

Work, Migration & Tech
**Who Moves, Who Stays, and
Who Works Across Border?**

JELENA ŠAPIĆ





Hello everyone!

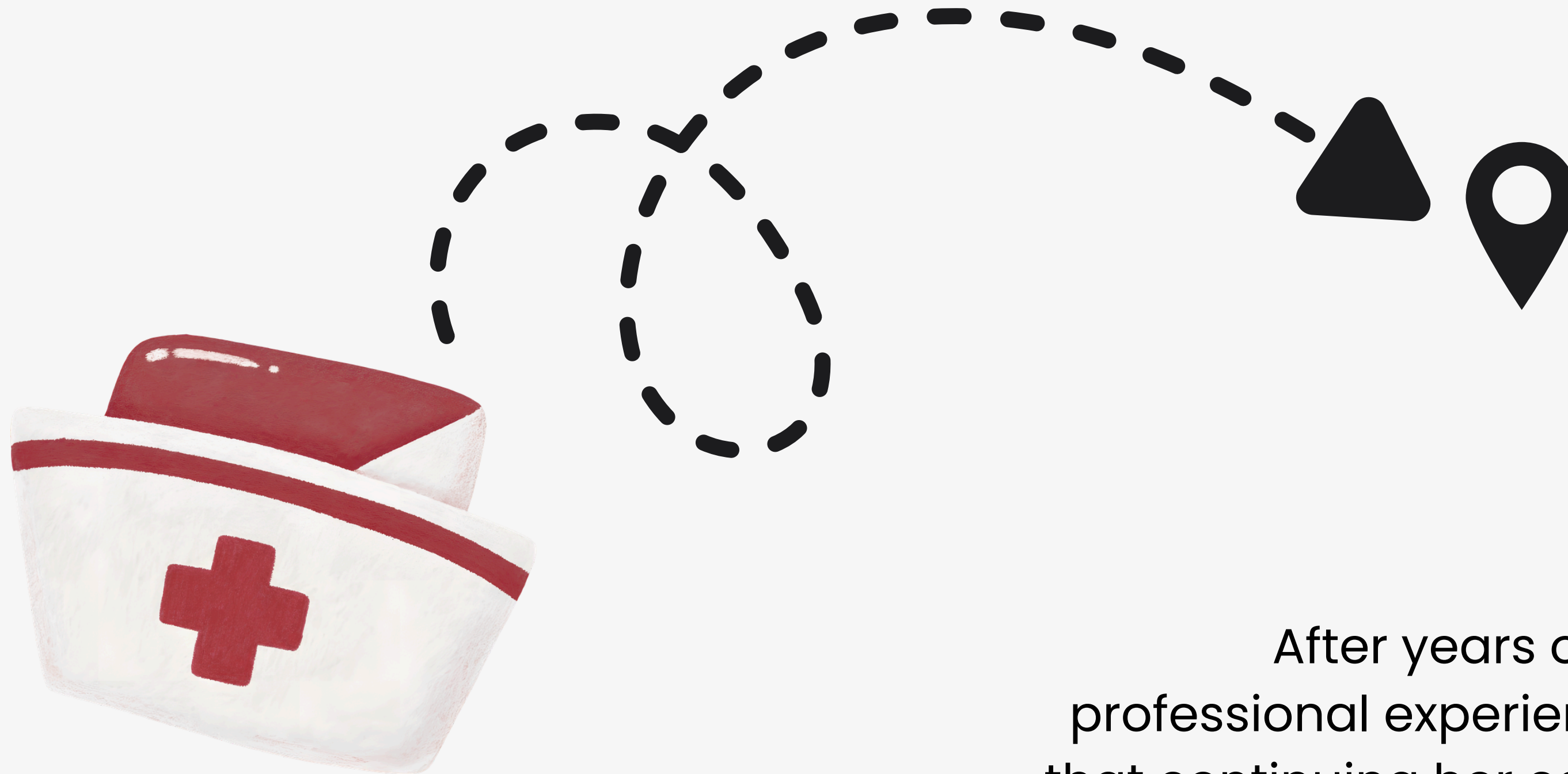
I question our current digital realms with curiosity and hope for humanity.

I am interested in the social impacts of digital disruptions and human-computer interactions.

PhD candidate in ethnology and anthropology

Reshaping Work | Labor Tech Research Network |
PersonalData.io | Serbian AI Society |
Digital Stardust



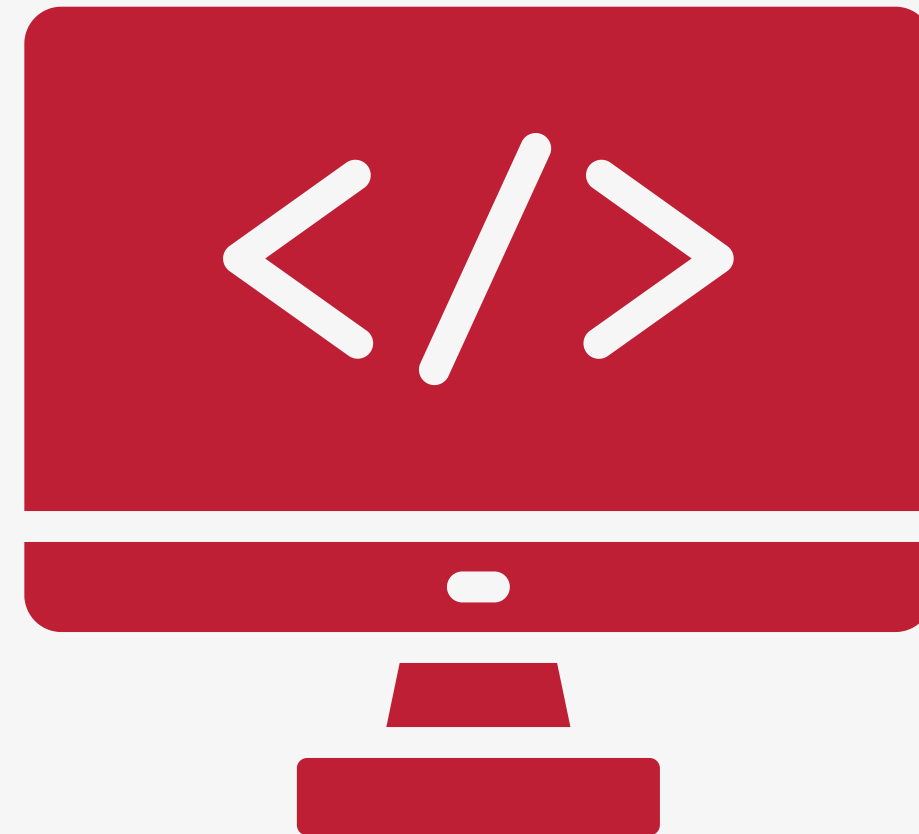


After years of education and professional experience, she decides that continuing her career abroad will provide better opportunities, whether in terms of income, working conditions or professional development.

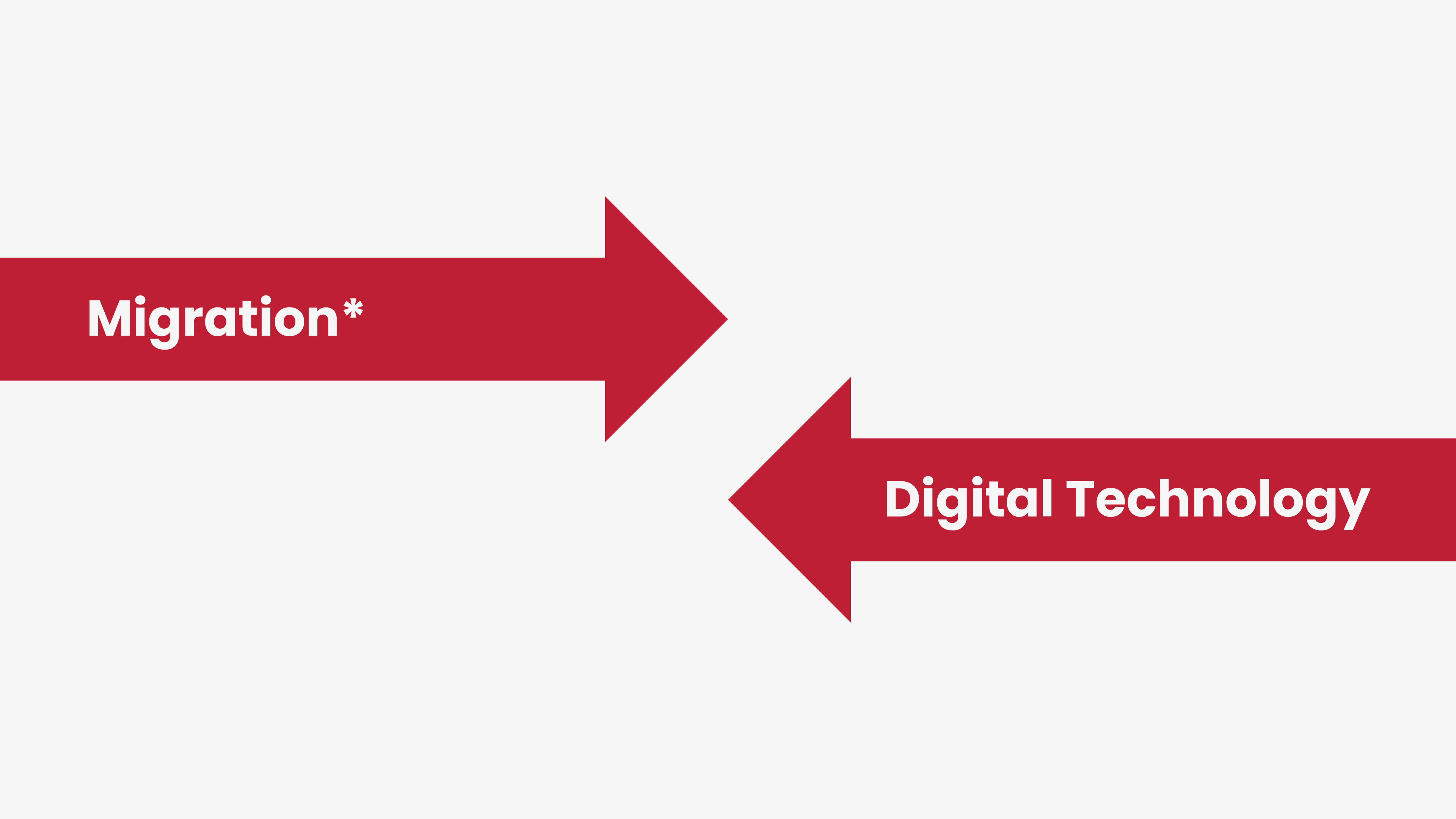


He may earn more than he would in a comparable domestic position, collaborate with colleagues across Europe and build a professional career without leaving his home.





Both involve the incorporation of workers from the Western Balkans into economic relationships organised beyond the region, and both raise questions about the distribution of opportunities, responsibilities and power.



Migration*

The diagram consists of two red arrows pointing towards each other. The top arrow points right and contains the text 'Migration*'. The bottom arrow points left and contains the text 'Digital Technology'. The arrows are positioned such that they appear to converge towards a central point.

Digital Technology

Guiding Questions

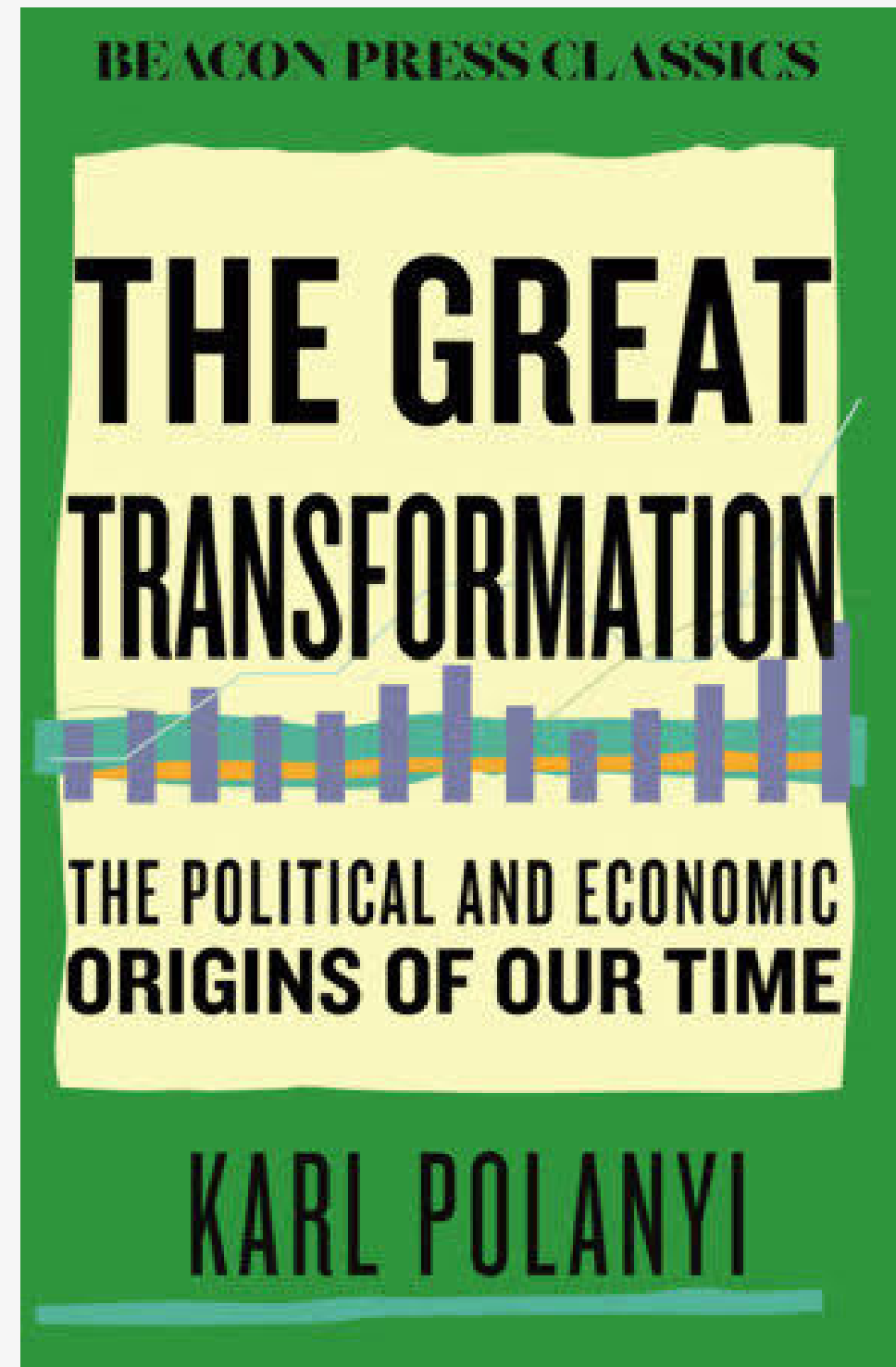
How are demographic change, emigration, labour shortages, and precarious employment **connected** to technological change?

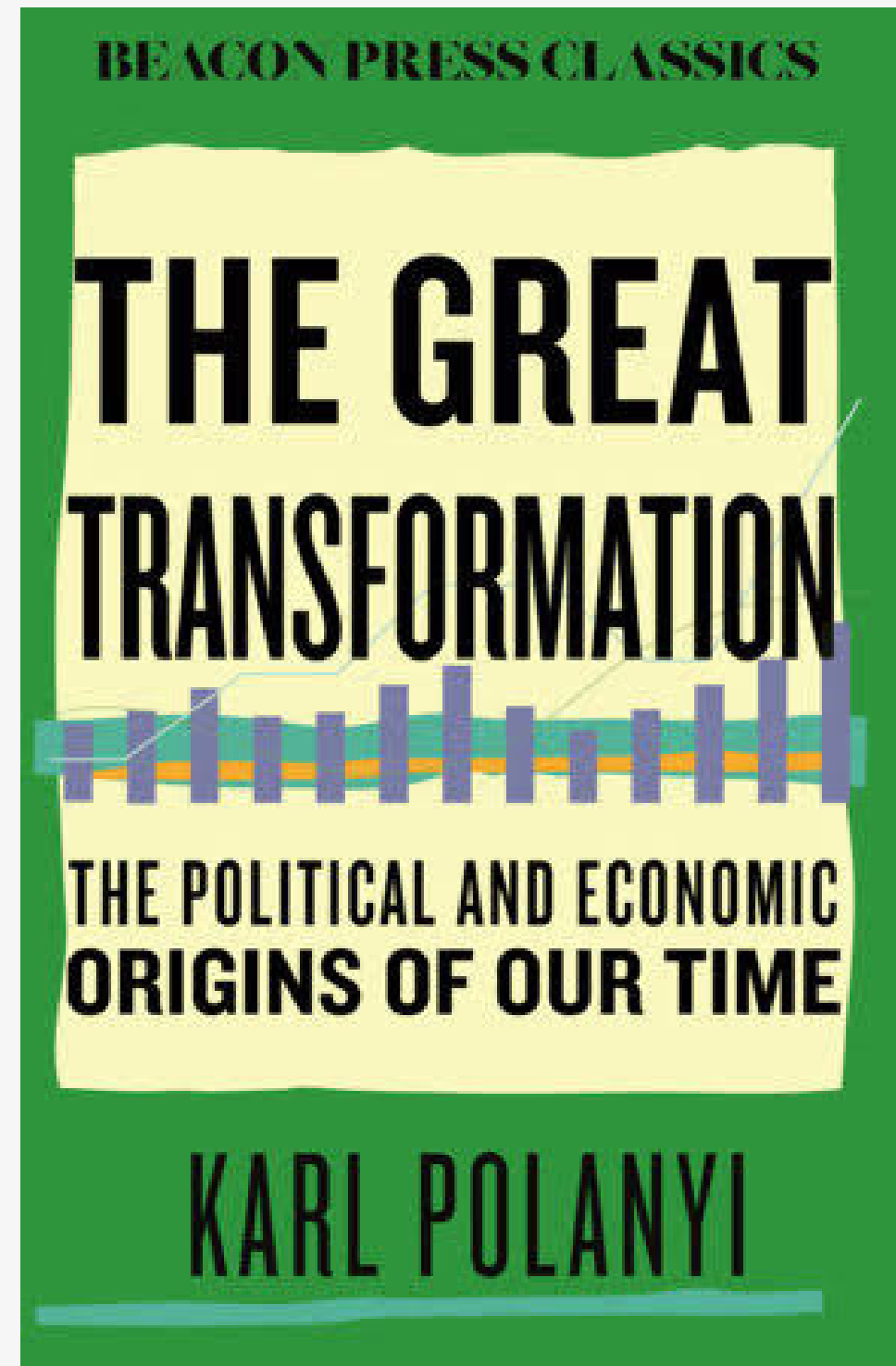
What **happens** when people migrate for work and when technology enables them to work for foreign companies without migrating?

Broader Reorganisation of Labour

Broader Reorganisation of Labour

Throughout this process, **existing inequalities** in employment conditions, institutional protection and bargaining power continue to shape what different groups of workers can actually do.





Fictitious communities

Embeddedness

Double movement









Technology enters an already unequal labour market

Changing the tasks involved in particular occupations

Reorganising how employers coordinate and supervise work

Facilitating easier recruitment or contracting workers beyond national borders

Tech Change as a Social and Institutional Process

Its effects depend not only on the technologies available but on who controls them, what problems they are introduced to address and how their benefits and risks are distributed

Digital Technology Meets Work

Cross-border arrangements with companies and
mediated through digital labour platforms

Task-based, competition and risks shift

Co-existence of opportunity and insecurity

When Workers Migrate Because of Work

When Workers Migrate Because of Work



When Workers Migrate Because of Work



Labour markets organise the exchange of **people's capacity** to work, but the conditions necessary to develop and sustain that capacity extend beyond employment contracts

Migration **changes the relationship** between the places in which workers are educated and socially supported and the places in which their labour is economically used.

In this sense, the movement of workers does not simply transfer labour from one economy to another. It creates and reorganises **transnational relationships** through which income, care, skills and institutional responsibilities circulate.

When Tech Allows People to Work Abroad Without Migrating



Digital technologies allow workers to participate in international labour markets without physically relocating, but the conditions necessary to develop and sustain their capacity to work remain **embedded** in local communities and institutions

The changing geography of work in the Western Balkans should therefore not be understood simply as a story of people leaving or technology allowing them to stay.

It is also a story about how labour is valued, how workers navigate unequal opportunities and how responsibilities are distributed across households, employers and states.

Greater mobility **does not necessarily** mean greater power. The ability to move, or to make one's labour available internationally, can expand workers' choices.

However, the capacity to negotiate employment conditions and secure adequate protection depends on relationships and institutions that cannot be replaced by access to markets alone.

The future of work is not simply a consequence of technological development or demographic change.

It is shaped by **the ways societies respond** to these developments, the priorities they establish and the relationships of power they are prepared to challenge.

*Thank you for your
attention!*



jelena@digitalstardust.org

When Workers Migrate Because of Work

Migration is not only a movement of labour due to economic differences, but it also involves social networks, institutional relationships, and expectations about better life

Intermediaries // Institutions // Collective bargaining

Remittances // Costs of migration