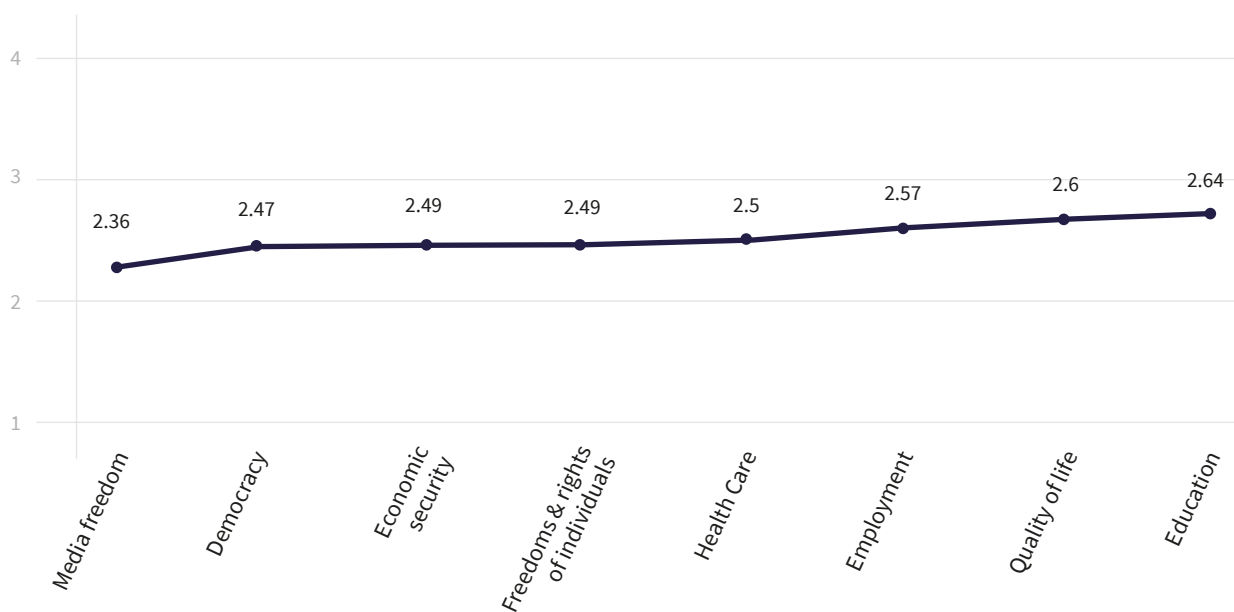
• **Inglhart’s instrument to measure Modernization / Postmodernization:**

Modernization	76,5%	23,5%
Postmodernization	63,2%	36,8%

• **When you think about the future, how do you see the following aspects of life in the next 10 years?**

	It'll be worse	It'll be better
Quality of life	41,6%	58,4%
Employment	41%	59%
Economic security	45,4%	54,6%
Education	40,1%	59,9%
Health care	47,5%	52,5%
Democracy	48,1%	51,9%
Freedoms and rights of individuals	46,7%	53,3%
Media freedom	52,8%	47,2%

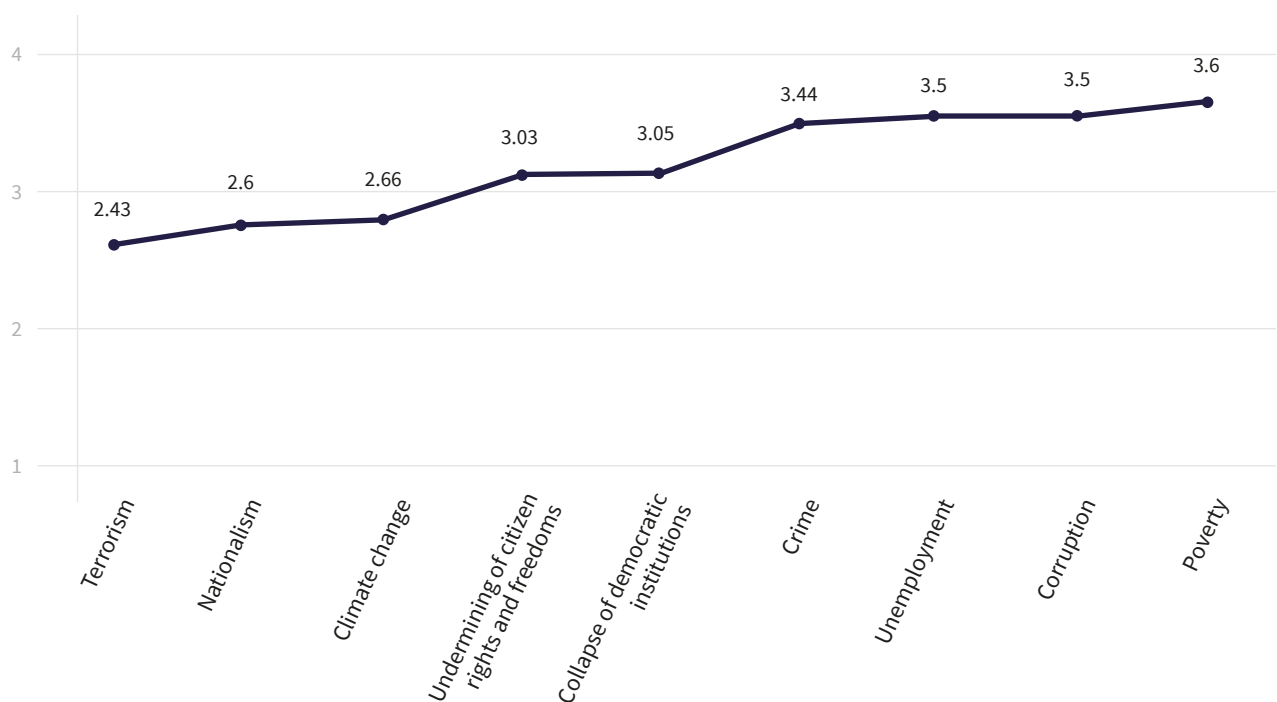
• **Perception of improvements in the following aspects of life: average mark on 1-4 scale**



• How negative an impact on the life of Serbian citizens do the following phenomena have?

	small negative impact	big negative impact
Climate change	43,1%	56,9%
Unemployment	6,4%	93,6%
Terrorism	55,7%	44,3%
Undermining of citizen rights and freedoms	26,6%	73,4%
Poverty	7%	93%
Nationalism	45,4%	54,6%
Crime	9,4%	90,6%
Corruption	9,5%	90,5%
Collapse of democratic institutions	25,5%	74,5%

• Perception of negative impact of the following phenomena on the quality of life: average mark on 1-4 scale



• Authoritarianism

Overall score for authoritarianism index from 0 (no authoritarianism) to 1 (high degree of authoritarianism) is 0.5.

	I disagree	I agree
Some political parties in Serbia should be abolished.	23,6%	76,4%
If more important issues pop up, a possibility for everyone to say what he thinks about it in the media should be restricted.	51,3%	48,7%
The opinion of the majority is always the best.	47,2%	52,8%
What's contrary to state interests should be precluded from getting published in the media.	48,9%	51,1%
Some media in Serbia should be abolished.	27,4%	72,6%
One should make it impossible for anyone to speak in the media contrary to the opinion of the majority.	66,3%	32,7%
There's no social progress without respect for authority in the family, at school and in the state.	18,1%	81,9%
It's desirable to have a single strong party dominate the political scene for a longer time.	52,2%	47,8%
The ruling party should have an absolute freedom to rule between two election cycles.	58,8%	41,2%
When calling for a general strike, trade unions threaten the safety of all of us and of our state.	63,9%	36,1%
Conflicts of various interest groups in our society are harming the general interest of the state.	41,8%	58,2%
The opposition's task is not to criticise the government, but to support its work.	72,6%	27,4%

• Political compass: Social-political views

Overall score for social-political compass index from 0 (liberal) to 1 (conservative) is 0.38.

	I disagree	I agree
When the state is under threat, the government is entitled to abolish civic freedoms in order to provide security.	48,6%	51,4%
LGBT marriages should be legalised.	78,2%	21,8%
Her career notwithstanding, the most important role of a woman is to take care of family household.	52,5%	47,5%
Possession of marijuana for personal use should be legalised.	70,1%	29,9%
Capital punishment should be an option in case of gravest crimes.	26,4%	73,6%

• Political compass: Economic views

Overall score for economic compass index from 0 (etatism) to 1 (liberalism) is 0.32.

	I disagree	I agree
Every government's duty is to provide jobs to citizens by setting up state-owned companies.	24,2%	75,8%
The state may bring about economic progress in Serbia much better than the market and private companies might.	33,2%	65,8%
The state should not grant subsidies to farms.	81,2%	18,8%
It's good the state levies more taxes on wealthy citizens in order to create better conditions for the poor with that money.	21,9%	78,1%
Theatres, museums and other cultural institutions which survive on their own revenues should not be funded by the state.	65,3%	34,7%

• Gender equality

Overall score for gender equality index from 0 (low level of gender equality) to 1 (high level of gender equality) is 0.55.

	I disagree	I agree
Roles of men and women in a family must differ because the women should be primarily dedicated to the household.	55,3%	44,7%
The man is the one to make money and feed the family.	42,2%	77,8%
We need more women in positions of power in the society.	31,3%	68,7%
It's no good when customary roles in the family change and the woman starts making more money than the man.	59,8%	40,2%
Women and men should share entirely equally household chores such as cooking, ironing and vacuum cleaning.	39,2%	60,8%
Overall, men are better politicians than women.	52%	48%

• Attitude towards migrants

Overall score for tolerance-towards-migrants index from 0 (low level of tolerance) to 1 (high level of tolerance) is 0.41.

	I disagree	I agree
Migrants are undermining security in our state.	30,5%	69,5%
Migrants must adapt to our society's values if they want to live here.	18,9%	81,1%
I'd have a hard time accepting a migrant as my first neighbour.	43,1%	56,9%
There's no danger of migrants destroying our culture and customs.	52,5%	47,5%
Migrants pose a threat to Serbian workers.	53,2%	46,8%

• Ethnocentrism

Overall score for ethnocentrism index from 0 (low level of ethnocentrism) to 1 (high level of ethnocentrism) is 0.46.

	I disagree	I agree
I can imagine a friendly relationship with a person of a different race, religion or nationality.	13,3%	86,7%
True Serbs are only those who are Orthodox Christians.	50,8%	49,2%
People who've come to live in Serbia should first give up their customs and adapt completely to Serb customs and tradition.	66,6%	33,4%
In Serbia, ethnic Serbs should not have greater rights than other inhabitants.	44,3%	55,7%
Any effort to prosecute Serb generals and soldiers for alleged crimes committed in the 1990s wars should be stopped.	39,3%	60,7%
It's good to have in the country people of different races, religions or cultures.	33,6%	66,4%
Serbia should be defined in its Constitution as a national state of exclusively Serb people.	56%	44%
In Serbia, the use of languages and alphabets of national minorities on u official premises of state institutions should be allowed.	51,2%	48,8%
Serbia has an obligation to protect the rights of all national minorities living in the country.	15,9%	84,1%
Serb tradition is richer than the tradition of most other peoples.	33,3%	66,7%
National identity preservation must be one of the government's main goals	20,8%	79,2%

- **Attitude towards various forms of government:**

	I disagree	I agree
Strong leader who doesn't need to pay much attention to the parliament and elections	55,6%	44,4%
Experts who, instead of the Government, make decisions based on their own assessment as to what's the best for the state	42,3%	57,7%
Military government in the state	62,4%	27,6%
Democratic political system	16,8%	83,2%

- **Trust in election**

Overall score for trust-in-election index from 0 (low level of trust) to 1 (high level of trust) is 0.43.

	I disagree	I agree
Ballots are honestly counted.	59,8	40,2
Opposition candidates are prevented from entering the election race.	63,7	36,3
TV news coverage favours the ruling party.	25,4	74,6
Bribing voters	24,8	75,2
Journalists report honestly on the election.	66,1	33,9
Electoral officials are honest.	66,7	33,3
The rich are buying elections.	31,9	68,1
Voters are threatened with physical violence at polling places.	67,3	32,7

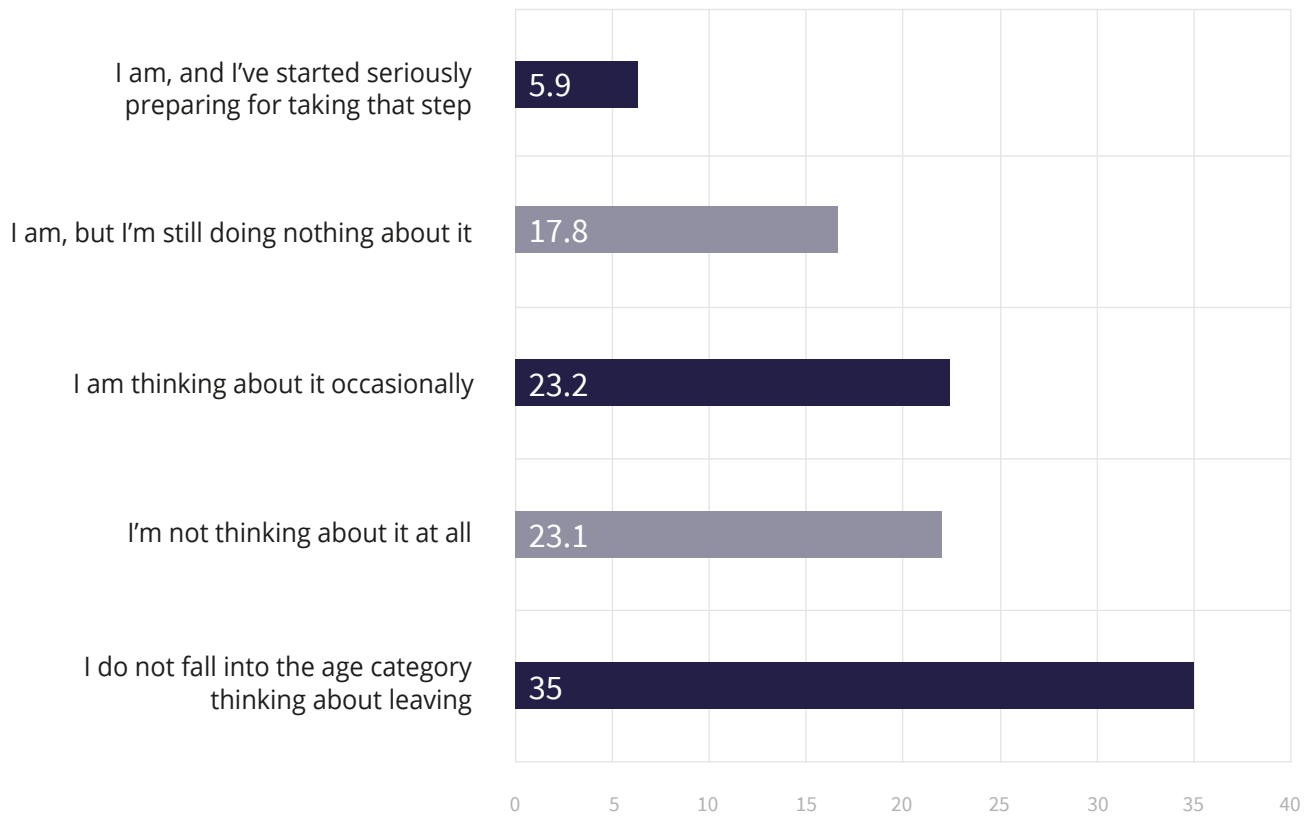
• Trust in politicians

Overall score for trust-in-politicians index from 0 (low level of trust) to 1 (high level of trust) is 0.34.

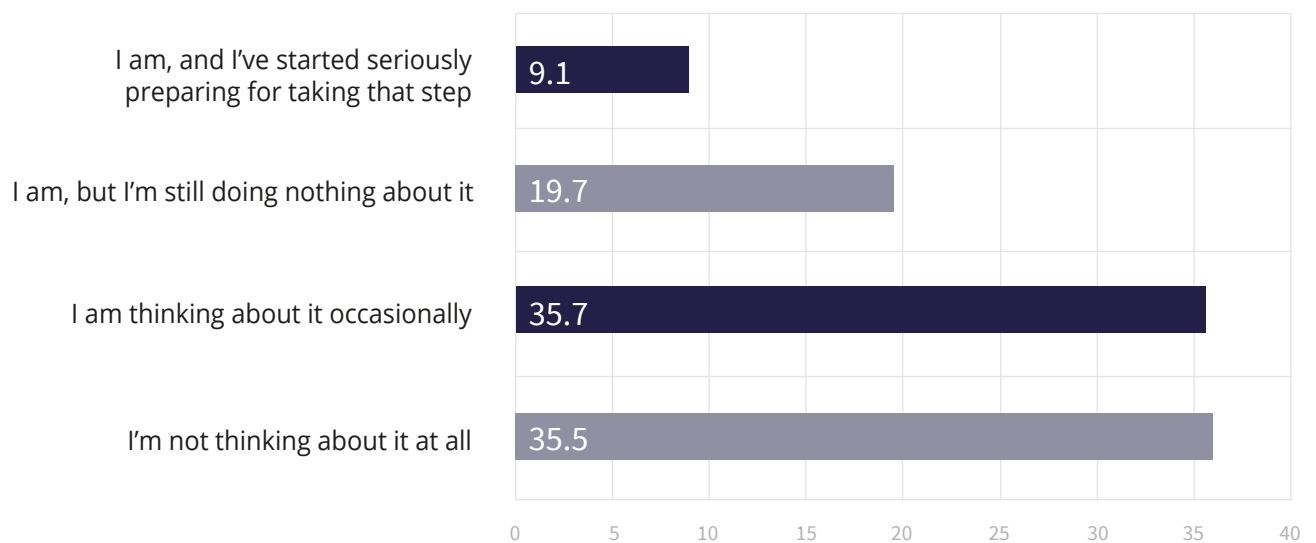
	I disagree	I agree
Generally speaking, politicians are competent	63,4%	36,6%
The government is reckless with excessive public spending.	27,6%	72,4%
Politicians mostly know what to do.	63,2%	36,8%
Politicians are usually trying to help their voters.	61,9%	38,1%
Politicians are mostly looking after their own interests instead of trying to help the citizens.	23,1%	76,9%
Politicians mostly do not understand the problems ordinary people are facing.	26,7%	73,3%
Politicians mostly tell the truth.	81,3%	18,7%
Government ministers are poorly informing us about what they do.	30,3%	59,7%
Governments distort facts so as to make their policies look good.	20,1%	79,9%
When things go awry, politicians mostly won't admit their mistakes.	74,2%	25,8%
Politicians gladly make pre-election promises, but forget about them thereafter.	12,5%	87,5%
Politicians are trying to fulfill their promises.	61,3%	38,7%
Politicians constantly change their views.	20,7%	79,3%
The Government treats equally every group in the society.	64,1%	35,9%

Emigration

• **Are you actively thinking about leaving Serbia?**

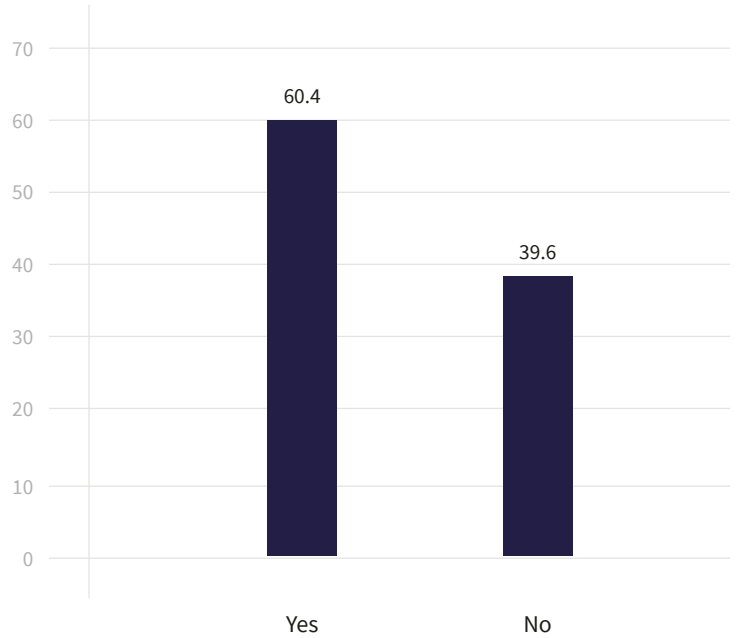


• **Without older population**

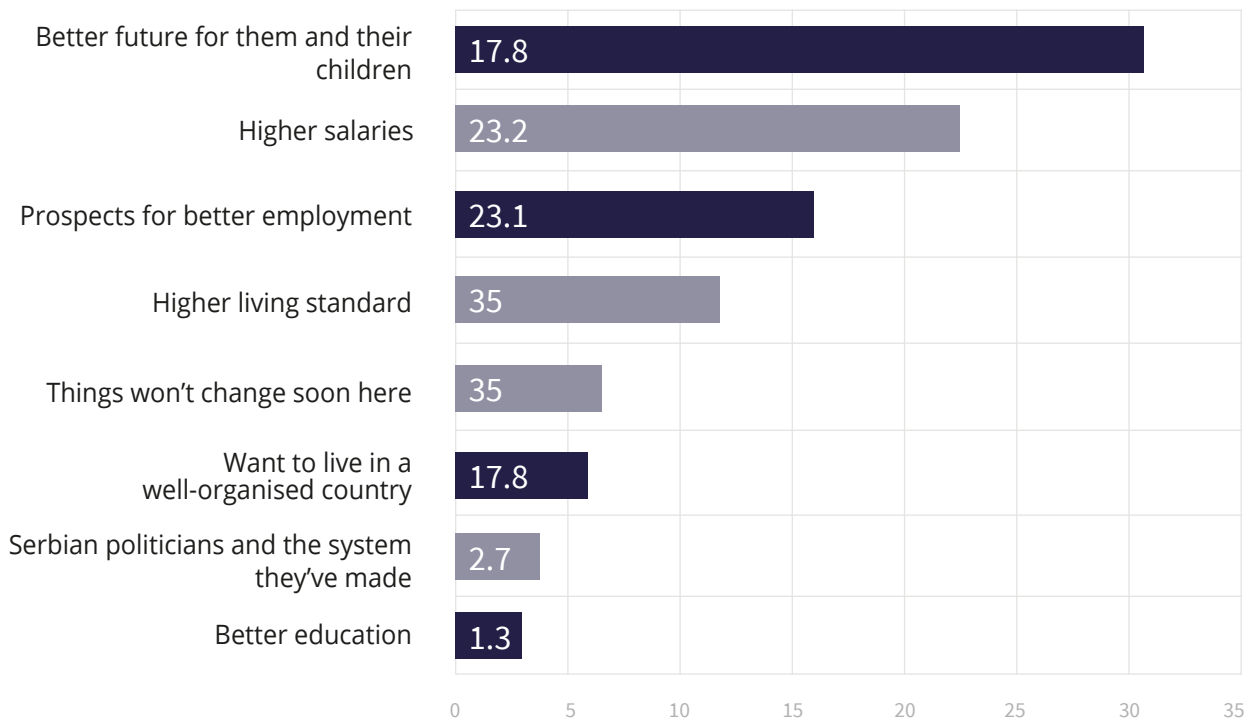


Views on emigration among older respondents

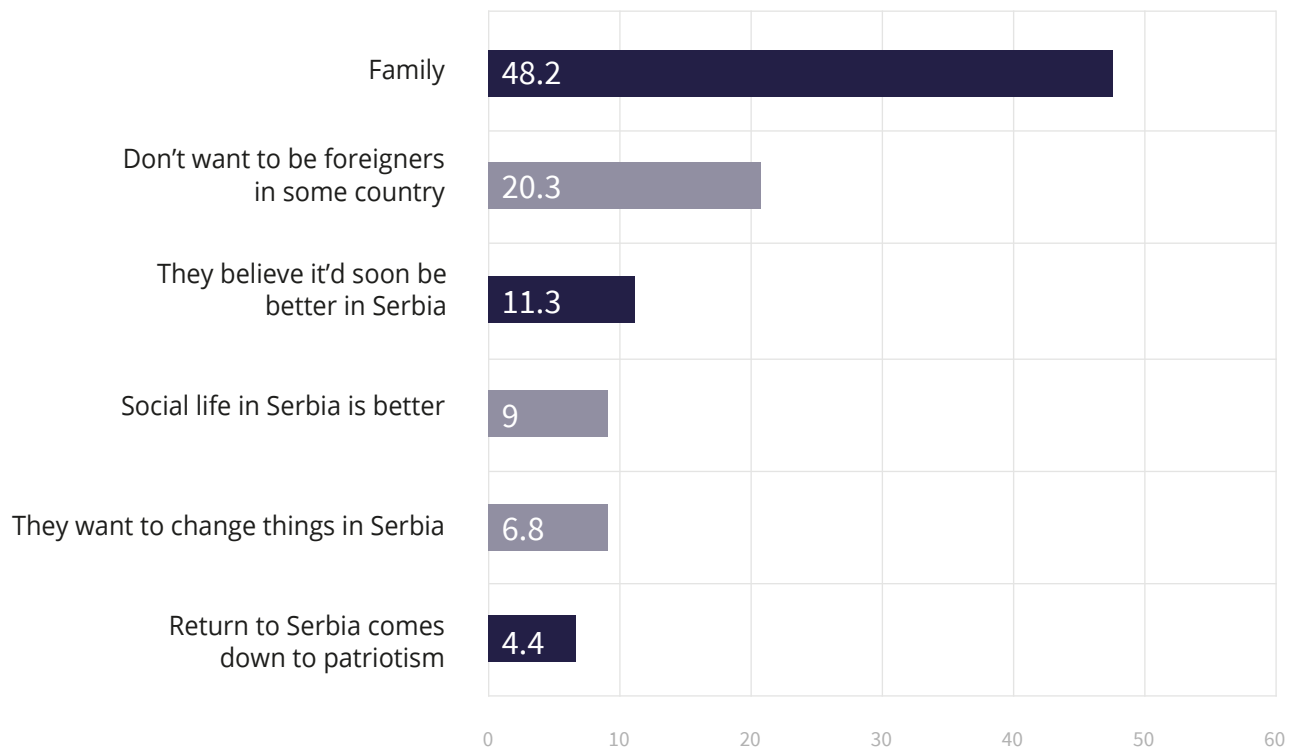
- Are your children or grandchildren planning to leave Serbia?



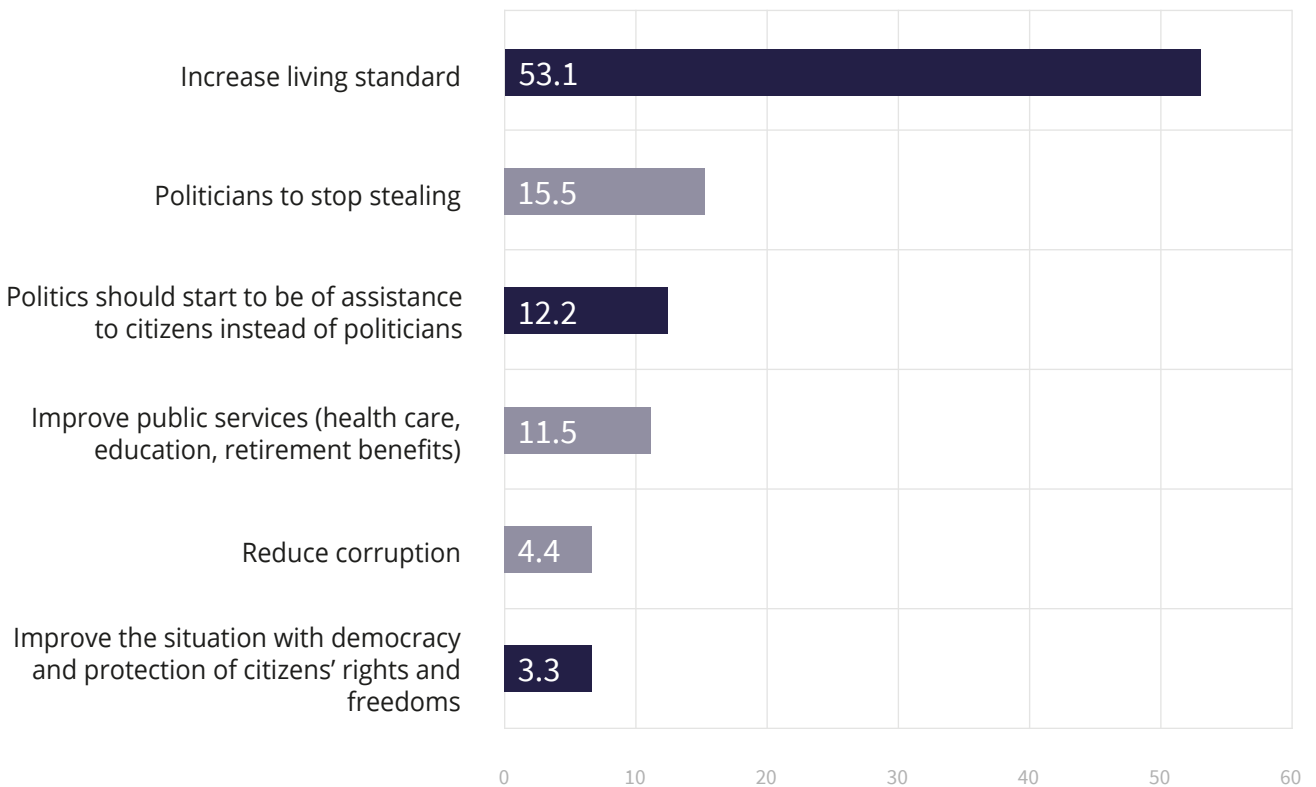
- Why do you think young people are leaving?



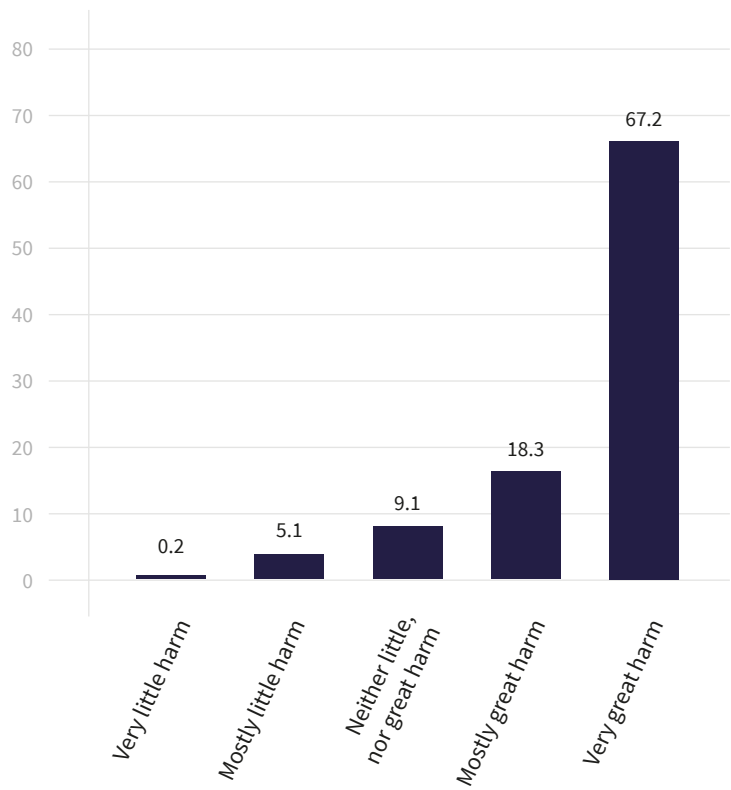
• **Why do you think they would return?**



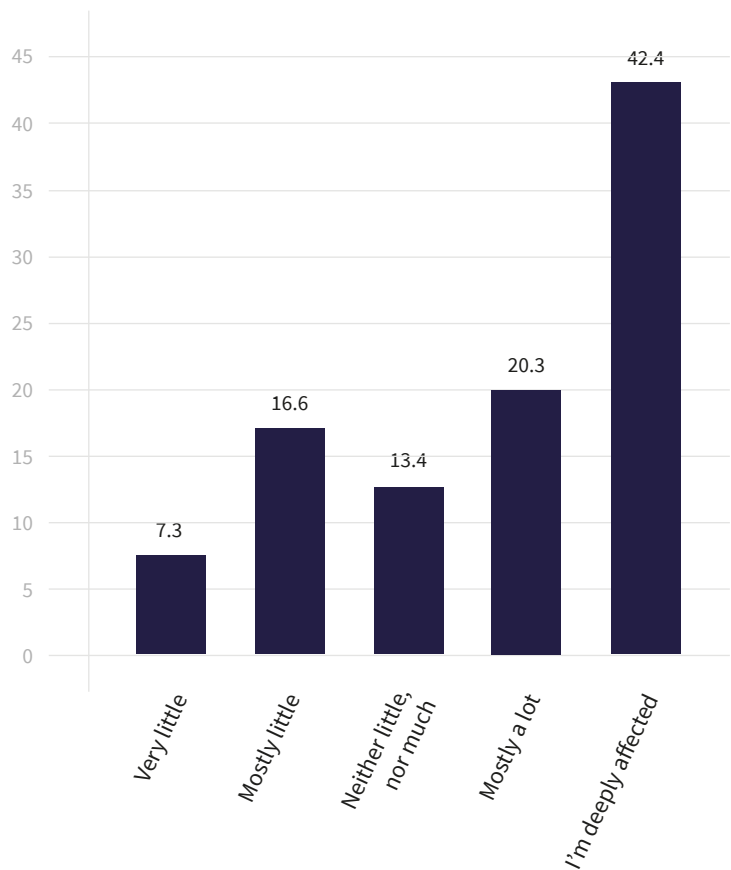
• **What does the state need to change first so that the people wouldn't leave?**



- **What do you think how much is Serbia harmed by having its people leaving the country?**

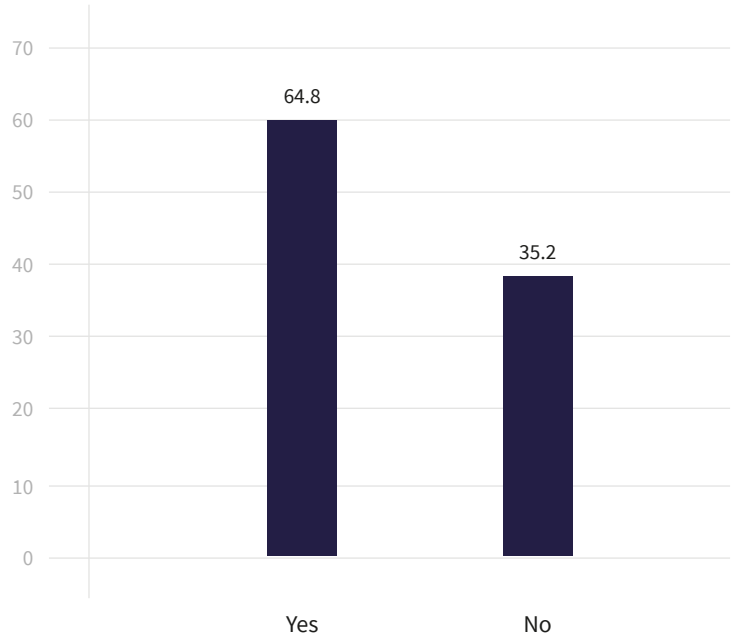


- **How much are you personally affected by seeing people leave Serbia?**

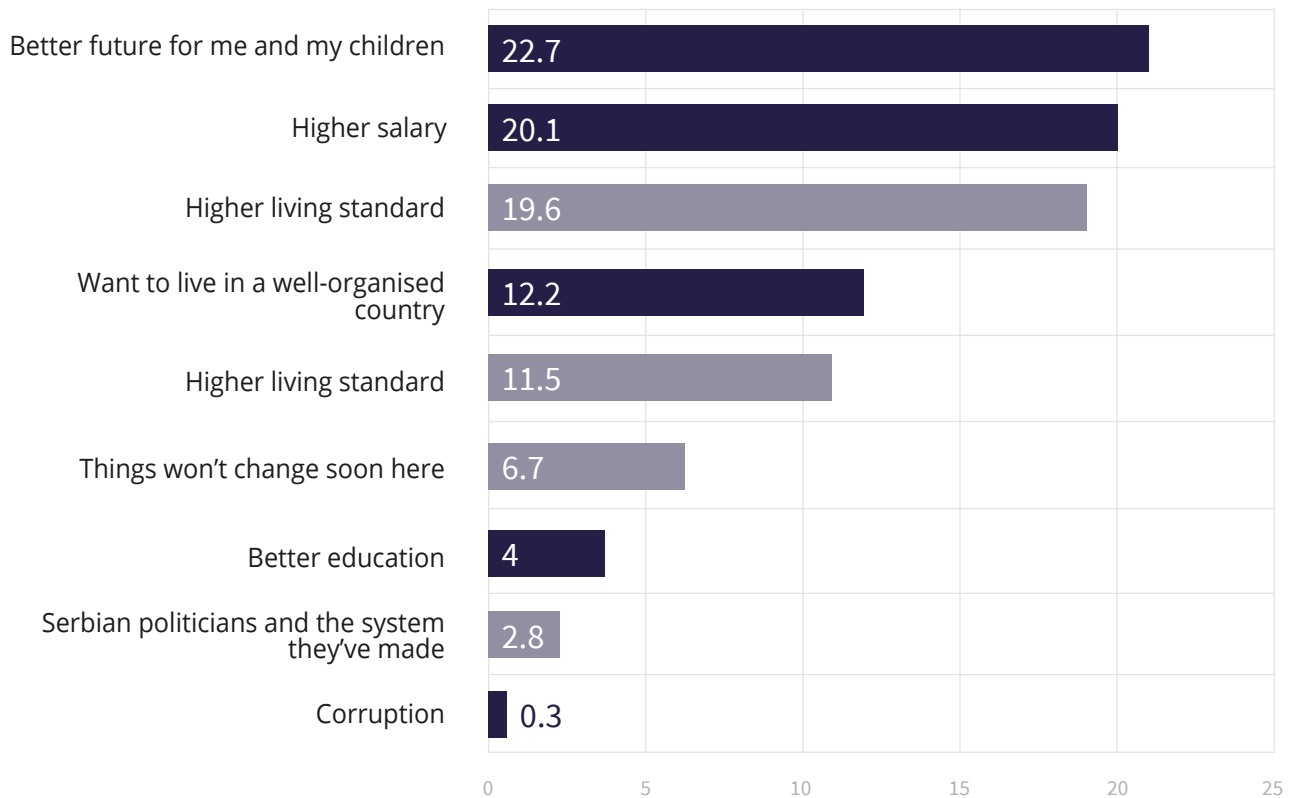


Views on emigration among young respondents

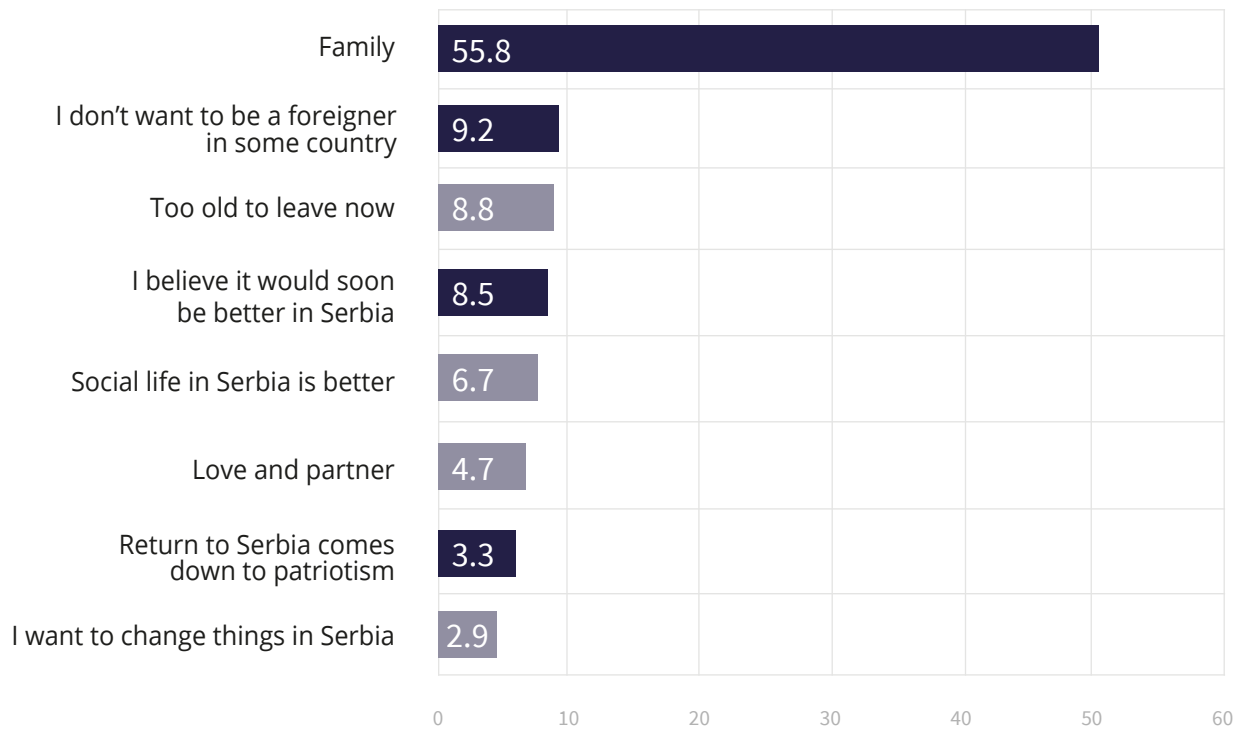
• **If you were to get a good enough chance to leave, would you leave?**



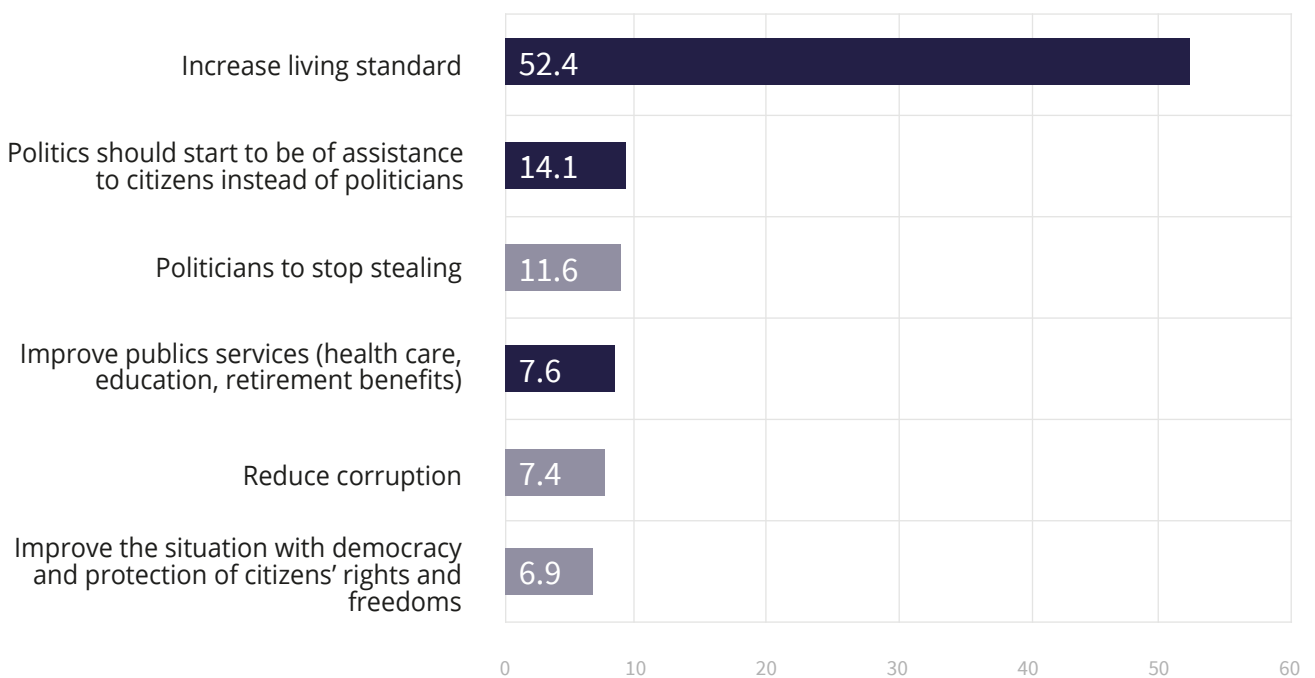
• **What is your crucial reason for thinking about leaving Serbia?**



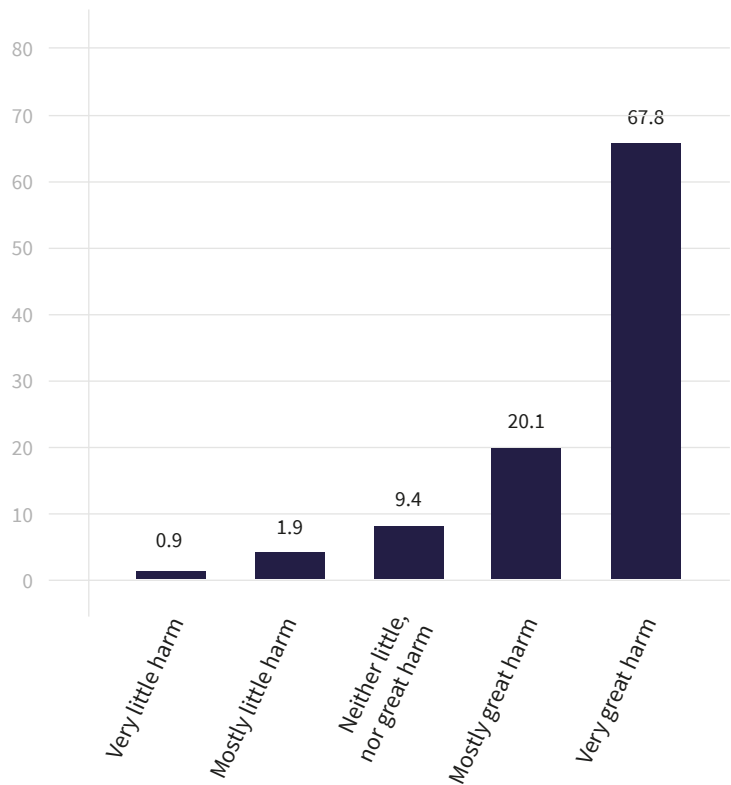
• **Why would you stay above all?**



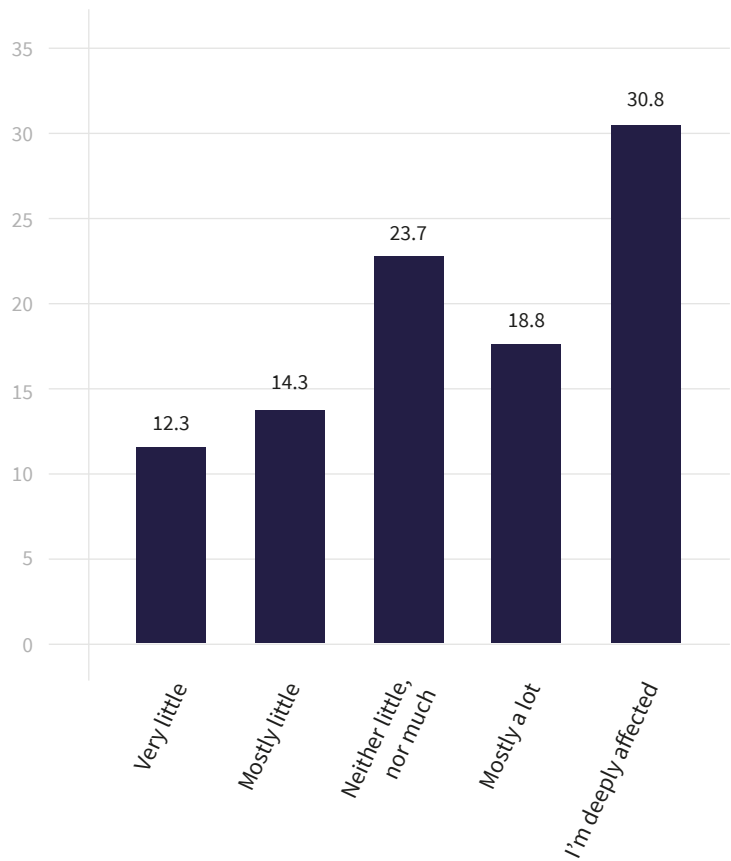
• **What does the state need to change first so that the people wouldn't leave?**



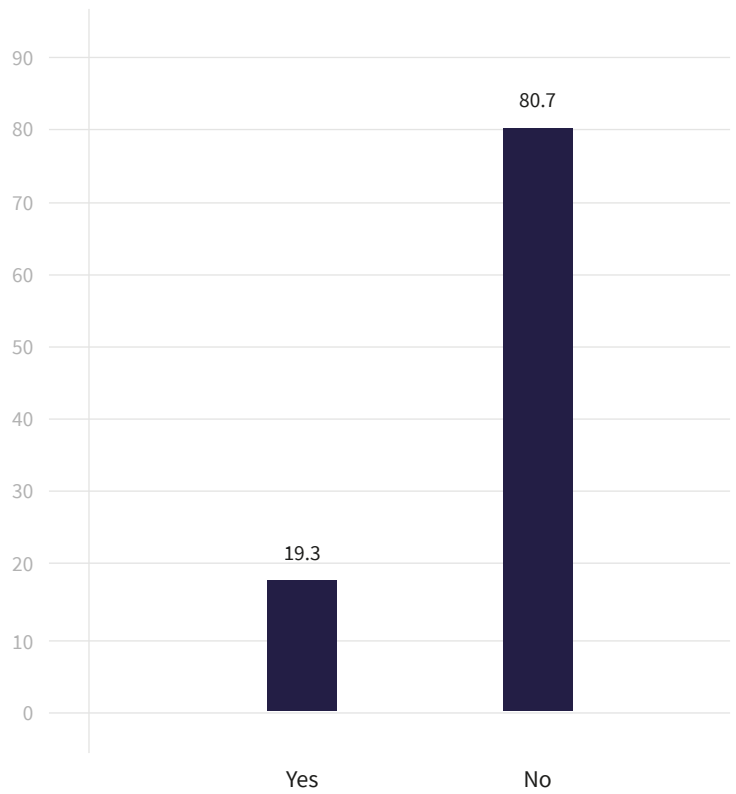
• **What do you think how much is Serbia harmed by having its people leaving the country?**



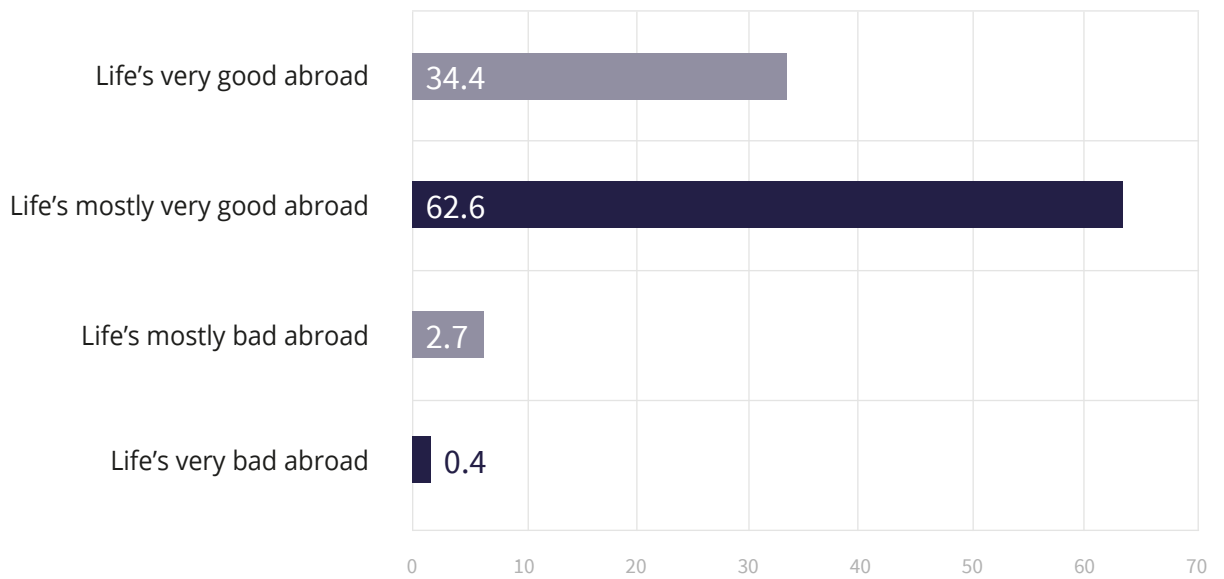
• **How much are you personally affected by seeing people leave Serbia?**



- **If a friend of yours living abroad were to call you, would you advise him to return?**



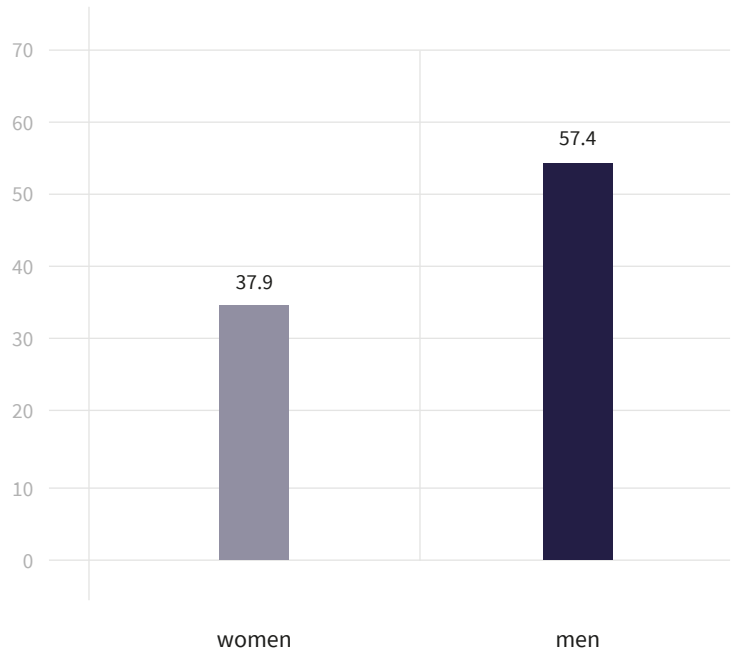
- **What sort of information about life abroad is reaching you?**



Gender Post-Stratification

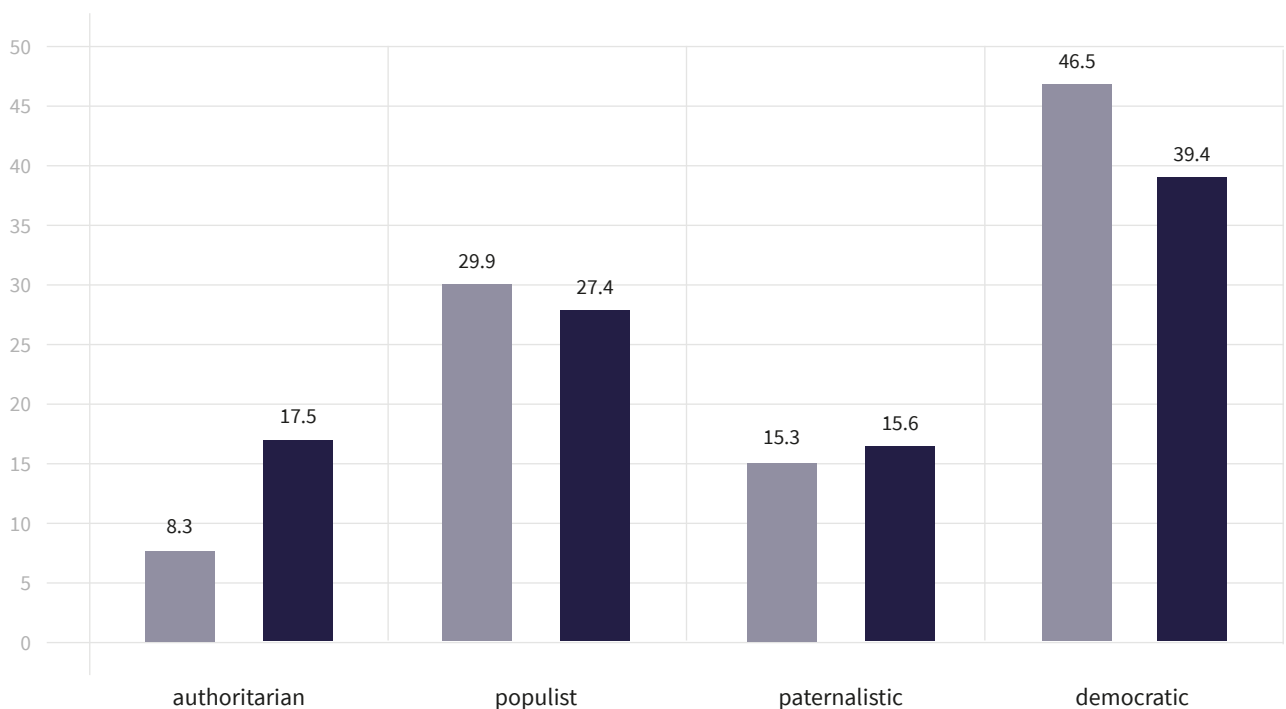
In this part of the report, the most important survey results will be presented through the prism of gender segmentation by way of graphically displaying the cases where there is a statistically significant difference between women and men in their replies to the questions. The survey results show that women are following politics significantly less so than men (x2 0.00) ¹.

I follow politics



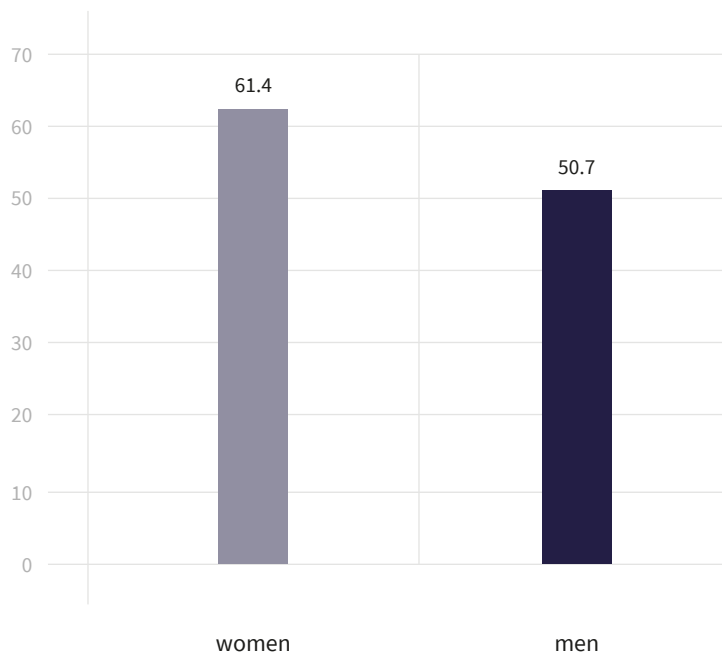
¹ chi-squared test

Regarding the type of political leadership, it is noticeable that women are more inclined to democratic type of leadership. They are notably less inclined to supporting authoritarian type of leadership (x2 0.00)

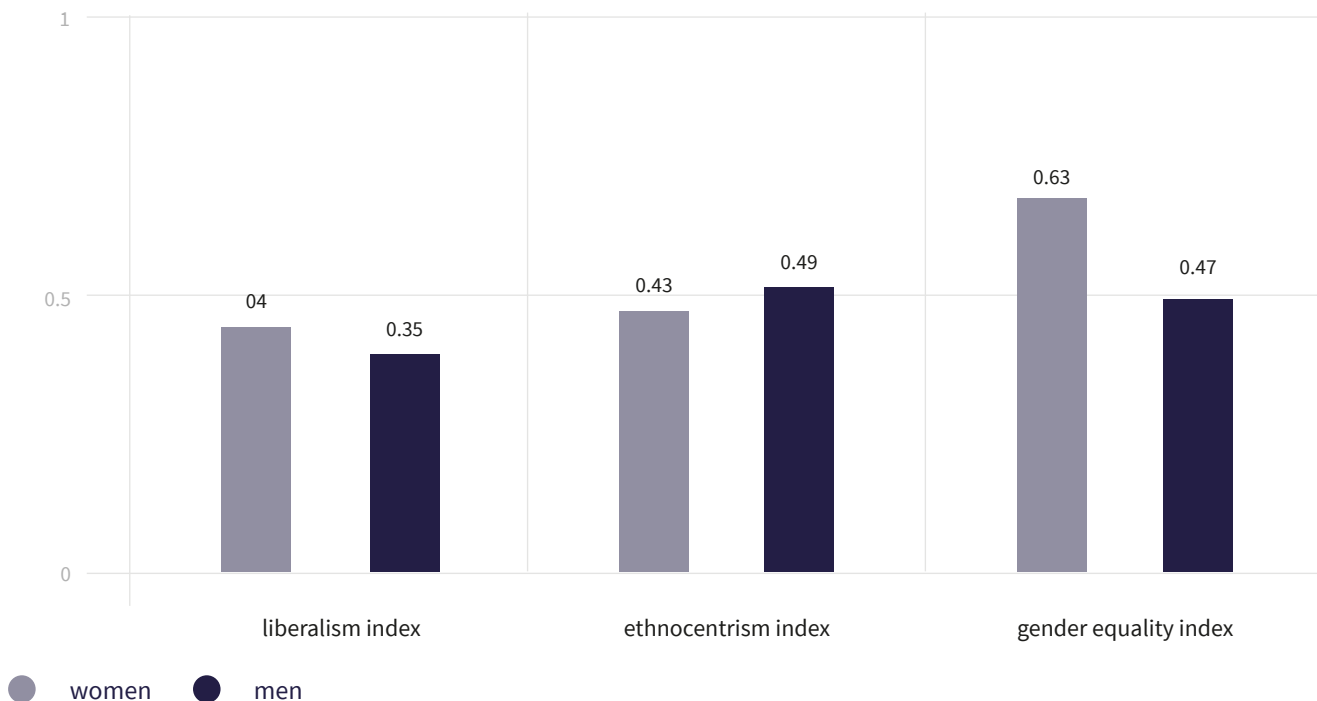


As regards the reasons why they would stay in Serbia, the analyses show that there is a statistically significant difference between women and men ($p < 0.00$), i.e. that women cite family more often as a reason to stay.

Family as a reason to stay



Besides, the analyses show that there are two different gender perceptions when it comes to liberalism, ethnocentrism and gender equality indices. Independent samples t- test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in views between women and men ($p < 0.00$).



This graph tells us that women are more liberal when it comes to social issues, that they are less nationalist, and that they believe more in gender equality than men.

Discussion and Analysis of Survey Results

In democratic societies, building and maintaining a high level of political trust and trust in institutions is of crucial importance. Stable democracies, however, rest on trust in not only classical political institutions, such as President of the Republic, government, parliament and local institutions, but also the justice system, the state apparatus of coercion - the police and army - religious institutions, civil society and media, education and health care systems, etc. Some authors, for example, point out a social role of the media because, in practice, it is impossible to appraise other institutions and believe in a democratic concept of the society unless the citizens are not timely and truthfully informed about various issues of importance for the functioning of a community. At the same time, the rule of law and trust in judiciary constitute the key elements of democracy, as well as a belief that the state apparatus of coercion will not be abused and used against the citizens. Therefore, building broad political trust and basic consensus is particularly important as low legitimacy of institutions and high level of alienation from the world of politics and anything political may undermine in the long run the foundations of the political community, hence some authors say that “trust comes on foot and goes away on horseback” (Campen, De Walle & Bouckaert, 2006).

Authors of this survey, however, do not focus exclusively on institutional trust, but recognise an intertwined nature of institutional, personal and interpersonal trust. If the citizens do not trust political institutions and system as a whole, the governments will not be able to implement their policies, the citizens will not be willing to observe laws, and the concept of general good will be subjugated to selfish interests of each and every individual. Why would the citizens - who trust no politicians, who believe political parties and politicians are corrupt, and democracy - a farce - accept the rules of a democratic system (Schyns & Coop, 2010)? The most direct and visible political consequence of such an attitude is a reduced level of electoral participation (Gronlund & Setala, 2007) and increased electoral support for populist parties and politicians (Pauwels, 2011). Hence, in the first part of the discussion, we use a classical instrument for measuring trust in institutions - the Government, President of the Republic, Parliament, judiciary, NGOs, education system, health care system, army, police, church, media, political parties and local governments - but, in the second part, we include another two instruments in the analysis which take a more in-depth and more precise measurement of the level of individual trust in politics and politicians - political alienation / cynicism index and trust-in-politicians index. In simpler terms, in addition to classical political institutions, we are interested in the citizens' trust in key political actors - politicians, their competence and morality.

The key reason why we make this distinction has already been elaborated in literature delving into the issue of political trust (e.g. Miller, 1974; Citrin, 1974; Citrin & Luks, 2001) and may be reduced to the following thesis: the level of institutional trust of every individual is coloured by his/her political preferences and support for the party, i.e. parties in power. The citizens who voted in the previous election for the political parties whose representatives now hold executive power and have the majority of seats in the parliament will also show a higher degree of trust in those institutions. And vice versa, the citizens who voted for the defeated party in

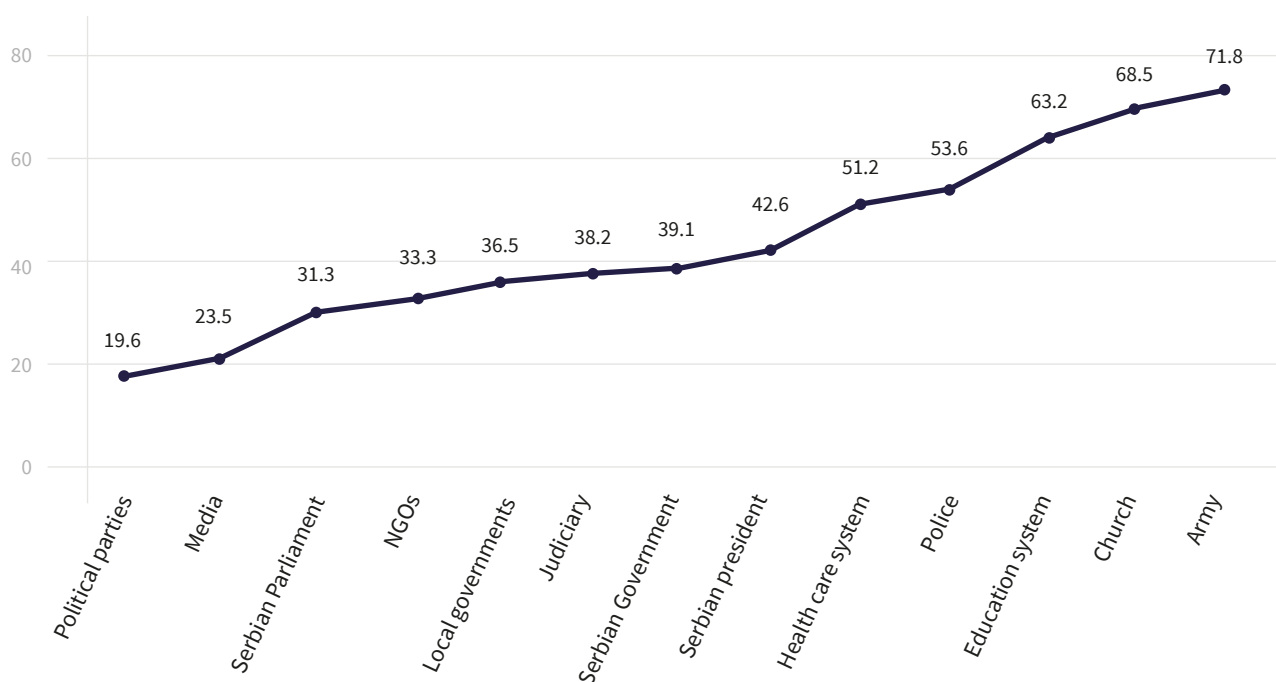
the election will have a low level of trust until his/her political option wins in one of the following electoral cycles. Therefore, we would expect that those social categories on which the current power of the Serbian Progressive Party and president Aleksandar Vučić rests will have the highest degree of trust in institutions, even though, on the basis of empirical surveys published in comparative practice, different findings would be expected.

The following discussion is divided into four parts. First, we deal with the issue of trust in institutions, and then in the 2nd part with political alienation / cynicism. We expect that the instrument used in the 2nd part of the analysis would provide to us a more in-depth insight into the degree of political alienation of citizens in the Republic of Serbia, and, more importantly, the findings which are skewed by the respondents' party preferences. In the 3rd part of the discussion, we include a new instrument – the trust-in-politicians index – on which some international researchers have insisted in the past couple of years as an additional batch of questions eliminating shortcomings related to the measurement of total institutional trust, which is a much broader concept than trust in politicians. Finally, in the last part, we give answers to questions pertaining to an increasingly prominent trend of emigration from Serbia. We are interested, above all, in reasons and motives for departure, as well as the differences in views and value-based orientations of respondents who are willing to leave Serbia relative to those who would not leave Serbia even if a good enough opportunity for this were to arise. In this part we also endeavour to eliminate some flaws in previous studies on emigration, which were focusing exclusively on young respondents, disregarding in the process if and how the departure of young people affects the lives of Serbia's older citizens.

Trust in Institutions

The insights in institutional trust obtained from descriptive statistics (graph 1) are to be expected and they do not indicate significant deviations relative to previous similar surveys. The citizens trust political parties the least (fewer than one fifth of them say ‘I mostly trust them’ and ‘I’ve got great trust in them’), followed by the media (23.5%), parliament (31.3%), NGOs (33.3%) and a set of political institutions. Traditionally, citizens in the Republic of Serbia trust the army (71.8%) and the church (68.5%) the most, followed by the education system, police and health care system.

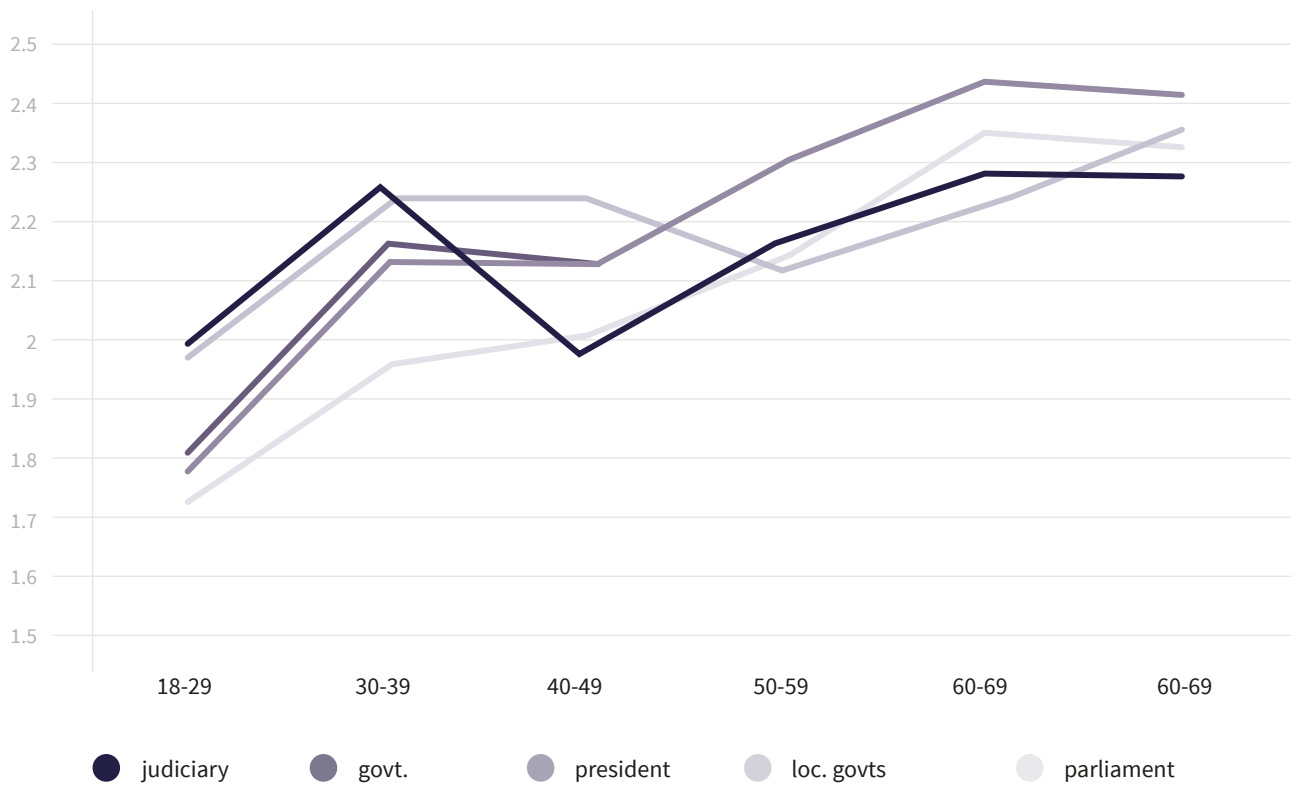
Graph 1. Percentage of citizens who reply to the question “How much trust do you have in the following institutions?” with “mostly” and “I have great trust”



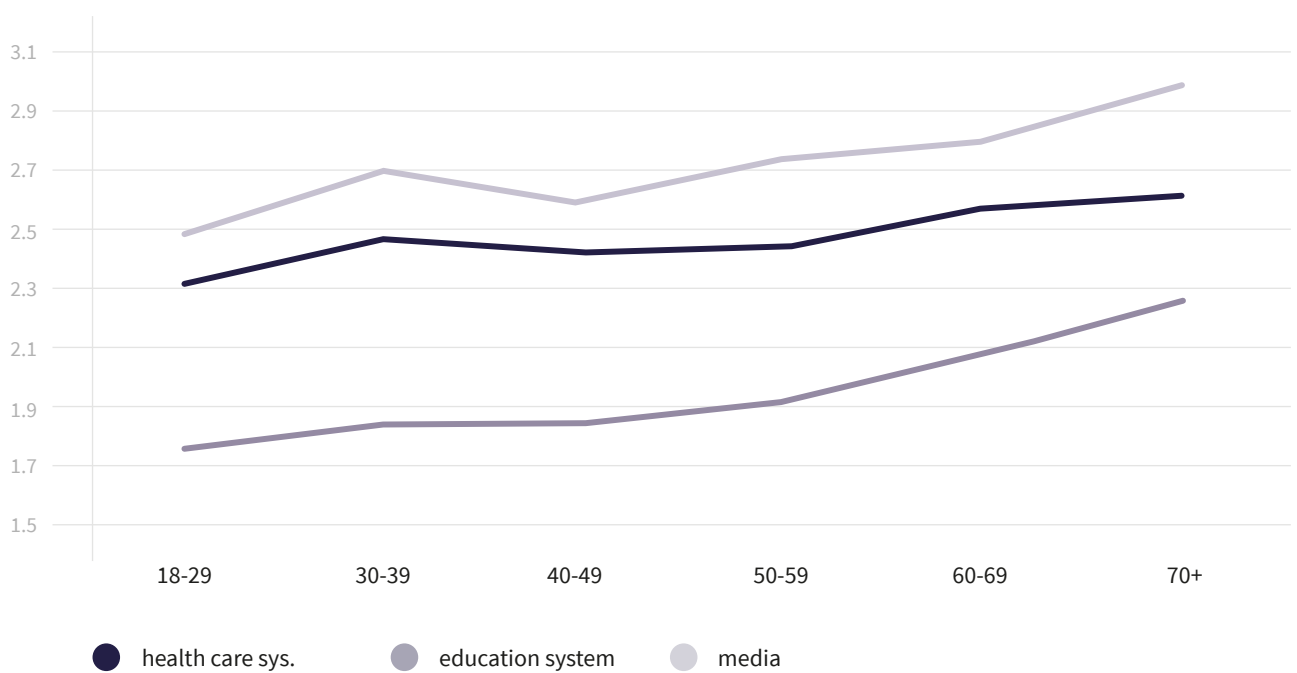
More interesting findings, however, are obtained through segmentation of respondents by various categories. In order to simplify the presentation of findings, we have converted the replies to the question “How much trust do you have in the following institutions?” into the institutional trust index (min = 1, max = 4), where 1 means a total lack of trust, whereas 4 equals great trust. In graphs 2-4, values for the institutional trust index are shown with various age-related categories. With most institutions, a drastic and almost linear growth of trust is conspicuous with an increase in the age of respondents. Whilst, an avg. young respondent (18-29 yrs) has a level of trust in the parliament of 1.72, the interviewees belonging to the oldest age groups have much higher index values – 2.36(60-69) and 2.34 (70+). Among the young, trust in the President of the Republic is 1.77, whereas among the older people it is 2.45 (60-69) and 2.42 (70+).

Somewhat milder trend of a growing trust with an increase in the age of the respondents is noticeable with education and health care systems, as well as political parties, but we should point out that even the older respondents have no high level of trust in the parties. The only opposite trend is noticeable regarding trust in NGOs (graph 4) where younger interviewees (18-29, 30-39) have displayed a higher degree of trust.

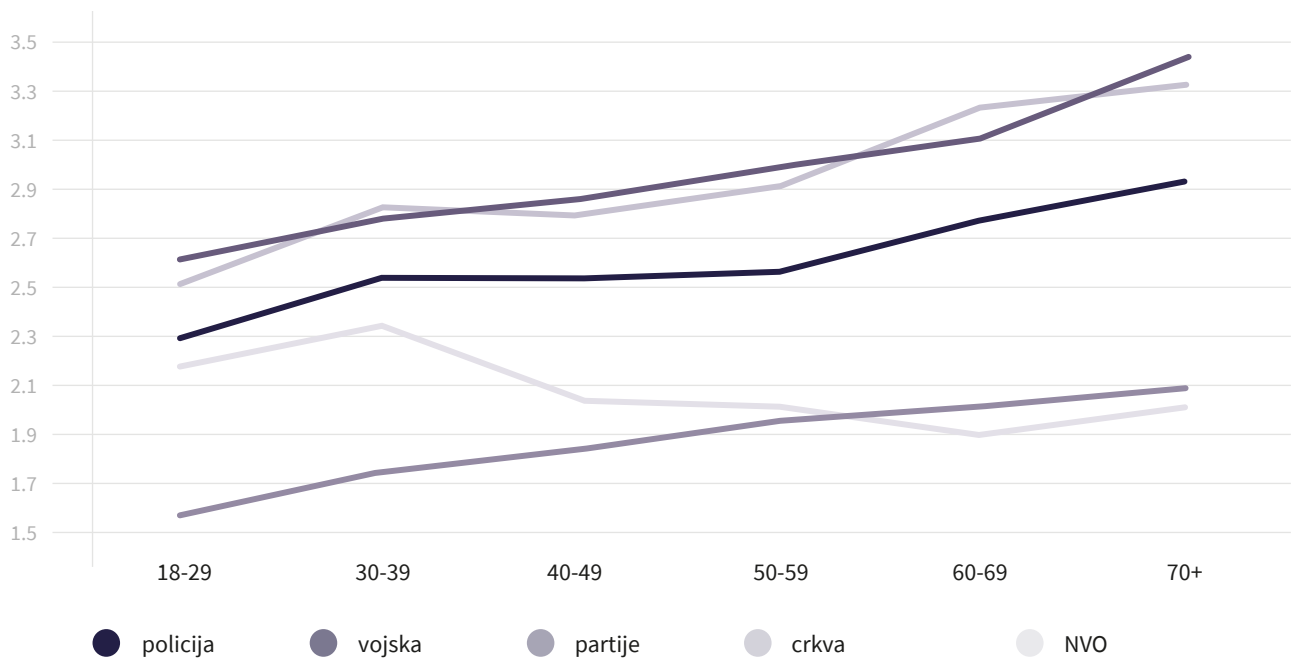
Graph 2. Institutional trust index by various age categories



Graph 3. Institutional trust index by various age categories

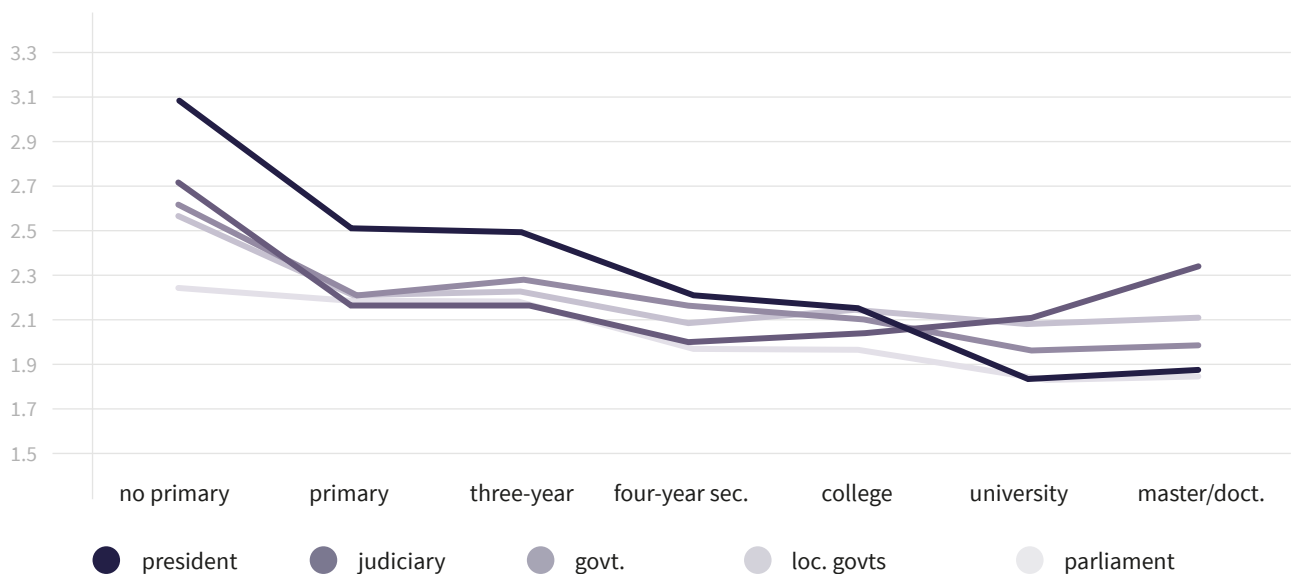


Graph 4. Institutional trust index by various age categories

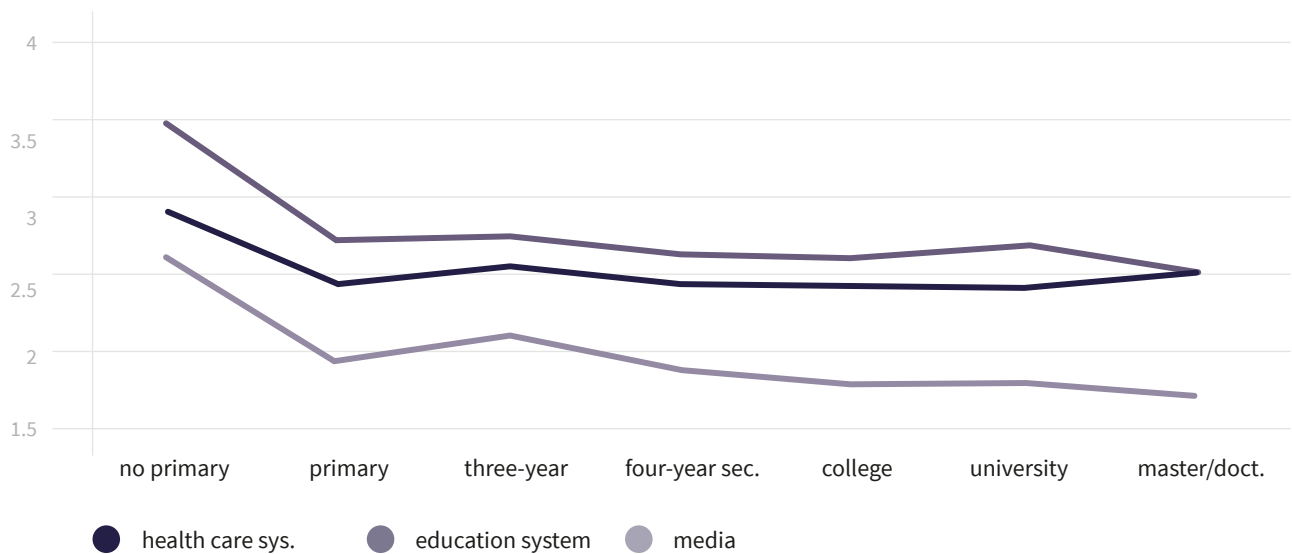


The findings which do not correspond to the comparative empirical practice (see e.g. Dalton, 2005) are particularly conspicuous with regard to the level of education (graphs 5-7). In Serbia, the respondents with lower level of education have more trust in institutions, which pertains to classical political institutions. Thus, the respondents without primary schooling have avg. level of trust in the President of the Republic of 3.09; those with completed primary school - 2.54; those with university degrees - 1.88; and those with master or doctoral degrees - 1.87. Somewhat milder decline is visible only with regard to the trust in parliament as even the respondents with a low education level have no trust in the supreme legislative and representative body in the Republic of Serbia. The declining trend pertinent to institutional trust corresponding to higher level of education is conspicuous with all institutions, except for NGOs, where trust rises starting with the respondents with completed four-year schooling. This finding overlaps findings obtained for age groups.

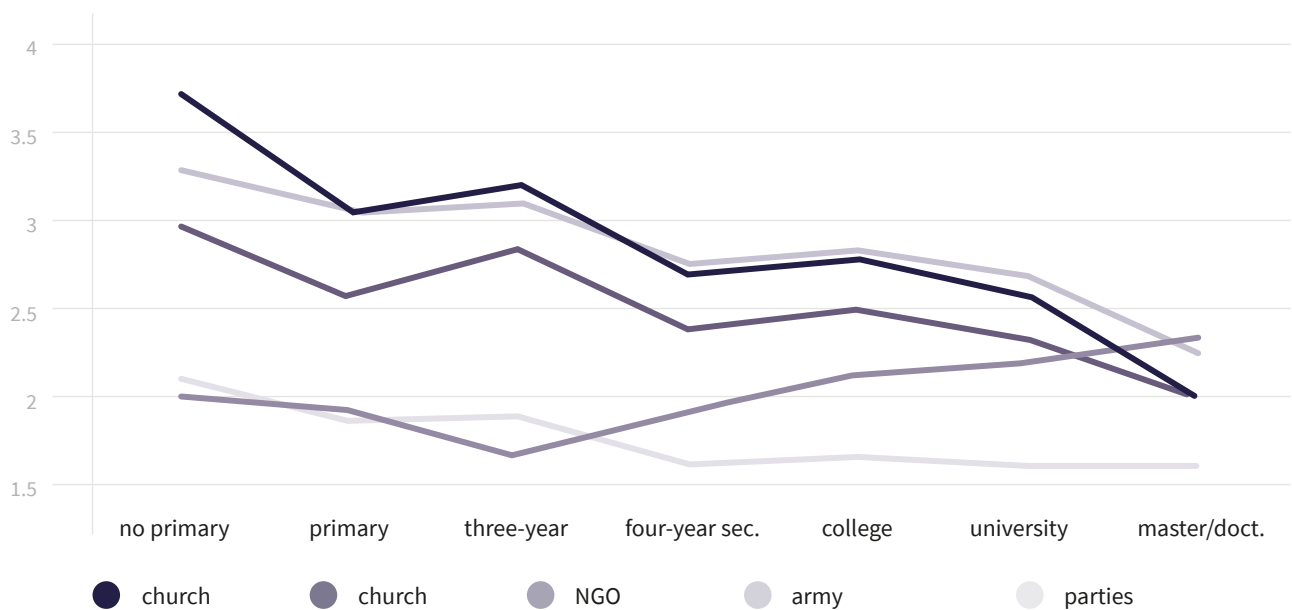
Graph 5. Institutional trust index by education level



Graph 6. Institutional trust index by education level

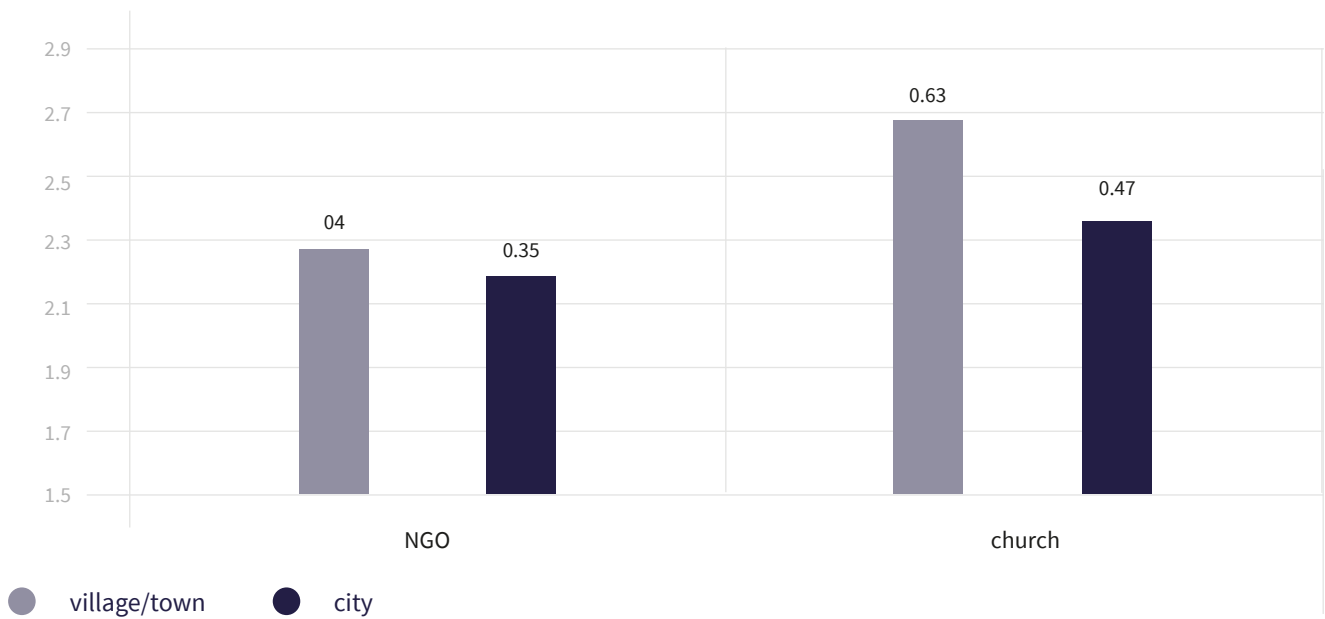


Graph 7. Institutional trust index by education level

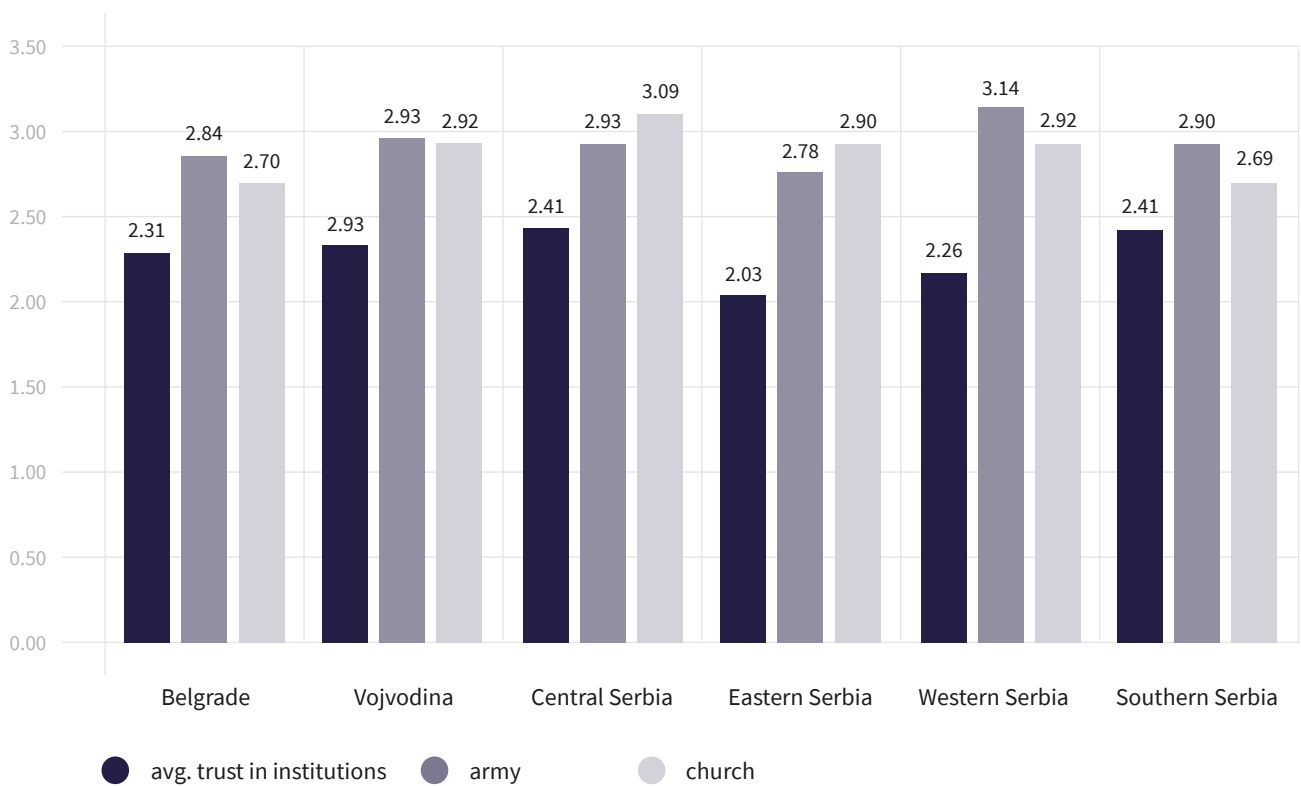


As regards the degree of institutional trust relative to the type of settlement (graph 8) where the respondent lives, there are statistically significant discrepancies ($p < .05$) for NGOs and church only. The respondents living in rural areas (villages and towns) have more trust in the church than those living in urban areas, whilst this ratio is opposite for NGOs. Avg. trust in institutions (value for all 13 institutions) is at its lowest in East Serbia (2.03), and at its highest in South (2.41) and Central Serbia (2.41). The results obtained through segmentation of respondents by employment status fit the findings above. Pensioners have the most trust in 3 classical political institutions - president, government and parliament, followed by employees in the public sector, then employees in the private sector, and, finally, students (graph 10). The value of trust index for the president among pensioners is 2.83; among employees in the public sector - 2.28; employees in the private sector - 1.99; and among students - only 1.61.

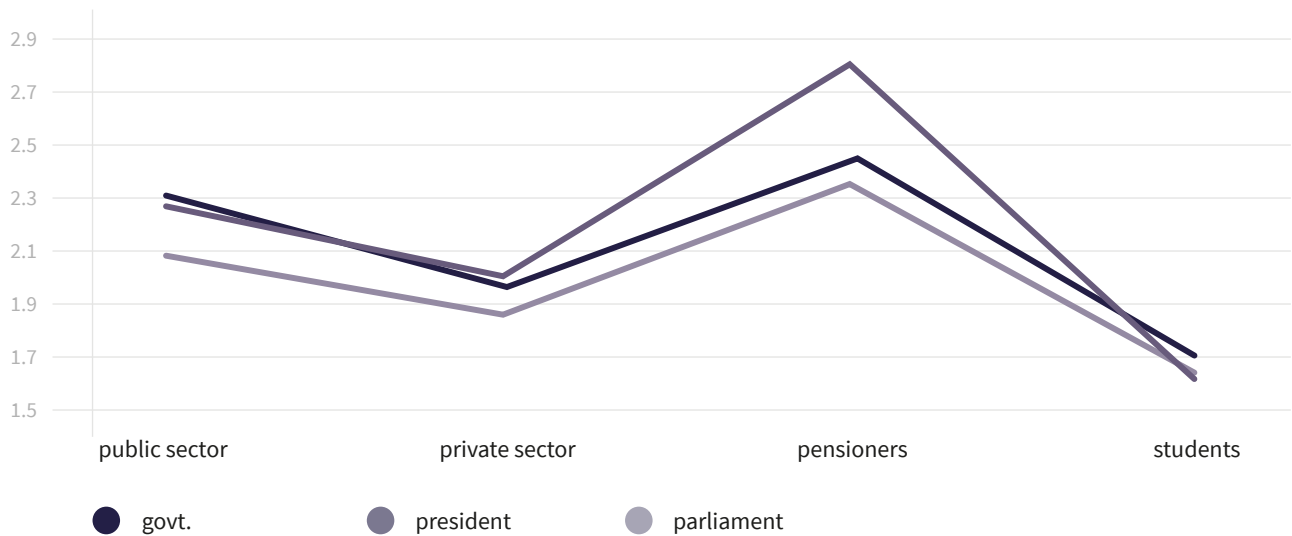
Graph 8. Institutional trust index by type of settlement



Graph 9. Institutional trust index by regions



Graph 10. Institutional trust index and employment status



Of other ‘demographic’ predictors of institutional trust that we tested, the perception of family’s experience with Serbia’s transition in previous years has the biggest impact. Thus, “transition winners” (very few of them in the population - about 10%) trust the institutions more, which applies to all institutions except for the army and the church, which enjoy a higher level of trust among “transition losers”. On the other hand, the perception of financial situation (“how would you describe financial situation in the household”) has a relatively weak impact on the level of institutional trust, and the most significant statistical discrepancies ($p < .01$) exist with regard to NGOs (better financial situation – more trust) and church (better financial situation - less trust).

Respondents following politics have more trust in institutions, where the findings for the government, parliament, NGOs are significant at the .001 level, and for most other institutions at .01 level. Such results are to be expected and in accordance with the comparative empirical practice, confirming the thesis of Pippa Norris according to which the more information the citizen has, the stronger his/her interest in politics which, in turn, leads to even more media sources used to get political information. Such a behaviour is conducive to an increase in political participation which, in turn, increases trust in politics and institutions (Norris, 2000). The analysis’ results show a direct connection between institutional trust and perception of the Serbian economy’s future in the following 3 to 5 years. The respondents who believe in economic growth trust the institutions more (e.g. Government - 2.77, President - 3.08); those who believe there will be no significant changes - Government - 2.13, President - 2.20, and the respondents who believe the economy will take a turn for the worse - Government 1.62 and trust in the President - 1.52.

In terms of context and state of democracy in Serbia, particularly interesting findings pertain to the trust in institutions relative to the type of government which suits Serbia the most, according to the respondents. Whilst in democratic states one would expect that respondents have a preference for a democratic type of government which they would trust the most, in Serbia we would have to use a different hypothesis. Bearing in mind that Serbia has traits of governance combining formally democratic institutions and rules, on one hand, and authoritarian political practice, on the other hand, the expectation would be that those claiming that the most favourable type of government for Serbia would be “in principle democratic, but currently we need to be ruled with an iron fist” to have the highest degree of institutional trust. The analysis’ results have met our expectations for the most part. Except for NGOs with opposite findings, and the media, political parties, judiciary and local governments where there are no statistically significant discrepancies, the highest level of institutional trust is displayed precisely by those respondents with a preference for the key feature of a mixed type of governance (“democracy with an iron fist”). To illustrate the point, the respondents who believe in a democratic type of government for Serbia have a lower level of trust in the president (2.10) than those insisting currently on “an iron fist” (2.55).

Political and electoral participation are also a good predictor of institutional trust, hence the respondents who are members of political parties, as well as those regularly turning out for elections, display a considerably higher degree of trust in institutions. What is, however, surprising and unexpected is that the respondents who would vote for a party with whose views they disagree if such an act would help them or a family member get a job have a higher level of institutional trust. Discrepancies are statistically significant at level .01 for all institutions, except for NGOs and the church. Additional in-depth analyses would be required through focus groups and interviews to understand such a finding, but,

in any case, this suggests that trust in institutions is not a consequence of interiorised democratic values and cognizance of the importance of institutions for development of democracy in a society, but of instrumentalist and clientelist value which the voters ascribe to the act of ballot casting and, effectively, a superficial support for institutions if the ballot we cast for a politician who will be sitting in those institutions and represent us in public brings us some personal benefit.

Trust in institutions is directly related to the respondents' trust in politicians ("are there politicians in Serbia that you trust?") and the feeling that politicians are addressing them directly. This finding is particularly interesting from the angle of an opposition public and opposition political actors. Not only do the respondents with a low level of institutional trust feel that the politicians are not addressing them, but it is also apparent that the members of opposition public do not believe politicians in general. It is telling that of all the respondents supporting current national government, 44.5% of them say that they feel like the politicians are addressing them directly, whereas among those not supportive of the current government, this figure is only 12%.

Finally, in the last part of the analysis dealing with predictors for institutional trust, we are examining a link between value-based characteristics of the respondents and trust in institutions. As we have shown so far, older interviewees have the most trust in institutions, then those with a lower level of education, pensioners and employees in the public sector, and those who believe a mixed type of governance is right for Serbia. Hence, we also expect specific findings regarding value-based orientations. The questionnaire featured a total of 7 batches of questions used to measure the level of authoritarianism (12 questions), the position on the social compass (conservatism/liberalism; 5 questions) and economic compass (state interventionism/market orientation; 5 questions), level of ethnocentrism (11 questions), attitude towards women (6 questions) and migrants (5 questions), as well as placing an emphasis on materialistic/postmaterialistic values. In order to facilitate a review of all seven "value-based orientations", they were converted into indices (min = 0, max =1), where value 1 represents prominent authoritarianism, liberal social position, market orientation, total gender equality, positive attitude towards migrants and placing an emphasis on postmaterialistic values (ensuring greater citizens' influence on decision-making and protection of freedom of speech).

The analysis results are shown in seven tables – authoritarianism index (table 1), liberalism index (table 2), market orientation index (table 3), ethnocentrism index (table 4), gender equality index (table 5), attitude towards migrants index (table 6) and postmaterialism index (table 7). Due to lack of space, we will highlight only several specific characteristics. The lowest degree of authoritarianism, except in case of NGOs and local governments, is displayed by the respondents who have no trust whatsoever in institutions. And the opposite applies - the respondents with a high level of institutional trust are supportive of authoritarian views. Similar findings are repeated practically with every index and are a cause for particular concern because they effectively show that institutional trust, and legitimacy of the entire political system based on it, are propped up by individuals who are more authoritarian, conservative, ethnocentric, more inclined to state interventionism, have a negative attitude towards migrants and gender equality, and place an emphasis on materialistic values (ensuring that order is maintained in the state and fighting a rise in prices). These conclusions particularly apply in case of classical political institutions, such as the Government, President of the Republic and the National Assembly.

Table 1. Trust in institutions and authoritarianism

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government	0,42	0,46	0,58	0,72
President	0,42	0,45	0,56	0,69
Parlament	0,43	0,48	0,59	0,76
Judiciary	0,46	0,49	0,56	0,62
NGO	0,53	0,49	0,49	0,56
Education sys.	0,45	0,47	0,51	0,63
Health care sys.	0,45	0,50	0,51	0,62
Army	0,40	0,44	0,50	0,62
Police	0,44	0,46	0,52	0,65

Table 2. Trust in institutions and social compass (0 = conservatism; 1 = liberalism)

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government	0,42	0,46	0,58	0,72
President	0,42	0,45	0,56	0,69
Parlament	0,43	0,48	0,59	0,76
Judiciary	0,46	0,49	0,56	0,62
NGO	0,53	0,49	0,49	0,56
Education sys.	0,45	0,47	0,51	0,63
Health care sys.	0,45	0,50	0,51	0,62
Army	0,40	0,44	0,50	0,62
Police	0,44	0,46	0,52	0,65
Church	0,46	0,43	0,48	0,60
Media	0,49	0,49	0,54	0,68
Political parties	0,47	0,50	0,59	0,63
Loc. government	0,50	0,47	0,53	0,63

all discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

Table 3. Trust in institutions and economic compass (0 = state intervention; 1 = market orientation)

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government*	0,34	0,35	0,31	0,29
President*	0,35	0,35	0,31	0,29
Parlament	0,34	0,34	0,32	0,29
Judiciary*	0,35	0,35	0,30	0,29
NGO*	0,31	0,35	0,35	0,30
Education sys.	0,37	0,32	0,33	0,31
Health care sys.	0,35	0,33	0,32	0,34
Army*	0,33	0,35	0,34	0,30
Police*	0,35	0,35	0,32	0,29
Church*	0,32	0,36	0,36	0,29
Media*	0,32	0,34	0,32	0,36
Political parties	0,33	0,32	0,34	0,34
Loc. government	0,32	0,33	0,33	0,34

* discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

Table 4. Trust in institutions and ethnocentrism

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government*	0,44	0,45	0,48	0,54
President*	0,43	0,46	0,48	0,52
Parlament*	0,43	0,47	0,48	0,58
Judiciary*	0,44	0,47	0,47	0,52
NGO*	0,51	0,45	0,43	0,43
Education sys.	0,44	0,45	0,46	0,50
Health care sys.	0,46	0,48	0,44	0,48
Army*	0,39	0,42	0,47	0,52
Police*	0,42	0,45	0,47	0,52
Church*	0,36	0,42	0,47	0,53
Media*	0,46	0,46	0,46	0,61
Political parties*	0,44	0,46	0,50	0,55
Loc. government*	0,46	0,45	0,48	0,50

* discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

Table 5. Trust in institutions and gender equality

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government	0,60	0,59	0,51	0,46
President	0,63	0,59	0,51	0,45
Parlament	0,61	0,56	0,52	0,41
Judiciary	0,61	0,57	0,51	0,48
NGO	0,49	0,61	0,60	0,57
Education sys.	0,64	0,58	0,55	0,48
Health care sys.	0,58	0,57	0,56	0,47
Army	0,64	0,63	0,56	0,49
Police	0,61	0,59	0,53	0,49
Church	0,67	0,62	0,55	0,49
Media	0,59	0,57	0,52	0,38
Political parties	0,60	0,56	0,51	0,41
Loc. government	0,58	0,58	0,54	0,47

all discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

Table 6. Trust in institutions and attitude towards migrants

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government*	0,39	0,46	0,41	0,32
President	0,42	0,46	0,40	0,36
Parlament	0,42	0,43	0,40	0,36
Judiciary*	0,42	0,43	0,41	0,37
NGO*	0,36	0,46	0,44	0,44
Education sys.*	0,42	0,42	0,43	0,35
Health care sys.*	0,43	0,39	0,44	0,37
Army*	0,48	0,43	0,43	0,35
Police*	0,45	0,42	0,42	0,36
Church*	0,48	0,48	0,40	0,36
Media*	0,40	0,45	0,39	0,32
Political parties	0,42	0,43	0,38	0,36
Loc. government	0,40	0,43	0,40	0,43

* discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

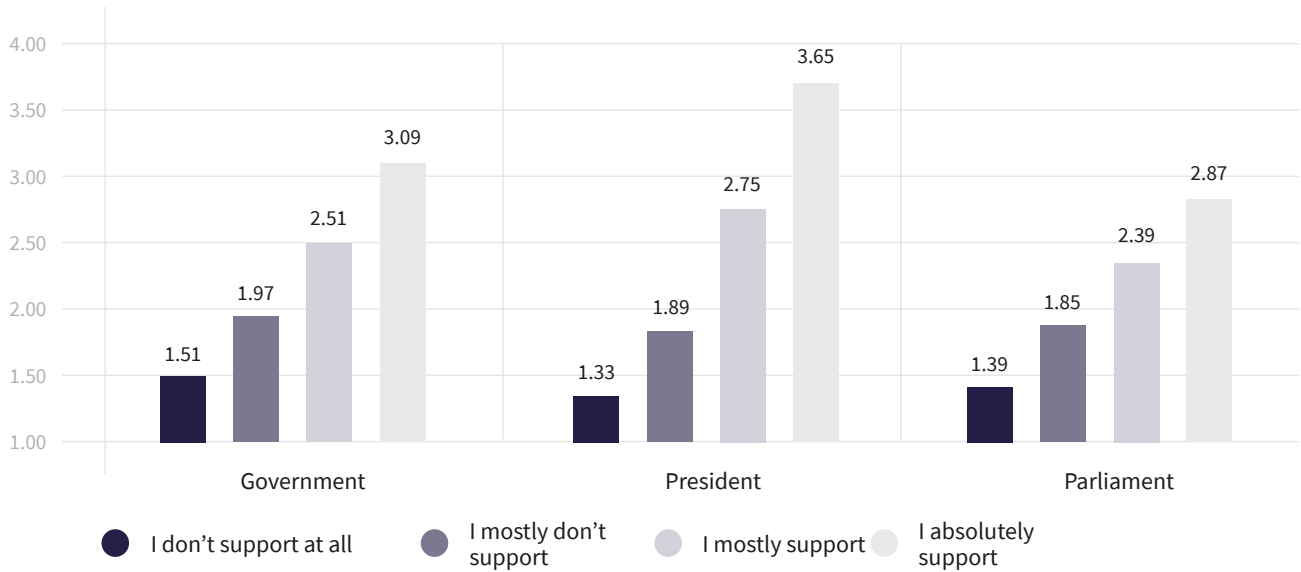
Table 8. Answers to the questions from the batch “Political cynicism/alienation”

institution	not at all	mostly not	mostly yes	great trust
Government	0,52	0,48	0,31	0,21
President	0,52	0,52	0,30	0,23
Parlament	0,53	0,44	0,30	0,24
Judiciary	0,46	0,44	0,37	0,32
NGO	0,35	0,47	0,46	0,40
Education sys.	0,48	0,48	0,42	0,26
Health care sys.	0,47	0,42	0,44	0,23
Army	0,55	0,45	0,44	0,30
Police	0,51	0,45	0,41	0,27
Church	0,54	0,50	0,43	0,29
Media	0,45	0,46	0,29	0,20
Political parties	0,49	0,37	0,35	0,30
Loc. government	0,47	0,44	0,36	0,31

all discrepancies significant at level $p < .01$

The analysis thus far was focused exclusively on trust in institutions. In the introductory part of the discussion, we mentioned, however, that this instrument has some conspicuous deficiencies because the level of institutional trust depends the most on whether there are representatives of those political parties for whom the respondents voted in the previous election in political institutions. If this is so, trust in institutions will be high. If not, the respondents will indicate a low level of trust in institutions. That this thesis holds water is shown in Graph 11 where we have singled out the degree of trust in three classical political institutions, although similar findings are also applicable to all other institutions (the least conspicuous discrepancies in nongovernmental organisations).

Graph 11. Do you support current government with Aleksandar Vučić at its helm and trust classical political institutions?



Political alienation/cynicism

Positive attitudes toward the political system and institutions influence citizens' readiness to engage in formal political activities such as membership in political parties (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003), whilst negative attitudes toward the political system encourage the activities that bring the system itself into issues such as protests and rallies (Dalton, 2008). On the one hand, raising people's awareness about the importance of politics to their lives directly influences them to become more active citizens. On the other hand, political alienation and a cynical attitude towards politics are the main reasons for passivising the individual and loss of interest in political life.

Basically, citizens participate in politics based on a variety of motives and interests – instrumental, identity and ideological (Klandermans, 2004) – and searching for political organisations and civic associations that can fulfil their needs and motives for social engagement. For example, citizens with whom instrumental motives are predominant will be more likely to run in elections as candidates and become members of political parties, whilst those with ideological backgrounds will be more engaged in actions such as to prevent the eviction of their fellow citizens. Different organisations provide different participatory incentives. The problem, however, arises in cases where a large number of citizens are completely alienated from the world of politics, which is why there is no sense in any form of political and social engagement. This problem is additionally important because the incentives for greater engagement come not only from organisations, but also from the social capital that individuals dispose with – social networks of friends, colleagues, neighbours and relatives who are self-employed. If in one society there is a widespread view about the inadequacy of social engagement and the inability to influence social movements and changes, the number of citizens ready to engage will be in constant decline.

The high level of alienation from the world of politics in Serbia is best reflected in the respondents' answers to questions such as “People mostly join political parties to get a good job” (I agree - 88.1%), “Between the two cycles of parliamentary elections ordinary citizens cannot influence the situation in the country” (I agree - 70.4%) and “Whether I am politically active or not will not affect the changes in society” (I agree - 65.3%). Compared to the results obtained last year by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (Vučićević & Jović, 2019), examining exclusively the views of young people under the age of 30, some responses show an even greater degree of political cynicism in the total population. The percentage of answers “I agree” to the three questions mentioned, in young people, was 91.5% in 2019 (a decrease of 2.4% in the total population), 64.6% (an increase of 5.8% in the total population) and 59% (6.3% growth in total population).

On the other end, there are questions such as “It is up to us to solve social problems in our environment, not to wait for them to be solved by others” (I agree - 79.5%), “Citizens' association and political activism can limit the arbitrariness of politicians in power” (I agree - 56.2%) and “Civil society organisations are important for the development of democracy and for solving a range of social problems” (I agree - 52.8%). The percentage of answers “I agree” with respect to the 2019 surveys, conducted only on the youth population, decreased by 0.4% (2019 - 79.9%), 5.4% (2019 - 61.2%) and 15.1% (2019 - 67.9%).

The last finding is particularly interesting because it indicates how much the perception of the importance of civil society organisations is more widespread among young people compared to the total population. Namely, in “conflict” with classical political institutions and organisations, such as political parties, young people in Serbia feel powerless and show a high degree of apathy and cynicism. On the contrary, young people believe that their problems will not be solved by anyone else, that association and greater engagement is one of the ways to limit the self-will of classical political institutions, and that, for that purpose, it is important to have strong civil society organisations. The position on non-governmental organisations is especially important given the ongoing campaign against them in Serbia. On a scale of political cynicism/

alienation from 0 to 1, where the value 0 - represents the complete absence of a cynical attitude to politics, and the value 1 - complete alienation from the world of politics, the average respondent has a value of 0.52, which is a jump of 0.04 compared to the 2019 survey, which included only youth (distribution on the scale of political cynicism is shown in Graph 12).

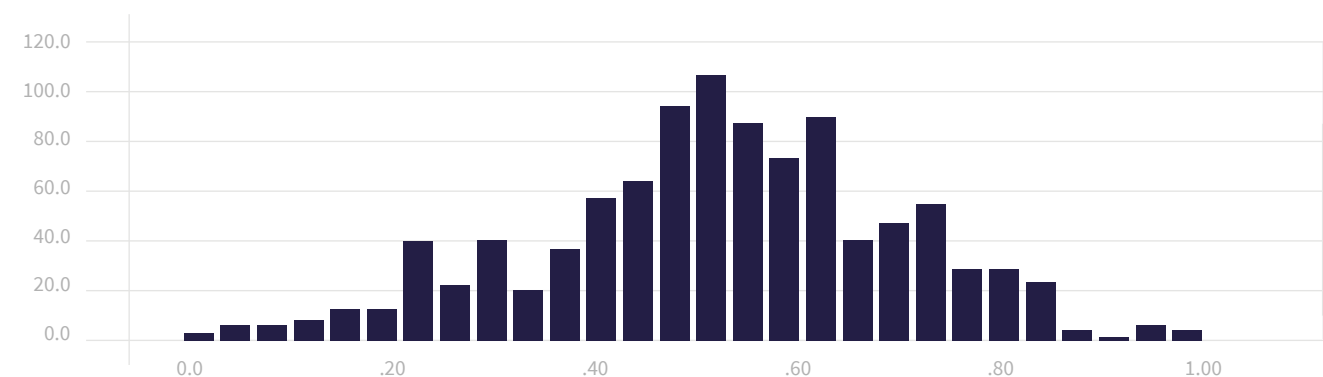
Table 8. Answers to the questions from the batch “Political cynicism/alienation”

	disagrees	agrees
One is well advised not to get in the bad books of the government and the powers that be.	45%	55%
It is up to us to solve social problems in our community, not to wait for someone else to solve them.	20,5%	79,5%
One should not publicly express one’s own opinion, one never knows if one will "bear the consequences".	43,4%	56,6%
People join political parties generally to get a good job.	11,9%	88,1%
Civil society organisations mostly gather people who don’t have "better things to do", so they just rebel.	47,2%	52,8%
Between the two cycles of parliamentary elections ordinary citizens cannot influence the situation in the country.	29,6%	70,4%
Whether I am politically active or not will not affect changes in the society.	34,7%	65,3%
Citizens’ association and political activism can limit themselves-will of politicians in power.	43,8%	56,2%
Civil society organisations are important for the development of democracy and for solving a range of social problems.	36,9%	63,1%
Even though it is not certain that significant changes will happen, it is very important to be politically active.	49%	51%

sve razlike značajne na nivou p < .01

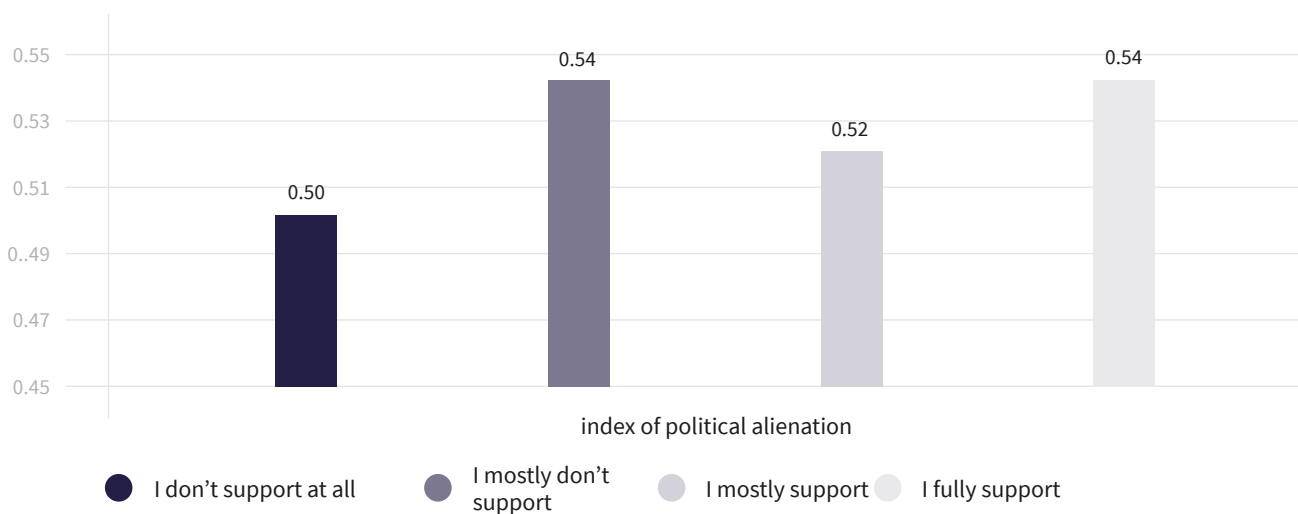
Graph 12. Distribution on the political alienation/cynicism scale

Index of political alienation



As we have shown in the previous section, the respondents who support the current authorities at the national level have the highest institutional trust. We have argued, however, that this type of trust is not a consequence of understanding the importance of institutions, but that it is solely an instrumental value in which institutional trust is a proxy for the political and electoral preferences of respondents. If our hypothesis is not true, the respondents who support the national authorities headed by Aleksandar Vučić, who at the same time have the highest trust in institutions should show the least alienation from the world of politics and the least degree of political cynicism (Graph 13). Although these are not distinct differences, it is evident that, unlike institutional trust, the least degree of alienation and cynicism is shown by respondents who do not support the current ruling structure.

Graph 13. Index of political alienation and support to national government



To test the impact of various factors on political alienation, we built up a relatively extensive regression model. Unlike trust in institutions, where we have shown that authoritarian, conservative and ethnocentric respondents who place emphasis on modernist values, we expect that the model will show that in Serbia there are no significant deviations from the findings observed in empirical surveys in other European countries. Our dependent variable is the index of political alienation/cynicism, which is a composite variable based on the answer to ten questions (Table 8) and has a value of 0 to 1. There are several independent variables in the model. We expect the variable “authoritarianism” to have a positive sign, as with the increase of authoritarianism, the degree of political cynicism and alienation from politics would have to increase. We expect the same sign for the variable “ethnocentrism”. On the other hand, the variables “postmodernism” and “liberalism” should have negative signs, because we expect the level of political alienation to decline if the liberal social orientation and emphasis on postmodern social values increase among the respondents. The model also includes the “market orientation” variable, although due to the traditional closeness with the economic left with a large number of politically active citizens in Serbia and in accordance with previous survey, we do not expect it to be statistically significant. The model also includes several control variables - “education”, “follows politics”, “supports the government” and “age”. We assume that the values of the coefficients will be negative for the first three variables and positive for the last. As education levels rise, interest in politics grows, and support for the ruling political structure grows, the degree of alienation would have to decline, whilst older respondents would have to show a greater degree of political cynicism.

Table 9. Impact of various factors on the degree of political alienation/cynicism

	model 1
(Constant)	.538**(.043)
Ethnocentrism	.152**(.036)
Authoritarianism	.067+(.035)
Liberalism	-.090*(.036)
Postmodernism	-.073**(.014)
Market orientation	-.021(.032)
Education	-.007(.004)
Age	.001+(.000)
Follows politics	-.070**(.011)
Supports the government	-.041**(.012)
R ²	.253

standard error in parentheses; + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

the table shows the non-standardised regression coefficients and Adjusted R

As can be seen in Table 9, the results obtained are in line with expectations. All variables have expected signs. Ethnocentrism and postmodernism are significant at the .01 level, liberalism at the .05 level, and authoritarianism at the .1 level. The finding for the variable “market orientation”, which, although it has a negative index, is not statistically significant is also in line with expectations. Unlike the findings concerning institutional trust, for which we claimed that they arise concern because trust in institutions and the legitimacy of the overall political system rests on individuals who are more authoritarian, conservative, ethnocentric and modernist-prone (securing order in the country and fight against price growth), the findings regarding political alienation and cynicism give a significantly different picture, from which we draw several conclusions. First, it is acknowledged that institutional trust is above all a proxy for respondents’ political preferences. Given the mixed type of governance currently in place in Serbia, which combines formally democratic procedures and rules and authoritarian political practices, the respondents who, at present, trust the institutions belong to those social categories that share the value orientations that the Serbian Progressive Party and Aleksandar Vučić publicly promote. Secondly, the index of political alienation, or cynicism, measures the degree of alienation from the world of politics much more precisely. It actually shows that individuals who believe in the idea of political activism, the possibility of social change, the importance of civil association and civil society organisations for the development of democracy, share democratic values, are more liberally oriented, place an emphasis on the protection of free speech and providing greater influence of citizens on the decisions of the authorities, they are less authoritarian and ethnocentric, have a higher level of education, etc. And finally, the citizens who are less cynical and alienated from politics do not trust the current political institutions, especially those with a classical political character.

Trust in politicians

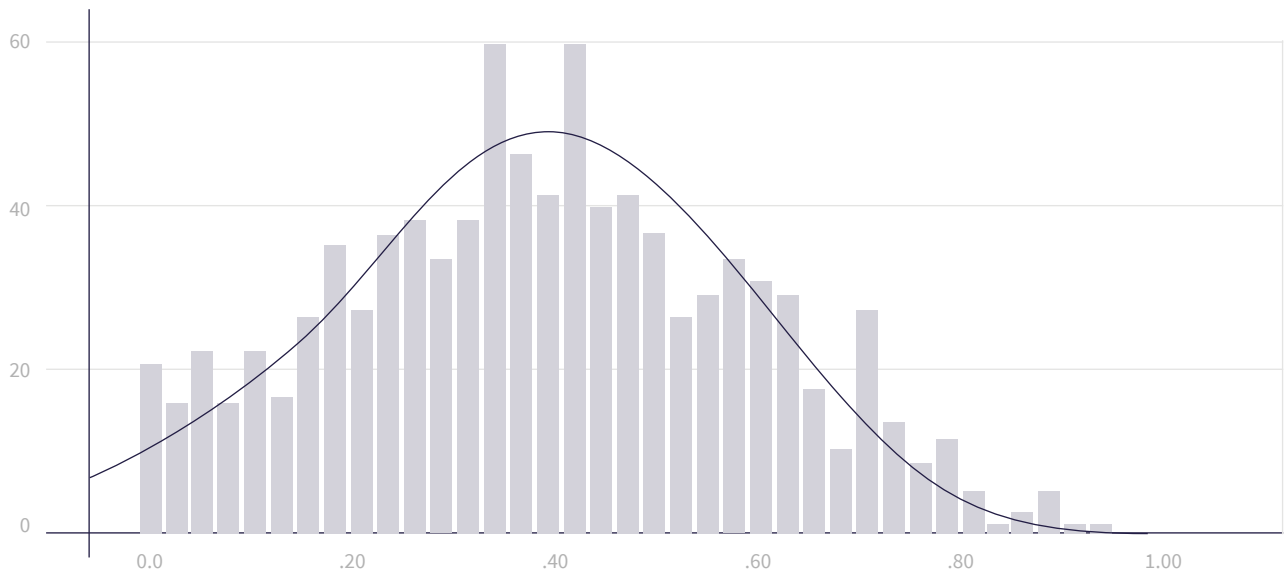
We tested the last instrument with which we measured citizens' political trust for the first time in this survey (and probably also for the first time in Serbia). In relation to classical institutional trust, the instrument that covers 14 questions (Table 10) includes more rigorous and robust indicators of political trust (Seyd, 2016). The questions that respondents answer put to the forefront politicians, their competence (question 1), inefficiency (question 2), expertise (question 3), care (questions 4 and 5), understanding (question 6), honesty (question 7), openness/transparency (questions 8-10), keeping promises (questions 11-12), consistency (question 13) and fairness (question 14). Viewed from the standpoint of individual statements, most respondents doubted the honesty of politicians (question 7 - 81.3%) and their consistency (question 13 - 79.3%), whilst on the other hand, the majority believed in their expertise (36.8%), competence (36.6%) and fairness (35.9%). The total score on the index of trust in politicians from 0 (low level of trust) to 1 (high level of trust) in Serbia is 0.34 (Graph 14).

Table 10: Answers to questions from the batch "Trust in politicians"

	disagree	agree
Generally, politicians are competent	63,4%	36,6%
Government "recklessly" spends a lot of public money	27,6%	72,4%
Politicians usually know what they are doing	63,2%	36,8%
Politicians generally try to help their voters	61,9%	38,1%
Politicians generally care for their own interests instead of trying to help citizens	23,1%	76,9%
Politicians generally do not understand the problems that ordinary people face	26,7%	73,3%
Politicians generally tell the truth	81,3%	18,7%
Government ministers poorly inform us of what they are doing	30,3%	59,7%
Governments distort facts to make their policies look good	20,1%	79,9%
When things go wrong, politicians generally admit their mistakes	74,2%	25,8%
Politicians easily give promises in elections, but forget about them later on	12,5%	87,5%
Politicians try to fulfil their promises	61,3%	38,7%
Politicians constantly change their attitudes	20,7%	79,3%
Government treats equally every group within society	64,1%	35,9%

Graph 14. Distribution on the scale of trust in politicians

Histogram



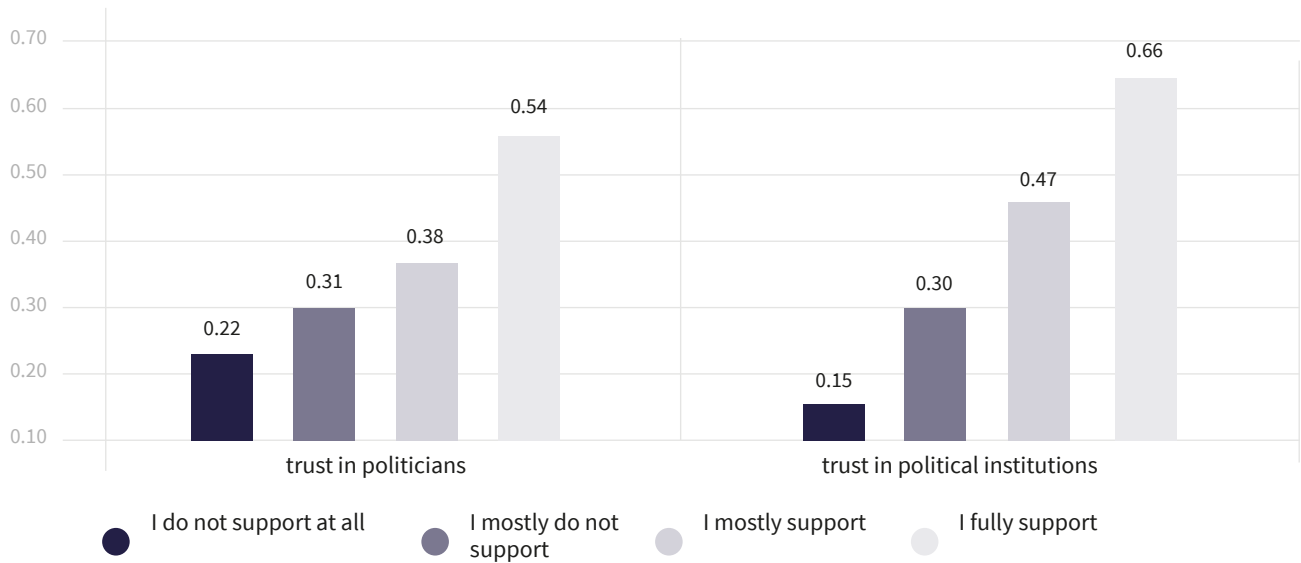
Index of trust in politicians

Table 11 shows the correlation matrix between the instruments used in the analysis so far. When it comes to “institutional trust” values for five institutions – Government, President, Parliament, political parties, local government – they are grouped into one composite variable “trust in political institutions” (see more in: Schneider, 2017). Whilst there is a high positive correlation (.635) between the index of trust in politicians and the index of trust in political institutions (.635), the index of trust in politicians is a more rigorous and precise instrument that is less dependent on the party preferences of respondents and the level of support for politicians currently in power (Graph 15).

Table 11. Correlation matrix of the three instruments

	trust in politicians	trust in political institutions	political alienation
Trust in politicians	1	.635**	-.036
Trust in pol. institutions	.635**	1	-.059
Political alienation	-.036	-.059	1

Graph 15. Politicians’ & political institutions’ trust indices by degree of support for the ruling structure



As in the case of political alienation/cynicism, we tested the same variables and examined their effects on the degree of trust in politicians within regression model 1 (Table 12). The results are expectedly different from those obtained by the political alienation. The dummy variable “supports the authorities” has the highest predictive power within the model. The variables “authoritarianism” and “ethnocentrism” are also statistically significant at the .01 level and with a positive sign, which means that with the increase of authoritarianism and ethnocentricity of individuals, the degree of trust in politicians also increases. What is somewhat surprising, however, is that in the regression model and under the control of other variables, the variable “liberalism” has a positive and statistically significant sign, which would mean that shifting to the right on a social compass carries with it an increase in trust in politicians, and vice versa, a more conservative social orientation also means less trust in politicians.¹⁰ Of the other variables, the most predictive power is given to “age” and “follows politics”, and as expected, with the increase in the number of years and interest in politics, trust in politicians increases. Finally, in Model 2, we included the independent variable “political alienation”, which has a negative and statistically significant coefficient value and shows that with increasing levels of alienation from politics, trust in politicians themselves decreases.

Table 12. Impact of various factors on trust in politicians

	model 1	model 2
(Constant)	-.084+(.047)	.074(.053)
Ethnocentrism	.215**(.041)	.241**(.042)
Authoritarianism	-.206**(.038)	.200**(.039)
Liberalism	.156**(.040)	.121**(.040)
Postmodernism	-.018(.016)	-.039*(.017)
Market orientation	.056(.036)	.052(.036)
Education	.002(.005)	-.001(.005)
Age	.001**(.000)	.002**(.000)
Follows politics	.026*(.012)	.004(.013)
Supports the government	.143**(.014)	.136**(.014)
Political alienation		-.237**(.044)
R2	.360	.377

standardna greška u zagradi; + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

u tabeli su prikazani nestandardizovani regresioni koeficijenti i Adjusted R

² In the model that is not shown in the analysis, in which “trust in political institutions” is the dependent variable, the value of the coefficient for liberal social orientation is not statistically significant.

Emigration

Although there are no precise figures on how many citizens have left Serbia in the last few decades, Serbian society is overwhelmed by the assessment that it is necessary to find systemic solutions in order to at least mitigate the negative trend of emigration from Serbia. Some of the estimates of long-time opinion polls (e.g. Srđan Bogosavljević, Bojan Klačar) state that there are about 4,800,000 citizens of legal age in Serbia in 2020, which means that the number of eligible voters since the last census of 2011 decreased by over a million. According to official data, the negative natural increase in this period is about 35,000 a year (e.g. for 2018 -37,680), from which we can conclude that on average, between 60,000 and 75,000 citizens left the country every year. For this reason, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has, at least formally, taken some steps to mitigate the negative trends. A government expert team was set up to stop the youth emigration from Serbia, whose task is to devise a strategy to stop the youth emigration from the country and find a way for those who left to return. This year, with the support of the government and the Science and Technology Park of Belgrade, an alliance of associations “(Re)Turning Point” was formed, which aims to provide information and assistance to individuals from the diaspora who would want to return to Serbia. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy, with its actions, insights and reports since 2019, has contributed to understanding the causes and effects of the depopulation trend that has engulfed Serbia. When it comes to consequences, the results of a research study funded by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and carried out by the Institute for Development and Innovation show that youth emigrating abroad costs Serbia up to two billion euros a year. The most direct loss is measured by the funds invested in their education, especially considering that the biggest problem for Serbia is the emigration of qualified, educated youth.

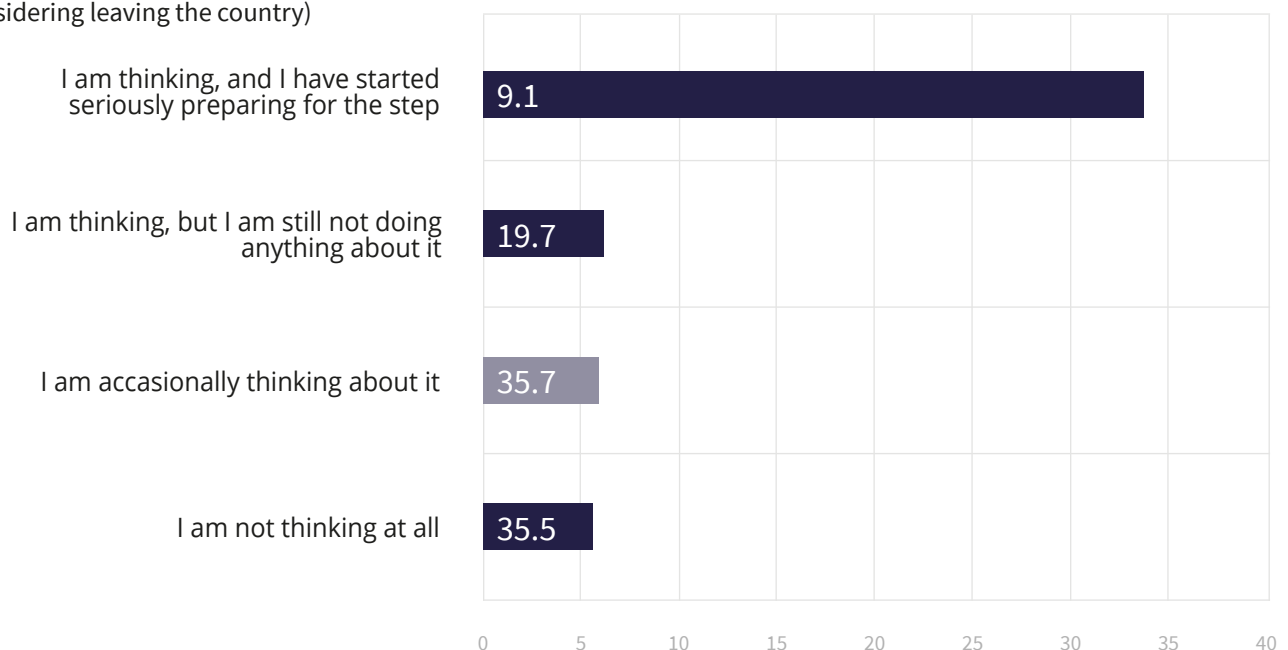
In February 2019, in a survey encompassing only members of the young population (18-29 years old), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy came to the extremely worrying data, according to which only one in five respondents (22%) said they were not considering leaving Serbia at all. On the other side were those who occasionally think about leaving Serbia (37.7%), respondents who think about it more often but still do nothing about it (27.9%), whilst every eighth respondent covered by the research seriously prepared for this step (Vučićević & Jović, 2019). An additional problem was the insights related to the “photo-robots” of young respondents who remain in Serbia compared to those planning to leave. Young respondents who claimed to be seriously preparing to leave Serbia were better educated (students or university degree holders), more liberal, more tolerant of other nations and cultures, emphasised the importance of gender equality. At the same time, they classified themselves as transitional losers, claiming that they lived in a worse financial situation, arguing that Serbia was going in the wrong direction, that it was not ruled democratically, that news in Serbia was negative, as well as that they did not trust politicians and that in Serbia elections were not possible.

Unlike last year’s survey, which focused exclusively on the young (aged 18-29), the general population was the subject of this year’s analysis. Respondents were, however, left with the opportunity to answer the question “Are you actively thinking about leaving Serbia” with “I do not belong to the age category thinking about leaving”; after which, depending on the answer, the questionnaire was divided into two sleeves, one for the younger respondents and the other for the older ones who, due to age, do not think about leaving, but who may also be directly affected by the high level of depopulation because their children or grandchildren are leaving Serbia. Whilst filling in the questionnaire, I determined that the average age of respondents who do not fall into the age category thinking about leaving was 62, whilst the average age to other respondents was 39. In total, 35% of respondents claimed that they did not belong to the age category that

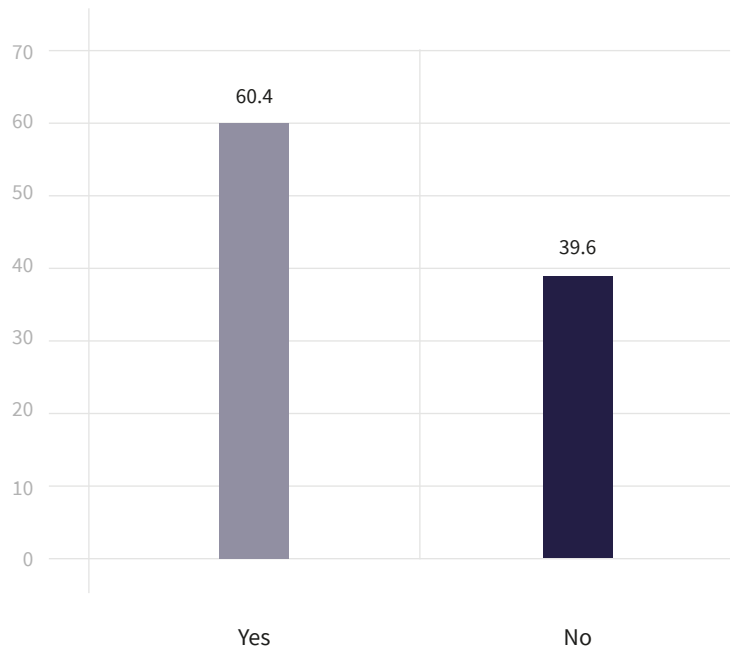
is not thinking about leaving. As for others (Graph 16), the share of those who do not even think about leaving was just over one-third (35.5%), whilst about two-thirds were those thinking about this step occasionally (35.7%), often but they do not take serious steps to leave (19.7%) and those who are seriously preparing to leave Serbia (9.1%). At the same time, as many as 64.8% of respondents who do not plan to leave due to age answer “Yes” to the question “If you were given a good opportunity at this moment to leave, would you leave?”, whilst less than one-fifth (19.3%) would advise friends from abroad to return to Serbia. That the division of the questionnaire into two sleeves was justified is also shown by the findings presented in Graph 17. Although one-third of respondents fall into the category who do not think about leaving because of age, more than three-fifths say that either their children or grandchildren are planning to leave Serbia.

At the same time, it is evident that older respondents perceive the youth emigration from Serbia as very harmful to the country, and in this respect there are almost no differences between the respondents who identified themselves in the category who because of age do not think about leaving and other respondents (Graph 18). However, it turns out that, on a personal level, older respondents are even more affected by the youth emigration from Serbia. As many as 62.7% of the respondents who have identified themselves in the category who do not think about leaving Serbia because of the years claim that youth emigration personally affects them - 42.4% very much affects me, 20.3% mainly affects me. Not only does this proportion almost ideally overlap with the percentage of those older respondents who claim that their children or grandchildren are planning to leave Serbia, but it is also significantly higher than in the category of other respondents - 62.7% versus 49.6% - who are personally affected by the emigration of people from Serbia (Graph 19). The issue of depopulation of Serbia is therefore a topic that is perceived by most citizens of Serbia as important, both socially and personally, with even greater importance for senior citizens in the Republic of Serbia. One explanation could simply be that in the older population the youth emigration induces and reinforces a combination of two fears - the fear of old age and the fear of loneliness (“dying in solitude”).

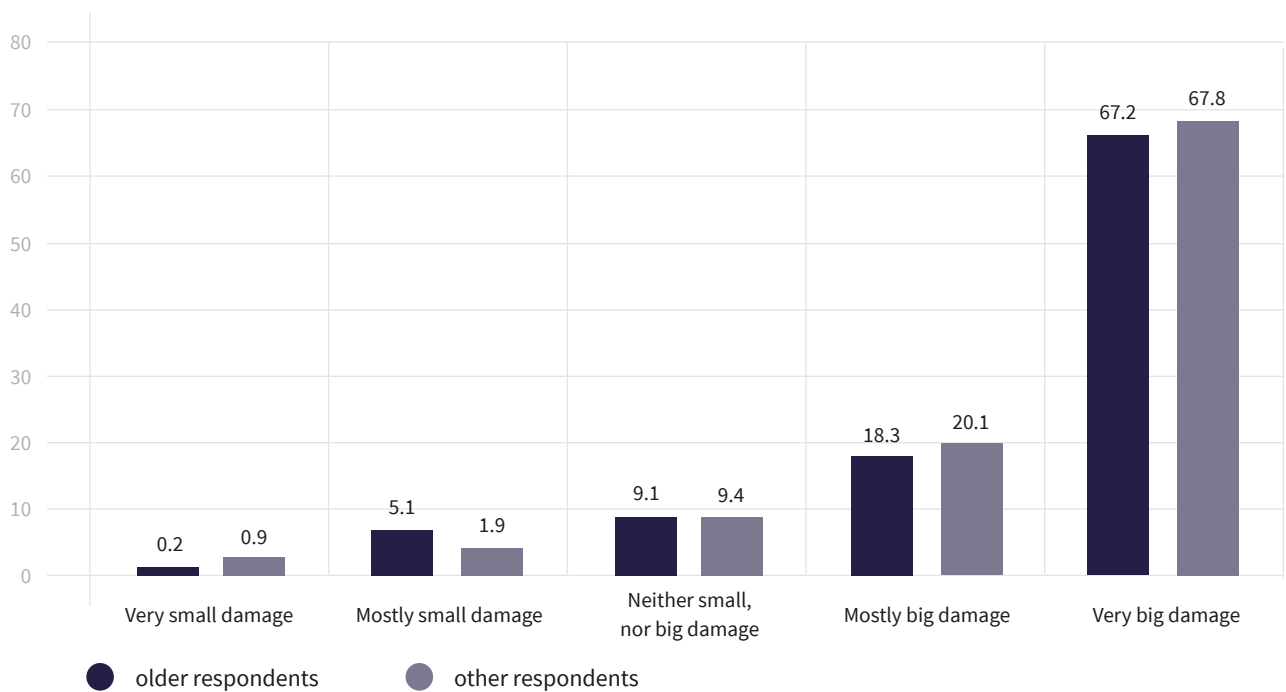
Graph 16. Emigration from Serbia (excluding respondents who do not see themselves as belonging to the age category considering leaving the country)



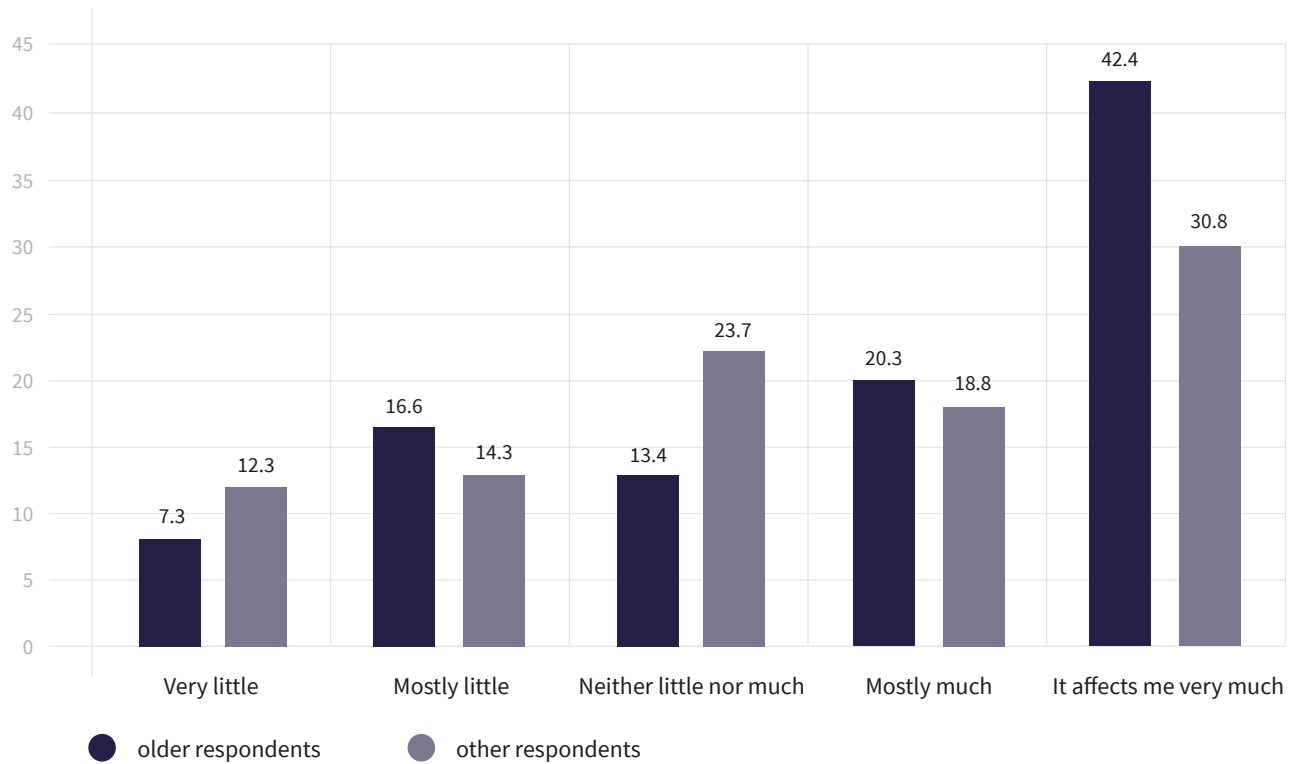
Graph 17. Do your children or grandchildren plan to leave Serbia?



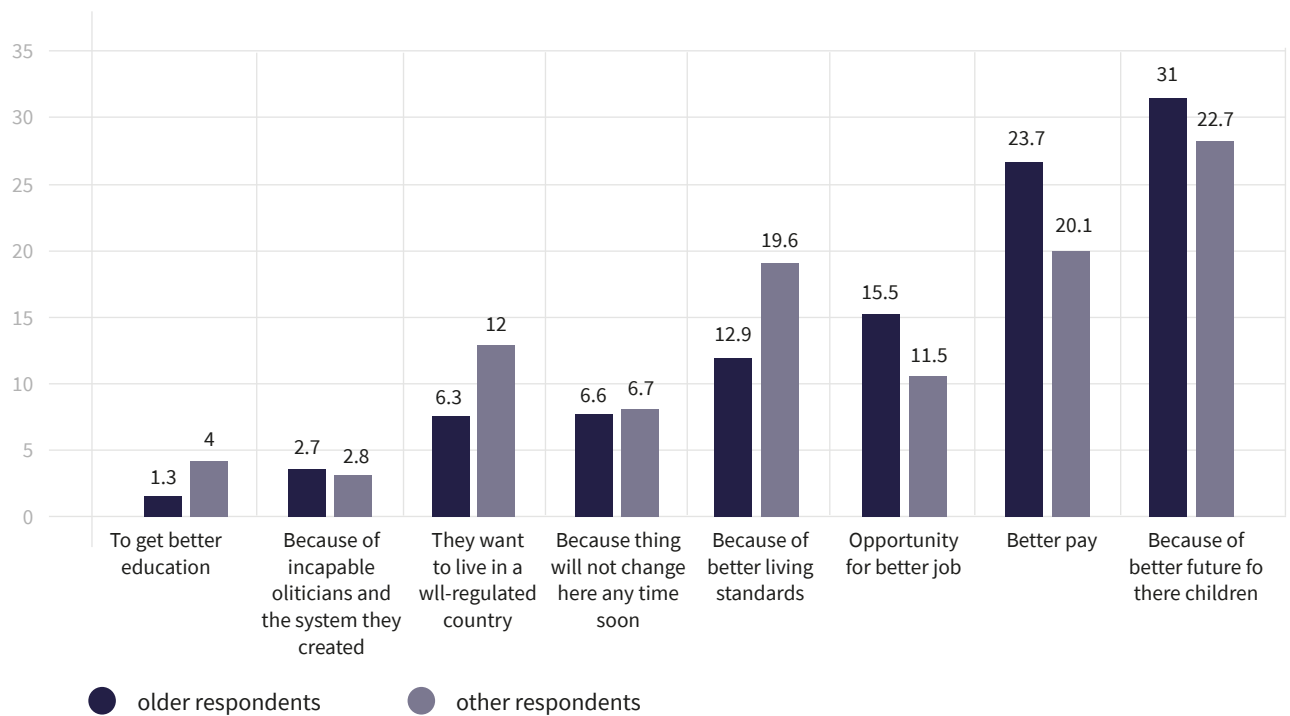
Graph 18. How much damage does Serbia have because people are leaving the country?



Graph 19. How much are you personally affected by people leaving Serbia?

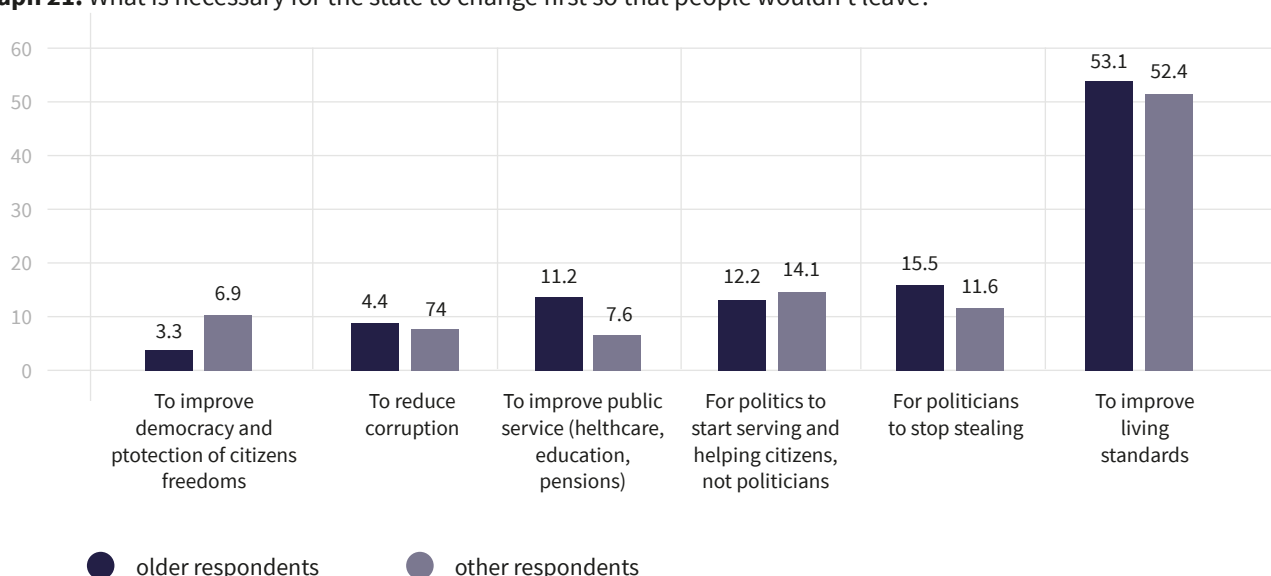


Graph 20. Perception of motivation to leave



When it comes to the perception of the motives why young people leave (Graph 20), there are some differences between the two age categories of respondents, but they are not drastic. Although both categories consider the key motive to be a “better future for them and their children,” the longer-term perspective is more emphasised by older respondents (31%) than younger respondents (22.7%). As expected, a slightly higher proportion of younger than older respondents singled out the possibility of better education as the main motive, and the same applies for the wish to live in a regulated country and a better standard of living. 51.2% of younger respondents and 52.1% of older respondents point to direct economic motives (better standard of living, better employment and higher pay). Half of the respondents, therefore, single out economic motives, but almost the same number of those who put forward reasons other than purely economic in nature. Practically the same insights are obtained when the role of the state and the moves it should take to mitigate Serbia’s high depopulation rate are brought into focus (Graph 21). Slightly more than half of respondents in both categories singled out a better standard of living, but almost half singled out as crucial non-economic aspects - the rule of law and democracy, reducing corruption and clientelism, improving public services, changing the behaviour of politicians.

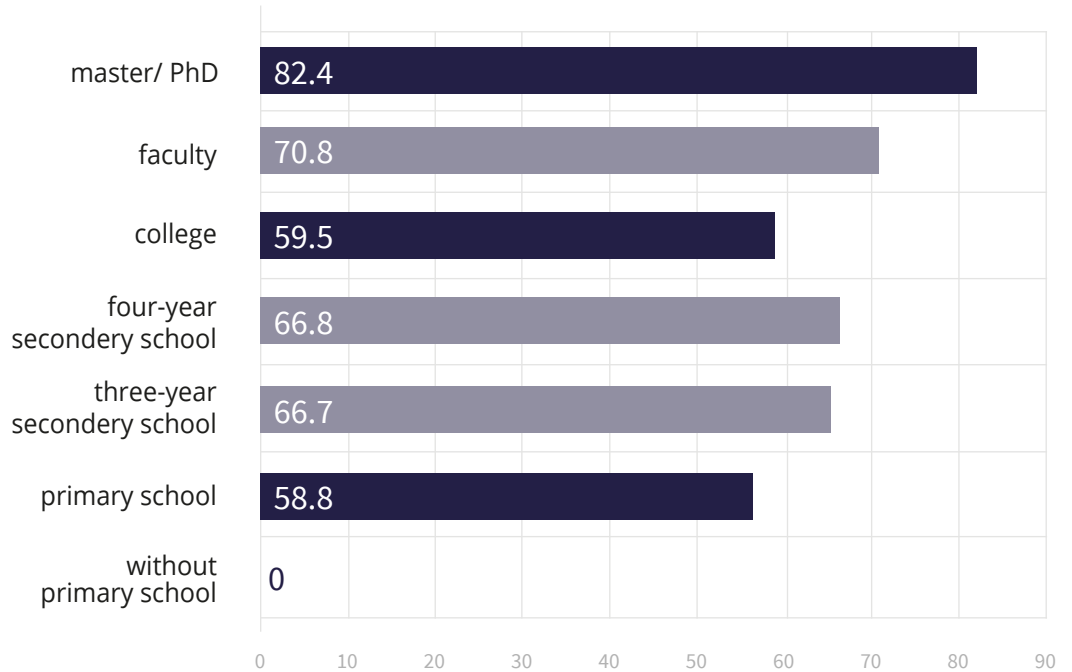
Graph 21. What is necessary for the state to change first so that people wouldn’t leave?



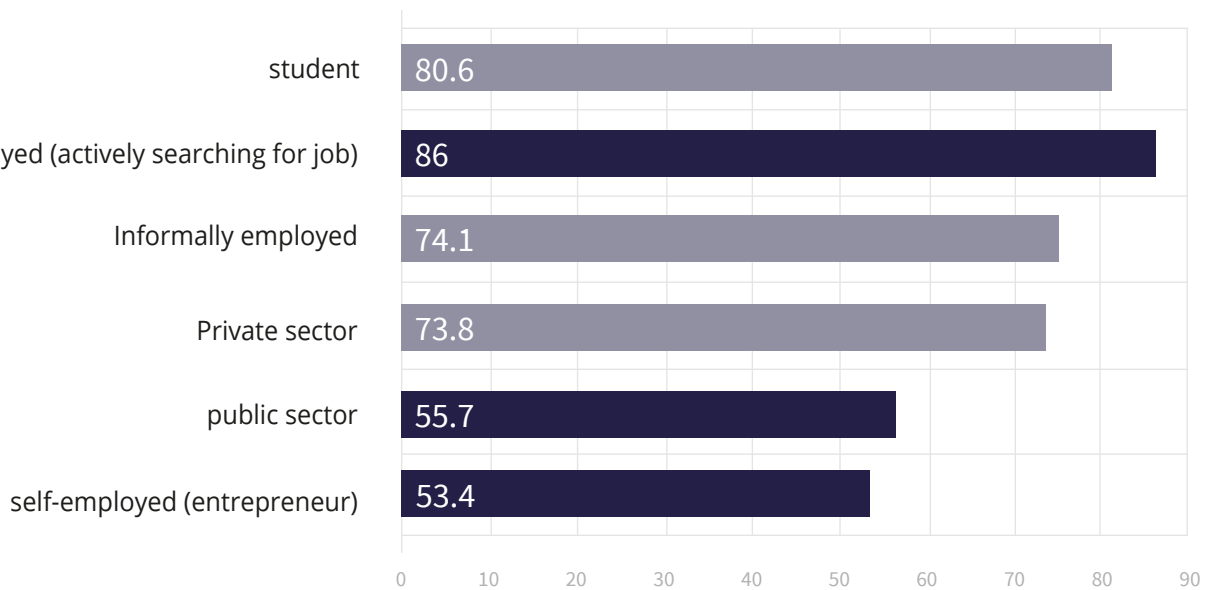
As in the previous study, which concerned exclusively the population of young people (aged 18-29), the predictors of emigration generally remain the same (Vučićević & Jović, 2019). One of the key ones is education. More than four-fifths of respondents (82.4%) with completed master’s or doctoral studies would leave Serbia if given an opportunity (Graph 22). A good predictor is the work status of the respondents. Only every six respondents who are unemployed and actively looking for a job would stay in Serbia even if given the opportunity to leave. In Serbia, only every fifth student and every fourth respondent who belongs to those informally employed or in the private sector would remain. There is the least number of those who would leave if they had their own business or were employed in the public sector, although in these categories more than half of the respondents would leave Serbia if given a good opportunity (Graph 23). The opportunity would also be used to a greater extent by those respondents who are in a worse financial situation, who see themselves as transitional losers and who do not expect an economic upswing in the next 3-5 years (Graph 24). Of course, the number of respondents who perceive their own and the general economic situation as good and who would emigrate from Serbia is not negligible, which once again indicates that economic motives are not the only reason for depopulation of Serbia, although they are often considered crucial in public. Also, support for the Serbian Progressive Party and Aleksandar Vučić, who are in power in the Republic, is a solid predictor of readiness to leave Serbia, although the findings are less valid for older respondents (Graph 25). Nearly three-quarters of “younger” respondents who do not support the current government in Serbia would take advantage of the opportunity to leave, whilst this proportion falls to less than

half (46.9%) of those who support the government (27.8% difference), we are reminded that support for the government is the weakest in young respondents and increases linearly with age. Of the older respondents who support the current governing structure, 56.4% state that their children or grandchildren are planning to leave, whilst for those who do not support the regime, this proportion rises to 66.7% (a difference of 12.3%). Based on the data above, it seems that a large number of older respondents do not associate the emigration of family members (children and grandchildren) with the current type of governance, or, in simple terms, that the government is not to blame, in their view, for the departure of young people from Serbia, which is why they do not deny it support in the elections.

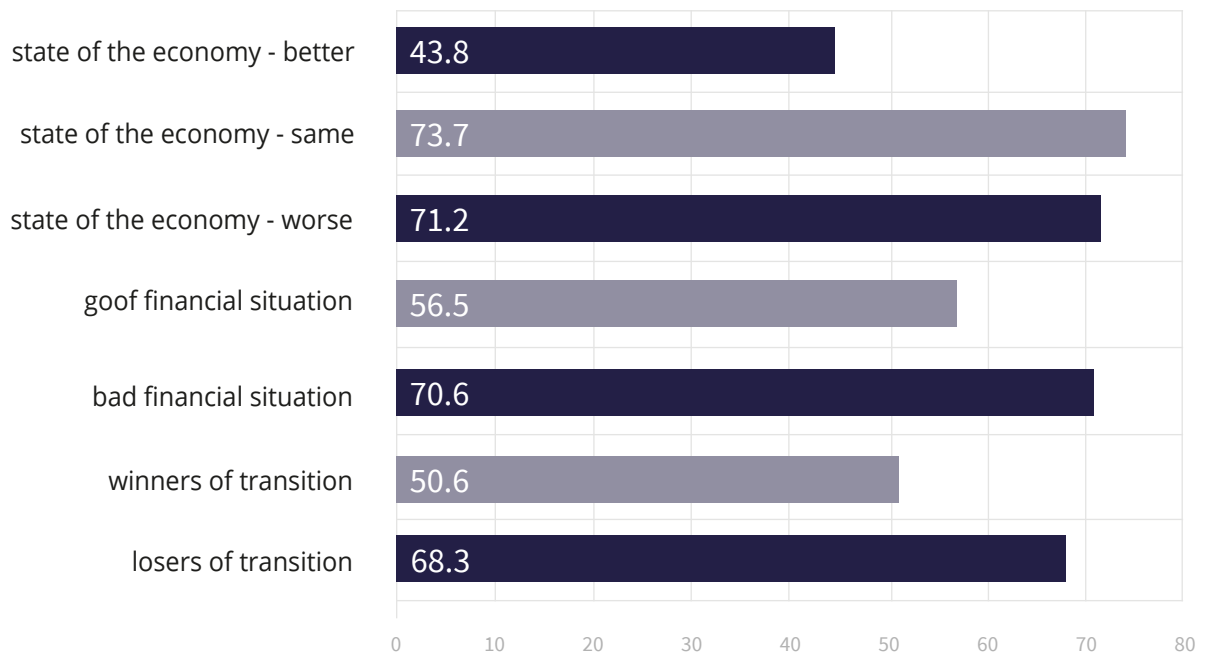
Graph 22. “If you were given a good opportunity at this moment, would you leave” based on the level of education



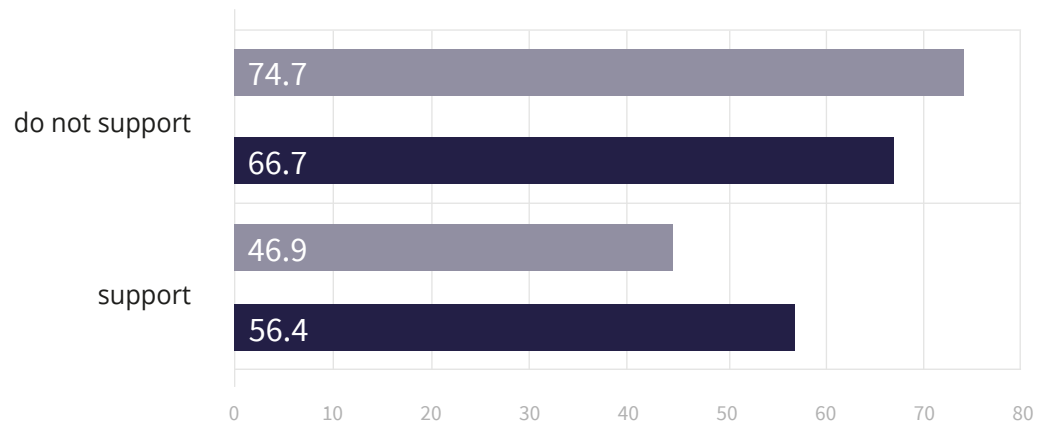
Graph 23. “If you were given a good opportunity at this moment, would you leave” based on the work status



Graph 24. “If you were given a good opportunity at this moment, would you leave” based on the economic factors



Graph 25. Emigration (would you leave/do your children or grandchildren plan to leave) and support for national authorities



At the very end, we also surveyed the values and orientations of the respondents who would leave Serbia if given a favourable opportunity compared to those who would remain in Serbia regardless of that opportunity. The findings, as in the case of education, are worrying and statistically significant at the .01 level. Respondents who would leave are postmodernist-oriented (they emphasise the importance of freedom of speech and provide greater influence of citizens on government decisions), are less authoritarian, more liberal on the right/left social axis, emphasise the concept of gender equality, they have less trust in politicians and political institutions, they claim that Serbia is not democratically governed.¹ In older respondents, the findings are similar, although there are some nuanced differences as some variables become and others are no longer statistically significant. Older respondents whose children or grandchildren are planning to leave Serbia also find that Serbia is not governed democratically, have less trust in political institutions and politicians, are less conservative (social compass), but at the same time less prone to state interventionism (economic compass) than those whose family members do not plan on leaving Serbia.²

¹ The findings for variables such as “economic compass”, “attitude toward migrants”, “ethnocentrism”, “political cynicism/alienation” are not statistically significant.

² The finding for ethnocentrism is significant at the .05 level, for attitudes toward women at the .1 level, whilst findings formodernism/postmodernism, authoritarianism, and political alienation are not statistically significant. It is interesting, however, that older respondents whose children and grandchildren plan to leave have more negative attitudes toward migrants ($p < .05$).

Considering the findings mentioned in this section, Graph 26 shows the simplified “photo-robots” of two “average persons” belonging to two categories: respondents who would leave Serbia if given the opportunity (picture left) and respondents who, despite the good opportunity to leave, would still remain in Serbia (picture right). A simplified presentation of characteristics of respondents who would leave and those who would remain in Serbia does not mean that each person belonging to one or the other category has the same characteristics and shares the same attitudes and values, but that there are statistically significant differences between those categories. Also, the data do not say, for example, that the person who is leaving the country belongs to the liberal gender of the social compass, and the one who remains conservative, since slightly more than 70% of the respondents in the total sample are more prone to conservative social values, but only that an average respondent who is willing to pack his or her suitcases is less conservative than the one who does not even consider leaving.

Graph 26. “Photo-robot” of the respondent who would leave/stay in Serbia



- High education
- Unemployed
- Student
- Private sector
- Poor financial situation
- Loser of the transition
- Economic stagnation or lagging behind
- Does not support the current govt.
- Postmodernist
- Less authoritarian
- Distrusts politicians and pol. institutions
- Serbia is not ruled democratically
- More gender sensitive
- More liberal

- Low education level
- Public sector
- Entrepreneur
- Good financial situation
- Winner of the transition
- Believes in economic progress
- Supports the current govt.
- Modernist
- More authoritarian
- Trusts politicians and political institution
- Serbia is ruled democratically
- Less gender sensitive
- More conservative

Basic Findings

- Compared to the previous surveys (Ipsos, CESID) data show that there is a decline in the number of respondents who believe that Serbia is on the right track.
- Potentially the most significant motivators for greater citizen involvement in politics are situations in which **citizens' freedoms and rights would be jeopardised, the accumulated injustice in society resulting from the arrogance of politicians in power, and situations in which citizens are constantly "taken for fools" by politicians.**
- Ethno-nationalism has a major influence on political preferences, as shown by the fact that almost 2/3 of the respondents would not vote for a non-Serb politician.
- Half of the respondents openly reveal their clientelism, acknowledging that they would sell their vote to a party they would not otherwise vote for if they or someone in their family got a job. Due to the stigmatisation of the socially undesirable response, it is reasonable to assume that the percentage of respondents who are ready for this type of clientelism is even higher.
- More than half of the respondents prefer a non-democratic type of leadership (authoritarian, paternalistic and populist).
- Of all institutions, respondents have the least trust in political parties and the media.
- Respondents show a very high degree of political alienation, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, distrust in elections and distrust in politicians.
- According to the respondents, the biggest problems in Serbia are: unemployment, poverty, crime and corruption.
- 2/3 of respondents (who do not belong to the age group who cannot migrate due to age) are considering leaving Serbia.
- The main reason for leaving Serbia is **a more certain future, higher pay, better standard of living and state order.**

Advanced Findings

- Respondents who support the power of the Serbian Progressive Party and Aleksandar Vučić
- have the highest trust in institutions, especially in classical political institutions.
- As the degree of institutional trust depends on the electoral and party preferences of the respondents, it turns out that older respondents, those with a low level of education, those who believe that this type of governance is good for Serbia, pensioners and public sector employees have the greatest trust in institutions in Serbia.
- Institutional trust and the legitimacy of the overall political system based on it are maintained by individuals who are more authoritarian, conservative, ethnocentric, prone to state interventionism, have a negative attitude towards migrants and gender equality, and place emphasis on modernist values (ensuring order in the country and fight against price growth).
- These findings apply to virtually all institutions except non-governmental organisations.
- The index of trust in politicians, as a slightly more accurate instrument than trust in institutions, is less dependent on the party preferences of respondents, but with this dependent variable the main predictors of trust are: support for those who are in power in the republic, age, level of policy monitoring, authoritarianism and ethnocentrism of respondents.
- A large number of Serbian citizens have been alienated from the world of politics. However, findings related to political alienation and cynicism give a significantly different picture and show that individuals who believe in the idea of

political activism, the possibility of social change, the importance of civil association and civil society organisations for the development of democracy, share democratic values in line with trends in democratic countries, they are more liberally oriented, they put the emphasis on the protection of free speech and ensure greater influence of citizens on government decisions, are less authoritarian and ethnocentric, have a higher level of education, etc.

- The citizens who are less cynical and alienated from politics do not trust the current political institutions, especially those with a classical political character.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents who are younger (average age 39) would leave Serbia if given the opportunity.
- More than three-fifths of older respondents (average age 62) who identify themselves as members of a group that cannot leave Serbia due to age, states that their children or grandchildren are planning to leave Serbia.
- Depopulation of Serbia is an issue that is extremely important as perceived by the younger and older respondents, whilst on a personal level, people leaving Serbia affects
- older respondents even more than younger respondents.
- Economic factors are an important motive for leaving, but almost half of the respondents cite non-economic factors as the key reasons for leaving Serbia.
- “Photo-robots” of those who would leave Serbia and those who would remain no matter what opportunity is significantly different. Respondents ready to leave are better educated or they are students, are unemployed or work in the private sector, are in an economically disadvantaged position and do not believe in the growth of the economy in the future, believe that Serbia is not ruled democratically, do not support the regime and do not trust institutions and politicians, they are more gender sensitive, more liberal, less authoritarian and postmodern-oriented.

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