

# Work orientations in contemporary advanced societies

Three comparative studies based on large-scale cross-national survey data



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Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)  
University of Bergen, Norway  
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*To my mother and father who, in 2007, suggested that  
quantitative sociology could be an interesting career path.  
Back in 2007, I disagreed.*

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates work orientations among workers in contemporary capitalist societies from a comparative cross-national perspective. It consists of three individual studies. Each applies a different conceptual and theoretical framework and analyses data from large survey programmes for several different societies. The studies address three general research questions. What factors are primarily responsible for differences in work orientations among individuals in different societies? Are work orientations changing over time as societies develop and if so, how can the divergence in these trends across societies be explained? And, finally, can work orientations also be conceptualized as characteristics of a society's cultural contexts, independently shaping individuals' ideas, expectations, and preferences in spheres of life other than work? To address these questions, each study focuses on different aspect of people's orientation to work, approached through different work orientation concepts. The studies primarily rely on concepts of job preferences, work ethic and non-financial employment commitment. Although all three studies can be characterized as comparative cross-national studies, they employ different comparative designs and methodological approaches.

Study I relates to a classical discussion about whether workers' orientations are primarily shaped by social and cultural factors external to the work situation or whether they depend on organizational features and the nature of one's work. It draws upon earlier studies which showed interrelatedness between workers' experiences with the intrinsic quality of work and their preferences. The study seeks to determine if an explanation based on job quality can also be extended to explain cross-national patterns of job preferences. The results suggest relatively strong support for the job quality hypothesis. They show that experience with intrinsic quality of work is not only the strongest factor to explain the preferences of individual workers within a country, but that it also accounts for a lion's share of variance in job preferences at the country level. Moreover, cross-national distribution of both job quality and job preferences is shown to follow a similar institutional logic predicted by power resources theory (PRT). The results indicate that where the unions are strong, job quality is generally higher, and workers' intrinsic

preferences are strengthened. This is likely to be a result of their value-reinforcing reaction to better quality of work.

Study II addresses a theoretical argument about the long-term decline of work ethic in contemporary societies. The study adopts theoretical lenses of revised modernization theory. It investigates whether longitudinal evidence supports its predictions about decreasing work ethic being a by-product of a post-materialist value shift associated with socio-economic development. According to the theory, weakening of work ethic is supposed to unfold primarily through intergenerational population replacement. Trends for the last two decades are first analysed for the two most similar cases of development, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The analysis is later supplemented by an examination of data from nine other European countries. Results provide support for modernization theory and show that the work ethic of more recent cohorts has been continuously decreasing. The intergenerational differences, in conjunction with cohort turnover, have contributed to work ethic decline in all analysed countries alike. However, this component of social change has not yet dominated the overall work ethic trend in all countries included in the data. The findings indicate that this might be due to countries' historical differences in socio-economic development as well as due to differences in the pace of development experienced in recent years.

Study III draws upon theoretical discussions about the feasibility of a universal basic income (UBI). It has been repeatedly argued that a proposal's capacity to appeal to the general public is likely to be impaired by the strength of productivist norms and values regarding the importance of paid work. The study then seeks to determine whether and to what extent cultural productivism can account for varying levels of public support for UBI between European societies. The findings show that the public's average commitment to paid employment is the second strongest factor limiting support for UBI. However, this effect is surpassed and confounded by the negative effect of socio-economic development. The study draws upon revised modernization theory and provides an explanation for why socio-economic development may be a common underlying

reason that UBI is less appealing in the eyes of the general public, while simultaneously creating conditions for workers' stronger expressive attachment to paid employment.

Findings presented in this thesis provide important insight regarding the formation, change and consequences of work orientations in contemporary advanced societies. They indicate that any comprehensive explanation of cross-national variation of work orientations has to take into consideration a broad range of macro factors related to a country's socio-economic, cultural and labour-market characteristics. The complex nature of work orientations has to be acknowledged in the analysis of longitudinal trends. These are likely to reflect a more universal cultural logic of modernization as well as structural changes in the content, conditions and organization of work. However, work orientations are not only shaped by other contextual characteristics. Rather, orientations as socially embedded phenomena are part of a country's wider cultural contexts. In turn, these cultural contexts may act as independent variables which shape individuals' attitudes, ideas and preferences in other spheres of life.

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## 1 Introduction

This thesis investigates work orientations among workers in contemporary capitalist societies from a comparative cross-national perspective. It consists of three individual studies<sup>1</sup>. Each study applies a different conceptual and theoretical framework and analyses high quality data from large survey programmes for several different societies. Despite their specific focus, the studies address three general research questions. What factors are primarily responsible for differences in work orientations among individuals in different societies? Are work orientations changing over time as societies develop and if so, how can the divergence in these trends across societies be explained? And, finally, can work orientations also be conceptualized as characteristics of a society's cultural contexts, acting as macro-level factors shaping individuals' ideas, expectations, and preferences in spheres of life other than work?

At a general level, the thesis relates to a discussion about the subjective dimension of individuals' relationship to work and its meaning. Arguably, this question has been debated in the field of sociology since its very foundation. Traditionally, sociologists have been interested in whether paid work under industrial capitalism is capable of providing any intrinsic meaning and if so, what socio-economic conditions and employment characteristics maximize this intrinsic potential (Baldry, 2013: 2). The thesis builds on this rich tradition. To compare the subjective relationship with work among individuals from different contemporary societies, it applies a so-called work orientation approach. This typically sociological approach to the study of work's meaning is ideal for such comparative analysis. It recognizes a multiplicity of potential meanings that work may carry for different individuals and/or different societies and treats them as collectively shared social constructs embedded in societies' socio-economic, institutional and cultural structures (Baldry, 2013: 2; Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 30; Watson, 2003: 121–122). Conceptually, work orientations refer to 'a subjective dimension between a person and his/her job and employment in general' and grasp the complex 'conceptions, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and evaluations

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, all three studies have been written as journal articles. Whilst all have been submitted prior to submission of the thesis, they are at different stages of the review process. Later in the text, they are referred to as either studies, articles or papers. The terms are used interchangeably.

concerning work or various aspects of it' (Furåker, 2019: 16). In the thesis, this broad concept is used rather than similar but more specific terms such as work attitudes or work meanings<sup>2</sup>. Still, the three are used interchangeably, as it not always possible to distinguish them conceptually in previous research and/or perspectives of other social sciences. However, work orientation is such a broad term, that it brings together several more specific concepts, each tapping at a different subjective dimension of meaning that work may carry. Thus, even though the thesis can be thought of as a cross-national investigation of work orientations, each study analyses a different work orientation concept. These specific work orientation concepts are job preferences, work ethic and employment commitment.

When talking about work orientations, it is important to clarify exactly what is meant by work, towards which individuals orient themselves and with which they form subjective relationships. In the thesis, the term is used in line with a convention present in mainstream sociology of work, i.e., as referring to paid employment. Work stands for a purposeful activity, which is not undertaken solely for pleasure, but which has economic or symbolic value and for which one receives some sort of income, financial compensation or other tangible remuneration, in order to earn a living (Brief and Nord, 1990: 2; Budd, 2011: 2; Furåker et al., 2012: 2; MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 2; Noon and Blyton, 2002: 9; Watson, 2003: 113). On the one hand, institutionalization of paid employment has been a relatively recent phenomenon and still concerns only a minority of the world's nations (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 2–3). Still, it is a principal form of work in modern societies, be it in terms of the number of individuals involved, time allocated to it or with regard to its importance for basic material sustenance (Noon and Blyton, 2002: 9). Moreover, this definition of work has several practical advantages. In fact, it is close to a subjective understanding of work held by the majority of

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<sup>2</sup> Work attitudes typically refer to 'a wide range of people's feelings about their work' and include 'their satisfaction with and commitment to work and to different work structures' (Kalleberg and Berg, 1987: 157). On the other hand, work meanings typically refer to psychological meanings which individuals and groups attach to working as a stream of human activity (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 13; Rosso et al., 2010: 94). However, the concept of work orientations is broader, and one's orientation to work can consist of a whole set of different types of work attitudes and/or meanings.

people, who regard financial reward as the most important definitional feature of working (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 150–171). It also facilitates empirical analysis, as the majority of available data sets are based on similar definitions. Furthermore, the choice allows one to avoid complex theoretical and political discussions about recognition of the value of unpaid domestic labour, voluntary work and/or leisure activities (Furåker et al., 2012: 2). Thus, considering this definition, the thesis understands work orientations as orientations towards work *qua* paid employment.

As will be discussed later in more detail, work orientations comprise a well-established research topic with a long history in sociology (Grint, 2005: 24–29), and other social sciences (see Rosso et al., 2010: 98–99). However, work orientations research also has great practical significance outside of academia. First, orientations to work are important for the interpretation of workers' subjective well-being and satisfaction with their jobs, as well as for our understanding of job quality. Job satisfaction does not depend solely on the objective characteristics of jobs, but is instead determined by a match between workers' subjective needs, wants and expectations, and the rewards that their jobs objectively offer. Thus, work orientations are essential in determining what counts as a good job (Berglund and Esser, 2019; Clark, 2005; Kalleberg, 1977). Second, work orientations are important for the effective utilization of the productive capacities of societies. They determine how efficiently, carefully and responsibly the labour required for material reproduction of societies will be employed. Needless to say, there is a substantial difference in the outcome if the work is done by individuals positively oriented towards expenditure of their labour power, as opposed to being done by workers whose participation in productive activities has to be enforced (Furåker et al., 2012: 1). Third, since work orientations have cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Furåker, 2019: 16; Watson, 2003: 118), people actively use them to modify social structures, to change old social organizations and to create new ones (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 7–8). Therefore, the study of work orientations can have a prognostic value and indicate the direction of future trends and changes in the organization of work.

Traditionally, the majority of work orientation studies were confined to specific organizational, occupational or national contexts (e.g., Goldthorpe et al., 1968; Kalleberg, 1977; Mackinnon, 1980; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979; Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991). However, recent decades have seen increasing availability of data from large international survey programmes combined with substantial advancements in statistical modelling of such multi-national data (Andreß et al., 2019). This has opened up new possibilities for comparative work orientations research, enabling broader comparative designs based on analysis of data from diverse national contexts (e.g., De Witte et al., 2004; Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011; Parboteeah et al., 2013; Parboteeah and Cullen, 2003; Stam et al., 2013; Turunen and Nätti, 2017; Van Hoorn and Maseland, 2013). All three studies in the thesis fall under the common umbrella of cross-national comparative research. They are ‘concerned [...] with observing social phenomena across countries, and with developing explanations for their similarities and differences’ (Andreß et al., 2019: 2). On the one hand, such cross-national scope allows us to assess the impact of societies’ institutions, structural characteristics, cultural traditions and ecological settings on workers’ orientations, in addition to the individual characteristics of workers and their jobs (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 12–13). On the other hand, it allows us to conceptualize work orientations as macro-level contextual characteristics and test their unique explanatory power with regard to individuals’ attitudes and preferences in various spheres of life. Additionally, a cross-national focus greatly expands generalizability of findings, since their plausibility is tested across diverse national, cultural and socio-economic contexts (Andreß et al., 2019: 11).

What then are the topics of the studies and how do these relate to the three research questions outlined above? Study I addresses the question of country-level factors responsible for work orientations differences among workers in different contemporary societies. It can be seen as relating to a classical discussion about whether workers’ orientations are primarily shaped by factors external to the work environment or whether they reflect experiences with nature and the organization of one’s work (Goldthorpe et al., 1968). In particular, the study focuses on the concept of job preferences. It investigates whether individual-level theories which understand workers’ preferences as being predominantly shaped by experiences with high quality jobs

(Gallie, 2007c: e.g., Johnson, 2001a; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979) can be extended to account for their cross-national variation. The comparative framework of the study is inspired by varieties of capitalism and power resources theory, and the paper is designed as a multi-country study which analyses International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data for 25 advanced societies.

Study II focuses on the question about factors and mechanisms responsible for work orientations' long-term changes. More specifically, it addresses a classical theoretical argument about the expected decline of work ethic in contemporary societies (Bauman, 2005; Inglehart, 1997; Offe, 1985). It adopts theoretical lenses of revised modernization theory (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005) and investigates whether longitudinal evidence supports its predictions about decreasing work ethic being a by-product of socio-economic development, unfolding primarily through intergenerational population replacement (Norris and Inglehart, 2011). The thesis is based on the analysis of three waves of European Values Study (EVS) data covering the period between 1999-2017. It is primarily designed as a comparative case study (Grunow, 2019) of two very similar countries (Ragin, 1987), i.e., the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, the analysis is also extended to nine other European societies with comparable data available.

Study III addresses the question about work orientations being an independent causal variable at the country level. This study is based on discussions about the feasibility of a Universal Basic Income (UBI). It seeks to test a theoretical argument, which states that the public acceptance of UBI might be fundamentally impaired by the strength of productivist cultural norms and values, which are to a varying degree common to virtually all modern societies (e.g., Bauman, 2005; Offe, 2001; Wispelaere and Noguera, 2012). The thesis analyses employment commitment and work ethic, aggregated at the level of countries, as macro-level indicators of societies' productivist cultural ethos. It aims to determine the extent to which productivism can explain the cross-national pattern of public support for UBI, which does not seem to correspond to any established comparative political economy typology (Vlandas, 2019). This multi-country study analyses European Social Survey (ESS) data on UBI support from 21 societies, but the information on work ethic and employment commitment is collected from EVS and ISSP, respectively.

This descriptions of the three studies show that the problems addressed in the thesis are relatively specific. However, such specific focus is inevitable, for a truly comprehensive treatise of the three research questions would be an ambitious research project beyond the scope of a doctoral dissertation. Instead, the thesis adopts a perspective, which Locke modestly described as an ‘under-labourer’ approach. In other words, it aspires to ‘clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way of knowledge’ (cited from Winch, 2003: 3–4). Thus, by addressing these partial problems, the study aims to generate theoretically relevant and empirically solid findings, which can contribute to more general discussions in the field of sociological work orientations research, comparative or otherwise.

Due to the specific focus of the studies, this introductory part of the thesis attempts to build a unifying framework, which will help the reader localize the arguments in the broader theoretical and empirical context of the research field. The first part introduces work orientations as an interdisciplinary field. It discusses differences in the views of three main social science disciplines: economics, psychology and sociology.

The second part is the longest and the most important. It reviews relevant theoretical discussions and empirical findings from previous research, which form the wider context for each of the three studies. This part is divided into three subsections, each building a background for one study. The section related to Study I is centred around discussions of the formative factors shaping workers’ job preferences, at the level of individuals and their jobs, and at the macro-level of entire societies. The section related to Study II discusses the question of supposed work ethic decline in advanced societies and its underlying causes. Lastly, the section which sets the context for Study III, addresses the question of whether prevailing cultural attachment to paid employment can act as a factor preventing UBI from gaining more substantial public support.

Next, the methodological part provides a sketch of comparative theories used for identification of structural and institutional characteristics of countries and to explain cross-national



differences. This is followed by a description of multi-level modelling and the linear decomposition technique, two main methods used in these studies.

The fourth part introduces comparative survey data analysed in the thesis, i.e., International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), European Values Study (EVS) and European Social Survey (ESS). A summary of the studies is provided next, followed by a discussion of the merits of the thesis for both contemporary and future comparative work orientation research. The introduction is concluded with a discussion of policy implications derived from the presented findings.

## **2 Work orientations as an interdisciplinary research field**

This section will briefly discuss how work, work meanings<sup>3</sup> and work orientations are conceptualized in different social science traditions. The overview will first present the view of work found in mainstream neoclassical economics, followed by a sketch of the features typical of a psychological perspective and end with an outline of a sociological approach to the study of work and its meaning.

### **2.1 Economics**

Work has traditionally played an important role in economic thinking, mainly because of its contribution to creation of wealth (Spencer, 2009: 1). Likewise, the theorization of work found in mainstream economic thought is extremely influential, especially at the policy level (Spencer, 2009: xvi–xvii). According to this view, work is an inherently unpleasant activity, whose main purpose is to provide resources for consumption of goods, services and leisure in a way that maximizes an individual's personal utility. However, work itself does not contribute any utility of its own, and is therefore regarded as a disutility (Budd, 2011: 77–78).

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<sup>3</sup> This is probably the only part which uses the term work meanings more often than work orientations. The reason for this is simple. Work orientations represent a specific sociological way of conceptualizing the meaning of work (Baldry, 2013) and this terminology is not always found in perspectives of other social sciences. Even within sociology, the term dates back to the study by Goldthorpe et al. (1968) and instances of its use in earlier works are rare.

There are two main explanations offered for this depiction of work. First, it is claimed that work is a disutility simply because it is a painful endeavour. This view is mirrored in the writing of many neoclassical economists from the nineteenth century. For instance, Adam Smith characterized work as toil and trouble and, in a similar fashion, Jeremy Bentham defined it as a pain to overcome in order to realize the pleasure of consumption (Spencer, 2015: 676). The second reason has to do with the fact that work interferes with leisure, which is seen as one of the sources of utility. Since a day has only a fixed number of hours, the more time that is spent on work, then logically less time remains for leisure. Implicit to this argument is a perception of work per se as a bad thing, whilst utility-generating leisure is considered as good (Spencer, 2015: 677). This particular conception of work as a disutility forms the basis for the well-known 'income-leisure' model of labour supply, which models an individual's labour supply as a decision to sell an optimal number of hours of labour in order to consume a basket of goods and leisure in a utility-maximizing way (Budd, 2011: 79)

Thus, classical mainstream economics assumes that the main reason why people engage in work is to produce objects for consumption or trade and to earn income to purchase other goods and services (Budd, 2011: 78). Because work is seen as a burdensome activity, it is not expected to have any other meaning beyond the instrumental, related to the purchasing power for consumption that it provides (Budd, 2011: 86). However, such conceptualization is obviously reductionist, as it ignores the fact that work may carry a variety of different meanings which are not necessarily confined to its consumption-supporting function. These might well have to do with it being perceived and experienced as an intrinsically rewarding activity and an end in itself (Spencer, 2015). Moreover, the approach ignores the potential social, cultural, and institutional embeddedness of work's meanings and thus cannot account for its cross-national variation.

## **2.2 Psychology**

The psychological perspective emphasizes the centrality of work for personal fulfilment and satisfaction (Budd, 2011: 90). Although psychology does not question the importance of the income-providing function of work, it focuses on non-financial intrinsic aspects of work

experience and their impact on an individual's well-being (Gill, 1999: 726). Work is seen primarily as satisfying psychological needs, which have historically been met by religious rituals, the extended family or the village community. Their role in modern societies has been entirely taken over by the institution of paid employment (Gill, 1999: 726). However, not all modern work is equally satisfying. Depending on whether work fulfils an individual's psychological needs, it can be seen as either a source of personal satisfaction and meaning, or in cases where these needs are not adequately met, as a source of deprivation (Budd, 2011: 90). Although discontent can be triggered by a lack of material rewards, psychologists have demonstrated that it is the non-pecuniary aspects of work such as variety, exercise of one's skills, autonomy or job control, which have the strongest effect on employees' motivation (Herzberg, 1971) and/or satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Psychology does not expect modern work to carry one universal meaning. Instead, it emphasizes that the nature of work's meaning is personal, rooted in an individual's subjective interpretation of their work experiences. Each individual worker is surrounded by a variety of potential sources of meaning, and it is up to them to assess which meaning to actualize (Rosso et al., 2010: 94).

With a bit of exaggeration, such perspective on work and its meaning is close to an anti-thesis of the view of economics. Instead of emphasizing the objective material rewards from work, psychology shifts the focus to the subjective experience of working and its beneficial or harmful effects on the human psyche. However, this perspective overlooks the importance of broader social structures within which individuals work and derive meaning from their employment. On the one hand, institutional, social, and cultural contexts have a profound impact on the nature and organization of work and thus also on an individual's working experiences. At the same time, these structures determine the culturally specific way in which individuals in different societies ascribe meaning to their work (Gill, 1999: 726–727).

### **2.3 Sociology**

To provide a summary of the sociological perspective on work and its meaning, is a challenging task. Despite the fact that these themes are central to traditional and contemporary sociology,

an integrated sociological approach to work has never emerged. On the one hand, this has to do with theoretical divisions within sociology, well-known for its multi-paradigmatic character. On the other hand, the effect of paradigmatic plurality has been further reinforced by the fact that sociological research of work has specialized in a variety of diverse areas, from work organizations and occupations, through to industrial relations to work behaviours and attitudes (Watson, 2003: 40–43). Therefore, this section will provide only a brief outline of some general principles common to sociological thinking about work and individuals' subjective relationships with it. A more specific review of topics directly related to the arguments presented in the thesis will then follow.

According to Vallas (2012: 6–19) there are three basic principles that provide coherence in the sociology of work. The first principle states that work is an activity of primary importance and that productive relations which people form as they earn their living have a decisive impact on their individual lives as well as on the structure and organization of the societies in which they live (Vallas et al., 2009: 5). Work has traditionally occupied a central position in sociological thinking, being famously considered the key sociological category (Furåker et al., 2012: 3–5), or a fundamental social fact shaping the structure of society, its integration, conflicts, developments, self-understanding and future (Offe, 1985: 129). This is still the case for contemporary societies, where work is not only the central mechanism for the distribution of income, allocation of social status and welfare entitlements, but also an important source of sociality outside the family (Weeks, 2011: 6). Additionally, work fulfils a number of latent socio-psychological functions, such as provision of temporal structures, regularization of activities and creation of opportunities for collective engagement for common purposes (Jahoda, 1982). Furthermore, work plays an important role for self-understanding in individuals who acquire and form their personal identity in and through their occupations (Beck, 2000: 13). The importance of work extends to a social level, where an obligation to partake in productive activities is regarded as a citizen's duty and a fundamental part of the basic social contract (Weeks, 2011: 8).

The second principle specifies that work is always embedded in social and institutional settings which lend it its specific character and form its meanings (Vallas et al., 2009: 9–11). On the one hand, work is an objective reality, constituted by a physical or mental activity. On the other hand, it is constituted by associated values and socially constructed meanings, which vary substantially in time and across societies (Brief and Nord, 1990: 3). Borrowing the words of Charles W. Mills (1966: 215), this principle simply states that ‘[n]either love nor hatred of work is inherent in man, or inherent in any given line of work. For work has no intrinsic meaning. [...] Whatever the effects of [...] work [...] they are the net result of the work as an activity plus the meanings [...] brought to it, plus the views that others hold of it’. The second principle renders the sociological approach to work distinct from both economics and psychology. In contrast to economics, the emphasis on social and institutional structures allows conceptualization of work’s meaning beyond a mere economic transaction (Vallas, 2012: 6). Unlike psychologists, sociologists assert that work meanings cannot be analysed within the atomistic context of an individual’s inner mental world and insist that institutional, social and cultural systems form specific ways in which individuals ascribe meaning to their work (Gill, 1999: 726–727). Other than that, both disciplines agree about the importance of work for an individual’s social identity, self-understanding or well-being.

Finally, the third principle stresses that work is always more than its formal side specified in the employment contract. There is a hidden underside to every workplace, where ‘informal norms and practices are established that often stand at odds with formal expectations’ (Vallas, 2012: 6). These informal ties which workers develop as they engage in work in organizations, are important resources which may either enable organizations to achieve their goals, or impede their success (Vallas et al., 2009: 14).

With regard to the question of work’s meaning, sociological interest in this topic dates back to the emergence of industrial capitalism and waged labour (Baldry, 2013). Sociologists started to investigate regular incidences of collective dissatisfaction among workers in this period, inquiring whether these were only a transient phenomenon or a permanent feature associated with all work under capitalism. Interestingly, the founding fathers of sociology associated major defining

features of modernity – both positive and negative – with changes in the nature, organization and meaning of work. For instance, Marx (1961) argued that work is what distinguishes humans from other animal species by allowing them to transform their environment to suit their interests. However, he criticized capitalist society for alienating workers from the end product of their labour and from the labour process itself, preventing them from deriving intrinsic value and meaning from their work (Bain et al., 2007: 4). Similarly, Durkheim (2014) feared that complex divisions of labour in capitalist societies might not be sufficient as a social bond, and warned against a permanent risk of normlessness (Furåker, 2005: 162). He hoped that the creation of a new social order based on shared values and goals, at the level of the workplace and of society, could eliminate the risk, while at the same time leading to the restoration of work's lost meaning (Baldry, 2013: 2). Finally, Weber (1958) famously argued that the change in the meaning of work (as embodied in the conception of a job as a calling introduced by the Protestant reformation), made the emergence of capitalism possible. However, it also led to the bureaucratization of work, the separation of workers from the craft of their work and the creation of an iron cage with no meaning of work left (Rosso et al., 2010: 105).

The plurality of views regarding the meaning of work also characterized sociological thinking in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Grint, 2005: 24–25). Some authors, such as Dubin (1962) or Mannheim (1950), argued that the lack of workers' expectations with regard to the meaning of their work in industrial society, justifies the existence of alienating working conditions. Argyris (1964) argued that the meaning of work depends on the nature of a particular job, to which workers adapt their subjective expectations. It was the famous study by Goldthorpe et al. (1968), *The Affluent Worker*, which introduced the concept of work orientations as a typically sociological approach to the study of the meaning of work. The authors coined the term to account for a paradoxical observation encountered in their study of assembly-line workers in the British town of Luton. Despite not deriving much intrinsic or social satisfaction from their work experience, these workers did not express any dissatisfaction with their jobs either. Goldthorpe concluded that the workers had an instrumental orientation to work, which made them prioritize the relatively high standard of living that these well-paid jobs offered, while accepting the associated deprivations

(Watson, 2003: 120). The authors developed a complex theory about the social and cultural origin of orientations to work and offered a typology of orientations that could be found in industrial society. However, these points will be elaborated on in more detail in the next section. For now, it is important to emphasize that the work orientation approach represented an important step towards a fully sociological understanding of work and its meaning (Watson, 2003: 122). Goldthorpe recognized that there are multiple different meanings that can be attached to work (Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 30) and acknowledged that these meanings are socially and culturally determined (Grint, 2005: 290) rather than solely reflecting job conditions or worker's psychological needs (Watson, 2003: 67–68).

Indeed, sociological interest in work orientations, meanings and values did not end with Goldthorpe, but over the years evolved into a relatively broad and diverse research field. Contemporary work orientations research addresses several topics and employs a great number of concepts to capture different aspects of people's subjective relationship to work. For instance, when providing a theoretical and conceptual review of present-day work orientations research, Furåker (2019: 18) implicitly suggests it is structured around three main topics: the question of why people engage in work, how their willingness to work is motivated and finally what role people think work plays in their lives. Gallie (2019), however, who reviewed the work orientation research agenda<sup>4</sup> since the 1960s, identified four different phases which successively broadened the scope of the research field. Research efforts in these phases concentrated on the impact of socio-economic development on work orientations, their role in the experience of unemployment, specific gendered values of women related to their increased participation in the labour market, and the role of attachment to a job and organization.

Rather than trying to exhaustively cover this complex research idea in its entirety, the thesis will now continue with a more focused review of classical and recent works related to three specific topics addressed in the individual studies. In particular, the next part discusses the factors

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, Gallie uses the term work value rather than orientations to work. However, he conceptualizes the term in a sufficiently broad way, which makes his review highly relevant for work orientations as the main topic of this thesis.

shaping job preferences of workers in modern societies, the trajectory and mechanisms of work ethic change, as well as the question of commitment to paid employment and its impact on public support for UBI.

### **3 Selected topics in work orientation research**

This section reviews theoretical literature and previous research related to the main topics of the three studies. It is divided into three sub-sections, each centred around a particular problem addressed in the studies. Each section starts with a definition of the main work orientation concept that the study employs, continues with a brief history of its use in sociological research and then moves to a more specific research question related to the concept addressed in the study. Where possible, a review of empirical results related to the question is provided as well.

#### **3.1 Factors shaping job preferences**

This section provides the context for Study I. It discusses a range of factors considered to shape workers' job preferences at both the level of individuals and their jobs, as well as at the macro-level of entire societies. The section introduces the concept of job preferences and its relevance in work orientation research. This is followed by a review of The Affluent Worker study (Goldthorpe et al., 1968) and its critiques. The rest of the section is devoted to a review of contemporary views on determinants of job preferences, as found in empirical job preferences research.

##### **3.1.1 Job preferences**

A classical sociological approach to the study of work orientations is through the analysis of characteristics that individuals find most important in work, or through analysis of their job preferences (Esser and Lindh, 2018; Gallie et al., 2012; Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011). Phenomena which are here referred to as job preferences have elsewhere been analysed under different terms including job orientations (Mackinnon, 1980), job preference orientations (Gallie, 2007c), work goals (MOW - International Research Team, 1987; Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991), work values (Berglund and Esser, 2019; Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013, 2019; Kalleberg and



Stark, 1993; Parboteeah et al., 2013) and even work orientations (Berglund, 2012). While some minor conceptual distinctions exist among these (see for instance the discussion in the first note in Zou, 2015: 20), they are used more or less interchangeably in the thesis.

At the most general level, job preferences can be defined as conceptions of what is desirable that individuals hold with respect to their work activity. They reflect awareness of the conditions that individuals seek from work situations and regulate an individual's actions in pursuit of those conditions (Kalleberg, 1977). Job preferences can be analysed individually or in ad hoc clusters of empirically interrelated items. Theoretical literature typically distinguishes between preferences of two main types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic preferences focus on the consequences or outcomes of work and emphasize the importance of tangible rewards external to the individual, such as security, income, advancement opportunities, or status. Intrinsic preferences, on the other hand, emphasize the process of work and related non-material rewards, reflecting an inherent interest in the work, the learning potential and the opportunity to be creative (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Twenge et al., 2010). This dichotomy can be thought of as designating a continuum of potential meanings of work. Whilst a position closer to its intrinsic pole signifies that work has predominantly expressive meaning, extrinsic orientation is indicative of an instrumental meaning of work (Watson, 2003: 118). Apart from theoretical reasons, job preferences are of great practical significance, as they guide an individual's vocational aspirations, career choices, or job satisfaction and influence personal well-being. They are likely to have implications for performance of organizations, social welfare and functioning of modern societies (Gallie, 2007c; Gallie et al., 2012; Kalleberg, 1977; Kraaykamp et al., 2019).

An important research question which dates back to the very foundations of the field, concerns mechanisms responsible for the formation of workers' preferences. Researchers have been particularly interested in whether job preferences are primarily determined by processes operating outside the work context or by characteristics of the work situation itself. The following review will focus specifically on this question. It will start by introducing Goldthorpe's foundational work, *The Affluent Worker*, as well as the main arguments of the work's

contemporary critics. The review will be concluded by a summary of views on the formation of workers' preferences found in more recent studies.

### 3.1.2 The Affluent Worker study and its critique

Goldthorpe's study *The Affluent Worker* (1968) represented a big step towards a distinctively sociological analysis of the meaning of work. First, it introduced the concept of orientation to work into sociological analysis (Watson, 2003: 120). Second, the study was the first one to recognize the multiplicity of meanings work may hold for different social groups (Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 30). Finally, it meant a paradigmatic shift in understanding of the origin of work orientations, which were conceptualized as generated by sources autonomous to the working environment (Grint, 2005: 27).

The specific goal set by the authors in the first volume was to examine if work attitudes are primarily determined by features of the work situation itself, or whether they derive from pre-existing orientations with external sources. The study responded to other approaches which conceptualized work attitudes as shaped by immediate experiences with and reactions to work-tasks and work-roles. It started with a paradoxical finding: whilst analysed manual workers did not seem to derive much intrinsic satisfaction from their immediate work experience, they nevertheless reported high levels of attachment to their present employment (Goldthorpe et al., 1968: 27–29). The authors introduced the term 'orientation to work' to provide an explanation for this paradox. The workers were said to have an a priori instrumental orientation to work, which led them to prioritize extrinsic satisfaction from work at the expense of expressive aspects of work.

However, the authors acknowledged that work may have a variety of meanings for different occupational groups of employees and offered a typology of three work orientations. First, there is the instrumental orientation typical of the new affluent working class. For instrumentally oriented workers, the primary meaning of work is that of a means to an end, external to the work situation. Second, bureaucratic orientation (Goldthorpe et al., 1968: 39) characterizes salaried

white-collar workers for whom work means a service to an organization in exchange for a career. Finally, solidaristic orientation (Goldthorpe et al., 1968: 40–41) is typical for members of the traditional proletarian working classes who perceive work primarily as a group activity, participation in which is based on moral grounds.

Goldthorpe argued that work orientations are in fact socially and culturally constructed phenomena which workers bring to their work from other social contexts. That said, Goldthorpe assumed that the instrumental orientation of workers from the study was primarily a function of contextual factors external to their work environment (Goldthorpe et al., 1968: 147–158). First, it was determined by their lifecycle, as the analysed men were all married and had financial responsibility for their families. Second, the instrumental orientation was reinforced by workers' high geographical mobility. This reinforcement was direct, because the workers purposefully left their former areas of residence in order to improve their living standards, and direct because of the contextual effects of a large number of geographically mobile persons in the area. In the absence of local communities, workers adopted a lifestyle centred on conjugal family instead of work. Finally, a high proportion of the studied workers experienced downward social mobility, which increased their motivation for a better living standard. All in all, their instrumental orientation seemed to have little to do with the nature of their work and working conditions (Goldthorpe et al., 1968: 174–177). Furthermore, Goldthorpe expected the same processes which shaped orientations of workers in Luton to operate universally in any industrial society. Thus, he expected that instrumental orientation to work would increase and become more widespread in the future.

However, Goldthorpe's conclusions were heavily criticized by various contemporary critics. Among other issues, they contested the notion of work orientations being shaped by factors external to the work environment (Grint, 2005: 27–29; Watson, 2003: 123–126). Some authors argued that the direct impact of work experiences upon work orientations becomes obvious in a long-term perspective and accused the authors of overlooking the dynamics and the changing nature of orientations. Results from various studies showed that workers may choose jobs in

accordance with their pre-determined priorities, but they make important adjustments based on work-situation-related factors once they are employed (Beynon and Blackburn, 1972; Daniel, 1973; Wedderburn and Crompton, 1972). Furthermore, Goldthorpe's findings might have been significantly affected by the historical context in which the study was written. As noted by Gallie et al. (2012), *The Affluent Worker* was published in the context of widespread de-skilling of manual labour resulting from the implementation of large-scale production technologies. Under such circumstances, workers may have simply redefined priorities to preserve a meaningful sense of identity.

### 3.1.3 Contemporary views on formation of job preferences

Contemporary sociological thinking is less divided on the question of the origin and nature of job preferences. It is generally accepted that preferences are shaped by the different social settings in which individuals reside, as well as by different individual needs and dispositions (Kraaykamp et al., 2019: 13). These formative settings include both social contexts inside as well as outside the world of work. There are many heuristic models of transmission, formation and change of job preferences proposed by researchers from different fields (Brief and Nord, 1990; Kraaykamp et al., 2019; MOW - International Research Team, 1987). This review will narrow its focus to one particular framework suggested by Kalleberg and Marsden<sup>5</sup> (2013: 256–257, 2019: 45–48). The authors categorized sociological explanations of variation in job preferences into two groups: theories emphasizing selection mechanisms, and approaches which emphasize work-related socialization. Even though complementary, selection perspectives give priority to circumstances and experiences outside the work context, while work-socialization perspectives focus on the impact of workplace and labour force events in shaping people's preferences. This typology can be enriched even further by considering economic, cultural and institutional macro factors as independent mechanisms operating at the social level and shaping the context within which people seek specific job rewards (Kraaykamp et al., 2019: 13).

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<sup>5</sup> The typology was originally designed to classify an explanation for the change in preferences over time. However, it can be readily applied to systematize theories explaining variation in job preferences.

### *Selection perspectives*

Selection perspectives (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013: 256, 2019: 45) point to the impact of pre-labour force experiences in the formation of an individual's job preferences. They emphasize the interrelatedness between people's preferences and their group membership, which socializes them into values and norms which the respective groups hold. These formative factors not only include expectations and behaviours related to gender roles, primary socialization in the family, impact of formal schooling, but also birth cohort membership and a life-course stage.

First, gender role socialization has been hypothesized to make women less concerned with breadwinning and freer to focus on intrinsic preferences, and to make men place greater emphasis on extrinsic preferences (Johnson and Mortimer, 2011). The evidence for such an effect is however quite mixed and while some single-country (Johnson, 2001a, 2001b; Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013; Zou, 2015) as well as cross-national comparative studies (Esser and Lindh, 2018) found women oriented more strongly towards social and/or intrinsic work values, others did not arrive at the same conclusion (De Witte et al., 2004; Gallie et al., 2012; Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011; Parboteeah et al., 2013).

Job preferences are also formed by parental influences during socialization in early childhood and adolescence. Parents are supposed to form their children's preferences directly through education and indirectly through everyday routines and provided opportunities (Kraaykamp et al., 2019: 14). Evidence from various longitudinal studies indicates that parental interest in educational progress leads to stronger intrinsic preferences (Gallie et al., 2012) and that socio-economic advantage in terms of either parental education and/or family income leads to weaker extrinsic and stronger intrinsic preference orientations (Johnson, 2002; Johnson and Mortimer, 2011) as well as an emphasis on entrepreneurial values later in life (Halaby, 2003). It seems to be that the transmission occurs as young people internalize the job values of their parents during adolescence (Hoffner et al., 2008).

Another type of socialization to job preferences occurs in formal education. On the one hand, enrolment in higher education may affect job preferences directly through increased cognitive abilities and instilled modern and liberal values. On the other hand, it may indirectly advance a person's breadth of perspective and lead to stronger post-materialistic and intrinsic job preferences (Kraaykamp et al., 2019: 14). Irrespective of their design, recent studies find that higher education achievements consistently relate to stronger non-financial and intrinsic and/or weaker extrinsic valuations of work (De Witte et al., 2004; Esser and Lindh, 2018; Gallie et al., 2012; Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011; Hajdu and Sik, 2018b; Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013, 2019; Parboteeah et al., 2013). However, evidence from a panel study by Dæhlen (2005) indicates that job preferences are to a great extent already crystalized when individuals choose their educational programmes, which is in fact the first step in realizing one's job preferences.

Finally, job preferences can be influenced by an individual's generational or birth-cohort membership<sup>6</sup>. Members of specific cohorts experience the same formative events within the same time interval (Nilsen, 2015: 476) and these socializing experiences may lead to differences in job-related expectations and preferences (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013). In her comprehensive review of available time-lag and cross-sectional studies, Twenge (2010) concluded that while the importance of intrinsic values appears to be relatively consistent across different generations, there is evidence for an increase in extrinsic values among more recent birth cohorts. However, hierarchical age-period-cohort studies<sup>7</sup> found no evidence of the effect

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<sup>6</sup> Additionally, lifecycle factors related to family life may also be counted among selection perspective explanations. As shown by Johnson (2005), becoming an economic provider is associated with increased concerns about extrinsic values, while the fact of having a spouse is related to a decrease in the priority placed on intrinsic rewards.

<sup>7</sup> Separation of generational or cohort effects with cross-sectional data is problematic because of the well-known identification problem (Glenn, 2005). In any given data set, age, period and cohort are perfectly correlated. Thus, purely mechanical separation of the three effects is impossible, unless there is a theoretical argument which enables constraint of at least one of them (Alwin and McCammon, 2003). Some argue that hierarchical age-period-cohorts produce misleading results and neither they, nor any other method can properly identify cohort, period or age effects (Bell and Jones, 2015). However, others argue that generational differences can be determined within a time-lag design, which examines people of the same age at different points in time (Twenge, 2010).

of birth cohorts on job preferences in American (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2019) or in a broader Euro-Atlantic context (Hajdu and Sik, 2018b).

### *Work socialization perspectives*

Another important source of factors influencing workers' values is the work experience itself. It is not only the immediate nature of work but also the availability of different rewards that the job provides which affect one's job preferences. The main mechanisms through which work experiences shape workers' preferences for different types of job rewards can be in principle categorized into two groups: value reinforcement and problematic rewards explanations (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013, 2019). First, reinforcement explanations assume that workers adapt to the realities of their jobs, in a way that the initial orientations that led them to make a particular job choice are reinforced as a result of that choice (Mortimer and Lorence, 1979). Thus, workers may either assign greater importance to the things they have achieved or believe are achievable, or on the other hand, devalue attributes that they regard as unattainable. Consistent with a Marxist approach, the expectation is that workers in jobs that offer strong intrinsic rewards will experience their work as meaningful and develop a sense of responsibility and stronger internal motivation (Gallie, 2007c). On the other hand, workers in jobs offering little in terms of such rewards will lose aspirations for self-development and retreat into a state of alienated instrumentalism (Gallie et al., 2012).

Second, problematic rewards explanations assume that workers value most highly the job rewards that they feel least certain of obtaining at a given time (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013). This explanation is in line with the hierarchy of needs approach, which asserts that people give priority first to basic material needs and once these are satisfied and the structure of opportunities allows it, the priority will shift to higher-order self-realization needs (Gallie, 2007c). Applied specifically to the realm of job preferences, the explanation asserts that workers in high-paid secure jobs will place less emphasis on material rewards and stress the importance of intrinsic aspects of their job, while workers in less favourable market positions will place higher importance on material job facets.

Existing empirical evidence seems to be inconclusive as to which of the two mechanisms is more important. Different studies support one or the other, or even both. Vast amounts of empirical evidence from panel studies conducted in the USA seem to unanimously support the plausibility of the reinforcement mechanism in shaping job preferences. Johnson (2001a, 2001b) showed that young adults tend to adjust their work values in a 'cooling out' process as they gain first experiences as adult workers. Similar studies showed that reinforcement mechanisms apply in the explanation for a change in work values during the economic recession (Johnson et al., 2012) and even to the development of work values across-generations (Johnson and Mortimer, 2015). On the other hand, repeated cross-sectional studies provided equally strong support for problematic rewards mechanisms. In a study of data spanning four decades, Kalleberg and Marsden (2013) found that economically insecure American workers are more likely to attribute higher utility to both income and job security. The same authors showed more recently that the importance that American workers assign to extrinsic job rewards have increased since the 1970s, while availability of those rewards in the same period decreased (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2019). Results from a British panel study seem to support problematic rewards as a plausible mechanism for job preferences, indicating that an individual's demand for good non-financial aspects of work strengthens over time as their wealth increases (Haywood, 2016). Finally, a study by Gallie et al. (2012) comparing job preferences of British workers in 1992 and 2009 showed support for both reinforcement and problematic rewards mechanisms. The authors found that job quality, just like protection of basic economic needs, is associated with a higher concern for self-realization in work.

### *Macro-level perspectives*

With increasing availability of data from large comparative survey programmes, research of cross-national variation in job preferences and its relatedness to contextual country-level characteristics, became increasingly popular. The general assumption in this area has been that national contexts affect peoples' preferences independent of their individual characteristics. In other words, individuals are supposed to adjust their attitudes and behaviours as a part of their reaction to a specific policy, cultural and socio-economic structural context (Gesthuizen and



Verbakel, 2011: 667). Similarly, public policy efforts aimed at modification of these contexts are then supposed to bring about change in an individual's behaviour and attitudes (Kraaykamp et al., 2019: 13).

Cross-national comparative studies of job preferences have mostly focused on the impact of three types of macro-level contextual factors: socio-economic development, welfare institutional setups, and labour market institutions and policies. Some authors have adopted a modernization theory approach and investigated interrelatedness of countries' intrinsic and extrinsic work orientations and the degree of economic development. Following this theoretical logic (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), populations of developed societies were anticipated to emphasize post-material intrinsic valuations in the realm of working life, while less developed societies were expected to assign greater importance to materialist extrinsic values. However, empirical evidence with regard to the existence of such a relationship is rather inconclusive. In their analysis of EVS data from 31 European countries, De Witte et al. (2004) found no relationship between a country's strength of intrinsic orientations and their prosperity or scarcity. On the other hand, in their study relying on ISSP data from 25 countries, Parboteeah et al. (2013) found that both extrinsic and intrinsic preferences decrease with post-industrialization. Finally, results of a more recent study drawing upon four waves of ISSP data for 19 developed Western countries showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic preferences are stronger in more unequal societies, while socio-economic development plays a limited role (Esser and Lindh, 2018).

Other studies have adopted an approach rooted in political economy and investigated work orientation differences between countries through the prism of welfare institutional setups. Citizens of countries with comprehensive and pro-active welfare states were assumed to be protected from financial deprivation, insecurity, or unemployment, and thus more eager to emphasize intrinsic valuations of work. The stipulated relationship however, received only limited support. In a study of five European countries, Gallie (2007c) found that the extent of job insecurity and financial hardship explained a relatively small part of the overall cross-national variation in relative strength of intrinsic and extrinsic job preferences. On the other hand,

Berglund (2012) who analysed five developed Western democracies, observed that generous Nordic welfare states foster individualistic and post-materialistic work values. Similarly, Gesthuizen with Verbakel (2011) analysed EVS data from 19 European countries and found that a country's ability to safeguard basic material needs goes hand in hand with stronger intrinsic job preferences. Also, Esser and Lindh (2018) showed there is a stronger valuation of autonomy in more-encompassing welfare states, however the authors found neither a strong nor consistent effect with respect to extrinsic or intrinsic job preferences.

The institutions and policies conducive to better quality of jobs have been investigated as a possible third factor contributing to cross-national differences in work orientations. According to this job quality hypothesis, policy efforts that contribute to higher quality of jobs may lead to a higher prevalence of good jobs and a general ethos where employees attach particular importance to intrinsic rather than extrinsic characteristics of work (Gallie, 2007c). Evidence from a few comparative studies showed the potential of this explanation. Gallie (2007c) found that the prevalence of good working conditions together with skill structure, explained a substantial part of the difference in job preferences between Scandinavian countries and Germany, compared with Britain. A study by Gesthuizen and Verbakel (2011), found that the quality of a country's labour market decreased the importance attached to extrinsic values with no effect on intrinsic preferences.

### **3.2 Is work ethic dying off?**

This section builds the background for Study II. It primarily discusses the question of the supposed work ethic decline in contemporary advanced societies. After defining the concept of work ethic, this section summarizes Weber's Protestantism thesis, widely acknowledged as the concept's origin. The section continues with a summary of the main theoretical arguments about work ethic decline in contemporary societies and its supposed mechanisms. It is concluded by a review of relevant empirical studies.

### 3.2.1 Work ethic

The intrinsic-extrinsic continuum neither exhaustively covers the whole range of people's subjective relationship with work, nor does it account for all possible motives for their engagement in work. In fact, scholars have traditionally recognized that the belief that work is a moral obligation is another possible motivation and reason for working. Such a belief presupposes the existence of work ethic as a norm at the societal level, which implies that work is a highly valued activity and that people are subject to a normative pressure to partake in it (Furåker, 2019).

Sociological interest in work ethic dates back to Weber and his seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958). Due to its perceived religious origins, the phenomenon is often analysed under the term Protestant work ethic. However, authors today typically focus on a non-religious set of values, labelled as work ethic (Van Hoorn and Maseland, 2013: 2). Thus, work ethic can be defined in at least two different ways. First, defined broadly as the Protestant work ethic, it refers to an entire philosophy of life related to religious and economic activity, which consists of several different beliefs. Second, defined narrowly, work ethic can refer to a positive attitude about work, or a belief that work itself is important and that doing a good job is essential (Cherrington, 1980: 19). For practical purposes, the latter view is favoured in this review. Work ethic is defined as the degree to which individuals place work at the centre of their lives and view it as intrinsically good and almost a moral duty (Mudrack, 1997: 217).

Although most modern societies do not have a religiously justified work ethic in operation, they all have explicit norms regarding working. These imply that all able-bodied individuals of working age are subject to a normative pressure to work unless they have a due cause or sufficient means of subsistence from other sources (Furåker, 2019: 20). However, foundations of the work ethic in operation might also be found in the principle of normality, implying that participation in productive activities is part of what defines a decent citizen (Furåker, 2019: 21). Persistence of work ethic is often linked to the variety of social functions which it fulfils. First, work ethic has traditionally been assumed to fuel economic growth and prosperity (Stam et al., 2013: 267).

Second, since all societies depend on work for their essential reproduction, they rely on work ethic to secure a continuous supply of labour. Third, since modern welfare states require substantial resources to function as intended, there has to be a normative pressure on individuals to support themselves through paid employment rather than through social benefits (Furåker, 2019: 20–21).

However, various scholars have argued that in spite of its persistence, work ethic is subject to a significant change in modern societies, especially since the nature of jobs, composition of the labour force, as well as prevailing value orientations in the population, are constantly changing (Cherrington, 1980). Dominant among these discourses is arguably the one which assumes the decline of work ethic with negative consequences for the social and economic order of modern societies. The question of the decline of work ethic in contemporary societies is the main topic of the following review. It starts with a summary of Weber's Protestantism thesis and then discusses some of the most well-known contributions to the debate about work ethic change.

### 3.2.2 Protestant ethic and the emergence of early capitalism

The origin of the work ethic as a concept can be traced back to Weber's seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958). Weber polemizes with economic determinism and argues that ideas played a crucial role in shaping the social order and economic systems of Western societies (Desfor Edles and Appelrouth, 2015: 178–179). The focus of the book is to explain how people started to pursue wealth and material gain not out of necessity, but for its own sake. Weber found the answer in Puritan asceticism and its concept of calling of an individual to fulfil his or her duty in this world (Furnham, 1990: 1–2). Thus, Weber established a historical connection between Protestant reformation and the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic system in Western societies (Van Hoorn and Maseland, 2013: 2–3).

The doctrine of a calling as the moral obligation of every individual was already present in the teachings of Protestant reformer Martin Luther. However, it gained a new meaning in the context of the doctrine of predestination, introduced later by John Calvin. In Calvinist theology,

individuals were predestined by God to either salvation or damnation. While no one could obtain a proof of their grace, it was believed that by fulfilling one's calling in the service of God, a divine sign could be granted (Desfor Edles and Appelrouth, 2015: 176–177). Hence, success, wealth and profit in worldly affairs were understood as confirmation of one's salvation (Budd, 2011: 168). It was the concept of calling that elevated worldly work to the centre of believers' existence. Through the subsequent processes of rationalization and secularization, this emphasis on worldly activity as a means of revealing one's predetermined fate evolved into the spirit of capitalism, i.e., the idea that working for the purpose of profit is a moral good in itself (Van Hoorn and Maseland, 2013: 2). This fuelled a dramatic social transformation, which resulted in the growth and dominance of capitalism and rationalization of other spheres of life in the West. Weber however, expressed serious concerns about the work ethic, which Puritan ascetism let into this world. He feared that after bureaucratic structures of modern capitalism rendered obsolete the religious ethic which endowed work with meaning, the moral imperative to conduct one's work ascetically would be here to stay, evolving into an iron cage of duty with no other choices left (Desfor Edles and Appelrouth, 2015: 178–181).

The work provoked much controversy at the time of its publication and continues to inspire academic debates in social science. Many contemporary researchers have attempted to gather empirical evidence in support of Weber's thesis about causal interrelatedness between religious beliefs and economic developments. Despite these numerous efforts, results of empirical studies about the connection between Protestantism, work ethic and economic development remain rather inconclusive. For instance, Dülmer (2011) used data from 52 societies and showed that Protestant and Orthodox societies display the weakest work ethic of all major religious cultures. Similarly, Stam et al. (2013) who analysed 44 European countries found it was predominantly Protestant countries that have the weakest adherence to work ethic values. In contrast, Van Hoorn and Maseland (2013) found strong support for Weber's thesis. They showed that unemployment harms the well-being of Protestants more than that of other religious groups and that its negative effect on well-being is stronger in historically Protestant societies.

### 3.2.3 Conceptualizations of work ethic decline in advanced capitalist societies

According to Weber's thesis, work ethic functioned as a cornerstone from which emerged the ideology of work linked to industrialism and early capitalism. However, it has been argued that work ethic in its traditional sense was only tied to a particular period of early capitalism and that structural transformations of capitalist societies led to a loss of its relevance (Noon and Blyton, 2002: 67–70). It has been further claimed that work ethic's emphasis on worldly asceticism, productive work and prohibitions on idle amusements, placed excessive constraints on mass consumption required to sustain national production capacities (Weeks, 2011: 48). With the emergence of consumption as a new economic practice, work ethic was hypothesized to be replaced by different belief systems such as leisure ethic, hedonistic consumption ethic or an aesthetic of consumption (Weeks, 2011: 49–50). This problematic relationship between productive activities and consumption was further reinforced during the transformation to post-industrial society. The growth of immaterial labour in the service sector, expansion of precarious forms of employment and the decline of Keynesian ideologies, together rendered the relationship between workers' effort and their remuneration problematic and led to further disconnection between productivist and consumerist values<sup>8</sup> (Weeks, 2011: 50–51).

Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert (1991) identified a number of hidden assumptions which characterize the debate around the decline of the importance of work values and work ethic in modern societies. These assumptions can however be used to systematize different arguments in the debate. The first assumption relates to the degree of the decline, which is consensually described by most authors, as clearly recognizable if not drastic. The second assumption relates to the mode of change, where it is either postulated that work ethic simply declined, or that it

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<sup>8</sup> Whilst the decline of work ethic is the scenario of change most often echoed in academic literature, other patterns of change have been theorized too. According to Furnham (Furnham, 1990: 201–212) four other alternatives can be identified. First, some authors suggest that protestant work ethic never really existed, or if it ever did, it only applied to fractions of the population in a certain limited period of time. According to the second view, there are no universal trends in work ethic and any changes depend on the nature of one's job and the worker's biography. According to the third view, work ethic is alive and well and may even flourish in the future. The fourth alternative argues that work ethic has been evolving for centuries, constantly adapting to new circumstances. This view predicts that work ethic naturally metamorphosed into its successor, e.g., post-industrial work ethic, post-Fordist work ethic or a new work ethic of humanization (Weeks, 2011: 60).

was substituted by post-materialistic values, or that value systems are being restructured in a multidimensional way. The final aspect of the debate relates to the principal agent responsible for the decline. Here, two mutually non-exclusive competing hypotheses prevail. According to the first, the decline in work values and work ethic reflects the labour-saving impact of technological development, which eliminates entire occupational sectors and shortens working hours in those that remain. The other hypothesis sees different value orientations of new cohorts who tend to prioritize leisure and self-expression as the main driving force behind the decline. In this case, the promoters of changes are not the cohorts per se, but rather their formative socialization experiences.

As early as the mid-1980s, Offe (1985) argued that work ethic in contemporary societies is on the decline. In a classical essay, he considered 'moral depreciation of work' to be one of the two components of a process of paid employment gradually losing its function as the key organizing principle of dynamics of social structures in advanced industrial societies<sup>9</sup>. As Offe (1985: 141) asserts, the idea of obligatory power of work as an ethical human duty is disintegrating partly due to the erosion of cultural traditions and the growth of consumer-centred hedonism, and also due to technical and organizational rationalization which undermines conditions that allow workers to participate in their work as recognized, morally acting persons. Additionally, effects of these processes are further reinforced by growing discontinuities in work and occupational biographies, as well as by the contraction of work-time and the expansion of leisure (Offe, 1985: 142). All in all, Offe concludes that these conditions make it seem improbable that work would continue to play a role as a central norm integrating and guiding personal existence in the future (Offe, 1985: 143). Hence, regarding the classification scheme described above, Offe's assumption about the mode of change would be one of a simple decline without any value substitution towards a new type of work ethic. While Offe acknowledges the influence of both structural as well as cultural processes contributing to the decline, he seems to assign greater importance to

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<sup>9</sup> The other component of the same general process is the growing differentiation of working experience due to the continuing division of labour and expansion of the service sector (Offe, 1985: 135–140).

objective technological advancements as being the primary driving force behind the observed changes.

Bauman (2005) too talks about the demise of work ethic and considers it to be one of the symptoms characterizing societal transition from an industrial society of producers to a society of consumers. In the process, work is said to lose its privileged position of 'an axis around which all other effort at self-constitution and identity building rotate'. Furthermore, it is claimed to cease 'to be the focus of [...] ethical attention in terms of being a chosen road to moral improvement, repentance and redemption' (Bauman, 2005: 32–33). The moral commitment to work is supposedly being destroyed by a combination of Taylorist managerial innovations as well as monetization of work incentives. Instead of asserting that work effort is a way to a morally superior way of life, it is reduced to a means to earn more money. People's desire for autonomy, freedom and self-fulfilment has shifted to spheres of life other than labour and the aesthetics of consumption has replaced work ethic in its function of primary integrative mechanism of society (Bauman, 2005: 31). While work ethic accorded the highest value to duty well done, the new aesthetics put a premium on the capacity to generate pleasurable experience. Bauman's account of the work changes in contemporary societies differs from that of Offe in the sense that it describes the mode of decline as that of value substitution, where moral commitment to work is replaced by consumerism. With regard to the promotor of these changes, he too seems to find the main underlying causes in the sphere of production and work organization of work, rather than in the cultural realm.

Inglehart writes about the erosion of Protestant work ethic and considers it to be a part of a broader process in which value orientations of populations in advanced industrial societies shift from materialism to post-materialism (Inglehart, 1997: 218; Norris and Inglehart, 2011: 159–179). He claims that as societies experience prolonged periods of prosperity and transition to a post-industrial stage of development, the priorities of their citizens shift from materialist goals emphasizing economic and physical security, towards postmaterialist goals where the emphasis is on self-expression and quality of life (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). However,



work ethic is a system of materialistic values encouraging economic accumulation, and just like other materialistic doctrines, its importance should fade away under conditions of prosperity (Norris and Inglehart, 2011: 162). As Inglehart reminds us, post-materialists do not place negative values on materialist goals, but rather emphasize the importance of postmaterialist goals to an even greater extent (Inglehart, 1997: 35). Thus, the mode of work ethic change is in fact more like value substitution or even multidimensional value restructuring. The principal agent of the value shift is seen in new cohorts who are socialized under conditions of unprecedented material security and are thus more post-materialistic than their predecessors.

The three examples above are some of the most prominent theoretical conceptualizations of work ethic decline. Nonetheless, they are not the only existing theories about why and how work ethic in advanced Western societies has declined, nor do they comprise a representative set of all theories that exist. There are other authors who have contributed to the debate and their theories often combine some of the elements present in the three aforementioned examples (see for instance Baethge, 1985; Gorz, 1982).

#### 3.2.4 Empirical evidence

Of the three theoreticians, only Inglehart bases his analysis on empirical data. Norris and Inglehart (2011) successfully demonstrated that the strength of work ethic is in accordance with their explanation, i.e., weaker in advanced post-industrial societies and stronger in poorer developing countries. Dülmer (2011) who later replicated the study with a multi-level design, confirmed a negative relationship between development and work ethic. Nevertheless, comparative cross-sectional studies provide only indirect evidence in support of the hypothesis about the decline of work ethic, and the question remains as to whether any such trend can be directly observed in longitudinal data. Although relatively scarce, the evidence tentatively suggests that there might be a negative long-term trend, however its strength is nothing like the theoretically predicted dramatic changes. First, studies focusing on changes in the moral importance of work as a duty, showed that there has been a moderate decline in these values in the last three decades. Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert (1991) showed a relatively small, yet

significant decrease in the obligation norm associated with working in the Federal Republic of Germany between 1983 and 1989. In addition, results from a study by Smola and Sutton (2002) showed a decline in craftsmanship pride and valuation of hard work among American workers between 1974 and 1999. Similar results were also reported also by Twenge and Kasser (2013) who analysed a representative sample of US high school students between 1976 and 2007. They showed growing discrepancy between a steadily decreasing work ethic in young people and increasing material desires. Evidence from studies on long-term changes in the centrality of work in people's lives further confirms the existence of a negative trend. For instance, Hikspoors et al. (2012) showed a decline in the significance attributed to work in the majority of 11 analysed countries from 1990 to 2008. Similarly, a large-scale study by Hajdu and Sik (2018a) of more than 40 countries showed that the relative importance of work gradually, but constantly decreased between 1981 and 2014.

One can only speculate about the role of advanced technologies in diminishing the strength of work ethic. To assess the plausibility of this explanation, it is necessary to turn back to static-comparative studies and look at whether technologies are featured among covariates negatively associated with work ethic and related beliefs. There is indirect evidence that this might be the case. Multi-level cross-national studies showed that work ethic is negatively related to modernization (Stam et al., 2013) and that centrality of work in peoples' lives decreases with the degree of industrialization of their countries (Parboteeah and Cullen, 2003). Though neither of these studies included any indicator of technology, innovations arguably go hand in hand with socio-economic development and one can infer their negative effect. On the other hand, development should be accompanied by a post-materialist value shift brought by intergenerational population change, and thus its effect is likely to be confounded.

Evidence that younger generations are the principal agent of the decline is more conclusive. A review of a handful of cross-sectional and time-lag studies indicated that younger generations express a weaker work ethic, believe that work is less central to their lives, value leisure and seek more freedom and work-life balance (Twenge et al., 2010). Evidence from more recent multi-

national studies revealed a decline in the value placed on work ethic (Cogin, 2012) and relative work centrality (Bjarnason and Håkansson, 2019) among younger generations. On the other hand, researchers who analysed repeated cross-sectional data with hierarchical age-period-cohort models found no such evidence that birth cohorts would differ with regard to their work centrality, employment commitment, or work values. This was regardless of whether the analysis was from a multi-national perspective (Hajdu and Sik, 2018a, 2018b) or in a single-country American context (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2019).

All in all, available empirical evidence suggests that even though work ethic might be changing in the predicted direction, the magnitude of the change is only minor and far from being dramatic. On the other hand, results are less clear as to the main promotor of the observed changes. While evidence for the impact of technological advancement is only indirect, studies on generational differences provide a mixed picture and their results vary substantially based on the selected methodological approach.

### **3.3 Attachment to work and feasibility of the universal basic income (UBI)**

This section sets the context for Study III. It addresses the issue of whether prevailing cultural attachment to paid employment can act as a factor preventing UBI from gaining more substantial public support. It first introduces the concept of employment commitment, which is used as the main indicator of attachment to work in the study. Next, the work-centred institutional system of modern societies is discussed, together with various alternative forms of social organization based on the idea of UBI. The section is concluded with a review of factors which have been considered as limiting public acceptability of UBI, with a special focus on cultural factors related to the importance of paid work.

#### **3.3.1 Work society and employment commitment**

Various scholars have argued that the importance of paid employment for advanced industrial societies is historically so unprecedented that the very term industrial society is synonymous with the term work society (Bauman, 2005; Beck, 2000). Ransom (2005: 15) defines a work-based

society as a societal type where 'people regard work [...] as their central life interest in the sense that they attribute greater significance to the benefits which come from this realm of activity than they do from any other realm.' In this type of society, work constitutes the dominant type of activity both practically (as it overshadows other realms of activity), but also ideationally, as it is widely accepted as being the only way to satisfy peoples' needs and expectations (Ransome, 2005: 22).

In a work society, the needs satisfied by work are of an economic as well as a psycho-social nature. Work is thus central economically, as it provides income necessary for satisfaction of material needs. However, it is also central in a subjective sense, due to a number of latent social psychological functions which affect subjective well-being (Furåker, 2019: 23; Gill, 1999: 728; Jahoda, 1982). The latter, subjective psycho-social centrality of work or 'a general belief about the value of working in one's life' (MOW - International Research Team, 1987: 17) is yet another important aspect of work orientation, one that extends beyond the conceptual space covered by either job preferences or work ethic. Arguably, the most prominent concept used to measure the degree to which work represents a central life interest or an all-encompassing part of one's life is the so-called non-financial employment commitment (Highhouse et al., 2010). Originally labelled by Warr (1982), employment commitment measures peoples' willingness to work using the so-called lottery question, i.e., by asking whether they would continue working if they won a lottery, inherited a large sum of money or if the financial need to work in more general terms was removed (Snir and Harpaz, 2002: 636). By definition, employment commitment reflects voluntary choice and consent and allows the strength of importance that people attach to employment on intrinsic ground, irrespective of financial implications to be captured (Furåker, 2019: 22). By separating non-monetary motivations for working from the monetary ones, the concept enables measurement of the value placed on employment which is a result of non-financial job rewards such as motivating work tasks or social relations associated with employment.

In sociological research, employment commitment has been typically examined with regard to the impact of the welfare state on people's propensity to work. Despite popular concerns about a dependency culture and the negative impact of generous welfare on work ethic, the evidence clearly points to the opposite being the case. Thus, affluent countries (Turunen and Nätti, 2017), those with generous benefit systems (Esser, 2005, 2012), high social expenditures and more extensive investments in active labour market policies (van der Wel and Halvorsen, 2015) were shown to have populations highly committed to paid employment. Results from recent empirical studies show that as long as this type of psychosocial centrality of work is considered, affluent societies in the Euro-Atlantic space still continue to have a largely work-based character with citizens highly committed to paid employment. In 2016, nearly 75% of questioned Americans answered that they would continue working even if they become sufficiently wealthy (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2019). Even though there are substantial differences between European societies, on average almost 60% of respondents from 18 European countries in 2010 indicated they would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need the money (van der Wel and Halvorsen, 2015). Additionally, results from other surveys show that in the majority of European countries in the last two decades, work has been continuously ranked as the second most important domain of life after family, surpassing average importance of areas such as friends, religion or politics (Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 50–53).

However, as Ransom (2005: 22) points out, the very idea of work society only makes sense insofar as work fulfils its promises, and current working arrangements provide mechanisms through which people can adequately satisfy their needs and expectations. As high continuing attachment to employment in contemporary societies indicates, this is still likely to be the case for work's psychosocial functions. However, there has been growing concern regarding the capability of paid employment to secure life-time material security for all citizens, especially in increasingly precarious and technologically advanced contemporary economic contexts.

The following section discusses the central role of paid employment for the provision of financial security of citizens in modern societies and analyses changes that have led to a weakening of this

function in the recent past. Alternatives to work society as a form of social organization are discussed next, with a focus on UBI as an institutional backbone common to the majority of such proposals. The review is concluded by a discussion of why high persisting psychosocial centrality of work may in fact pose a problem for attempts to adjust existing welfare institutions to a new economic reality, where work fails to secure lifetime material security for everyone.

### 3.3.2 Economic centrality of work in question

The pivotal role of paid work in the provision of financial security can be illustrated with a reference to welfare institutional structure of industrial work societies. Even though crafted during the 30 years following World War II, welfare systems still operate on a similar premise. Irrespective of a particular model, an ideal-typical welfare state of that era functioned on the assumption that government's primary role is to manage economies in order to promote full employment, while the welfare state's business is to provide resources to people at stages of their life when their financial needs are not adequately met through the wage relationship (Taylor-Gooby, 2005). A typical client of the welfare state was a male worker in continuous employment from an early age, with a steadily rising salary (Bonoli, 2006: 7). It was assumed that protection of his income was the best way to provide security for him and also for his dependents in the same household (Vosko, 2010: 4–5). Statutory benefits and entitlements, as well as other employer-sponsored benefits, were thus primarily distributed to citizens through their employment status and only through them as single earners to other non-productive members of their households. However, labour market reality has changed greatly and the assumptions regarding participation in paid employment are no longer valid. Structural changes of post-industrial labour markets resulting from economic globalization, flexibilization of employment relations and implementation of advanced technologies in production have resulted in a new reality where full employment is no longer a feasible goal and where structural unemployment and exclusion from the labour market (especially for those with inadequate skills) has become more and more common. Moreover, proliferation of precarious, insecure and unstable forms of employment mean that many will find it increasingly difficult to obtain a stable and adequate job in the labour market even if trying to achieve full earning potential.

In the vast majority of Western societies, the 30 post-war years were characterized by unprecedented growth and stable full employment (Veal, 2019: 159–161). However, the situation changed in 1973, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) forced a four-fold increase in the traded price of oil over a period of only a few months. There followed an economic crisis accompanied by a dramatic increase in unemployment and benefit dependency. Subsequently, a second and third crisis hit economies in the 1980s and 1990s ensuring that unemployment rates never quite returned to their pre-crisis levels. Contrary to the expectations of the economic experts, these changes were not related to cyclical fluctuations in economic activity, but instead represented a long-term structural decline in the demand for labour caused particularly by advances in information technology (Veal, 2012: 100–103). Technical developments in production, together with increased intensity of cross-national competition, hit less-skilled and low-qualified workers especially hard. These developments reduced the proportion of unskilled manual jobs in industry and tightened the link between education and employment (Marx, 2007: 10; Taylor-Gooby, 2005: 4). In this new situation, economic growth no longer contributed to a reduction in unemployment and poverty. Instead long-term structural unemployment and benefit dependency among the working-age population became permanent features of post-shock economies and directly undermined the role of employment as a central supporting pillar of the welfare capitalist system (Marx, 2007: 10–12).

Moreover, these long-term trends are likely to be further reinforced by more contemporary technological developments. There is now a consensus both in mainstream and radical scholarly literature, that recent advancements in automation, robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence are going to transform labour markets in such a way that most existing work tasks will be fully automated and a large number of workers will permanently lose their jobs (Spencer, 2018). Since the new smart machines will replicate human skills and competences and will be a cost-effective substitution for human labour, human workers are expected to face redundancy and shrinkage in job opportunities. According to expert estimates, up to 47% of total US employment is in the high risk category of occupations that potentially will be automated in forthcoming years (Frey and Osborne, 2017). Similar numbers from Europe show that 14% of

adult employees in the EU are currently in jobs that are highly automatable, while another 40% face a risk of significant change in their work (Pouliakas, 2018).

Another process which further weakened work's capacity to secure life-time financial security, has been the growth of precarious work. The concept describes the growth of insecurity and uncertainty resulting from processes of globalization, technological change, weakening of workers' power, and the political and cultural dynamics associated with the spread of neoliberalism (Kalleberg, 2018). Precarious work arrangements are typically characterized by uncertainty, low income and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements (Vosko 2010: 2) as well as by the fact that it is the workers themselves who bear the risks of work, as opposed to employers and governments (Kalleberg, 2018; Vosko, 2010). They stand in sharp contrast to the normative model of the standard employment relationship (i.e., a full-time continuous relationship with one employer, with work on the employer's premises, under direct supervision and with access to comprehensive benefits and entitlements) which characterized the post-war era (Kalleberg, 2018; Vosko, 2010). Growth of precarious employment represents a major global challenge, mainly due to the negative consequences around quantity and quality of available jobs. However, precarious forms of work have also had an adverse effect on a variety of non-work-related outcomes, such as individuals' physical and mental health, delayed marriage and family planning, disintegration of whole communities and the creation of fears and anxieties leading to political unrest (Kalleberg, 2018: 3). Kalleberg (2011: 82–104) has documented a long-term increasing trend in job insecurity and instability in the US since the 1970s. However, the author's more recent work showed that growth of precarious work on a global scale largely depends on national labour markets and social welfare protection institutions (Kalleberg, 2018: 90–107).

### 3.3.3 Alternatives to the work society model

Labour market trends leading to reduced and more insecure work environments inspired various scholars to argue that a societal model based on the centrality of paid employment has been rendered obsolete and that advanced post-industrial societies should grant material security for



their citizens by means other than paid employment. If left unchanged, extrapolation from current labour trends shows a future, where globalization, technological change and financialization lead to a further growth in low-wage and digital platform jobs, polarization in job quality, income inequalities and an eventual dramatic reduction in labour demand caused by automation (Kalleberg, 2018: 197). As Arendt (1958: 4–5) famously put it: '[w]hat we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of labourers without labour, that is, without the only activity left to them. Surely, nothing could be worse.'

On the other hand, optimistic scenarios treat the situation as an opportunity for a qualitative change, which would lead to a new societal model with higher social security, greater equality, freedom and better lifestyle choices for everyone. Such proposals typically involve decoupling of economic security from participation in paid employment via implementation of a so-called basic income. This step is typically complemented by a suggestion for formal redefinition of work as an activity beyond paid employment, so that its status with household work, care and volunteering would be equalized (see overview in Veal, 2019: 241–271).

In one such scenario, Gorz (1982, 1989, 1999) suggests that the labour movement should embrace the tendency of advanced capital equipment to displace labour in the production process and use it to eliminate the capitalist system. Workers should reduce their labour input, while maintaining their incomes, and use the reduction in working hours for autonomous activities and socially useful labour. In a new society based on these principles, a person's occupation would not be narrowly defined in terms of their employment. It would instead consist of a number of activities carried out for interest and pleasure, rather than for financial remuneration. The proposal also includes implantation of guaranteed social income, financed from additional taxes imposed on labour-saving technologies (Veal, 2019: 173–174).

In a similar vein Beck, (2000) proposes the replacement of work-society by a multi-activity society. Under this social model, work would be defined beyond employment and other types of activities (e.g., housework, family work, club work and voluntary work) would be given the same

status as paid work. Because paid work and civil labour would complement each other, people would be free to switch between formal employment, parental labour and artistic, cultural and political civil labour over the course of their lives. Citizens engaging in civil labour contributing to general welfare would be compensated with civic money, thus creating a financial security framework in a situation where full employment is no longer feasible. According to Beck, change towards a multi-activity society should be brought about by internationally networked activist movements (Kalleberg, 2018: 197–198; Veal, 2019: 265–266).

Guy Standing (2009) calls for a great transformation, one that would push forward what he labels as distributive ‘agenda of equality’ and lead to a good society for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The new society would grant freedom through occupational citizenship and redefine various social benefits such as old-age pensions and economic rights of citizenship, i.e., untie people from paid work. Basic income would be instituted as yet another right, allowing people to conduct more self-directed work instead of paid work and more civic participation instead of play. Such an infrastructure would be able to grant social security to the most insecure social classes, while creating more lifestyle options for everyone<sup>10</sup>(Veal, 2019: 260–261).

### 3.3.4 Universal basic income (UBI)

These proposals for an alternative type of social organization typically emphasize that moving beyond work society requires two steps. The first one is to socially recognize and rehabilitate types of work other than paid employment. The second step is then to decouple economic security from participation in paid work via institutionalization of UBI (Kalleberg, 2018). This last section comprehensively introduces the proposal, discusses its flaws and addresses the question of its feasibility.

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<sup>10</sup> These authors are not the only ones who speculated about the form and organization of future non work-centred society. Variations of similar ideas can also be found in more recent literature. To avoid repetition, these works are not analysed here (see for example Fleming, 2015; Frayne, 2015; Srnicek and Williams, 2015).

Broadly speaking, UBI can be defined as ‘an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement’ (Van Parijs, 2004: 8). The idea of providing all citizens with a grant on top of income from other resources has been debated in intellectual discourses for almost two centuries. However, recent years have witnessed an increased public interest in UBI, propelled by several civil and policy initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness of the proposal. Between 2012 and 2014, a European citizens’ initiative managed to collect more than 285,000 signatures from citizens in 28 European countries. However, they failed to meet the one-million threshold required by the European Condition (De Wispelaere, 2016). In 2016 in Switzerland, an unsuccessful public referendum on a monthly allowance of 2,800 EUR paid to all adult citizens was initiated. At approximately the same time, the Finnish government launched an experiment with a basic income of 580 EUR paid to a randomly drawn sample of 2,000 unemployed persons for the period of two years (Kalleberg, 2018: 179). Whilst none of the initiatives resulted in the proposal’s implementation, they all contributed to the popularization of the UBI among the general public, and led to further discussions about its advantages, flaws, and feasibility.

Advocates of the proposal typically argue in its favour on both normative and practical grounds. They claim that the UBI can be justified as the fairest and most efficient way of adapting post-war welfare institutions to the reality of increasingly precarious and technologically advanced labour markets, where paid employment fails to secure lifetime financial security for everyone (van der Veen and Groot, 2000: 13). The UBI is described as the fairest way because it unconditionally provides all individuals with sufficient means to pursue their own conception of a good life. It is described as the most efficient way, because it combines adequate social protection with the demands of flexible labour markets and leads to a more equitable redistribution of income, work, care and leisure between men and women (van der Veen and Groot, 2000). On the other hand, criticisms of the UBI operate on both normative and technical levels. According to the former, UBI is unjust or ethically undesirable, as it induces exploitation of its net contributors by its net recipients (Sommer, 2016). The latter stance addresses the practical pitfalls of UBI, including the supposedly unbearable financial costs, incentivization of

migration from third world countries or other unforeseeable disruptive effects on society and/or the economy (see Raventós, 2007: 177–198). Moreover, some argue that since UBI redistributes value that has already been created, its viability depends on future economic growth, which is highly uncertain (Kalleberg, 2018: 198).

In fact, there exists a great number of different versions of the proposal. Whilst they are all based on the same general definition presented earlier, they differ with respect to the interpretation of its elements and policy designs. On the most general level, it is possible to distinguish between a full UBI, which comprises an amount large enough to cover a person's basic needs and a less generous partial basic income (Widerquist et al., 2013: xii). If a calibration of the existing system of benefits is considered, one may further distinguish between a right-wing version of UBI intended to replace the existing system of benefits and a left-wing alternative which expects UBI to simply complement it (De Wispelaere, 2016: 135). Additionally, there is a plethora of supposedly more realistic derivatives of the UBI (e.g., Global Resource Dividend, Euro-Dividend, Negative Income Tax, Basic Capital, Participation Income or Sabbatical Grant), developed in response to criticism or suggested as a stepping stone in a gradual strategy with full UBI as the final goal (Noguera, 2015).

Common to all proposal variants are non-productivist underlying assumptions about the decoupling of one's income entitlements from income-earning capacity. This non-productivist nature renders UBI radically different from the majority of existing welfare arrangements. In contrast, these are based on productivist assumptions about the individual and collective desirability of paid work (Goodin, 2001). While UBI's non-productive focus has been advocated as the proposal's greatest advantage in terms of practical efficiency and normative desirability, it has also been recognized as problematic with respect to its psychological feasibility and popular support (Andersson and Kangas, 2005; Offe, 2001; Wispelaere and Noguera, 2012). According to the argument, ideas of citizens of virtually all modern welfare states have been hegemonically shaped by beliefs that all competent and able-bodied individuals should feel compelled to perform paid work, that working is normal and that free lunches are anomalous (Offe, 2001).

Thus, citizens may find it illegitimate or unjust to support a welfare design which assumes the very opposite, i.e., a strict independence of income and welfare entitlements from any participation in paid labour whatsoever (van der Veen, 1991). Ironically, according to this argument, the persisting psychological, social, and cultural attachment to work might prevent the public from recognizing the need to reform welfare institutions to a new economic context, in which paid employment might not be ideal as a central mechanism for the provision and distribution of income.

This fact has been recognized at the theoretical level by various authors addressing the issue of UBI's feasibility. For instance, Andersson and Kangas (2005) see normative foundations of Scandinavian welfare states built on the idea of maximizing the productive capacities of the citizenry as one of the reasons for relatively low support for UBI in Sweden. Similarly, De Wispelaere and Noguera (2012) argued that psychological dispositions expressed in the form of work ethic, the contribution principle or the deservingness principle are likely to constrain the psychological feasibility of UBI in contemporary societies. While there is currently no empirical evidence to support these concerns, work orientations and meanings have been widely considered as causal variables in other similar contexts. Work ethic in particular has received attention as an independent variable in empirical research. Stam et al. (2016) showed that a strong social norm to work at the level of countries reduces well-being of retired men and women as well as non-working disabled men. Van Hoorn and Maseland (2013) demonstrated that unemployment has more damaging effects on the well-being of Protestants and individuals living in historically Protestant societies, thus indirectly pointing to the effect of the Protestant work ethic. The effects of work ethic have also been examined with respect to welfare preferences. In a study from the Netherlands, Jeene et al. (2011) showed that people with a stronger work ethic have a heightened emphasis on deservingness criteria, while results from Reeskens and van Oorshot's (2013) cross-national study indicate that individuals from societies with a stronger work ethic tend to emphasize equity as a favoured redistributive justice principle.

However, it must be acknowledged that whilst the strength of cultural attachment to paid work is important, it is clearly not the only factor likely to affect public support for UBI. Among other relevant factors, perception of financial and budgetary restrictions may represent another great obstacle for UBI's feasibility. Cultural context has been considered as yet another factor, with a combination of strong individualism (allowing citizens to make unconventional choices) and solidarity values (securing strong support for state guaranteed basic economic security) hypothesized to be UBI's most natural habitat (van der Veen and Groot, 2000: 31–33). Furthermore, migration and ethnic homogeneity of a population seems to play a role too and citizens appear to be less willing to support the idea of UBI if it includes minorities and newly arrived migrants (Bay and Pedersen, 2006). Finally, in the case of countries with developed and effective welfare states, the current institutional status quo may prevent UBI from even being considered as an option (Andersson and Kangas, 2005). As recent cross-national studies show, Europeans perceive UBI as a way to improve their welfare standards (Meuleman et al., 2018). The support is stronger in countries with low social expenditure (Parolin and Siöland, 2020), higher levels of material deprivation (Roosma and van Oorschot, 2019) and/or those with long-standing unemployment problems (Vlandas, 2019).

## **4 Methodology**

This part of the thesis provides a brief sketch of comparative theoretical frameworks used for the identification of relevant structural and institutional characteristics of countries with impact on work orientations. Furthermore, it discusses specific comparative designs employed in individual studies and explains the basic principles of multi-level modelling and linear decomposition, the two main statistical techniques that the studies rely on.

### **4.1 Comparative theoretical frameworks**

All three studies in the thesis apply a cross-national comparative design and treat individual actors as the main units of the analysis, which are embedded in country-context with specific socio-economic, institutional, and cultural characteristics. To identify relevant country-level

characteristics responsible for variation in analysed work orientations<sup>11</sup>, the studies draw upon comparative theoretical frameworks. More specifically, Study I builds on two comparative political economy theories: varieties of capitalism (VoC) and power resources theory (PRT). Study II draws upon revised modernization theory. The theoretical logic of this theory is also the basis of the interpretation of the findings in the third study. This part of the thesis presents the three aforementioned theories and briefly explains some of their most general principles. More detailed descriptions of these frameworks, with a specific focus on their hypothesized effects on outcome variables of interest, can be found in the theory section of each study.

#### 4.1.1 Varieties of capitalism and power resources theory

At a general level, institutions are understood as formal and informal rules and norms which affect whole societies. Although they result from historical processes and reflect actors' earlier actions and decisions, institutions also provide an incentive structure for individual behaviours and attitudes in the present (Andreß et al., 2019: 5). VoC and PRT are two prominent theoretical approaches which explain existing diversity among modern capitalist societies through institutional characteristics of countries' labour markets and welfare systems (Kalleberg, 2018: 35–36). Even though the two frameworks overlap in their description of institutional differences and country classifications, they differ in interpretation of generative processes responsible for the differences (Korpi, 2006).

VoC approaches institutions from a perspective of economic efficiency and emphasizes the role of employers and firms. It stipulates that national political economy systems emerge from various ways in which firms that operate within them secure coordination with their partners (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Streeck, 2010). The main dimensions in which companies organize and coordinate production include the system of industrial relations, the vocational training and education system, corporate governance, inter-firm relations and relations with their own employees

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<sup>11</sup> With the exception of the third study, aggregated work orientations are used as contextual characteristics. There, other macro-level factors are chosen to explain the variation in public support for UBI.

(Kalleberg, 2018: 36). These institutional spheres are interrelated in a consistent and stable way, and in turn produce clustering of the countries into two main ideal groups.

The approach distinguishes between two types of national economies. Liberal market economies (LMEs), where firms rely mostly on coordination through hierarchies, formal contracts and competitive markets and coordinated market economies (CMEs), which secure cooperation through strategic interaction and non-market mechanisms (Streeck, 2010: 24–27). In LMEs, market mechanisms prevail, collective bargaining is decentralized and uncoordinated, labour unions are weak, relations between employers and unions are adversarial, non-market coordination is limited and the state generally plays a small role in the economy (Kalleberg, 2018: 36). Countries from the Anglo-American family, such as USA, UK and Canada, are typical examples of LMEs (Streeck, 2010: 24). CMEs, on the other hand, rely on non-market mechanisms of production, coordination and social partnership between unions and robust employer associations (Kalleberg, 2018: 36). Typical examples in this group are Scandinavian countries, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria and Japan (Streeck, 2010: 24). However, the two groups represent only the main ideal types of production coordination, and should be imagined as two opposing poles of a spectrum along which national capitalist systems can be arranged (Hall and Soskice, 2001: 8). In fact, the typology implicitly contains a third group of ambiguous countries, which do not fit either of the two types, e.g., France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey (Streeck, 2010: 24).

PRT provides a perspective that is more political and sociological. It emphasizes the importance of inherently conflicting interests of employers and workers as the main generative mechanisms responsible for institutional variation among national economies. While employers strive for profitability, workers aim for social citizenship rights and protection against life-course risks (Korpi, 2006: 171). Both employers and workers mobilize their relative power resources to channel their interests into the political system, welfare, and labour market policies (Berglund, 2012: 49–50). The state functions as a mediator between the two parties (Kalleberg, 2018). To explain the cross-national diversity, the approach focuses on the balance of power between the



two classes reflected in the strength of trade unions and/or socialist and social-democratic parties (Kalleberg, 2018). Differences between capitalist societies are expected to reflect patterns of opportunity constraints imposed on employers' choices. While CMEs are then an example of societies where historical and institutional countries forwarded the strength of organized labour, these factors have been counteracted in the case of LMEs (Korpi, 2006: 171). Further examples of categorizations of national political economies inspired by PRT are Esping-Andersen's (1990) welfare state typology or Gallie's (2007b) employment regime framework.

#### 4.1.2 Revised modernization theory

Both Study II and Study III are inspired by a theoretical framework of modernization theory. Generally speaking, modernization theory is a relatively broad research field within the sociology of development, with a long tradition and several more specific subfields (Marsh, 2014). The approach typically defines a set of social developments (e.g., industrialization, urbanization, tertiarization and educational expansion) for which it postulates a causal chain with a common driving force (social differentiation) and a common goal (increase in societal adaptive capacity) (Andreß et al., 2019: 13–14). Because industrialization has traditionally been seen as one of the most important modernization processes, modernization as such is typically operationalized as economic development and measured by GDP per capita. However, other indicators such as the use of energy, average life expectancy, average education, cell phones plus land lines per capita, or the multidimensional human development index, are often used instead (Marsh, 2014: 263–264).

The studies draw upon a theory of values modernization, which is a part of revised modernization theory suggested by Inglehart and Welzel (2005). Despite the criticisms of its theoretical premises and methodological practices (Abramson, 2011; Haller, 2002), it is widely acknowledged as one of the most prominent comparative frameworks for analysis of cultural change and value change in contemporary sociology and political science (Haller, 2002; Marsh, 2014).

The revised version of modernization theory is a unified theory of modernization, cultural change and democratization, which sees contemporary social changes as part of human development, leading to increasingly humanistic societies that place an emphasis on human freedom and self-expression (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 2). This human development has three components, i.e., socioeconomic modernization, cultural shift towards self-expression values and democratization. However, the theory is particularly famous for its conceptualization of cultural change and value change, unfolding into two distinct modernization phases: industrialization and post-industrialization. In the first phase, industrialization expands human control over nature and instils a general perception that scientific rationality represents a universal solution for the majority of existing problems. This perception leads to a transition from traditional to secular-rational values. These are linked with conformist values, and the emphasis in this phase is put on discipline rather than individual freedom (Inglehart and Welzel, 2007: 6). The following post-industrialization phase brings about a transformation towards a service-based economy and leads to a de-standardization of economic and social life. People increasingly experience themselves as autonomous individuals, which triggers another round of value change, this time the emphasis having moved from survival values to an increasing valuation of self-expression (Inglehart and Welzel, 2007). Inglehart and Welzel (2005: 95–97) argue that the value change occurs in a quasi-Maslowian logic. It is believed to unfold gradually, through a process of intergenerational replacement of the population, as socio-economic development alters material conditions under which new cohorts gain their formative experiences. Thus, older cohorts growing up in the context of scarcity will emphasize survival values, while self-expression becomes more important for cohorts which grew up in relative prosperity.

There are at least two main ways of applying this theoretical framework in empirical research, both of which were used in the thesis. First, modernization theory can be applied in static cross-national comparative research, by demonstrating patterns of relations between countries' technological, industrial and economic structures and the value orientations of their citizens (Haller, 2002: 142). At the same time, the framework can be fruitfully employed in a study of the dynamics of the value change. This can be done through inspection of intergenerational

differences in value orientations within particular countries. Rich post-industrial societies which experienced substantial economic growth are supposed to show sharp differences between younger and older cohorts, in terms of their emphasis on secular-rational and self-expression values. The differences in low-income countries without such growth experience should be minimal (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 98–99).

#### **4.2 Multi-level modelling**

Study I and Study III apply a multi-country research design. They both analyse data from comparative survey programmes for a large number of countries and use several country-level variables to explain what makes countries special with respect to the outcome variables of interest (Andreß et al., 2019). Naturally, these similarities in comparative design, research questions and data sources also extend to modelling techniques used in both studies. Despite minor differences, the studies apply statistical models commonly referred to as multi-level models, random effects models, random coefficient models, hierarchical models, mixed-effects or mixed models. Multi-level models were already developed already by the 1970s and 1980s, but increased availability of comparative survey data, advances in computational power and statistical software has rendered them especially popular in the last two decades. Within the context of comparative cross-national research, multi-level models are typically used to answer the research question regarding how much of the heterogeneity between countries can be explained by particular country characteristics (Andreß et al., 2019: 8–9; Schmidt-Catran et al., 2019: 100–102).

Multi-level models are essentially an extension of classical regression models for the analysis of data structures which are hierarchical. In comparative cross-national research, a hierarchical structure of data usually means that individual survey respondents as primary analytical units are nested within countries as their higher-level social groups (Schmidt-Catran et al., 2019: 100). In other words, such individual observations are not independent. Instead, the average correlation between individuals from the same country is higher than the between individuals nested in different country samples. Applying standard regression models to such a data structure would

lead to a violation of independent errors assumption of the regression and to an inappropriate estimation of standard errors for model parameters. Unrealistically small standard errors would affect p-values and spuriously significant results might be produced as a result (Finch et al., 2014: 28–29; Hox, 2010: 4–7). Furthermore, since classical regression cannot accommodate variables at different levels of the hierarchy, important relationships involving each level of the data could be missed. Thus, simply by not including such characteristics in the equation, one may develop an incorrect model for understanding the outcome variable (Finch et al., 2014: 29). However, multi-level models are designed to handle these issues. They take the hierarchical nature of data into account and estimate individual and higher-level contextual effects simultaneously, while recognizing the level at which each variable is measured.

Both Study I and Study III use two-level multi-level models with country-specific random intercepts, where individuals are nested within countries. Dependent variables of interest, measured at the level of individuals, are modelled as a function of characteristics and circumstances of those individuals as well as of the countries that they reside in. Using a general mathematical notation<sup>12</sup>, such models can be characterized as:

$$y_{ji} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ji} + \dots + \beta_k x_{kji} + \gamma_1 z_{1j} + \dots + \gamma_l z_{lj} + u_j + e_{ji} \quad (1)$$

where indices  $i$  and  $j$  stand for individuals and countries, respectively. The sign  $y_{ji}$  stands for an individual-level outcome variable, which is modelled as a function of 1 to  $k$  individual-level variables  $x$  and their regression coefficients  $\beta$ , and 1 to  $l$  country-level variables with coefficients  $\gamma$ . Both  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  coefficients are referred to as fixed effects because they remain constant across all countries. The model additionally includes random effects or error terms, at both the level of countries ( $u_j$ ) as well as the level of individuals ( $e_{ji}$ ). The random effects are assumed to be drawn from a normal distribution with a mean of zero and a constant variance and to be uncorrelated with each other or with observed variables. Finally, the model estimates variances of the error

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<sup>12</sup> The notation and corresponding explanation of mathematical symbols are mainly from Schmidt-Catran et al. (2019: 102–103).

terms too:  $u_j$  is the random part of the intercept and captures specific country-level disturbances from the overall intercept  $\beta_0$ .

In Study I, the classical linear version of the two-level random intercept model was applied. Job preference orientations of respondents from 25 countries were estimated to depend on the quality of respondents' work and various other controls at the individual level, together with country-level indicators of job quality and institutional determinants highlighted by VoC and PRT. Estimates of model parameters were made with the restricted maximum likelihood (REML) method, using the R package 'lme4'. In comparison with the maximum likelihood method (ML), REML estimates should have less bias and be more realistic, especially if the number of higher-level groups is relatively small (see Finch et al., 2014: 36; Hox, 2010: 40–42). However, the number of analysed countries is at least theoretically sufficient for a robust and accurate estimation of the country-level parameters (Bryan and Jenkins, 2016; Stegmueller, 2013). In order to speed up convergence of the models and facilitate interpretation of the results, models used a combination of group-mean and grand-mean centring of predictors on both levels of analysis, in line with suggestions formulated by Enders and Tofighi (2007). For the same reasons, all continuous predictors were additionally standardized by twice their standard deviation and are thus comparable with one another as well as with unstandardized binary predictors (Gelman, 2008).

In the main models, predictors at both levels of the hierarchy were centred by the overall grand-mean across the entire pooled sample. As demonstrated elsewhere, grand-mean centring of lower-level predictors is ideal in research scenarios when these are included as controls, while the effect of higher-level variables is of primary interest (Enders and Tofighi, 2007). Such a centring approach yields individual-level regression coefficients that contain a mixture of both within- and between-group variances and are correlated with variables at both levels of the hierarchy. Although not necessary, country-level predictors in these models were grand-mean centred too. However, centring leads to a few minor changes in the formal notation.

$$y_{ji} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(x_{1ji} - \bar{x}_1) + \dots + \beta_k(x_{kji} - \bar{x}_k) + \gamma_1(z_{1j} - \bar{z}_1) + \dots + \gamma_l(z_{lj} - \bar{z}_l) + u_j + e_{ji} \quad (2)$$

Compared to the first equation, the new specification simply subtracts corresponding grand-means from the values of all 1 to  $k$  individual-level predictors and controls  $x$  ( $\bar{x}_1$  to  $\bar{x}_k$ ) as well as from values of all 1 to  $l$  country-level predictors  $z$  ( $\bar{z}_1$  to  $\bar{z}_l$ ).

On the other hand, Study III uses random intercept logistic regression, a version of the multi-level generalized linear model designated for scenarios where the outcome variable is dichotomous. The binary nature of the outcome means that the assumption about normal distribution of model errors does not hold, and linear models cannot be applied. Instead, a natural log of odds of individual outcome taking the value of 1 is taken and its linear relationship with predictors is modelled (Finch et al., 2014: 124–125). In the present case, log-odds of a respondent's support for implementation of UBI in their country are modelled as a function of strength of productivist cultural norms at the country level along with other country- and individual-level controls associated with pro-welfare attitudes. Because the main focus of the paper was the relationship between individual-level outcome and country-level predictors, grand-mean centring was also applied in this case, with a subsequent standardization of continuous predictors. Returning to mathematical notation, this gives us the following model,

$$\log \left[ \frac{p_{ji}}{(1 - p_{ji})} \right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1(x_{1ji} - \bar{x}_1) + \dots + \beta_k(x_{kji} - \bar{x}_k) + \gamma_1(z_{1j} - \bar{z}_1) + \dots + \gamma_l(z_{lj} - \bar{z}_l) + u_j + e_{ji} \quad (3)$$

where  $p_{ji}$  is the probability of the binary outcome for a person  $i$  in a country  $j$  and the entire expression on left side reflects the logit link transformation of the outcome described earlier. The right side of the equation is conceptually identical to the same side in equation 2.

Models in Study III were fitted with R package 'lmer' and REML as the estimation method. However, the number of countries present in the ESS data was slightly below the minimal threshold required for a reliable estimation of significance of country-level predictors' effects. The models were therefore additionally refitted as Bayesian with weakly informative priors since

these deliver more robust estimates of group-level effects in such small-C cases (Bryan and Jenkins, 2016).

### **4.3 Linear decomposition**

The comparative design applied in Study II requires a different methodological approach. As a cross-national comparative study, its design falls closer to a comparative case study, which analyses data for fewer countries, selected with regard to a particular theoretical explanation (Grunow, 2019). First, this is because the scale of comparison is smaller and predominantly focuses on only two countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Second, the subject of comparison is a social change in work ethic in the two countries, rather than average differences between them at one point in time. These differences in turn translate into a different strategy of comparison. The comparison is not determined statistically, but statistical methods are applied to examine time trends in work ethic in each country individually. The results are then qualitatively compared, with regard to the theoretical explanation of modernization theory which links direction, magnitude and proximate sources of these trends to a country's level of socio-economic development. To accomplish these goals, the paper primarily relies on linear decomposition (Firebaugh, 1989, 1997, 2008, 2010), a method which partitions data on a given trend into a component that is due to aggregated individual change and a component reflecting the effect of the changing composition of the population with regard to the structure of cohorts.

It is generally accepted that there are three possible mechanisms through which time can affect a certain outcome of interest: age (individual change as a result of progression through life), period (passage through time affecting all individuals regardless of change) and cohort effects (the changing composition of society as new cohorts replace old cohorts). Unfortunately, partitioning of the components of change with statistical methods is mechanically impossible, as the three are exactly linearly dependent and perfectly correlated (i.e., the so-called identification problem). Some authors argue that the only solution is to creatively interpret the data and to make theoretical assumptions about at least one of them being constrained or even equal to zero (Bell and Jones, 2015: 198–199). However, repeated cross-sectional data offer alternative

approaches to the study of sources of social change. These are based on an assumption that a certain change in culture, social norms and behaviour can in principle occur either as a result of aggregated change undergone by individuals over time (due to the effects of aging and/or of periods), or through succession of cohorts (due to birth and death). Thus, without separating the effects of age, period and cohort, repeated cross-sections make it possible to decompose data reflecting certain social change into these two orthogonal components (Alwin and McCammon, 2003: 34).

Linear decomposition is one of the techniques used to accomplish this. It uses repeated cross-sections to partition a social change into a part which is due to changes in population membership due to birth and death (inter-cohort change) and a part which is due to aggregated individual change (intra-cohort change). To simplify, the method helps to determine whether a certain social change in public opinion resulted from the fact that the composition of a population has changed over time, or if it is the result of individuals actually changing their attitudes as time goes by (Firebaugh, 2010: 806).

As its name suggests, linear decomposition works best when the slopes of inter- and intra-cohort change are linear-additive (Firebaugh, 1989: 253). It applies classical linear regression to decompose social change on some characteristic  $Y$  from survey 1 to survey  $T$ , that is the change  $\bar{Y}_T - \bar{Y}_1$ , where  $\bar{Y}$  is the mean of  $Y$ . In the first step,  $Y$  is simply regressed on year of survey and individual's year of birth.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SurveyYear}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{BirthYear}_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

From left to the right,  $Y_{it}$  is the value of  $Y$  for the  $i$ -th respondent in the  $t$ -th survey ( $t = 1, \dots, T$ ),  $\beta_0$  is the estimated intercept,  $\beta_1$  the average annual change in the outcome variable *within* cohorts and  $\beta_2$  the average difference *between* adjacent cohorts (Firebaugh, 1997: 24, 2010: 797). The means  $\bar{Y}_1$  and  $\bar{Y}_T$  can be determined from this equation, simply by taking its expected values for the first ( $t = 1$ ) and the last survey ( $t = T$ ),



$$\bar{Y}_1 = E(Y_1) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SurveyYear}_1 + \beta_2 \overline{\text{BirthYear}}_1 \quad (5)$$

$$\bar{Y}_T = E(Y_T) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SurveyYear}_T + \beta_2 \overline{\text{BirthYear}}_T \quad (6)$$

where  $\text{SurveyYear}_1$  and  $\overline{\text{BirthYear}}_1$  correspond to year of the first survey and average year of birth (i.e., cohort) of respondents in that survey, respectively. Expressions with the  $T$  subscript refer to the same terms in the last survey. Assuming parameters in the first and the last survey are the same, the social change from survey 1 to survey  $T$  is equal to:

$$\Delta\bar{Y} = \bar{Y}_T - \bar{Y}_1 = \beta_1 \Delta\text{SurveyYear} + \beta_2 \overline{\Delta\text{BirthYear}} \quad (7)$$

Looking at the right-hand side components,  $\beta_1 \Delta\text{SurveyYear}$  is the contribution of aggregated individual change to overall social change. It is obtained by multiplying average annual change in  $Y$  within cohorts ( $\beta_1$ ) by the number of years from the first to the last survey ( $\Delta\text{SurveyYear}$ ). Similarly, the second component of social change  $\beta_2 \overline{\Delta\text{BirthYear}}$  is the total contribution of cohort replacement. It is calculated as the average change in  $Y$  between cohorts ( $\beta_2$ ) weighted by the difference in the average year of birth of respondents between the first and the last survey ( $\overline{\Delta\text{BirthYear}}$ ) (Firebaugh, 2010: 807–808). The two components typically do not exactly add up to the observed aggregate change, however large discrepancies indicate that linear-additive assumptions do not hold and that another decomposition method should be used instead.

It is important to emphasize that linear decomposition is neither a causal analysis, nor does it represent a solution to the identification problem mentioned earlier. It can nonetheless serve as an important preliminary procedure<sup>13</sup> for uncovering causes of the underlying trends by

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<sup>13</sup> Some authors are critical of this and other similar techniques. They argue that decomposition is meaningful only in cases with an absence of any age effects on the dependent variable and that its results also depend on the length of the time interval covered (Glenn, 2005: 36). It is true that if one can make a theoretically grounded argument that aging is not likely to affect the outcome of interest, it is possible to interpret the two components directly in terms of the effects of cohort (inter-cohort trend) and period mechanisms (intra-cohort trend) (Alwin and McCammon, 2003: 34). Nevertheless, the decomposition approach has proven its usefulness in studies of social change of various phenomena, such as materialist and post-materialist values (Savelyev, 2016), family attitudes (Kraaykamp, 2012),

determining whether the change lies in individual conversion or changing cohort composition of the population (Firebaugh, 2010: 810–811).

In Study II, several linear decompositions of social change in work ethic between 1999 and 2017 were conducted. First, for the Czech Republic, Slovakia and in the next step for another nine European countries. Underlying statistical models were fitted as ordinary least squares linear regression with the R ‘stats’ package.

## 5 Data

Work orientations, as reflections of various aspects of people’s subjective relationship to work, are phenomena which are inherently subjective. That said, they are not material things which positively exist in outer reality, but are of a non-phenomenal nature, existing as mental representations internal to individuals (Kozák, 2018). This subjective nature of work orientations determines the type of data suitable for quantitative analysis. Researchers typically rely on the so-called subjective social survey data, i.e., data generated in the process of questioning individuals about their inner mental worlds (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2000; May, 2011; Tourangeau and Bradburn, 2010; Wikman, 2006). While critics argue that subjective survey data suffer from various fundamental flaws<sup>14</sup> impacting their validity as well reliability, their usage has a long history in various social sciences. Experiences from different fields reveal that respondents are capable of competently reporting on their own behaviours, attitudes and values and that such data can provide relevant information in areas with high policy significance such as health, well-being, or performance measurement (e.g., Kessler and Bedirhan Üstün, 2004; Lauer Schachter, 2010; OECD, 2013). Analyses in each of the three studies are based on individual

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gender ideology (Brewster and Padavic, 2000), co-residence beliefs (Alwin, 1996), and racial prejudices (Firebaugh and Davis, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> The validity and reliability of subjective survey data is said to be especially problematic for the following reasons: a) the mental state representations may not exist in a sufficiently coherent form, b) the respondents might not have formed mental representations at all, c) the respondents may not be able to clearly articulate their mental representations, d) the respondents may be wrong in what they think of their own inner states or e) the respondents might censor themselves due to social desirability bias (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2000: 67–68).

survey data which could be labelled as subjective. However, due to the comparative cross-national focus of the thesis, the data are taken from large international survey programmes, consisting of a great number of representative samples from diverse national contexts. In the remainder of this section, a short description of each data file will be provided.

Study I analyses individual survey data from the fourth module of the Work Orientations survey of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). ISSP is an international collaborative survey programme on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours related to various topics relevant to social science. The programme evolved from pre-existing general social surveys and was founded in 1984 by survey institutes from the USA, the UK, Germany and Australia (Andreß et al., 2019: 6). Fielded between January 2015 and April 2017, the final release of the 2015 Work Orientation module includes data on attitudes towards work, private life, work organization and working conditions for representative samples of the adult populations of 37 countries. This was already the fourth wave of the module with predecessors in 1997, 2005 and 2015 (Jutz et al., 2018). The ISSP data used in the paper were complemented with country-level institutional variables which were either aggregated from other cross-national surveys (ESS, 2010; Eurofound, 2018) or obtained from the International Labour Organization database (2019). However, due to unavailability of country-level variables for all 37 countries, the sample had to be reduced to 25 advanced developed countries. Given the nature of research questions addressed, the data file was further reduced to include only subpopulations of respondents who were in paid employment, so that the relationship between quality of their jobs and their job preferences could be investigated.

Study II is based on survey data from the European Values study (EVS). EVS is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research programme on the basic human values of citizens all over Europe (Andreß et al., 2019: 6). The EVS started in 1981 and is repeated every nine years in a variable number of countries and the second pre-release of its latest 2017 wave is currently available for 30 countries. Because the third paper has a temporal as well as a cross-national comparative focus, it uses pooled cross-sectional data from the last three waves of EVS which

contained information on respondents' work ethic. The three waves together cover a period of 18 years between 1999 and 2017. Whilst the paper primarily compares national samples from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the analysis in the next step is extended to include samples from nine other European countries with analogous data.

Study III uses individual survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 8 module entitled 'Welfare Attitudes in a Changing Europe: Solidarities under Pressure'. ESS is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted across Europe every two years since 2001. In 2005 the ESS won Europe's most prestigious science award, the Descartes Prize, and in 2013 became part of the European Research Infrastructure (Andreß et al., 2019: 6). The current Welfare Attitudes module was fielded between 2016 and 2017 and contains data from 23 countries on citizens' attitudes towards welfare services, solidarity with vulnerable groups and support for UBI. The Welfare Attitudes module is a partial replication of a similar module included in ESS Round 4 data fielded between 2008 and 2009 (Meuleman et al., 2018). The data file is different from those used in the other two studies, as it does not include any information on respondents' work orientations. Instead, data on work orientations were collected from other available cross-national surveys (i.e., EVS, 2015; ISSP Research Group, 2017), aggregated at the level of societies and used as country-level predictors of support for UBI. Additionally, these macro-predictors were complemented with a set of country-level controls associated with pro-welfare attitudes collected from available statistical sources (International Labour Organization, 2017; OECD, 2019).

## **6 Summary of the studies**

This section provides a summary of all three studies that constitute this thesis. The title together with publication or submission details are presented first, followed by a short description of background information regarding each study's relevance, analysed data, methodological approach and main findings.

## 6.1 Study I

Kozák M (n.d.) What matters in a job? A multi-level study of job preference orientations and the intrinsic quality of work in 25 societies. *Submitted to Societies (17 July 2020)*.

The concept of job preferences has traditionally been used in the analysis of people's subjective relationship with work. Whilst most existing studies of job preferences have been conducted within a single-country context, there is also a growing body of comparative cross-national studies. Comparative studies in this field have typically adopted approaches inspired by modernization theory and welfare state typologies, with, however, rather inconclusive results (De Witte et al., 2004; Esser and Lindh, 2018; Parboteeah et al., 2013). There is an alternative approach which suggests that cross-national variation in job preferences might be related to national differences in job quality (i.e., intrinsic quality of work which includes the ability to use knowledge and skills, autonomy and control or participation in decision-making). In line with neo-Marxist thinking and implicitly based on a so-called value reinforcement mechanism, this perspective assumes that while people have a natural desire to fulfil themselves through work, they adapt their preferences to the realities of their jobs (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979). Hence, employment offering intrinsic rewards is supposed to strengthen the desire for self-realization. On the other hand, degrading jobs with few such opportunities are expected to make workers devalue those aspirations and to retreat into a state of alienated instrumentalism (Gallie et al., 2012). Even though this approach has been relatively under-utilized in cross-national comparative research on job preferences, the few studies which have tested its assumptions have yielded promising results (Gallie, 2007c; Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011).

The main purpose of this study was to offer an empirical analysis of a reinforcement-based job quality hypothesis in a comparative cross-national setting. In particular, the study addressed the issue of interrelatedness between job preferences and quality of work both directly and indirectly. The question was addressed directly by examining the association between cross-national variation in job preferences and quality of national labour markets. It was addressed indirectly, by investigating whether the same institutional forces conducive to cross-national

variation in job quality can simultaneously account for between-country differences in job preferences. To identify the relevant institutional mechanisms, the study relied on two main comparative political-economy frameworks, i.e., varieties of capitalism (VoC) and power resources theory (PRT).

Data on job preferences for individual workers from 25 societies are taken from the 2015 ISSP Work Orientation module. The data set was further enriched by country-level indicators, aggregated either directly from the original data set or other survey programmes, or obtained from available statistical databases. All models were estimated as multi-level regressions with country-specific random intercepts.

Empirical findings consistently support the idea that job quality is an important factor in explaining variation in job preferences at the level of individual workers as well as countries. Results at the individual level showed that even though workers tend to be oriented towards the same type of rewards which they enjoy in their current jobs, the experience with intrinsic quality of work stands out as the strongest of all considered factors. However, it was demonstrated that this reinforcing logic also applies to cross-national comparisons of job preferences. First, workers embedded in national labour markets with higher intrinsic quality of work were found to have significantly stronger intrinsic valuation of work. Job quality alone accounted for as much as two thirds of the overall country-level variance in job preferences. Second, it was demonstrated that stronger intrinsic preferences can be found in societies with more encompassing labour unions and that PRT can account for country differences in job preferences more consistently than VoC. A series of additional robustness checks indicated that this is likely to be due to the PRT's superior capability to explain cross-national variation in job quality. All in all, the results showed that interrelatedness between job preferences and job quality is so strong, that the cross-national distribution of both follows a similar institutional logic.

## 6.2 Study II

Kozák M (n.d.) The work ethic and social change in the Czech Republic and Slovakia – a modernization theory perspective. *Submitted to Sociologický časopis / Czech Sociological Review (20 November 2019)*.

Revised modernization theory has established itself as a prominent theoretical framework for analysis of value change in advanced industrial societies. Surprisingly, relatively little attention has been paid to investigating its implication in the realm of work (De Witte et al., 2004; Parboteeah et al., 2013; Stam et al., 2013). However, work orientations and especially work ethic, play an important role in the framework's theoretical logic. According to the argument, work ethic is a cultural force which disrupts norms concerning accumulation of capital in the first phase of modernization and opens the door for industrialization and capitalism. Being essentially a materialist doctrine, work ethic is also supposed to gradually weaken in the post-industrial phase of modernization, as increasing material prosperity shifts value priorities of newer cohorts in a post-materialist direction. Thus, as new cohorts replace older ones in the process of intergenerational population replacement, work ethic is expected to gradually die off. Only a few studies have examined whether there is evidence that work ethic in advanced societies has been changing in line with stipulated theoretical logic and even fewer have done so by adopting a dynamic perspective of social change (Dülmer, 2011; Norris and Inglehart, 2011; Stam et al., 2013).

The study's main purpose is to fill this gap and to offer a longitudinal analysis of changes in work ethic from the modernization theory perspective. Thus, the study investigates whether work ethic has been decreasing during the years of growing material prosperity and if evidence can be found to attribute this decline primarily to weaker work ethic in younger cohorts in conjunction with cohort replacement.

Rather than applying a large multi-country design, the study focuses on an in-depth comparison of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, two dynamically developing and culturally similar Central

European societies with more than 70 years of shared history within one state. However, to enhance generalizability of the findings, data from nine other European societies were analysed in a similar fashion in the last section of the study. Survey data used in the study come from the three latest waves of EVS, covering the 18 years between 1999 and 2018. In order to approximate sources of social change, the study relies on a linear decomposition technique (Firebaugh, 2010), which is complemented by a series of classical multivariate regressions.

The findings provide support for the plausibility of a modernization model and indicate that it can be fruitfully applied as a model of social change in work ethic and other work-related attitudes and values. First, the results show that, even though the overall work ethic decreased in the Czech Republic and increased in Slovakia, cohort turnover contributed to the weakening of work ethic in both countries. Second, the results point to historical differences in socio-economic development as the main reason why negative cohort replacement dominated the overall trend in the Czech Republic but not in Slovakia. Formative experiences of younger cohorts in the comparatively more affluent Czech Republic have probably been obtained under more favourable conditions, thus leading to their much weaker emphasis on work ethic. On the other hand, the same historical differences have probably translated recent material gains into a stronger attitudinal conversion of Slovak respondents towards work ethic values. This outweighed the effect of cohort succession. Finally, the results demonstrated that population turnover has been contributing to weaker work ethic not only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also in all nine additionally analysed European countries with comparable data.

### **6.3 Study III**

Kozák M (2020) Cultural productivism and public support for the universal basic income from a cross-national perspective. *European Societies*. DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1758741.

Recent years have seen renewed public, media, and academic interest in the UBI. It has been discussed as an alternative to existing welfare institutions in an era characterized by increasing



precariousness of employment and implementation of advanced production technologies with far reaching labour-saving effects.

One dynamically growing research area focuses on the analysis of UBI's feasibility with respect to political and public support for its implementation. Especially important in this regard was the inclusion of a UBI support question in the ESS Round 8 module. This opened up an opportunity to compare public support for UBI between countries and to identify macro-level factors which could account for the observed variation.

Studies relying on the ESS data showed that while UBI enjoys substantial support in Europe, it tends to be particularly pronounced in materially deprived societies (Meuleman et al., 2018) with modest welfare expenditures (Parolin and Siöland, 2020), as well as in countries with long-standing unemployment problems (Vlandas, 2019). Still, cross-national patterns of support for UBI was found to be specific and not fully corresponding to any of the established political-economy typologies. However, none of the existing studies have paid sufficient attention to one ideological factor that is traditionally considered to prevent UBI from receiving more positive reactions from the general public: strength of productivist cultural beliefs about individual and collective importance of paid employment (Bauman, 2005; Offe, 2001; Wispelaere and Noguera, 2012).

According to theoretical arguments, UBI is a non-productivist proposal which assumes strict decoupling of individuals' income entitlements from their earning-capacity. As such, it stands in contrast to productivist normative foundations of modern welfare states, characterized by a belief that all able-bodied individuals should participate in productive activities. It follows that since citizens' ideas and expectations have been fundamentally shaped by these cultural forces, they are unlikely to support a welfare proposal which goes against the very same principles.

Building on these assumptions, the main purpose of the study was to subject the theoretically formulated cultural productivism hypothesis to an empirical test. First, the study sought to

examine whether societies where paid work carries a stronger cultural importance are also less likely to sympathize with the idea of UBI. The effect of two dimensions of cultural productivism was examined: the strength of normative importance of work captured by the concept of work ethic, and the strength of expressive importance of work operationalized through non-financial employment concept. Second, the study examined the relative plausibility of the cultural productivism hypothesis, by comparing its explanatory power with alternatives based on standard explanations of general pro-welfare-state attitudes.

To address these objectives, the paper analysed ESS Round 8 data from 23 European countries paired with macro-level indicators of productivism and other socio-economic characteristics generally used in welfare attitudes research. The data were analysed with a multi-level logistic regression with country-level specific intercepts.

Two main findings can be highlighted. First, the results confirmed the theoretically formulated concerns and showed that in societies where paid work has a stronger cultural significance, the public are less likely to support the implementation of UBI. Surprisingly, it was not the strength of work ethic that was found to affect the preferences, but the average non-financial employment commitment. Second, the results revealed that even though strong, the effect of employment commitment is in fact confounded by countries' economic prosperity captured by GDP per capita. This is also negatively related to UBI preferences.

The article offers a possible explanation for this relationship rooted in revised modernization theory. It suggests that unprecedented material security achieved by post-industrial societies may make UBI appear redundant in the eyes of citizenry, while proliferation of generally more likeable forms of immaterial labour in the service sector increases a population's willingness and expressive attachment to work. Hence, socio-economic development can be the common underlying factor that simultaneously leads to limited support for the implementation of UBI and to a stronger commitment to paid employment.

## 7 Summary

The main goal of this thesis was to analyse work orientations among individuals from different advanced societies and to contribute new findings to the growing field of comparative cross-national research on work orientations. The thesis consists of three studies, which address three general research questions. These concern the factors responsible for different work orientations in different societies, the dynamics of changing work orientations in the process of development, and the potential role of work orientations in influencing cross-national variation in values, attitudes and preferences in other spheres of life. However, each study focuses on a different aspect of people's orientation to work, approached through a different work orientation concept. The studies primarily rely on concepts of job preferences, work ethic and non-financial employment commitment. Even though all three studies can be characterized as comparative cross-national studies, they employ different comparative designs and methodological approaches. Two of the studies apply large multi-country designs and rely on multi-level modelling (Study I and III). The other study is more similar to a comparative case study design and analyses longitudinal trends in two societies with a regression-based decomposition technique (Study II).

Study I relates to a classical discussion about whether workers' orientations are primarily shaped by social and cultural factors external to the work situation or whether they depend on organizational features and the nature of one's work. Drawing upon earlier studies which showed interrelatedness between workers' experiences of the intrinsic quality of work and their preferences, the study seeks to determine whether an explanation based on job quality can also be extended to explain cross-national patterns of job preferences. The study finds relatively strong support for the job quality hypothesis. It shows that experience with intrinsic quality of work is not only the strongest factor in explaining preferences of individual workers within countries, but that it also accounts for a lion's share of the variance in job preferences at the country level. Moreover, cross-national distribution of both job quality and job preferences is shown to follow a similar institutional logic predicted by PRT. In other words, the results indicate that where the unions are strong, job quality is generally higher, and workers' intrinsic

preferences are strengthened. This is likely to be as a result of their value-reinforcing reaction to generally higher job quality.

Study II addresses a theoretical argument about the long-term decline in work ethic in contemporary societies. The study adopts theoretical lenses of revised modernization theory. It investigates whether longitudinal evidence supports its prediction that decreasing work ethic is a by-product of a post-materialist value shift associated with socio-economic development. In line with expectations derived from the theory, weakening of work ethic is believed to unfold primarily through intergenerational population replacement. Trends for the last two decades are first analysed for two 'most similar cases' of development, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The analysis is later supplemented by an analysis of nine other European countries. Results provide support for modernization theory and show that work ethic of more recent cohorts has been continuously decreasing. Intergenerational differences, in conjunction with cohort turnover, have contributed to work ethic decline in all the analysed countries. However, this component of social change has not yet dominated the overall work ethic trend in all countries included in the data. The findings indicate that this might be due to countries' historical differences in socio-economic development as well as due to differences in the pace of development experienced in recent years.

The third study draws upon theoretical discussions about the feasibility of UBI. It has been repeatedly argued that the proposal's capacity to appeal to the general public is probably impaired by the strength of productivist norms and values regarding the importance of paid work. This study differs from the previous two, in that it analyses work orientations aggregated at the level of countries as macro-level predictors of strength of such productivist ethos. The study then seeks to determine if and to what extent cultural productivism can account for varying levels of public support for UBI across European societies. The findings show that the public's average commitment to paid employment is the second strongest factor limiting support for UBI. However, this effect is surpassed and confounded by the negative effect of socio-economic development. The study draws upon revised modernization theory and provides an explanation

as to why socio-economic development may be a common underlying reason that UBI appears less appealing to the general public, while simultaneously creating conditions for a stronger expressive attachment to paid employment.

Findings presented in this thesis provide important insight into formation, change and consequences of work orientations in different contemporary societies. Even though each study analysed different work orientations concepts and addressed fairly specific research questions, important general conclusions applying to the whole work orientations field can nevertheless be derived.

With regard to the first research question, the studies indicate that a comprehensive explanation of cross-national variation of work orientations of any kind has to take into consideration a broad range of contextual factors. As Study I indicates, work orientations are phenomena which are inseparable from the context of workers' actual experiences with their jobs. That said, rather than following an entirely autonomous cultural logic, patterns of orientations of individual workers, as well as of entire societies, can be fully comprehended only with regard to the everyday reality of working in terms of nature, context and conditions under which the work is carried out. Complementary to this insight, findings from Study II remind us as that work orientations are also subject to a continuous change which, at least partially, unfolds in accordance with a universal cultural dynamic of modernization. Thus, work orientations are also shaped by cultural forces and are, in this respect, similar to values and attitudes in other spheres of life. This Janus-faced nature of work orientations is further underscored in Study III. Whilst productivist ethos is an important factor in decreasing citizens' sympathies with the idea of UBI, a complex theoretical explanation for why this is the case has to be taken into consideration. A variety of contextual factors must be considered including a population's value orientation patterns, material security, and also the structure of the labour market and material conditions under which the work is done.

Regarding the question of change of work orientations, the studies provide direct as well as indirect evidence about possible future trends and the mechanisms behind them. These changes are likely to reflect the dual nature of work orientations and will be shaped by cultural forces as well as by developments in structure, organization and the nature of work. Study II presents tentative evidence that value change associated with modernization might contribute to the weakening of work orientations associated with materialism. Still, this trend may be reinforced or counteracted by labour market transformations with a direct impact on organization and content of work. As Study I suggests, a strong union presence is an important institutional factor that contributes to higher intrinsic quality of work as well as to its stronger intrinsic valuation. However, unionization rates have been continuously declining in the majority of advanced societies over the last decades (Bacarro and Howell, 2017; Booth et al., 2000). If mirrored in deterioration of work quality, the process may gradually contribute to an opposite trend, i.e., strengthening of materialist and instrumental orientations. At the same time, the third study indirectly suggests that a structural transformation of labour markets may also lead to improvement of conditions conducive to the expressive attachment to work. As economies enter into a post-industrial phase and more autonomous forms of immaterial labour become widespread, individuals may increasingly experience and value their work in self-expressive terms (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). However, evidence regarding trends in intrinsic quality of work in contemporary societies is rather ambiguous (cf. Gallie et al., 2004; Kalleberg, 2011). It therefore remains unclear if future changes in work orientations will be primarily driven by cultural processes and/or by the structural transformation of work and employment, whatever this trend might be. Moreover, the multiplicity of different work orientation types makes it difficult to formulate a universal prediction. Since different orientations tap into the different meanings work may carry, it is most likely that any longitudinal change will be of a multidimensional nature. While some types of orientation will strengthen over time, the importance of others decreases.

As for the last research question, the thesis shows that work orientations as independent causal variables can uniquely contribute to our understanding of phenomena which are not directly

linked to the realm of work. Due to their socio-cultural embeddedness, orientations can be used not only as characteristics of individuals, but also as characteristics of country contexts in which these individuals are located. As the third study shows, where the theoretical argument expects an association of an outcome with norms and values regarding importance and desirability of work, work orientations represent a straightforward way to operationalization such normative contexts. However, because of their complex nature, the effect of work orientations should always be assessed against and in conjunction with their known institutional and cultural determinants.

### **7.1 Contribution to the research area**

The thesis contributes to empirical work orientation research in many ways. First, all three studies address problems with a long-standing tradition in work orientation research and therefore they may add new and useful insight to important research discussions concerning the entire research field. The second contribution lies in the fact that the studies primarily focus on aspects which have either been under-analysed in the literature, or never empirically examined from a given comparative, theoretical or methodological perspective. The third contribution results from the universally applied comparative cross-national perspective. This approach enhances generalizability of findings to more than just one society, whilst at the same time allowing the plausibility of both micro- and macro-level explanations to be tested. Finally, in addressing their objectives, the studies apply advanced modelling approaches and statistical techniques, thus providing relevant and methodologically sound empirical findings.

Study I is the first in the field to attempt to determine the role of job quality and its institutional determinants in explaining cross-national differences in workers' preferences. The results, which are line with previous studies, indicate that intrinsic quality of work of national labour markets is a contributing factor for stronger intrinsic preferences of the labour force (Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011) and potentially one of the most decisive explanatory factors accounting for cross-national variation in job preferences (Gallie, 2007c). The study went a step further and demonstrated that cross-national variation in preferences is also strongly related to the same

institutional forces which affect availability and distribution of favourable intrinsic aspects of work (Edlund and Grönlund, 2010; Esser and Olsen, 2012). Thus, findings reported in the study can be seen as integrating results from comparative work orientations research with those from cross-national studies on job quality. The results demonstrate that the cross-national distribution of both job preferences and job quality follows a very similar institutional logic. Furthermore, the study implemented a number of methodological improvements not present in previous comparative studies. For instance, centring and standardization of predictors enabled direct comparability of their relative effect sizes (Enders and Tofighi, 2007; Gelman, 2008), whilst inclusion of observations from a larger number of countries ensured a more reliable estimation of country-level effects (Bryan and Jenkins, 2016).

The argument about the decline of work ethic in contemporary societies has been repeatedly elaborated in a handful of theoretical studies. However, attempts to support it with empirical data have been much less common (Dülmer, 2011; Norris and Inglehart, 2011; Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991). The approach adopted in Study II is unique in that it tests this claim empirically with longitudinal survey data covering a relatively long period of almost two decades. It is also the first study of its kind which addresses theoretical claims of modernization theory with regard to work ethic change with repeated cross-sectional data. Previous studies have tended to rely on a comparative-static comparison and dynamics of past changes is inferred from cross-sectional relationships found in data collected at one point in time (Dülmer, 2011; Norris and Inglehart, 2011; Stam et al., 2013). The results provide interesting insight with regard to patterns of work ethic change and indicate that modernization theory is a useful framework for explanations of value changes in the sphere of work.

Findings presented in Study III contribute to the body of knowledge in welfare attitudes research, basic income studies, as well work orientation research. It is the first comparative cross-national study to empirically address the classical argument, that UBI's feasibility is fundamentally impaired by cultural attachment of contemporary societies' citizens to paid work (Bauman, 2005; Beck, 2000; Offe, 2001). Focusing on a productivism hypothesis, the study complements existing



cross-national analyses on public support for UBI by substantially extending the range of relevant macro factors found to be associated with an individual's propensity to support the proposal (Parolin and Siöland, 2020; Roosma and van Oorschot, 2019; Vlandas, 2019). In contrast to similar existing analyses, data transformations implemented in the study allowed the importance of tested macro factors to be ranked according to the relative strength of their association with UBI support as well as according to their explanatory power. The study was also the only one among its contemporaries to implement a Bayesian sensitivity check, to ensure the robustness of the findings at the country level are not affected by the relatively modest number of country clusters present in the data. Furthermore, the study provided an innovative theoretical explanation for observed cross-national patterns of UBI support, which integrated factors of a socio-economic, cultural and labour market nature. On the other hand, previous explanations focused mostly on the performance of countries' welfare institutions and living standards (e.g., Meuleman et al., 2018). Last, but not least, an important contribution of this study is its focus on employment commitment and work ethic, operationalized as explanatory predictors at the country level, rather than work orientations to be explained by other factors. While work orientations have traditionally been used as individual-level predictors of workers' satisfaction and well-being (Clark, 2005; Kalleberg, 1977; Zou, 2015), they are seldom employed in comparative cross-national analyses of attitudes not explicitly related to the sphere of work (Jeene et al., 2011; Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2013; Kirsten Stam et al., 2016).

## **7.2 Theoretical implications**

Findings and conclusions presented in the thesis have relatively straightforward theoretical implications. This is due to the design of the studies, which were built upon clearly stated theoretical premises and had explicit theory-testing ambitions. However, in addition to these manifest theory-testing goals, the findings also have wider theoretical significance beyond analysed conceptual models.

Study I had a theoretical goal of testing the plausibility of the value reinforcement version of the work socialization model of job preferences formation in a large comparative setting (Gallie,

2007c; Johnson, 2001a; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979). The results imply that the model's theoretical logic at the micro level can be extended to explain variation in job preferences between societies. The fact that cross-national differences in workers' preferences are related to job quality in value reinforcement logic has, however, indirect theoretical implications for normative interpretation of the meaning of work orientations. If good working conditions understood to enhance workers' well-being are conducive to a specific job preference orientation, then high average levels of such orientation in a country indicate a subjective attitudinal state of the labour force that is, in principle, desirable. Similarly, if a lack of such beneficial conditions also has a subjective attitudinal component, its high levels may indicate wide-spread alienation or self-estrangement of the labour force (Mackinnon, 1980). These results indirectly favour the Marxist view on job preferences, over an approach based on a hierarchy of values (Gallie, 2007a: 280–281; Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013: 257). As far as can be seen from the cross-sectional data, workers appear to strive for self-realization if their jobs allow it, rather than aspiring for self-expression as a result of satisfaction of their more basic material needs. The study also indicates that the formation of job preferences may resemble a more general psychological mechanism described by the term 'sour grapes' (Elster, 2016). This means that, in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, workers tend to make themselves content with whatever they can get and adjust their preferences to their possibilities (cf. Johnson, 2001a, 2001b; Mackinnon, 1980; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979). Furthermore, an important theoretical contribution relates to the assessment of VoC and PRT, as two main theoretical frameworks for a comparative analysis of job quality. As the study indicates, the latter approach does a better job of explaining variation in job preferences. This is likely to be because PRT more accurately points to institutional mechanisms affecting prevalence and availability of the beneficial intrinsic properties of work. Together with similar conclusions made by other authors (Edlund and Grönlund, 2010; Esser and Olsen, 2012; Gallie, 2007a), the results of this study indirectly underscore the importance of labour unions, rather than the a labour force's skill profile, in the study of national differences of job quality.

The main theoretical ambition of Study II was to assess whether the model of value change developed by modernization theory can be successfully applied in the sphere of work orientations, focusing specifically on the example of work ethic. While previous studies have demonstrated that the framework's theoretical logic can explain cross-national differences in work ethic fairly well (Dülmer, 2011; Norris and Inglehart, 2011; Stam et al., 2013), it has remained unclear if long-term trends also unfold in accordance with expectations derived from the theory. The results imply that such an extension is possible, and that modernization theory is a versatile approach which offers plausible explanations for changes in general human values, as well as changes in values in specific spheres of human activity, such as work ethic. The results suggest that as long as a given type of work orientation can be linked either to the materialist or post-materialist pole of the value preferences continuum, modernization theory is capable of providing an explanation for both cross-national variation as well as longitudinal trends, based on the level and dynamics of socio-economic development. However, if applied consistently, the modernization theory model would also imply value substitution or even multi-dimensional pattern as a mode of such change (Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991: 97). Thus, if work ethic as a materialistic value orientation decreases over the course of development, this decline should, in principle, be compensated for by simultaneous strengthening of some kind of work ethic post-materialist equivalent based on self-fulfilment (e.g., Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 29; Weeks, 2011: 60). Unfortunately, this aspect of value change could not be appropriately addressed due to limitations of the analysed data. Additionally, the study has broader theoretical implications beyond the modernization theory. The evidence indicates that there has been a decline in work ethic in the majority of analysed countries. This is in line with predictions made by many sound theoreticians about the mode and direction of work ethic change in contemporary societies (Bauman, 2005; Offe, 1985). The study also suggests that, as far as the adopted statistical approach can show (Firebaugh, 2010), the main source of this decline has been a changing population structure with regard to cohort composition, rather than the attitudinal conversion of individuals. Thus, the results favour theories emphasizing different socialization patterns of new generations, rather than those that see technological change as a principal agent behind the decline (Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991: 98).

The third study's main theoretical contribution lies in its attempt to test the theoretical argument around work-centredness of modern societies being a crucial factor limiting public sympathies towards the UBI (Bauman, 2005; Offe, 2001; Wispelaere and Noguera, 2012). The results imply that whilst the general logic of this explanation finds support in cross-national data, the argument has to be adjusted in order to apply to the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That said, affluent post-industrial societies with citizenry highly committed to paid employment on intrinsic grounds are more sceptical of the UBI than societies with stronger average adherence to the Protestant work ethic or related normative principles. In other words, while productivism of modern societies limits UBI's feasibility as expected, it is a different productivism to the one implied by the original argument. This finding has important implications for the theoretical discussion regarding the changing nature of work ethic. It suggests that the attachment to work in advanced post-industrial societies is better conceptualized in terms of the 'new work ethic', emphasizing the expressive, rather than normative importance of work for individuals and societies (Weeks, 2011: 60). In order to explain the observed pattern of cross-national support for UBI, the study relied on a complex theoretical explanation inspired by a revised modernization theory (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). This allowed theoretical conceptualization of UBI support as a function of a variety of macro-factors associated with societies' socio-economic development levels. In line with earlier studies, the results demonstrated that the question of UBI support is a complex multi-dimensional problem. Its conceptualization and explanation requires broader theoretical approaches, which go beyond the established welfare state or political economy typologies (Vlandas, 2019: 4–5). Finally, the study showed that work orientations can be conceptualized as important cultural factors which shape the public's opinions and attitudes concerning important socio-political questions. Even though most existing studies explain a population's orientations to work as a function wider than socio-economic and institutional structures (e.g., Esser and Lindh, 2018; Parboteeah and Cullen, 2003; Stam et al., 2013), the orientations can be seen as potent independent forces which inform individuals' opinions and judgements and, thus, inhibit or facilitate actions leading to changes of those very same structures.

### 7.3 Future research

The research problems addressed in the thesis are rather complex. Although the studies provided interesting findings and explanations to some of the persisting theoretical and/or empirical dilemmas in the field, these are by no means definitive and require further exploration and plausibility checks. Furthermore, the results opened up many new related questions, which deserve scientific attention and corroboration in future research. Some of the suggestions are of a more general nature, others relate to the specific research questions addressed in the studies.

With regard to the topic of formative processes shaping work orientations, future cross-national research in this field is encouraged to pay closer attention to the mechanisms operating at the level of individuals, through which country-level contextual factors are likely to channel their effect on workers' orientations. Even though the thesis demonstrates the importance of explanations based on value-reinforcement (Mortimer and Lorence, 1979), future research is encouraged to look at alternative mechanisms operating at the micro level (e.g., socialization, or problematic rewards perspectives) and explore their interrelatedness with country-level characteristics associated with particular job preference orientations (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013). Furthermore, the value-reinforcing effect of job quality and its institutional determinants should be subject to more extensive investigations too. The relative importance of the effect of job quality still needs to be examined and compared with other types of contextual factors such as welfare institutional set-ups and other socio-economic characteristics. It might very well be that effect of such contextual characteristics on job preferences is in fact partly mediated through their correlation with institutional factors associated with high quality of work<sup>15</sup>. Researchers could also explore whether the reinforcement-logic of job preferences formation applies universally to all possible dimensions (e.g., altruistic, social, entrepreneurial, individualistic) or whether it is confined to extrinsic and intrinsic types of preferences only. Finally, the effect of unions on job preferences is another important finding requiring further attention. It would be particularly relevant to investigate how declining rates of unionization experienced by the vast

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<sup>15</sup> The author's preliminary estimations based on 2015 ISSP Work Orientations data tentatively suggest that this might be the case for many similar macro-level predictors.

majority of advanced societies (Bacarro and Howell, 2017) have affected workers' preferences. If mirrored in a deterioration of job quality, such changes would be expected to result in a decrease in workers' intrinsic preferences or a strengthening of their extrinsic preferences over time.

The question of longitudinal change of work orientation, as a part of a broader cultural shift associated with modernization, is possibly the most comprehensive of the three topics. Hence, it is also the one which may require the greatest concentrated research effort. In order to assess whether such change has been taking place in contemporary societies around the world, researchers need to further analyse time-series data on work orientations, preferably from a great number of diverse societies. This is not an easy task. First, perhaps with the exceptions of EVS, availability of such comprehensive cross-sectional data spanning long periods of time is rather limited. Furthermore, such analyses face serious methodological pitfalls related to appropriate identification of the causes of the underlying observed trends (Glenn, 2005: 6–10) as well as to disentangling cross-sectional and longitudinal effects (Schmidt-Catran et al., 2019: 112–120). Future research is encouraged to corroborate the findings regarding a modernization-driven decline in work ethic, preferably relying on a combination of various available techniques for an estimation of cohort effects, in order to increase the robustness of the findings (Bell and Jones, 2015: 199–205). Researchers can shed more light on the issue by investigating longitudinal trends and their sources with respect to other types of work orientations. Modernization theory predicts a shift towards post-materialism in relation to job preferences (e.g., Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 33) and the question remains regarding the extent to which the decline in traditional materialistic work ethic is accompanied by a strengthening of its post-materialistic alternative which emphasizes self-expression rather than duty as the basis of attachment to work (Méda and Vendramin, 2017: 20; Ruiz Quintanilla and Wilpert, 1991: 97).

Comparative work orientations research should continue investigating the role of orientations to work as independent causal variables both at the individual level and the country level. Historically, the effect of work orientations has been analysed mostly with respect to workers'

satisfaction and well-being (Clark, 2005; Goldthorpe et al., 1968; Kalleberg, 1977). However, work attitudes may be important in shaping individuals' opinions, preferences and behaviours in spheres of life other than work. Of particular relevance is the relationship between work values and socio-political preferences with potentially far-reaching consequences for social organization and its future developments. The third study in the thesis is one example of such research. Although the results showed that more productivist societies tend to be sceptical of the UBI, further investigations are needed to corroborate the plausibility of the finding. First, the lack of evidence to support the relationship between country-level work ethic and citizens' support for the UBI, is a non-finding which deserves further attention. This is a surprising fact, considering that previous research showed that work ethic affects perception of desirability criteria and preferences with regard to distributive justice (Jeene et al., 2011; Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2013). At the same time, this finding contradicts expectations of many sound theoreticians who expected work ethic to limit psychological feasibility of UBI (Bauman, 2005; Offe, 2001). Researchers are encouraged to carefully re-examine this relationship, preferably using alternative forms of work ethic operationalization (e.g., an indirect measure as used in Van Hoorn and Maseland, 2013). Second, future research should explore whether the relationship between societies' average employment commitment and UBI support also holds true at the micro level. This would mean testing whether individuals with a stronger commitment to paid work, irrespective of their country, generally have a lower propensity to support the UBI. However, this might require a fairly specific data set, since the ESS currently collects data on welfare attitudes and work in two separate modules, fielded in different years and with a different frequency. Furthermore, it might be a good idea to substitute work ethic with employment commitment as the primary indicator of respondents' attachment to work in research of welfare attitudes, or other types of socio-political preferences. Despite the fact that the latter concept is not as popular as an independent variable, it appears to more accurately capture the basis of attachment to work in advanced post-industrial societies. Another important question is whether it is only the UBI that is particularly sensitive to the cultural and psychological importance of work, or whether the strength of cultural productivism negatively affects support for similar universalistic, non-targeted and non-productivist welfare policies. It would be interesting to

elaborate the modernization theory explanation given in the study and to see if socio-economic development, with an increasing emphasis on post-materialism and expressive importance of work, brings about a general drop in support for universalistic welfare, or if this theoretical logic applies exclusively to support for UBI perceived as a radical and new welfare reform proposal.

Finally, there are new challenges and topics for future work orientations research, which stem from recent trends affecting labour markets and work forces of contemporary societies. Changes in the content of work and work organization, new production technologies, as well as changes in the composition of the workforce, are all likely to affect individuals' needs, expectations and orientations with regard to work.

First, some authors claim that the nature of work in modern societies is fundamentally changing. According to optimistic views, the growing importance of knowledge as a component of production combined with advanced production technologies, will lead to growth of work organizations. This would allow employees to upgrade their skills and exert greater control over their work and its organization (see Gallie, 2017: 226–227). Others have warned against the same structural processes and argued that expansion of informational and administrative jobs may actually lead to the creation of pointless forms of employment which produce no real social value and have a detrimental impact on workers' mental health and well-being (Graeber, 2018).

Second, a process with great relevance for the future of work orientation research is the ongoing technological transformation towards Industry 4.0 (Davies, 2015; Schwab, 2016). Technological innovations such as machine learning, the Internet of Things, and second-generation industrial robotics, are expected to bring about a fundamental change in employment structure and the nature of work (OECD, 2017). Labour demand is expected to grow for work requiring ICT, social and creative skills, while many low-skilled routine jobs will be replaced by new technologies (Davies, 2015; Schwab, 2016; Wisskirchen et al., 2017). On the other hand, those employees who will be able to transition to the new industry model are likely to enjoy greater autonomy and carry out more interesting work (Davies, 2015).



The third trend has to do with altering the composition of the labour force with regard to the entry of new birth cohorts. Current discussions have been centred around the millennial generation, i.e., those born between 1980 and 2000. Millennials have been described positively as technologically skilled, creative, multitasking and socially connected. On the other hand, members of this generation have also been characterized as self-centred, demanding, disloyal, questioning of authority and prioritizing leisure over work (Papavasileiou and Lyons, 2015; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Human resources management practitioners and researchers have expressed concerns regarding millennial's distinct work-attitude profile and its implications for intergenerational conflict in the workplace, and for companies' recruitment and retention strategies (Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Kowske et al., 2010; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011).

While the first two structural processes may significantly alter the context within which individuals seek to satisfy their needs and expectations with regard to work, the latter process suggests that workers' values and priorities might be simultaneously changing as a result of intergenerational population replacement. The extent to which these transformed objective conditions of employment meet workers' new subjective expectations and how this (mis)match affects people's relationship to work in more general terms, are very important questions that should be addressed by future research in the field of work orientations.

#### **7.4 Policy implications**

The findings regarding factors formative to work orientations, their longitudinal trends, and their impact on other attitudes and behaviours, are relevant to academic discussions as well as to a broader professional audience including HR practitioners, policymakers and other occupational specialists. The results provide insight for a deeper understanding of workers' orientations, which are of great relevance for various types of policy concerned with employees' motivation, productivity, and well-being.

Knowing that workers' preferences are to a large extent shaped by their experiences with prevailing working conditions, sheds light on the question of a match between individuals'

preferences and job qualities. Congruency or discrepancy between employees' expectations and job characteristics is a real phenomenon with important consequences for workers' satisfaction (Berglund and Esser, 2019: 220). However, results from Study I, together with similar findings reported in previous research (e.g., Argyris, 1964; Johnson, 2001a; Mortimer and Lorence, 1979), indicate that workers tend to cognitively reduce any such discrepancies by adjusting their preferences to the realities of their jobs. Additionally, if one is willing to accept the Marxist notion of a universal human need for creative self-actualization through work (Spencer, 2009: 47–50), instrumentalism orientation in itself may be interpreted as indicating a mismatch, whereby basic conditions for satisfaction of this fundamental need are not adequately met (cf. Mackinnon, 1980). Thus, rather than seeking to adjust working conditions to preferences to increase satisfaction, employers should pay closer attention to current job rewards which might have shaped those preferences.

On the other hand, intrinsic orientation has been considered as a factor of great importance for economic performance and product quality in knowledge-intensive service-based economies. Since methods of direct supervision cannot be effectively applied in such economic contexts, employers depend on workers' motivation to do their work well (Gallie, 2007c: 279–280). As Study I suggests, policies and programmes aimed at improvement of work quality might be among the most efficient tools to increase workers' intrinsic commitment, thus simultaneously enhancing economic competitiveness as well as employees' well-being. Policy makers should acknowledge this fact and put stronger emphasis on the improvement of job quality aspects conducive to employees' stronger intrinsic motivation and attachment. The importance of intrinsic work quality has been formally recognized by the EU, which made better quality jobs one of the goals of the Lisbon strategy and even suggested direct empirical measures for its assessment (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). However, any such focus is absent in the Decent Work initiative from the International Labour Organization (ILO). The initiative is primarily concerned with decency understood with respect to terms and conditions of employment, while leaving aside the question of quality of work content and its impact on well-being (Deranty and MacMillan, 2012).

One may also apply these lenses to interpret changes in work orientations over time and across generations. The fact that certain types of orientations are gaining importance while the strength of others is slowly fading may not entirely be due to cohorts' different formative experiences and socialization. It is likely that these changes reflect the wider labour market context within which the cohorts obtain their working experiences (Johnson, 2001a). For instance, if members of the millennial generation are commonly characterized as less concerned with career advancement and meaningful work<sup>16</sup> (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2019: 46), this might partly be a result of their adjustment to a situation where these particular rewards are simply not attainable. Similarly, since Study II demonstrated a decline in moral importance of work among recent cohorts, it may also indicate a gradual erosion of conditions that are conducive to this type of attachment to employment. Attempts to design new recruitment and retention strategies tailored to fit values of younger generations (Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Kowske et al., 2010; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011) should be complemented with complex work quality programmes. It is important to first ensure that modern workplaces offer conditions which allow young workers to identify with their work and build a strong internal motivation beyond material rewards.

Indeed, these suggestions are built upon a premise, that individuals in modern societies perceive work as a subjectively important activity which is also a source of meaning, self-expression and fulfilment. In fact, instrumentalism represents an issue requiring the attention of policymakers only insofar as work is seen in a narrow sense as paid employment<sup>17</sup>, and the institutional context does not allow individuals to satisfy their subjective needs through other types of activity such as care, volunteering or political activism. On the other hand, if the definition of socially recognized work were expanded to include these other activities and the safety net was adjusted accordingly, orientations which may indicate self-estrangement or alienation would be of lesser

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<sup>16</sup> There is a lot of disagreement as to which particular profile of preferences is characteristic for members of the millennial generation (Twenge, 2010). The sentence should be therefore read as an example illustrating theoretical argument, rather than as a statement describing a factual state.

<sup>17</sup> I am grateful to Arne L. Kalleberg who explained to me that instrumentalism per se is not automatically a problematic state.

concern. However, Study III demonstrated the limited feasibility of an institutional change in the direction of a post-productivist welfare regime based on UBI (Goodin, 2001) and showed that this is partly due to prevailing cultural discourses about the importance of paid work. Additionally, employment commitment (as an example of a productivist discourse negatively related to UBI support), even shows a tendency to strengthen as societies develop and become more prosperous (Turunen and Nätti, 2017).

This finding has important implications for political strategies aimed at mobilizing public support for the implementation of UBI. It suggests that one-size-fits-all strategies are likely to fail, and that different the general public in different countries are likely to positively respond to different aspects of the proposal. As noted by Wilson, UBI may theoretically find support among two categories of individuals: those who identify with its underlying values or those dissatisfied with their employment situation (Wilson, 2004: 111). However, these groups might not be equally represented in the coalition of UBI supporters in all country contexts alike. Citizens in affluent post-industrial societies who enjoy high levels of material security and are employed in service sector jobs offering more opportunities for self-realization, are less likely to find UBI attractive as a welfare measure. However, the proposal may appeal to their post-materialist value orientations if presented as a measure increasing human freedom (Offe, 2001) and broadening the scope of activities that individuals may legitimately engage in. On the other hand, the general public in less advanced societies is more likely to find UBI attractive as a step forward compared to relatively low levels of social security guaranteed by the state (Meuleman et al., 2018). Moreover, the proposal may also be appreciated as a means of liberation from paid employment. This will be more likely if employment is generally associated with industrial production that offers few self-realization opportunities and is primarily perceived in instrumental terms.

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I



**What matters in a job? A multi-level study of job preference orientations and  
the intrinsic quality of work in 25 societies\***

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**Abstract**

This paper examines cross-national differences in job preference orientations from the perspective of job quality. In particular, it investigates the extent to which preferences of workers in 25 developed societies are shaped by the intrinsic quality of jobs and its institutional determinants, as highlighted by varieties of capitalism (VoC) and power resources theory (PRT). The study uses multi-level models with country-specific random intercepts fitted to individual data from the International Social Survey Programme's 2015 Work Orientations, paired with institutional indicators from various sources. The results show that workers within countries tend to be oriented towards the same types of rewards that their jobs offer, with the intrinsic quality of work standing out as the most important factor of all. This logic extends to the cross-national variation in job preference orientations, which is strongly related to the average intrinsic quality of jobs in national labour markets and its institutional factors emphasized by PRT, rather than VoC.

**Keywords**

job preference orientations; job preferences; work orientations; work values; quality of work, job quality; varieties of capitalism; power resources

## 1 Introduction

The concept of job preference orientations<sup>1</sup> has been traditionally employed in analyses of people's subjective relationships with their work. Following a general definition, job preference orientations refer to "the way[s] in which workers order their wants and expectations relative to their employment" [1] (p. 37). Different typologies of orientations were proposed [2–4] but the central distinction is typically made between extrinsic preferences, "in which jobs are valued for their material rewards" [5] (p. 279), and intrinsic preferences, which "reflect the worker's desire to be stimulated and challenged by the job and to be able to exercise acquired skills at work" [6] (p. 128). The importance of job preferences lies mainly in relation to job quality in general terms, for what constitutes a good job naturally depends on workers' attitudes [7]. Furthermore, workers' orientations are important when it comes to their motivation, productivity, well-being [5] and job satisfaction [6, 8].

There is a well-established research tradition of job preference orientations, consisting mainly of studies conducted within specific national contexts [1, 3, 9–11], but there is also a growing body of comparative cross-national studies [5, 12–16]. At the individual level, researchers have investigated the relationship between workers' preferences and factors such as socialization practices, life stage, nature of family life and the moulding effect of work experience itself [5, 9, 10]. Comparative studies at the macro level have typically adopted approaches inspired by modernization theory [13, 16] and/or a welfare institutional perspective [12, 14, 15] and attempted to explain cross-national diversity in job preferences as a function of societies' development stages or welfare institutional set-ups, respectively. Still, findings with respect to the applicability of these comparative frameworks are at best inconclusive [5, 13, 14, 16].

There is a third, relatively under-investigated, perspective, which looks at differences in workers' preferences mainly through the prism of job quality. Following the sociological tradition, the term *job quality* is used to refer to a good intrinsic quality of work [17], such as

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<sup>1</sup> Job preference orientations have also been examined according to the terms "job preferences" [14, 15], "work orientations" [1, 11–13] and "work values" [2, 10, 52]. In this paper, these four terms are used interchangeably, but the term "job preference orientations" is predominantly used.

ability to use knowledge, skills, autonomy and control as well as participation in decision-making regarding work organization [7]. Job quality therefore differs from quality of employment conditions, which reflects the availability of extrinsic job rewards, such as high pay or job security [17]. In line with neo-Marxist thinking, the job quality perspective suggests that people have a natural desire to fulfil themselves through their work. However, if they are in degrading jobs with few opportunities for self-development, they retreat into a state of alienated instrumentalism<sup>2</sup> and refocus on priorities outside work [5]. On the other hand, experience of high-quality jobs is likely to increase the desire for self-realization, the use of skills and initiative [9]. The few studies which have explored the mechanism have yielded promising results and showed that job quality may be among the most important determinants of individual [9] as well as cross-national variations in job preferences [5, 15]. This paper's main goal is to corroborate the plausibility of the job quality hypothesis from a comparative cross-national perspective. It is argued that, if job preference orientations are shaped by individuals' experience of work quality, their cross-national variation should be explicable by the average job quality found in national labour markets and its institutional determinants. In particular, the study addresses the plausibility of job quality determinants associated with two comparative political economy frameworks, namely, varieties of capitalism (VoC) and power resources theory (PRT). The hypothesis is empirically examined with random intercept multi-level models fitted to individual data from the International Social Survey Programme's 2015 Work Orientations, paired with institutional indicators from various sources.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Part One presents theoretical arguments about how job quality experience shapes workers' preferences and reviews existing empirical evidence to support them. It then introduces VoC and PRT and explains the institutional differences likely to affect cross-national variations in job preference orientations. Hypotheses are derived thereof, and methods, data and measures of variables are described in the next section. Empirical analysis results follow, and the paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and their relevance to comparative work orientations research.

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<sup>2</sup> Instrumentalism refers to an attitude to work which regards it as a means towards an end, other than the work itself [53]. It usually suggests a primary concern with money and is closely related to extrinsic attachment to work, which is one of its four constitutive components [1, 11].

## 2 Theoretical argument

### 2.1 Job preference orientations and the intrinsic quality of work

A number of different individual factors has been identified as determinants of job preference orientations [5, 9, 10]. This paper focuses specifically on the effects of workers' experience of intrinsic job quality or the lack thereof, which are hypothesized to be of profound importance to preferences regarding work in general.

A theoretical mechanism about how experience with job quality translates into work preferences<sup>3</sup> was previously described under the term *value reinforcement*. According to this explanation, workers adapt to the realities of their jobs, so that the initial orientations that led them to make particular job choices are reinforced as a result of those choices [10, 18–20]. On a similar note, it has been argued that people tend to rationalize their position vis-à-vis their job and demand whatever it is the job supplies in the greatest quantity [21]. The expectation is that workers, in high-quality jobs offering intrinsic rewards, experience their work as meaningful and develop a sense of responsibility and stronger internal motivation [5]. On the other hand, workers in jobs offering little in the way of intrinsic rewards are assumed to retreat into a state of alienated instrumentalism and lose aspirations for types of work which offer self-development [9].

A number of longitudinal panel studies conducted in the USA seem to unanimously support plausibility of the reinforcement mechanism in shaping job preferences. Mortimer and Lorence [20] demonstrated that rewarding occupational experiences lead to reinforcement of the same values that served as the basis for earlier career choices. Johnson [18, 19] showed that young adults tend to adjust their work values in a cooling out process as they gain first experiences as adult workers. Other studies showed that reinforcement mechanisms can be extended to explain changes in work values during the economic recession [22] and even development of work values across-generations [23].

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<sup>3</sup> With cross-sectional data, it is not possible to determine causal ordering of job preferences and job characteristics. While there is a possibility that the relationship can be affected by self-selection, the study follows previous research and assumes that workers' ability to choose and shape their jobs is more limited than the effects that jobs have on them [5, 10, 20].



Results from cross-sectional empirical studies largely confirm the plausibility of this mechanism. In a study from Canada, MacKinnon [11] found that the instrumentalism of industrial workers was a subjective component of work alienation caused by self-estrangement and occupational powerlessness. As shown by Gallie et al. [9] in their study on the changing orientations of British workers between 1992 and 2006, job quality stood out as having particularly strong associations with intrinsic preferences, with effect and explanatory power ahead of early socialization or material conditions of employment. Additionally, Gesthuizen and Verbakel [15] found, in a multi-level study of 19 European countries, that job autonomy as an individual-level variable was associated with stronger intrinsic and weaker extrinsic preferences.

The logic of value reinforcement has been extended to the macro level too. It has been hypothesized that “an emphasis on high levels of skill and quality production” in the national economy is conducive to “an ethos in which employees attach particular importance to intrinsic characteristics of work” [5] (p. 282). Despite only a few studies testing the relationship cross-nationally, they still yielded promising results. In a study of five European countries, Gallie [5] found that a prevalence of good quality jobs, together with skill-related structural differences, explained the largest part of the distinctively intrinsic orientation of Scandinavian countries. In an alternative model specification from the same study, job quality eliminated country differences entirely. When Gesthuizen and Verbakel [15] replicated the study with a larger comparative design, they found that quality of the labour market was associated with a decrease in extrinsic preferences while intrinsic orientations remained unaffected.

## *2.2 Comparative frameworks: VoC and PRT*

It seems plausible to assume that job quality is an important factor shaping job preference orientations at both individual and national levels. However, intrinsic job quality and its specific components are not randomly distributed across national political economies; rather, they seem to follow specific institutional logic. VoC and PRT are the main comparative political-economy frameworks which specify institutional mechanisms responsible for national diversity in job quality [24]. While, according to the former, job quality varies as a result of differences in skill requirements, the latter emphasizes the varying strength of organized labour as the dominant factor [25].

VoC assume that national diversity in job quality is primarily the result of how companies organize and coordinate production. Different strategies require different types of skill assets, which in turn affect “several aspects of work experience [...] critical for the quality of employment” [26] (p. 87). Companies in so-called coordinated market economies (CMEs) focus on high-quality diversified production, as they depend on skilled labour with a great amount of company- and industry-specific skills [25]. Complex and knowledge-intensive production translates into high task discretion [12]. Since employees work in autonomous ways which are difficult and costly to monitor, consensus-based approaches to decision-making proliferate [27]. So-called liberal market economies (LMEs) provide a radically different picture of job quality [26]. This is linked with production strategy based on an ability to flexibly react to market signals and to adjust employee numbers accordingly [12, 25], which requires a workforce with general skills that are readily available on the market and transferable across firms. Hence, companies in LMEs favour organizational structures that allow high levels of unilateral managerial control which lead to employees having less influence in the decision-making process [25, 27].

According to PRT, divisions among developed societies reflect the balance of class power between employers and workers, manifested in the strength of labour unions and political parties [28]. Relative power resources determine the ability of workers to shape conditions under which cooperation necessary for production occurs [29]; hence, the extension of the framework to job quality. Intrinsic job quality is, from a labour union’s perspective, both a power resource and an aim of specific importance. First, this is because it increases employees’ well-being and satisfaction [17], reduces stress and enhances opportunities for skill development [30]. Second, it contributes to information asymmetry and increases employers’ motivation to invest in long-term employment contracts [25]. Finally, job quality empowers workers whereby they are able to resist restrictive employee control systems [24].

Available comparative studies show that institutional differences highlighted by both theories are related to various aspects of job quality and their cross-national variation. However, the evidence with respect to VoC is slightly less consistent, with some studies pointing to PRT as being a better explanatory framework. For instance, Esser and Olsen [24] showed that both

the specificity of skill structure and the power of workers are positively related to job autonomy. Edlund and Grönlund [25], on the other hand, demonstrated the relationship between autonomy and skill specificity is spurious and disappears when the strength of organized labour is accounted for. Similarly, Gallie [26] discovered no evidence that cross-national differences in task discretion, job variety and self-development opportunities would follow institutional distinctions highlighted by VoC, while finding PRT explanations more convincing. The same author also empirically demonstrated that trade unionism is highly correlated with task discretion [31] and higher employee control [32].

### **3 Hypotheses**

This paper aims to contribute to comparative work orientations research by empirically examining interrelatedness between job preference orientations and job quality from a multi-level cross-national perspective. Given the presented theoretical arguments and available evidence, a set of testable hypotheses can be devised.

First, it is expected that job quality at an individual level will be related to job preference orientations in a value-reinforcing way, i.e., that it will be positively associated with intrinsic-type preferences and negatively associated with extrinsic ones (Hypothesis 1a). The hypothesis also expects job quality to be a factor of the utmost importance to the formation of job preference orientations. Therefore, its effect is expected to be relatively larger than that of other predictors or controls (Hypothesis 1b).

The average job quality of national labour markets is expected to mirror the effect of its individual counterpart (Hypothesis 2). Seen from the perspective of VoC, national economies relying on specific skill assets are expected to emphasize stronger intrinsic work valuations as a result of a generally higher quality of work (Hypothesis 3). With respect to PRT, it is expected that employees in countries with encompassing labour movements will be in a better position with respect to many job quality aspects and therefore express stronger intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, valuations of work (Hypothesis 4). Finally, since studies indicate that PRT might do a better job in explaining cross-national differences in job quality than VoC, predictors related to the former framework are expected to have a stronger relative effect and explanatory power (Hypothesis 5).

## 4 Data

The paper uses individual survey data from the 2015 ISSP Work Orientation module [33, 34]. The original data set was further reduced to include only national samples that had complete sets of all relevant macro-level indicators. Within those countries, the focus was narrowed to sub-populations reported as being currently in paid employment. After cases with missing values were deleted, the final sample consisted of 15,163 individuals clustered in 25 countries<sup>4</sup>.

## 5 Methods

All models presented in the study were estimated as multi-level regressions with country-specific random intercepts. Parameter estimates were obtained with a restricted maximum likelihood, which is a more accurate method when the number of level-two units is relatively small [35, 36]. Given the fact there are 25 country-clusters in the analysed data, the estimation of group-level parameters and variance components should still be reliable [37, 38]. To enhance the accuracy and interpretability of the estimates, all predictors were either group- or grand mean-centred, depending on the specific model of interest [39]. Continuous variables at both levels were additionally standardized by twice their standard deviation, so that the relative strength of their relationship with the outcome could be directly compared with each other and with unstandardized binary predictors [40].

## 6 Variables

### 6.1 *Dependent variable*

The dependent variable is a multi-point scale capturing the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic job preferences to a person's job preference orientation [5]. Items used for its construction were introduced in the questionnaire with the instruction: "For each of the following, please tick one box to show how important you personally think it is in a job." Responses were reverse-coded so that the scales ranged between 1 ("Not important at all") and 5 ("Very important").

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<sup>4</sup> These countries were: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK and the US.

The results from exploratory factor analysis<sup>5</sup> suggested that “job security”, “high income” and “good opportunities for advancement” comprise the extrinsic dimension of the job preference orientations scale (alpha reliability<sup>6</sup> 0.57). The intrinsic dimension<sup>7</sup>, on the other hand, consisted of “an interesting job”, “a job that allows someone to work independently” and “a job that allows someone to decide their hours or days of work” (alpha reliability 0.58). The composite scale was calculated in two steps. First, average scores were computed for each of the dimensions separately. Next, the mean extrinsic score was subtracted from the intrinsic one, so that the resulting job preference orientations scale theoretically ranged between -4 and 4. While positive values indicate a higher relative importance accorded to intrinsic aspects of work, negative values correspond to a higher valuation of extrinsic rewards. Such a composite measure is not only analytically efficient, but can also account for halo effects resulting from the varying degrees of willingness among respondents in different countries to use extreme categories of the scale [5, 13, 32].

## 6.2 *Independent variables at the individual level*

To capture the overall intrinsic quality of the respondent’s work, a summative index of job quality was constructed (cf. with similar indices used in [5, 9, 17, 41]). The index consisted of four items reflecting the respondent’s assessment of whether her job is interesting, if she can work independently, if she is free to decide how her daily work is organized, and if she can decide her own working hours. For each component, dichotomous variables were created with a value of 1 indicating that a given facet is, to some extent, present in the respondent’s current job, and 0 otherwise. The sum of the four items was used as an overall measure of job quality (alpha reliability 0.62).

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<sup>5</sup> See Table A1 in the Appendix A.

<sup>6</sup> Cronbach alpha values below the 0.7 cutoff point are frequently reported for scales with only a few items and do not always properly reflect the internal reliability of such short scales. See Rammstedt and Beierlein [54] (p. 214).

<sup>7</sup> The survey also included two items measuring the importance of the social dimension of job preferences (the items “useful to society” and “help others”), which were interpreted in some previous studies as indicators of intrinsic orientation [14, 16]. However, if intrinsic orientation is understood in terms of the valuation of continuous personal development [2] and the use of one’s abilities [5], it is clear that the items fail to reflect the individualistic aspect of self-realization implied by the concept.

To assess whether the logic of value reinforcement also applies to the quality of employment conditions, subjectively assessed income and job security were selected as additional controls. The measure of income was based on the respondent's agreement with the statement "My income is high", expressed on a reverse-coded scale ranging between 1 ("Strongly disagree") and 5 ("Strongly disagree"). Job security was captured by agreement with the statement "My job is secure", expressed on an identical scale.

Additionally, controls for standard demographic and socioeconomic characteristics were used. With respect to demographics, these included gender, age and education measured in years of formal schooling. Location in the structure of work was captured by dummies for self-employment, supervising responsibilities and part-time work, defined as less than 30 weekly hours in the main job.

Finally, to avoid ecological fallacies and to be able to test macro influences over and above the micro level, two controls related to the main institutional frameworks were included too. With respect to VoC, the models control for specificity of individuals' skills, as captured by the "s1" relative skill specificity measure suggested by Iversen and Soskice [42]. The measure is derived from the ISCO-88 classification of occupations and captures how specialized an individual's skills are relative to the total skills she possesses<sup>8</sup> [42, 43]. Values of the measure obtained from Cusack et al. [43] were assigned to individual respondents based on their ISCO-

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<sup>8</sup> The measure of relative skill specificity of an occupation is mathematically defined as  $s/(s + g)$ , where "s" represents a measure of specific skills and "g" is a measure of general skills. Following the approach of Soskice and Iversen [42], Cusack et al. [43] derive the measure from information relating to the level and specialization of skills contained in the ISCO-88 classification of occupations. Firstly, an absolute average skill specificity of an occupation (corresponding to the numerator "s") is calculated, as a share of unit groups in the higher-level occupational class to which the occupation belongs, divided by the share of the labour force in that class [43] (p. 371). The value is high when there is a disproportionately high share of unit groups in the occupational class and a low share of the labour force employed in that class. Secondly, in order to transform this absolute measure into a relative index, it is divided by a measure of occupational skill level, a proxy for the total level of skills of an occupation "(s + g)". ISCO-88 distinguishes four such skill levels, which are defined for all major occupational classes. Values of the resulting relative skill specificity index are high when an individual is in a very specialized occupation, but her level of skills is relatively low. Values are low when the occupation is not particularly specialized, while the level of skills is high [43] (p. 371).

88 codes. As for the PRT, a simple binary variable indicating respondents' union membership status was included<sup>9</sup>.

### *6.3 Independent variables at the country level*

First, to illustrate the extent to which is cross-national variation in job preferences related to differences intrinsic quality of work, a country-level measure of job quality was constructed. The predictor was obtained simply by averaging the individual job quality variable at the level of countries.

Two indicators of countries' average skill specificity<sup>10</sup> were selected to capture skill diversity among national political economies, expected by the VoC framework. The first indicator is based on the aforementioned "s1" relative skill specificity measure [42, 43], the values of which were simply averaged at country level. Thus, higher values of this aggregated measure should reflect a higher average specificity of skill assets, utilized in production in a given country.

The second indicator of skill specificity is the median enterprise tenure measured in years<sup>11</sup>. The indicator is based on the idea that investment in specific skills increases opportunity costs with regard to the termination of the employment contract for both employers and employees. Therefore, higher average specificity of skills is expected to be reflected in longer median tenure rates in a country [44]. Indicator values for the majority of countries were extracted from the 2015 European Working Conditions Survey [45]. US data came from the 2014 General Social Survey [46], values for Japan were gathered from the 2012 Japan General Social Survey [47], and data for Russia and Israel were obtained from the 2010 European Social Survey [48].

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<sup>9</sup> See Table A2 in the Appendix A for descriptive statistics of all individual-level variables.

<sup>10</sup> Rather than being two categories of a dichotomous schema, CMEs and LMEs are ideal types constituting a continuum along which all national capitalist systems can be arranged [27]. The skill variation expected by VoC is therefore captured by continuous, and not by categorical, variables.

<sup>11</sup> Alternative indicators of skill diversity such as vocational training share [44] or tertiary vocational training [55] were unfortunately available for only a fraction of countries in the ISSP data.

With regard to PRT, two indicators of unions' capacity to organize large amounts of workers were selected [49]. The first indicator was trade union density, measured as the percentage of the labour force organized into unions. The second indicator was bargaining coverage, defined as the proportion of contracts in which wages are determined in collective bargaining. Both indicators were obtained from the International Labour Organization database ILOSTAT [50] and their values correspond to 2015 or the most recent available year<sup>12</sup>.

## **7 Results**

### *7.1 Country differences*

In the first step, a null model containing only country-specific random intercepts was applied to the data. According to the intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) calculated from the model, 12% of the overall variance in job preference orientations occurs between countries, i.e., it is explained by the grouping structure in the population. Figure 1 displays country effects from that model, along with their 95% confidence intervals. The effects are arranged around a mean job preference orientations score of zero, corresponding to extrinsic and intrinsic preferences which are of relatively equal importance. Countries with relatively stronger intrinsic orientation are located on the right half of the figure, while the predominantly extrinsically oriented are placed in the left half. A relatively stronger extrinsic orientation appears to be more common and can be found in 15 countries. Central and Eastern European countries (i.e., Croatia, Hungary and Russia), together with the US and Turkey, dominate the group of extrinsically oriented societies. Workers in remaining 10 countries are relatively more intrinsically oriented, and this type of orientation is strongest in Scandinavian countries (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Switzerland. The cluster pattern that emerged from the null model is roughly consistent with earlier results from comparative research on both job preferences and job quality. Workers in Scandinavian countries were repeatedly found both to be the most strongly intrinsically oriented [5, 12] and to report distinctively high levels of such work quality aspects as autonomy [24], work task quality [41], task discretion [31] and job control [32]. These preliminary results seem to support the idea of interrelatedness between job quality experience and job preference orientations.

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<sup>12</sup> Descriptive statistics for all country-level characteristics can be found in Table A3 in the Appendix A.



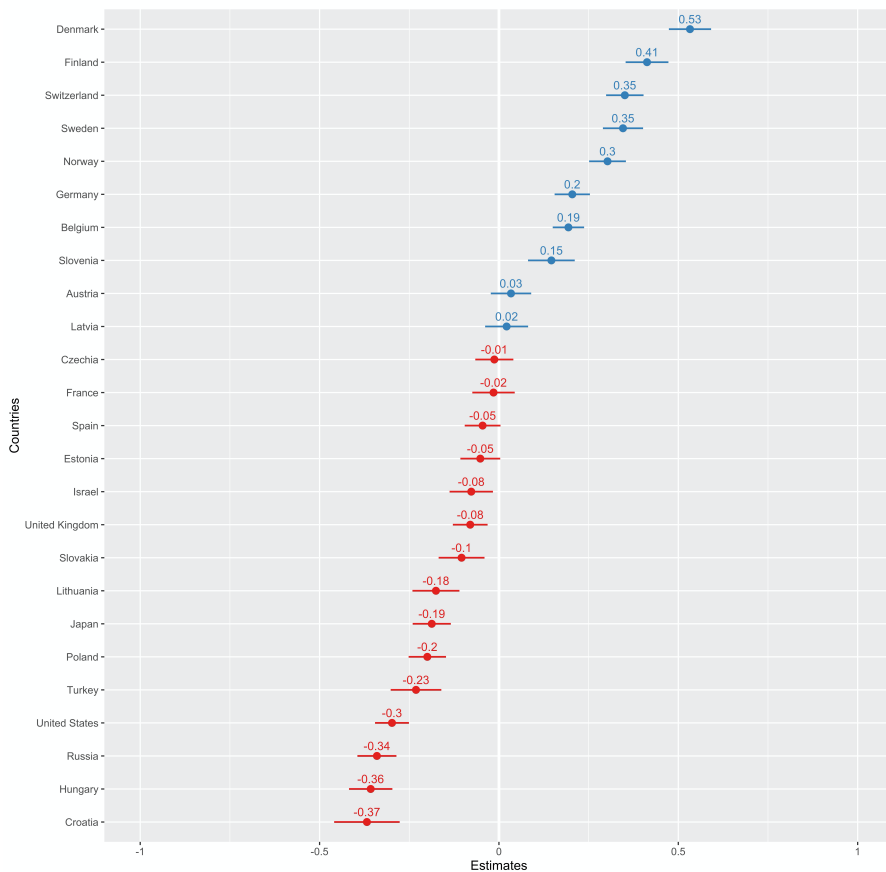


Figure 1. Effect of country-specific random intercepts on job preference orientations (based on Model A1, Table 1).

### 7.2 Individual-level regression results

In the next step, fixed effects of individual-level predictors and controls were estimated. In line with suggestions formulated by Enders and Tofghi [39], predictors were group mean-centred at the country level, as the procedure leads to purer estimates of individual-level regression coefficients. Results from this model are summarized in Model A2 (Table 1). Positive coefficients should be interpreted as strengthening relative intrinsic orientation. Negative coefficients, on the other hand, can be read as strengthening relative extrinsic orientations.

Table 1. Effects of individual-level characteristics on job preference orientations; multi-level regression.

	A1	A2
<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>
Woman		0.04 ***
Age		0.13 ***
Education		0.12 ***
Part-time		0.07 ***
Self-employed		0.20 ***
Supervising		-0.07 ***
Union membership		-0.05 ***
Skill specificity		-0.02
Income		-0.02
Job security		-0.05 ***
Job quality		0.26 ***
<b>Random effects variances</b>		
Individual level	0.50	0.46
Country level	0.07	0.07
ICC	0.12	0.13
N	25	25
Observations	15,163	15,163
Deviance	32,520.074	31,270.034

Note: Statistical significance = \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001. ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries.

Keeping other predictors and controls constant, intrinsic job quality is most strongly correlated with job preference orientations. The effect is significant and positive, which means that workers who enjoy high levels of job quality tend to be the most intrinsically oriented

ones. The effect of employment conditions is negative and much weaker. Having a secure job, *ceteris paribus*, increases the relative strength of the extrinsic orientation. However, the effect of high income is not statistically significant. The results provide evidence that value reinforcement is a plausible explanatory mechanism for individual differences in job preference orientations. As expected (Hypothesis 1a), workers tend to value the job characteristics they experience positively in their actual job: high employment quality is correlated with stronger relative extrinsic orientation, while experience with intrinsic job quality reinforces intrinsic orientation. As job quality has the strongest relative effect of all predictors (Hypothesis 1b), an individual's orientation is likely to be intrinsic rather than extrinsic, even if she enjoys a full range of favourable employment conditions and job quality rewards.

### 7.3 Country-level regression results

To test the impact of intrinsic job quality and its institutional determinants on cross-national differences in job preference orientations, country-level predictors were added to the model containing the full range of individual-level predictors and controls (see Table 1). All predictors were grand mean-centred, since the procedure is suggested when the relationship between outcome and level-two predictors is of primary interest, while individual-level variables are used as controls [39].

Model B1 (Table 2) shows that the effect of job quality is statistically significant and positive, indicating that workers from countries where jobs offer more intrinsic rewards tend to emphasize intrinsic rather than extrinsic job preferences. The predictor has a remarkable explanatory power, and its inclusion in the equation alone results in a 58% reduction in the initial variance share at the country level (compared to the Model A1, Table 1). The results seem to indicate that the job quality hypothesis holds true at the individual level and at the societal level (Hypothesis 2).

Model B2 (Table 2) shows that median tenure as a proxy for skill specificity has only a small positive effect which is not even statistically significant. This is not the case for the latter of the two VoC-related predictors. Model B3 (Table 2) suggests that average skill specificity is significantly related to job preference orientations, but the direction of the coefficient is

(contrary to expectations) negative. The model implies that workers in countries with relatively more specific skills are oriented relatively more extrinsically than intrinsically. As the indicator measures skill specificity relative to the general skills level, it also suggests that stronger relative intrinsic orientation is (contrary to expectations) associated with higher general, rather than specific, skills. Even though the predictor eliminates 33% of the initial ICC value, its explanatory power is comparatively weaker than that of aggregated job quality. All in all, the results do not seem to support the expectation that skill specificity plays a decisive role in determining job preference orientations (Hypothesis 3).

Table 2. Effects of intrinsic job quality and its determinants, as highlighted by VoC and PRT, on job preference orientations; multi-level regression.

	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>B3</b>	<b>B4</b>	<b>B5</b>
<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>
Job quality	0.29 ***				
Median tenure		0.09			
Skill specificity			-0.19 *		
Bargaining coverage				0.27 ***	
Union density					0.30 ***
<b>Random effects variances</b>					
Individual level	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46
Country level	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02
ICC	0.05	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04
N	25	25	25	25	25
Observations	15,163	15,163	15,163	15,163	15,163
Deviance	31,262.972	31,278.863	31,274.508	31,266.574	31,262.218

Note: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries. Controlled for individual-level characteristics (Table 1, Model A2).

Models B3 and B4 (Table 2) show that empirical support in favour of PRT is much more reliable. Consistent with expectations (Hypothesis 4), both predictors of unions' strength, be it

bargaining coverage or union density, are positively related to job preference orientations with effects comfortably higher than zero. In other words, the stronger the organized labour, the more intrinsically oriented individuals in a country are. Further, the explanatory power of this framework is higher than that of VoC. Each predictor alone has a stronger relative effect than skill specificity, and while bargaining coverage leads to a 58% reduction in ICC, union density reduces it by almost 67%. Still, also according to the former criterion, union density seems to be associated with job preference orientations even more strongly than bargaining coverage.

In the next step, the explanatory power of two frameworks was directly compared. This was done first by fitting a model containing VoC and PRT predictors which are most strongly related to job preference orientations, i.e., skill specificity and union density (Model C1, Table 3). The model provides additional support in favour of PRT by showing that union density alone accounts for the effect of skill specificity, while losing only a small portion of its initial strength (7%).

Both skill specificity and union density were then estimated individually, together with the country-level job quality predictor in one equation (Models C2 and C3, Table 3). This was done in order to assess whether the extent to which frameworks' explanatory powers are due to their capability to explain cross-national variation in job quality. Model C2 demonstrates that the skill specificity predictor again loses its effect and becomes statistically insignificant, even if job quality is controlled for. This indicates that any effect of skill specificity on job preference orientations is in fact fully mediated through job quality and disappears once this part of variance is removed. When an analogical operation is performed on union density (Model C3, Table 3), the outcome is rather different. The coefficient is substantially reduced (33%) but retains statistical significance. Even though the effect of union density is also mediated by job quality, this mediation seems to be only partial.

Finally, no major differences were observed when the effects of all three macro predictors were estimated together (Model C4, Table 3). The coefficient of union density loses approximately 27% of its initial effect but remains significant. On the contrary, the effect of skill specificity continues to be indistinguishable from zero. Taken together, the results from

all country-level models unanimously point to PRT as being a more plausible explanatory framework for cross-national variation in job preference orientations than VoC (Hypothesis 5).

Table 3. Effects of skill specificity and union density on job preference orientations, controlling for country-level job quality; multi-level regression.

	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	<b>C3</b>	<b>C4</b>
<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>Estimates</i>
Skill specificity	-0.03	-0.02		0.06
Union density	0.28 ***		0.20 **	0.22 ***
Job quality		0.27 ***	0.18 **	0.21 **
<b>Random effects variances</b>				
Individual level	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46
Country level	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
ICC	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03
N	25	25	25	25
Observations	15,163	15,163	15,163	15,163
Deviance	31,262.177	31,262.970	31,253.230	31,252.460

Note: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries. Controlled for individual-level characteristics (Table 1, Model A2).

These results fully support most of the job quality hypotheses formulated earlier. Not only is experience with intrinsic job quality crucial for the orientations of individual workers, differences in job quality at the societal level play a vital role in explaining cross-national variation in job preference orientations. The superior explanatory performance of PRT, compared to VoC, appears to stem from the fact that this framework more accurately points to the mechanisms that are primarily responsible for differences in the availability of intrinsic job quality rewards among countries. However, since the predictor retained substantial part of its initial effect size even after job quality at both levels was controlled for, it is possible that the impact of unionization on job preferences may be even more complex (see the Discussion part).

## **8 Discussion and conclusions**

The paper's main goal was to examine cross-national differences in job preference orientations from the relatively under-investigated perspective of job quality, i.e., good intrinsic quality of work. The effect of job quality and its institutional determinants underscored by VoC and PRT was investigated using the 2015 ISSP Work Orientation data, paired with a set of macro-level indicators. All models presented in the paper were fitted as multi-level regressions with country-specific random intercepts. Two methodological improvements to similarly designed previous studies were introduced: macro predictors were selected so that the number of countries fulfilled the requirements for a reliable estimation of country effects [37, 38], while the standardization of predictors made a direct comparison with their relative effect possible [39, 40].

Individual-level results showed that job rewards are related to job preference orientations in a value-reinforcing manner, i.e., workers tend to emphasize the importance of precisely those aspects of work they currently enjoy in their jobs. However, intrinsic job quality stood out as having the strongest association, outweighing the effect of good employment conditions such as high income or job security. That said, if a job offers autonomy, stimulating content and flexibility and is well-paid and secure, workers will be relatively more intrinsically, rather than extrinsically, oriented.

The analysis further demonstrated that the logic of reinforcement also extends to cross-national comparisons. National labour markets with a higher intrinsic quality of jobs were shown to have relatively more intrinsically oriented workers than societies with a lower quality of work. This explanation gained additional support when the plausibility of two comparative frameworks was examined. With respect to VoC, the average specificity of skill assets utilized in the production was found to be weakly related to job preference orientations and in direct contrast to what the theory expected. Furthermore, the relationship disappeared completely when controlling for either country-level job quality or the strength of organized labour. Indicators related to PRT were, on the other hand, more strongly and consistently related to workers' preferences. Extensive union representation was found to shift workers' preferences towards the intrinsic pole of the continuum, and this effect proved to be robust, even when skill specificity with job quality was included in the same model. The results

indicated that PRT is a more powerful explanatory framework for cross-national differences in job preference orientations than VoC, and that this is likely due to its superior capability to explain cross-national differences in job quality [25, 26].

The effect of unionization on job preferences is hardly surprising, especially given the well-documented association between strong union presence in a country and a better overall intrinsic work quality, be it in terms of autonomy, task discretion, or job control [24, 31, 32]. In turn, improvements in the quality of work achieved by unions are likely to be translated into workers' stronger intrinsic preferences, in line with the logic of value reinforcement. Moreover, unions may influence strength of intrinsic preferences also beyond their immediate effect on quality of work. If initiated by strong unions, policies aimed at improvement of job quality may contribute to a "shift in climate of ideas" [41] (p. 64) and create an ethos, whereby high priority is given to work quality and employees put specific emphasis on intrinsic aspects of jobs [5] (p. 282). However, it also seems possible to assume that both strong presence of unions and emphasis on intrinsic valuation of work can at least partly result from a common underlying factor of cultural nature, i.e. a general beliefs about positive value of work and its importance. Where such beliefs prevail, workers may be naturally inclined to perceive work as intrinsically important, while being at the same time more willing to organize for the sake of job quality and working conditions improvement.

This paper contributes to the comparative work orientations research in two respects. First, it provides evidence which interconnects with results from cross-national studies on job preferences and job quality [5, 15] with those on the intrinsic quality of work and its institutional determinants [5, 25, 32]. It illustrates the extent of interrelatedness between job preferences and job quality by showing that the cross-national distribution of both follows a similar theoretical logic to that of PRT. The results suggest that cross-national variation in job preferences does not follow an autonomous cultural logic. Instead, preferences of workers from different societies can only be comprehended and explained in the context of the material conditions of their work, its organization and quality.

The second way in which this study contributes to the body of knowledge on comparative work orientations is more substantial. Even though the evidence is not strong enough to claim



that extrinsic orientation is a result of degrading working conditions [11], it suggests that this type of orientation may indicate the absence of intrinsic job rewards known to be crucial for workers' well-being and satisfaction [7, 17, 30]. Similarly, stronger relative intrinsic orientation can be thought of as being an indication of the presence of such favourable aspects of work [5, 9], in addition to being a crucial factor of economies' innovation potential, competitiveness and sustainability [2].

Further research is recommended to examine the implications arising from the presented results. The first issue worthy of scientific attention concerns the potential existence of a mediating relationship between job quality and other types of macro determinants, which were previously demonstrated to affect job preferences. If country characteristics such as socioeconomic development, income inequality or generous welfare policies [14–16] are, in fact, correlated with the average quality of jobs, their effect might be partly mediated by this relationship. Another question relates to how job quality affects the social dimension of job preference orientations, which was beyond the scope of this study. Future research could examine whether value reinforcement also works in the case of this type of orientation and, if so, whether the strength of organized labour and/or dominant types of skill assets affect(s) conditions for the satisfaction of this preference orientation. Finally, researchers are encouraged to examine how job preferences are affected by changes in union membership over time. If reinforcement logic holds and decrease in unionization in the last decades was mirrored in erosion of job quality, the data should indicate devaluation of intrinsic rewards among workers and/or an increase in emphasis put on extrinsic preferences. Such strengthening of extrinsic preferences in the future can be further reinforced by intergenerational population replacement, as more recent cohorts seem to demonstrate stronger extrinsic valuation of work than their predecessors [51].

A few limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the presented results. The first issue concerns the cross-sectional character of the analysed data, which rules out any possibility for the causal interpretations of the results. However, they still provide valuable empirical evidence for the assessment of the presented theoretical arguments. The second limitation refers to the specific mode of the operationalization of job preference orientations used in this paper. The composite measure of extrinsic and intrinsic preferences captures the

relative differences between the two dimensions, i.e., the extent to which one is more or less important than the other. The reported results may therefore differ somewhat in comparison with other studies which use absolute measures instead<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> While there are differences when models are fitted separately for extrinsic and intrinsic dimension of preferences, the main results do not seem to be too sensitive to this alternative specification. At the individual level, job quality is negatively associated with extrinsic dimension of preferences and positively with the extrinsic ones. Country-level job quality and unionization both decrease the importance of extrinsic preferences and while their effect on intrinsic orientation is positive, it is not significant when the predictors are estimated alone.

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## Appendix A

Table A1. Exploratory factor analysis solution (three factors, principal axis factoring, promax rotation).

Job preferences	Factor loadings		
	Social orientation	Intrinsic orientation	Extrinsic orientation
High income	-0.19	-0.02	0.78
Advancement opportunities	0.02	0.15	0.51
Job security	0.10	-0.08	0.43
Work independently	-0.10	0.92	-0.12
Interesting job	0.11	0.42	0.08
Decide hours/days of work	0.03	0.41	0.02
Useful to society	0.85	-0.06	0.00
Help others	0.80	0.07	-0.07
<i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.58</i>	<i>0.57</i>

Table A2. Descriptive statistics.

	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Range
<i>Dependent variable</i>				
Job preference orientation score	18390	-0.10	0.75	8 (-4-4)
<i>Individual-level independent variables</i>				
Woman	18957	0.50	0.50	1 (0-1)
Age	18898	43.59	12.40	69 (17-86)
Education	18697	13.69	3.61	58 (0-58)
Part-time	18062	0.11	0.31	1 (0-1)
Self-employed	18644	0.12	0.33	1 (0-1)
Supervising	18529	0.27	0.44	1 (0-1)
Union membership	18566	0.26	0.44	1 (0-1)
Skill specificity	17791	1.17	0.68	3.63 (0.48-4.11)
Income	18318	2.82	1.09	4 (1-5)
Job security	18255	3.78	1.11	4 (1-5)
Job quality	17977	2.63	1.29	4 (0-4)
<i>Country-level independent variables</i>				
Job quality	18957	2.61	0.51	1.62 (1.74-3.35)
Median tenure	18957	6.70	1.47	5 (5-10)
Skill specificity 2	18957	1.19	0.12	0.46 (1.01-1.47)
Union density	18957	26.02	19.68	64.1 (4.5-68.6)
Bargaining coverage	18957	48.09	31.54	92.9 (5.6-98.5)



Table A3. Country characteristics.

Country	N	Job preference orientation	Job quality (0-4)	Median tenure (years)	Skill specificity (0.48 - 2.97)	Bargaining coverage (%)	Union density (%)
Austria	594	-0.06	2.91	7	1.10	98.00	27.40
Belgium	989	0.10	2.85	8	1.10	96.00	54.20
Croatia	221	-0.48	2.08	8	1.17	48.20	26.70
Czechia	670	-0.11	2.54	6	1.29	46.30	12.00
Denmark	543	0.44	3.31	6	1.01	84.00	68.60
Estonia	611	-0.15	2.38	6	1.33	18.60	4.50
Finland	528	0.32	3.15	10	1.17	89.30	66.50
France	538	-0.11	2.77	8	1.10	98.50	7.90
Germany	780	0.11	3.18	8	1.16	56.80	17.60
Hungary	515	-0.46	1.95	6	1.34	22.80	9.40
Israel	514	-0.18	2.61	6	1.06	26.10	25.00
Japan	667	-0.29	1.81	10	1.08	16.80	17.40
Latvia	524	-0.08	2.36	5	1.36	14.80	12.60
Lithuania	437	-0.28	2.31	6	1.33	7.10	7.90
Norway	718	0.21	3.11	6	1.09	67.00	52.50
Poland	695	-0.30	1.80	5	1.47	17.20	12.10
Russia	637	-0.44	1.76	6	1.27	22.80	30.50
Slovakia	459	-0.20	2.41	6	1.24	24.40	11.20
Slovenia	442	0.05	2.92	10	1.31	67.50	25.10
Spain	760	-0.14	2.54	7	1.35	76.90	13.90
Sweden	600	0.25	3.19	6	1.05	90.00	67.00
Switzerland	693	0.26	3.35	6	1.08	49.20	15.70
Turkey	375	-0.33	1.74	5	1.23	5.60	8.00

United Kingdom	806	-0.18	2.87	6	1.12	27.90	24.70
United States	847	-0.40	3.00	5	1.18	11.80	10.60

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**Cultural productivism and public support for the universal basic income from  
a cross-national perspective**

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## Cultural productivism and public support for the universal basic income from a cross-national perspective

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### ABSTRACT

It has been hypothesized that the capacity of universal basic income (UBI) to attract wider public support is impaired by the strength of productivist cultural norms and values, common to the majority of developed societies. The paper contributes to literature on attitudes towards UBI by empirically investigating this hypothesis from a multi-level cross-national perspective, using the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 8 data on UBI support for 23 countries. It seeks to determine whether and to what extent the strength of cultural productivism can explain cross-national variation in public support for the implementation of UBI. Two main findings are reported. First, the results demonstrate that the public are less susceptible to supporting UBI in countries where average employment commitment is higher. Second, the results show that, even though employment commitment is a strong predictor of cross-national variation in the public support for UBI, the effect is surpassed and explained by GDP, which itself is negatively related to the outcome. The study argues that the capacity of UBI to appeal to the general public is limited by the prosperity of post-industrial societies, rather than by the cultural attachment of their populations to paid work.


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### Introduction

In recent years, there has been renewed public and media interest in universal basic income (UBI). UBI has been debated as an alternative to post-war welfare institutions in the era when employment no longer secures

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financial security while human labour is under increasing risk of replacement by artificial intelligence (van der Veen and Groot 2000). Public and media attention reached its peak between 2016 and 2018 when a campaign in Switzerland resulted in an unsuccessful referendum about the proposal, and the Finnish government launched an experiment with UBI paid to a sample of jobseekers (De Wispelaere 2016). Systematic attention has also been paid to UBI in academia (for an overview, see Widerquist *et al.* 2013). Researchers have investigated a wide range of UBI-related topics, including the proposal's normative justifications (e.g. Van Parijs 1992), the technical aspects of implementation as well as the potential effects on the economy and society (see Gilroy *et al.* 2013; Sommer 2016; Pereira 2017).

A growing research area investigates the feasibility of UBI with respect to public support for its implementation (Andersson and Kangas 2005; Bay and Pedersen 2006; Parolin and Siöland 2020; Vlandas 2019). However, systematic attention has not yet been paid to one ideological factor traditionally perceived as hindering the proposal's public acceptance. At a theoretical level, scholars have argued that the public are unlikely to find UBI normatively legitimate and pointed to the contrast between the non-productivist nature of its underlying principles and the productivist normative foundations of modern societies (van der Veen 1991; Goodin 2001; Offe 2001; Bauman 2005; De Wispelaere and Noguera 2012). According to the argument, citizens of modern work-societies, socialized into beliefs about the individual and collective desirability of paid work (Offe 1992), are unlikely to support a welfare reform which explicitly assumes the decoupling of income and welfare entitlements from income-earning activities (Offe *et al.* 1996).

But is the strength of productivist cultural norms and values really a decisive factor which impairs support for the implementation of UBI? Are societies where paid work carries a stronger cultural importance less prone to being sympathetic towards UBI? If so, does cultural productivism explain the support as the most important factor, independently of other macro-characteristics associated with pro-welfare attitudes?

The article aims to contribute to welfare attitudes research by empirically examining these questions from a multi-level cross-national perspective, using the ESS Round 8 data on 23 developed societies. While not the first analysis of ESS data on public support for UBI, the paper complements existing studies (see Parolin and Siöland 2020; Vlandas 2019) with its specific focus on cultural productivism hypothesis. The paper proceeds as follows. The first part reviews the theoretical argument about why the strength of productivist cultural norms and values may



interfere with the public's support for UBI, putting it in the context of evidence from welfare attitudes research. It then discusses cultural productivism and argues for a distinction between its normative and expressive dimensions. Alternative explanations for cross-national variation in support of UBI are considered next. The analytical part begins with a formulation of hypotheses and a description of data, together with measures of variables. Descriptive results are presented first, followed by multi-variate results from mixed-effects logistic models with country-level random intercepts. The study is concluded by a discussion of the results in light of relevant theories.

## Literature review

### *Cultural productivism and public support for the implementation of UBI*

UBI is generally defined 'an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement' (Van Parijs 2004, 8). The main feature which distinguishes UBI from existing welfare arrangements is the non-productivist nature<sup>1</sup> of its underlying principles. While essentially all modern welfare states are productivist, in the sense that they are concerned with ensuring the smooth supply of labour to productive sectors of the economy (Goodin 2001) and assume that all able-bodied persons should be under economic compulsion to perform paid work (van der Veen 1991), UBI asserts a decoupling of income entitlements from income-earning activities (Offe *et al.* 1996). Such a decoupling has been advocated as just and necessary for the maintenance of financial security in precarious economic contexts (van der Veen and Groot 2000). On the other hand, it has been recognized as potentially problematic with respect to UBI's feasibility. Since productivist norms are considered to characterize modern societies as such, it has been hypothesized that the general public may perceive a non-productivist UBI proposal as ideologically illegitimate (Offe 2001; Bauman 2005; De Wispelaere and Noguera 2012). Offe (2001) argues that individuals' expectations have been so fundamentally shaped by hegemonic ideas about the normality of productive activities and the anomalousness of unearned benefits,

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<sup>1</sup>Some versions of UBI advocated by the political right (e.g., Friedman 1968) may actually be perceived as productivist. These typically assume below-subsistence payments and the abolishment of existing social transfers (De Wispelaere 2016), thus reducing effective marginal tax rates and incentivizing low-paid employment (Gorz 1999). This seems unlikely to be the case in the present study; the UBI conceptualization by ESS assumes the grant covers 'essential living costs' and replaces 'many' but not all benefits.

that the work-centred belief system has become largely immune to any revision attempts. In a similar fashion, De Wispelaere and Noguera (2012) assert that a widely shared belief that paid work is a core value and obligation and that benefits should be restricted to those who deserve them limits UBI's capacity to generate positive reactions among the general public.

Despite these concerns, prior representative polls have revealed that UBI enjoys substantial, albeit varying degrees of, public support in different national contexts.<sup>2</sup> In 2018, 48% of Americans favoured UBI to compensate workers who had lost jobs due to advances in artificial intelligence (Gallup Inc. and Northeastern University 2018). Similarly, 49% of Britons in 2017 said they would support the UK government in introducing UBI (Ipsos MORI 2017). Results from Scandinavian countries showed that 69% of Finns in 2015 (Kela 2016, 9), 66% of Norwegians in 2003 (Bay and Pedersen 2006) and 46% of Swedes in 2001 (Andersson and Kangas 2005) supported the idea of UBI.

The existing studies have yet to explore whether and to what extent public support for UBI can be related to the strength of productivist cultural norms and values. Some studies have examined the effect of individuals' perception of deservingness of needy groups. Arguably, individuals who believe that neediness is a result of personal failure should also value hard work and effort. Andersson and Kangas (2005) reported that individual blame for unemployment and poverty was the only factor which explained the variance in attitudes concerning UBI in both Sweden and Finland. Bay and Pedersen (2006) also showed that Norwegians who believed that the poor themselves are to be blamed for their situation were less likely to sympathize with UBI.

Useful information can be inferred from studies investigating the impact of productivist norms on preferences for welfare policies based on opposite principles, such as conditionality and targeting. In a Dutch study, Jeene *et al.* (2013) found that the work ethic measured at the individual level increased the emphasis on deservingness criteria for disability pension recipients. Such a relationship was also found with respect to preferences for the design of unemployment benefits. In a study of 24 European countries, Reeskens and van Oorschot (2013) showed that individuals living in societies where economic productivity is seen as important have stronger preferences for a meritocratic system of

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<sup>2</sup>Comparability of those polls is limited due to different wording of the UBI question (see Online Appendix A, Table A1 for an overview).

unemployment benefits, which disproportionately rewards those who contribute to the production of welfare.

### *Dimensions of productivism*

Productivist cultural norms and values have been claimed to characterize virtually all modern societies so profoundly that scholars refer to these as waged-work societies (Offe 1992; Bauman 2005). If exaggerated, this argumentation would imply that the implementation of UBI is equally unfeasible in any developed society. However, cross-national work orientation research has demonstrated that modern societies differ greatly with respect to the strength of various work-related attitudes (Gesthuizen and Verbakel 2011; Stam *et al.* 2013; Turunen and Nätti 2017).

This paper narrows its focus to two dimensions of work orientations, which reflect the main types of the cultural importance of work beyond its manifest income-producing function. If aggregated at the level of countries, they can be used to characterize the strength of the productivist cultural ethos of entire societies.

The first dimension of cultural productivism reflects the degree to which work is considered to be normatively important, i.e. valued as a moral obligation to which individuals are subjected (Furåker 2012). This type of importance corresponds to the sociological category of the work ethic, that is, a conviction that work is primarily a moral duty and not a matter of personal motives, preferences or values (Stam *et al.* 2013). The work ethic is based on values such as hard work, self-denial and avoidance of idleness (Highhouse *et al.* 2010). Previous research has shown that there is a substantial cross-national variation in the work ethic across societies. In the European context, a stronger work ethic was found in countries with a Muslim and Orthodox religious heritage and in societies with a communist past, while a weaker work ethic was found in economically advanced societies as well as in those with generous welfare states (Stam *et al.* 2013).

The second dimension of productivism reflects the degree to which work is expressively important, i.e. valued for beneficial intrinsic properties which motivate the willingness to engage in productive activities. This dimension can be captured by the concept of employment commitment, established in work orientations research. The concept measures people's willingness to work by asking whether they would continue working even if the financial need to work was removed (Furåker 2012). Employment commitment reflects the essence of a new type of work ethic of self-expression which emphasizes values of commitment, personal

growth and self-indulgence (Highhouse *et al.* 2010) and which has been considered to replace the traditional work ethic of duty in post-industrial societies (Méda and Vendramin 2017). Comparative research has found a stronger employment commitment in economically prosperous countries (Turunen and Nätti 2017), country contexts with generous welfare benefits (Esser 2005), and high and activating social spending (van der Wel and Halvorsen 2015).

### *Alternative explanations*

Earlier analyses of the ESS data indicated that stronger support for UBI is found in countries with lower social spending (Parolin and Siöland 2020) and less generous welfare regimes (Vlandas 2019), suggesting that Europeans welcome the scheme mainly as a way to improve their welfare standards (Meuleman 2018). Hence, individuals' preferences for UBI may be also shaped by factors associated with general pro-welfare attitudes.

First, the cross-national variation in UBI support could reflect compositional differences between countries with respect to social categories prone to supporting public welfare. Such categories comprise individuals with utilitarian self-interest in welfare programmes, and/or those whose support reflects an ideological position. Women, young adults, individuals with low skills and income, and the unemployed are typically recognized among the supportive classes. From an ideological perspective, personal values such as egalitarian ideology and trust have been identified among the attitudinal covariates of public welfare support (compare Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003; Gelissen 2008; Dallinger 2010).

Second, support for UBI may be affected by the welfare institutions that are currently in place. Redistributive policies are typically less advocated in countries with high welfare spending, where high tax burdens discourage citizens from supporting further redistribution (Gelissen 2008; Pfeifer 2009). On the other hand, demand for redistribution is higher in societies with higher income inequalities (Midtbø 2018).

Third, cultural context could matter too. Support for universalistic benefits in general requires cultural characteristics, such as trust and a commitment to egalitarian values (Bay and Pedersen 2006). High trusting countries tend to be more supportive of public welfare (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003), while ideologically egalitarian societies are less conditional in terms of their solidarity with those in need (van Oorschot 2006).

Fourth, public support for UBI can also be affected by business cycle phases. Support for redistribution and sympathy for needy groups are

typically higher when unemployment increases and lower in times of economic prosperity (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003; Pfeifer 2009; Dallingier 2010).

Finally, cross-national variation in support of UBI can also reflect differences in socio-economic development. Wealthy countries have a different composition of population in terms of education, family patterns or life expectancy (Midtbø 2018), as well as with respect to the value orientations of their citizens, who tend to prioritize autonomy and self-expression over material security (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

### Contribution, aim, hypotheses

Although cultural discourses about the importance of paid work have been repeatedly considered to pose a challenge for UBI's public acceptance, the argument has been justified mainly at the theoretical level. This paper aims to contribute to welfare attitudes research by empirically examining the argument from a multi-level cross-national perspective. Two general hypotheses are formulated.

If the theoretical logic of the argument holds, support for UBI should be lower in countries where productivist norms and values are more pronounced (H1). Since there are two different dimensions to the cultural importance of work, there are also two alternative versions of this hypothesis. The first version expects to find weaker support for UBI in countries where the social norm to work is high, i.e. in societies with a stronger work ethic (H1a). The second version expects to find lower UBI support in countries where the expressive importance of work is high, i.e. in societies characterized by a stronger employment commitment (H1b).

The second hypothesis investigates the relative strength and robustness of the assumed relationship (H2). If the main obstacle preventing UBI from gaining substantial popular support is cultural productivism, one should expect the effect to be relatively stronger than the effects of other macro-covariates associated with the public's support for welfare and redistribution (H2a). If cultural productivism explains attitudes towards UBI as a factor *sui generis*, the effect is also expected to be sustained when these characteristics are controlled for (H2b).

### Data

The paper uses survey data from the ESS Round 8 (ESS 2016). The module was fielded in 2016/2017 and addressed to nationally representative

samples of the following 23 countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Responses with missing values were list-wise deleted and the pooled sample used in the analysis consisted of 39,016 individuals clustered within 23 countries.

## Method

Given the hierarchical structure of the data and the multi-level nature of the research problem, the models were estimated as mixed-effects logistic regressions with country-specific random intercepts. To facilitate the interpretation of results, all predictors were grand-mean centred (Enders and Tofighi 2007). Additionally, quantitative variables were standardized by twice their standard deviation, to allow for direct comparison of their relative effect sizes (Gelman 2008).

## Measures of variables

### *Dependent variable*

Respondents' support for the implementation of UBI in their country was used as a dependent variable. A short introductory paragraph explaining the basic principles of UBI was presented first, followed by a question investigating the degree of support for the scheme. The definition of UBI provided to the respondents is specific and makes reference to both its benefits and associated costs. One can thus expect to obtain more realistic estimates of respondents' support for UBI, which was found to be sensitive to the phrasing and framing of the question (Bay and Pedersen 2006; Ipsos MORI 2017). The wording of the question was as follows:

Some countries are [...] talking about introducing a basic income scheme. [...] A basic income scheme includes all of the following:

- The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs
- It replaces many other social benefits
- The purpose is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living
- Everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether or not they are working

- People also keep the money they earn from work or other sources
- This scheme is paid for by taxes

Overall, would you be against or in favour of having this scheme in [your] country?

Respondents could express their support on a 1–4 scale anchored according to the variants ‘Strongly against’ (value 1) and ‘Strongly in favour’ (value 4). Responses were recoded into a binary variable with the value 1 assigned to respondents supporting the implementation of UBI and the value 0 assigned to those who were against.

### *Main country-level predictors*

The first predictor of cultural productivism captures the normative importance of work in a country, measured as the average work ethic. The index is based on a battery of items from the 2008/2009 wave of the European Values Study (EVS 2015). For Israel, the indicator was aggregated from the 1999/2004 wave of the World Value Study (WVS 2015). Although relatively older, such attitudinal data tend to be rather stable over time and can thus still appropriately capture the work ethic. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with five statements: (a) ‘In order to fully develop your talents, you need to have a job’; (b) ‘It is humiliating to receive money without having to work for it’; (c) ‘People who do not work become lazy’; (d) ‘Work is a duty towards society’; and (e) ‘Work should always come first, even if it means less spare time’. The original response scale was anchored according to the variants ‘Strongly agree’ (value 1) and ‘Strongly disagree’ (value 5). Reverse-coded responses were first averaged at the individual level (Cronbach’s alpha 0.71) and aggregated at the country level using survey weights. The construct’s theoretic range was between 1 and 5, with higher values indicating a stronger average work ethic of a country.

The second predictor captures the strength of the expressive evaluation of work in a country, measured as averaged employment commitment. The measure is based on a two-item indicator of work centrality, aggregated from International Social Survey Work Orientation data from 2015 or from the latest available wave (ISSP Research Group 2017). It is measured in terms of agreement with two statements: (a) ‘I would enjoy paid work, even if I did not need the money’; (b) ‘Work is just a way of earning money – nothing more’. Response scales for both items ranged from ‘Agree strongly’ (value 1) to ‘Disagree strongly’ (value 5). The scales were first harmonized, then the summative scores were averaged at the

country level by applying survey weights. The values of the composite scale ranged between 1 and 5, increasing with a higher average employment commitment in a country.

### *Individual-level controls*

Demographic and socio-structural variables were included as controls for compositional differences in utilitarian self-interest in public welfare. Gender is measured with a dummy variable, where the value 1 is assigned to women and the value 0 is assigned to men. Age is measured in years with a linear and a quadratic term, to capture the potential nonlinearities of its effect. Educational attainment is measured as years of completed formal education. Income is measured subjectively, as a feeling about the household's income expressed on a reverse-coded 1–4 scale. The value 1 corresponds to the response variant 'Very difficult on present income' and the value 4 stands for 'Living comfortably on present income'. Employment status is captured with a set of three dummies based on respondents' main activity seven days prior to the survey. These indicate whether respondents were in paid employment, unemployed or not active in the labour force. For each, the value 1 was given to those who reported the given activity, and 0 otherwise.

Two value orientations associated with support for public welfare were controlled for as well. A measure of interpersonal trust was constructed as the average agreement with three statements regarding whether people: (a) can be trusted, (b) try to take advantage of others and (c) are helpful most of the time. The composite scale ranges between 0 and 10, increasing in the direction of higher trust (Cronbach's alpha 0.76). The measure for egalitarianism is based on agreement with the statement 'For a fair society, differences in the standard of living should be small', indicated on a 1–5 scale. Responses were reverse-coded, so that higher values indicate a higher egalitarian orientation. The value 5 corresponds to the category 'Agree strongly' and the value 1 to the variant 'Disagree strongly'.

### *Country-level controls*

Countries' cultural, institutional and socio-economic characteristics considered to affect welfare preferences were also included as controls. Where possible, the values of covariates were lagged by one year, i.e. they correspond to 2015 or the latest available year. Structural macro-characteristics



typically require time to manifest and impact individual attitudes and behaviours (see Schlueter *et al.* 2013, 673).

The first two macro-controls focus on the national cultural context which is relevant to the support for universalistic benefits: aggregated interpersonal trust and egalitarianism. Both measures are based on corresponding individual-level variables from ESS data, weighted and averaged at the country level.

Total social protection expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) obtained from International Labour Organization's World Social Protection Report 2017–19 (ILO 2017) is used as an indicator of welfare generosity. Gini index of income inequality is used as a proxy for the extent of redistribution. Harmonized unemployment rate is indicative of a business cycle phase and GDP per head in terms of constant prices and purchasing power parities (currency USD) is included to control for differences in socio-economic development. All three measures were obtained from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2019).

## Results

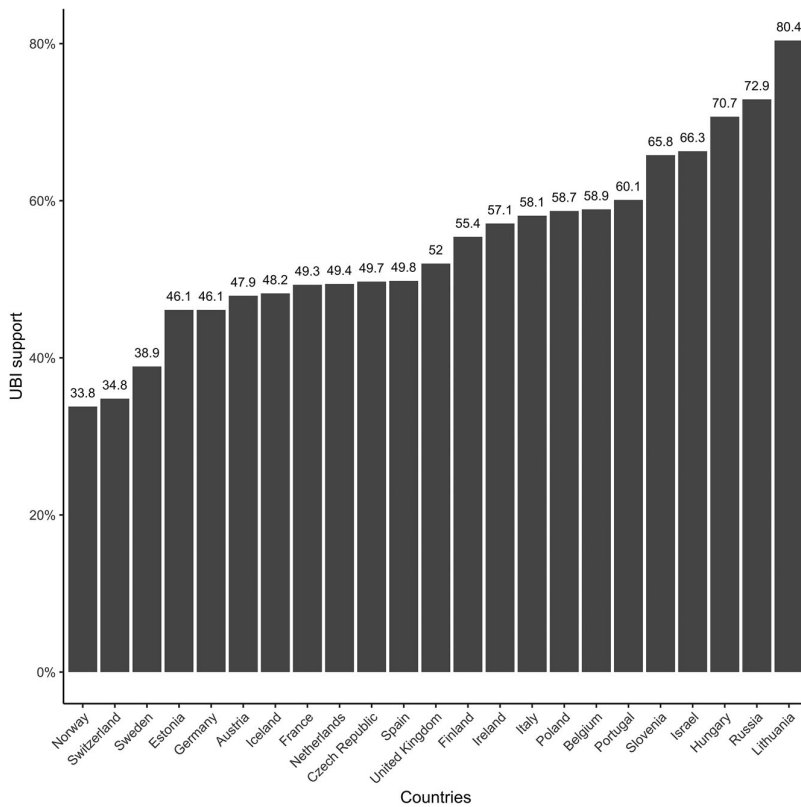
### Country differences

Figure 1 shows the weighted proportions of individuals who are in favour of implementing a UBI scheme in their country. Relatively high levels of support are found in the majority of countries, albeit there is a substantial cross-national variation. UBI is supported by more than half of the population in 11 countries, while the majority of citizens in 12 countries are against implementation. Countries with the highest share of those in favour are Lithuania, Russia and Hungary. UBI implementation is most strongly opposed in Norway, Switzerland and Sweden.

Figure 2 suggests that the two types of work importance are related to support for UBI in opposite directions. Israel, Hungary and Portugal, which score highest on the normative dimension of work importance, are all countries with above 50% support for UBI. On the other hand, the expressive dimension of work importance is clearly dominated by countries where the majority reject the scheme, i.e. by Norway, Iceland and Sweden.

### Multi-variate results

A series of multi-level logistic regressions was fitted to test the effect of the cultural importance of paid work on support for UBI. A null model

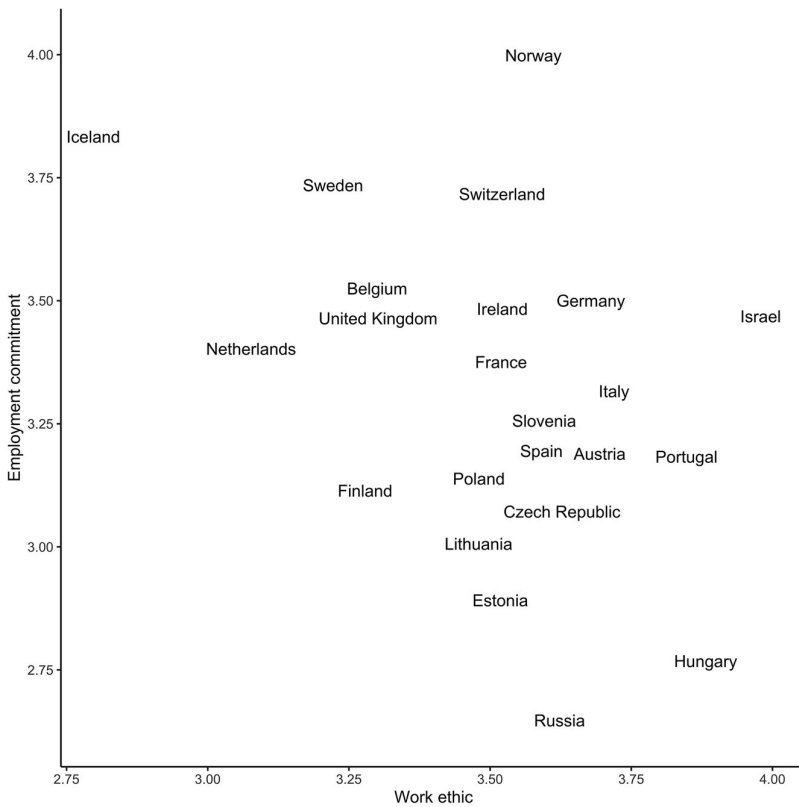


**Figure 1.** Support for the implementation of UBI in the 23 analysed countries (own calculations based on ESS 2016).

containing only random intercepts was estimated first (A1). According to the intra-class correlation (ICC), 7% of the overall variance in UBI support occurs due to respondents' country-belonging, rather than due to their individual characteristics.

Next, a model including individual-level controls was estimated (A2). With respect to socio-structural variables, individuals supportive of the implementation of UBI are, *ceteris paribus*, younger<sup>3</sup>, come from less affluent households and/or have a weaker labour market attachment. Looking at the value orientations, the results show that UBI is more likely to find support among egalitarian respondents and those who trust their fellow citizens. All in all, the model shows that the individual

<sup>3</sup>Although the quadratic term is significant and positive, conversion to unstandardized metric reveals that the effect changes from positive to negative only at 94 years of age.



**Figure 2.** Work ethic and employment commitment in the 23 analysed countries (own calculations based on EVS 2015; WVS 2015; ESS 2016; ISSP Research Group 2017).

characteristics associated with UBI support are similar to the factors related to general pro-welfare attitudes (Table 1).

In the next step, two country-level predictors of cultural productivism were added to the model containing individual-level controls, first alone, then together in one model. Model B1 shows that the effect of work's normative importance is surprisingly positive, albeit relatively weak and insignificant. Nor does it have any substantial explanatory power, as the unchanged ICC value indicates. The results thus provide no evidence in support of H1a. The average strength of the normative importance of work does not seem to affect cross-national variation in preferences for UBI.

The opposite is true for the expressive dimension of work's cultural importance. Its significant effect is stronger and negative (B2) and does

**Table 1.** Effects of individual-level characteristics on support for UBI; multi-level logistic regression.

Individual-level predictors	A1		A2	
	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE
Intercept	0.17	0.10	0.17	0.10
Woman (ref. man)			-0.03	0.02
Age			-0.73 ***	0.13
Age squared			0.39 **	0.14
Education			-0.00	0.02
Income			-0.28 ***	0.02
Not in labour force (ref. working)			0.10 ***	0.03
Unemployed (ref. working)			0.24 ***	0.05
Egalitarianism			0.53 ***	0.02
Trust			0.11 ***	0.02
Random effects variances				
Individual level	3.29		3.29	
Country level	0.24		0.20	
ICC	0.07		0.06	
N	23		23	
Observations	39,016		39,016	
Deviance	52,023.605		50,946.215	

Note: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

SE = standard error; ref. = reference category; ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries.

not change even when the effects of both predictors are estimated together (B3). It also eliminates more than half of the initial share of variance at the country level. The results suggest that citizens living in countries where work is highly expressively valued, i.e. where workers are, on average, more committed to paid work, are less likely to support the implementation of UBI. A higher expressive evaluation of work in a country seems to hinder UBI's capacity to generate more positive reactions among the general public as expected by H1b (Table 2).

How strong is this effect, relatively speaking, compared to the effects of other relevant macro-covariates on UBI support? To address H2a, six country-level controls were included one by one in the model containing only individual predictors. Relative sizes of their effects were then compared with the effect of the employment commitment predictor from a similar model (B2). Table 3 shows that the public's sympathy with UBI is lower in high trusting countries (C1), countries with compressed income structures (C4) and affluent societies (C6). Neither the strength of aggregated egalitarianism (C2), social protection expenditures (C3) nor unemployment (C5) was found to explain country differences in support for UBI. When compared to the effect of employment commitment predictor, it is only the effect of GDP which is relatively stronger. On the other hand, its explanatory power, as indicated by a reduction in the initial ICC, is roughly similar. The results show that, although

**Table 2.** Effects of main country-level predictors on support for UBI; multi-level logistic regression.

Country-level predictors	B1		B2		B3	
	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE
Work ethic	0.27	0.16			0.08	0.14
Employment commitment			-0.57 ***	0.14	-0.54 ***	0.15
Random effects variances						
Individual level	3.29		3.29		3.29	
Country level	0.18		0.12		0.11	
ICC	0.05		0.03		0.03	
N	23		23		23	
Observations	39,016		39,016		39,016	
Deviance	50,943.656		50,933.145		50,932.851	

Note: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . SE = standard error; ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries.

Controlled for individual-level characteristics (Table 1, Model A2).

the cultural evaluation of work is among the most influential macro-factors associated with UBI support, it is not the single most important factor.

Finally, the robustness of the negative relationship between the expressive cultural importance of work and UBI support was put to a test (H2b). Six country-level controls from Models C1-C6 were individually added to the model including individual-level controls, together with the employment commitment predictor (i.e. B2). Since the work ethic predictor was not found to be related to the outcome, it has been omitted from this step of the analysis. Table 4 shows that the negative relationship between the expressive evaluation of work and UBI support holds, even when cultural context (D1-D2), social expenditures (D3), income inequalities (D4) and unemployment (D5) are controlled for. The effect loses a substantial part of its strength and becomes insignificant only when socio-economic development is accounted for (D6). Not only is GDP the strongest macro-predictor related to UBI support, the findings suggest that it is also a mediating factor which simultaneously explains the public's expressive evaluation of work.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, GDP also explains away the effects of the other two significant macro-predictors, i.e. trust and inequality, when added as a control to Models C1 and C4 (models not reported).

To conclude, the results provide mixed evidence regarding the productivist hypothesis. While the cultural importance of work is undoubtedly a factor that limits UBI's potential to attract stronger popular support,

<sup>4</sup>Compare with figures D1 and D2 in the Online Appendix D, which show country-level relationships between public support for UBI and employment commitment, and UBI support and GDP.

**Table 3.** Effects of country-level controls on support for UBI; multi-level logistic regression.

Country-level predictors	C1		C2		C3		C4		C5		C6	
	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE
Trust	-0.53 ***	0.14										
Egalitarianism			0.22	0.18								
Social protection expenditures					-0.32	0.18						
Gini index							0.36 *	0.17				
Unemployment rate									0.10	0.19		
GDP per head												
Random effects variances												
Individual level	3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29	
Country level	0.13		0.19		0.18		0.17		0.20		0.11	
ICC	0.04		0.06		0.05		0.05		0.06		0.03	
N	23		23		23		23		23		23	
Observations	39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016	
Deviance	50,935.328		50,944.832		50,943.303		50,941.990		50,945.953		50,931.933	

Notes: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . SE = standard error; ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries. Controlled for individual-level characteristics (Table 1, Model A2).

**Table 4.** Effect of employment commitment on support for UBI, controlling for country-level characteristics; multi-level logistic regression.

Country-level predictors	D1		D2		D3		D4		D5		D6	
	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE	Log-odds	SE
Employment commitment	-0.39 *	0.17	-0.57 ***	0.13	-0.53 ***	0.13	-0.51 ***	0.14	-0.58 ***	0.14	-0.28	0.21
Trust	-0.27	0.17										
Egalitarianism			0.20	0.14								
Social protection expenditures					-0.21	0.14						
Gini index							0.17	0.15	-0.03	0.14		
Unemployment rate												
GDP per head												
Random effects variances												
Individual level	3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29	
Country level	0.10		0.10		0.10		0.11		0.12		0.10	
ICC	0.03		0.03		0.03		0.03		0.03		0.03	
N	23		23		23		23		23		23	
Observations	39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016		39,016	
Deviance	50,930.631		50,931.005		50,930.978		50,931.813		50,933.113		50,930.274	

Notes: Statistical significance = \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . SE = standard error; ICC = intra-class correlation; N = number of countries. Controlled for individual-level characteristics (Table 1, Model A2).

cross-national variation in UBI support seems to be primarily driven by countries' economic affluence.

Two sensitivity checks were conducted to test reliability of the findings. First, to assess whether a significance assessment of country effects was not affected by a relatively low number of countries, country-level models were estimated as Bayesian with weakly informative priors, since they deliver more robust estimates in small-C cases (Bryan and Jenkins 2016). The results of this check were almost identical to those reported (see Online Appendix B). Next, the models were re-fitted without Switzerland, where viewpoints on UBI may be more salient and fixed, as a result of the unsuccessful referendum from 2015. The only difference concerned the negative effect of social expenditures, which became statistically significant. The main findings remained unaffected (see Online Appendix C).

## Discussion and conclusions

The main aim of this paper was to contribute to comparative welfare attitudes research by examining the hypothesis about the negative impact of productivist cultural norms and values on public support for the implementation of UBI. The strength of cultural discourses about the importance of paid work has been traditionally hypothesized to impair UBI's capacity to attract wider public support. However, this claim has been justified mainly in the theoretical realm. The paper analysed the 2016 ESS Round 8 data on 23 European societies and empirically explored the question from a multi-level cross-national perspective. There were two main findings.

First, the results demonstrated that respondents living in societies where paid work has a stronger cultural significance are less susceptible towards supporting the implementation of UBI. However, it was not the strength of the normative importance of work, traditionally understood as the work ethic, which was found to affect the preferences. The societies more sceptical with regard to UBI were those where work matters expressively, i.e. where people's average commitment to employment was higher.

Second, the paper sought to determine how the cultural importance of work as an explanatory factor of UBI preferences compare with other country characteristics associated with pro-welfare attitudes. The results showed that, even though employment commitment is a strong predictor of public support for UBI, its effect is, in terms of relative size, surpassed by that of GDP, itself negatively related to the outcome. GDP was also the only predictor which explained away the effect of employment



commitment when both were estimated in one model. In other words, not only are citizens of affluent societies more sceptical about UBI, this affluence is also likely a factor which explains their stronger expressive evaluation of work. According to the results, UBI's capacity to appeal to the general public seems to be limited by the prosperity of post-industrial societies, rather than the cultural attachment of their population to paid work.

A plausible explanation for why socio-economic development simultaneously limits citizens' sympathies for UBI and increases their expressive evaluation of work can be offered by modernization theory. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) assert that, as the prosperity of post-industrial societies increases, individuals tend to prioritize self-expression goals and place a lesser focus on issues of material survival. Since affluent societies have achieved relative material prosperity by other means, UBI may appear to be redundant. Citizens of developed welfare states may also perceive UBI as insufficiently flat, more so if the question specifies that it entails the partial replacement of welfare programmes that currently exist. A stronger expressive evaluation of work is also likely to be brought about by restructuring the labour market brought about by post-industrialization. As new better paid, more autonomous, and generally more desirable forms of immaterial labour proliferate in the service sector of the economy, individuals' opportunities to satisfy their self-expression needs in work become more plentiful (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Hence, the average willingness to work is likely to increase too. This explanation is also in line with the results from work orientation research, where it has been demonstrated that GDP is strongly related to employment commitment (Turunen and Nätti 2017), and that workers' self-expressive work values are impacted by satisfaction of their material needs and/or of their positive experiences with beneficial intrinsic properties of work (Gallie 2007).

The findings are however not without limitations. The first issue concerns the cross-sectional character of the ESS data, which means that the results cannot be interpreted in causal terms. The second issue concerns the reliability of the macro-predictors of cultural productivism. Since ESS data include no measures of work orientations, they had to be aggregated from other earlier sources and could only be used at the level of countries.

Further research is needed to assess the extent to which the relationship between the public's preference for UBI and the cultural importance of work is mediated by socio-economic development. Researchers could

shed more light on the issue by looking at the dynamics of the relationship at the individual level, that is, by examining how individuals' work attitudes impact their propensity to support UBI. Researchers could also examine the issue by investigating preferences for other non-productivist welfare policies. If the explanation offered in the paper holds, support for these policies too should be indirectly related to employment commitment through socio-economic development. Failure to observe such association would, on the other hand, provide additional support to the legitimacy of concerns regarding UBI's specifically problematic relationship with cultural discourses about the importance of paid work.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes on contributors

*Michal Kozák* is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Bergen, Norway. His dissertation focuses on work orientations from a comparative perspective.

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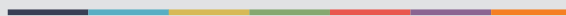
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