

## THE SOCIAL ORIGIN OF THE STUDENTS AND THEIR CHOICE OF STUDY PROGRAMS AT THE FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ<sup>a</sup>

Suzana Marković Krstić\*, Lela Milošević Radulović

University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš, Serbia

\* [suzana.markovic.krstic@filfak.ni.ac.rs](mailto:suzana.markovic.krstic@filfak.ni.ac.rs)

### Abstract

Based on the tenets of the theory of cultural capital (P. Bourdieu) and the results of studies on the social dimension of education, the paper analyzes the connection between the social origin and educational orientation of the student population of the University of Niš. It also focuses on family socio-economic status and cultural-educational status as socially differentiated factors of educational orientation (choice of program of study).

The paper presents the results of the study carried out from April until June 2019. The sample included 374 students from 13 faculties of the University of Niš. A comparative analysis of the social origin of the students (operationalized through the educational and socio-professional status of their parents and the financial status of their families) represented the starting point for the study of the social determination of their educational orientation. The findings indicate that children of agricultural workers and farm laborers more often choose the Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Pedagogy and Faculty of Economics, while children of business professionals and professionals with a non-business background more often choose the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Law, compared to the students with origins from other socio-professional groups. Since the research has confirmed the existence of social differentiation in educational orientation, it is necessary to design and realize adequate educational policy measures to overcome social inequality in education.

**Key words:** social origin, educational capital, students, university education, social inequality in education.

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## СОЦИЈАЛНО ПОРЕКЛО СТУДЕНТСКЕ ОМЛАДИНЕ И ИЗБОР СТУДИЈСКИХ ПРОГРАМА ФАКУЛТЕТА УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У НИШУ

### Апстракт

Полазећи од основних поставки теорије културног капитала (П. Бурдије), као и резултата бројних социолошких истраживања социјалне димензије образовања, у раду се указује на везу између социјалног порекла и образовних оријентација студентске омладине. У фокусу рада су друштвено-економски положај и културно-образовни статус породице, као социјално диференцирајући чиниоци образовних оријентација студената (избор студијских програма).

Рад се темељи на резултатима емпиријског истраживања спроведеног у периоду април–јун 2019. на узорку од 374 студента 13 факултета Универзитета у Нишу. Резултати истраживања омогућавају компаративну анализу специфичности социјалног порекла студената појединих факултета (операционализованог преко образовног и социопрофесионалног статуса родитеља и материјалног статуса породице), тако да представљају полазиште за разматрање проблема социјалне детерминисаности избора студија. Емпиријски налази указују на то да деца пољопривредника и сељака-радника у већој мери бирају Пољопривредни факултет, Педагошки факултет и Економски факултет, док су деца стручњака у привреди и стручњака ван привреде више заступљена на Природно-математичком факултету, Уметничком факултету и Правном факултету у односу на студенте пореклом из других социопрофесионалних група. С обзиром на то да је истраживање потврдило постојање социјалне диференцираности избора факултета, ауторке указују на неопходност конципирања и спровођења адекватних мера образовне политике ради превладавања постојећих социјалних неједнакости у образовању.

**Кључне речи:** социјално порекло, студентска омладина, факултет, Универзитет у Нишу, социјалне неједнакости у образовању.

### INTRODUCTION

That education supports the development of society, and accompanies socio-economic progress and the expansion of scientific-technological knowledge, is becoming an increasingly more prevalent opinion. Education is no longer understood only as a process of acquiring knowledge in order to adapt to the existing reality, but as a process through which people realize their potential based on their various experiences. In a time of transition, economic crisis, and intense social upheaval, the social dynamics and economic status in the Serbian society do not sufficiently promote the level of education of individual citizens (Mihailović et al. 2004; Koković, 2009; Tomanović et al., 2012; Mojić, 2013; Tomanović and Stanojević, 2015). S. Miladinović points to the weakened role of education as a social structuring factor, even though it has, on the other hand, contributed to the deepening of social stratification and the increase in social inequality. He states that, based on the findings on vertical mobility in our country, it is not necessary to prove that Serbian society has a closed structure of vertical mobility. Education, especially higher education, has proven to be a channel which

closes off social structure, favoring children whose parents have a higher social standing and educational status. In that respect, education should be considered an exceptionally significant channel of social promotion, but at the same time a very significant mechanism of preserving class inequality. As a channel, education is not equally used by all classes and social strata, which has been noted in some of the earliest studies on the issue (V. Milić, 1960), and on vertical mobility in our country (for more details see: Miladinović, 2007, p. 88; 2014, p. 204). In addition, the spreading of elite education (both state and private-run) is becoming more and more socially reserved, so that certain forms of education are less available to certain social strata (Lynch and O'riordan, 1998; Marks, 2005; Marković Krstić and Milošević Radulović, 2016). Some of its forms are being increasingly more commercialized and thus maintain the social hierarchy and strengthen social inequality in its most intense form – educational inequality.

The emergent forms and effects of inequality in contemporary education are more often prone to change and have more significant social consequences. Social change in post-social societies points out that the achievements of young people and their future social status are conditioned by their starting positions in life, that is, their social origin. In an attempt to realize their desired social promotion, young people most frequently rely on family resources, that is, on the opportunities or limitations of their social class (Ilišin, 2008). Social differences regarding the level of education do exist, especially when it comes to the prevalence of certain social groups in higher education. In that sense, more privileged groups which do not have a working-class background most often attend the Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Law and other related faculties, while groups with a working-class background most often attend the Faculty of Technology and Faculty of Science and Mathematics (Flere, 1976). P. Georgievski's (Георгиевски, 1972) initial hypothesis is that social origin has a significant impact on the choice of high school. After elementary school, students whose parents are manual laborers mostly opt for schools closest to the social status of their parents – schools for qualified workers. On the other hand, students from groups with more privileged origins (whose parents are highly educated or are managers) as a rule choose schools which not only lead to higher education, but are also the key to social and business roles and positions – technical schools, and especially grammar schools. Students with a working-class background, as a rule, do not intend to, or are prevented from furthering their education, while students without a working-class background, especially those belonging to highly educated and management-oriented groups are usually focused on furthering their education (Георгиевски, 1972). Both Ž. Pavić and K. Vukelić (2009) have indicated the existence of social differentiation in educational orientation, which points to educational inequality, that is, a suspension of the principle of equality of opportunity in education. The choice of which faculty to attend is tied to the level of education of the students' parents,

and this influence is mainly realized through the previously made choice of high school (i.e. grammar school). Therefore, irrespective of just how strong an influence socio-economic development has had on the changes in social structure, the effect of differences in terms of social stratification in the education system have not been overcome. The relations in which members of a particular social stratum to a great extent tend to reproduce themselves have been maintained (Ivanović, 2006, p. 50). Research into education inequality and the social origin<sup>1</sup> of young people as the determinants for their choice of school/university and their academic success, both in our country and the world, indicates that, even though formally equal conditions for enrollment and further achievements in any department/program of study do exist, a division based on the social origin of students can in a certain sense still be found (Katsillis and Rubinson, 1990; Lynch and O'riordan, 1998; Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Mojić, 2012; Marković Krstić, 2014). One of the elements of social status – the parents' level of education – is a significant determinant in the decision-making process when it comes to continued education (Džuverović, 1991; Gerber, 2000; Pavić, Vukelić, 2009). We could say that candidates for enrollment in university are already, based on their social origin and their parents' level of education, a highly select group. In addition, within such a group, there is a further selection based on the members' enrollment in a particular university/community college, which could lead to homogenization (Berković, 1990; Marković Krstić, 2014). The parents' social status separates young people into those who can choose and those who cannot, thus influencing their choice of high school/university. In effect, it influences their decision-making process and how they evaluate their possibilities – both job-related and academic ones. That is why the theoretical and empirical considerations of problems of social inequality in education indicate the necessity of equality of opportunity in education, and of ensuring a quality education for everyone.

There are questions which refer to the role of education in the contemporary world we live in, primarily those which refer to how education helps an individual prepare for the job market, and for achieving significant results in a particular activity. There are also questions of how education helps in discovering new forms of behavior, new activities, initiatives, and in the selection of cultural and life orientations. As a result, today, the

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<sup>1</sup> The indicators of the social origin of young people include: their parents' level of education (degree), their profession (the professional role that they perform), their economic status (the amount of material means they have at their disposal), residential status (place of residence), their parents' social power (their ability to actually take part in the decision making process) and their social reputation (respect or honor due to them based on their social roles) (Popović et al. 1977, 1991). In this study, the social origin of the students is seen through three indicators: the parents' educational level, the profession/socio-professional status of the mother and father, and the economic status of the family (the overall monthly income of the family).

dependence of lifestyle on one's level of education and the various forms of practice which help an individual find their place in a shifting reality are getting more attention than the influence of education on the processes of structuring society (Sorokina, 2004).

The influence that social structure has on the lifestyle of an individual, and especially on the processes of socialization and education, can be studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives (functionalist, radical, educational capital, cultural deprivation, positional, interactional and Marxist). Social inequality in education, and more specifically the socially differentiated factors which influence the educational possibilities of the individual, are increasingly more often the subject of study in social sciences (Milić, 1960; Георгиевски, 1972; Flere, 1976; Katsillis and Rubinson 1990; Džuverović, 1991; Lynch and O'riordan, 1998; Gerber, 2000; Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2003; Marks, 2005; Ilišin, 2008; Pavić and Vukelić, 2009; Mojić, 2012; Marković Krstić, 2014; Miladinović, 2007, 2014; Xu and Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Siraj and Mayo, 2014; Jæger and Karlson, 2018).

In this paper we rely on the basic tenets of the theory of cultural and educational capital, which provide the original account of the role of education in society, in particular of the social mechanisms which are active within the educational system and which enable the reproduction of social inequality through education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Based on the empirical research done in the field of higher education, Bourdieu and Passeron indicate that "educational barriers" are not only of a social and economic nature. If that were the case, then the few students from the lower social strata who attend higher education institutions would be equated with students who originate from higher (more privileged) social classes. The authors point out that social origin determines the success of the students and their choice of specialized field of study, and in order to better understand this phenomenon it is necessary to introduce the concept of "educational privilege" which they later refer to as "educational capital". Thus, in addition to social and economic privileges, there is also educational capital, as well as certain "attitudes" and types of "behavior" towards school and culture which differ among different social groups, and which are transferred from one generation to another (Haralambos and Holborn, 2002, p. 837-838). Educational capital consists of heuristic and ideological elements. Namely, children from more privileged classes come to school equipped with elements of 'free education' which are made up of educational resources (knowledge and an awareness of cultural creativity). They can directly be applied in school, even though their content does not include subjects and material taught in school. This provides individuals with a general predisposition for learning, and represents a kind of practice which is acquired outside of school, but has a considerable effect on academic success. Possessing the ability to interpret and understand ideational and cultural products is not the result of education but a permanent

communication with these products. Various social groups have different experiences and opportunities in life, adopt various values and types of behavior. In other words, their respective habitus differ. The habitus of certain social groups, meaning their way of life, system of values, their tendencies and expectations, influence their future activities. Individuals react to certain events, many of which are new to them, in accordance with the behavior which they consider 'rational' and the values which they have already adopted as part of their living circumstances (family, class, subculture). Bourdieu points out the importance of cultural and educational capital which is built into the social position of individuals and groups through educational institutions, in which selection is made during their entire education process, providing legitimacy to social inequality. He explains the continued elimination of the members of the lower classes from higher education due to the influence of various cultural capital that every family transfers as its 'ethos' (internalized system of values), and which depends on the parents' cultural and educational level, their status and place of residence. This affects access to education and choice of school (a high school or a vocational school). In that way the 'class ethos' determines the attitude towards education and the understanding of the future regarding education (for more detail, see: Bourdieu, 1994, 2004).

Children from privileged social classes consider university education a natural continuation of their education, just like children from non-privileged social classes consider it natural to attend elementary school. However, for children from non-privileged social classes (such as children of agricultural workers and industrial workers) higher education represents a conscious choice made after a prolonged period of overcoming challenges and difficulties, and is experienced as an instance of individual success. Class differences are a significant factor in the increase in the educational opportunities of privileged children on the one hand, and on the other, an essential and invisible barrier for the non-privileged. Since they feel that the educational content is familiar to them, which is the characteristic of students from privileged families, they do not apply themselves as much during their education due to a sense of security. This perceived security enables the privileged to choose a program of study based on their personal desires and abilities. They choose either new or uncommon fields of specialized study, "aristocratic" studies, and not those which lead to direct employment. Thus, it is possible for them to have an occupation with a high social status (Marković Krstić and Milošević Radulović, 2016, p. 34–43).

The findings of J. Xu and G. Hampden-Thompson (2012) indicate that the cultural resources of a family can have various effects in different regimes and that the model of cultural reproduction dominates liberal regimes. In addition, they point out that there is a connection between cultural capital and educational outcome, that is, that cultural capital mediates between the parents' socio-economic status and the academic success of their children. Significant findings were also obtained by L.

Archer, M. Hutchings and A. Ross (2003). The authors indicate a lower prevalence of children from working-class backgrounds in higher education, irrespective of the fact that recent decades have seen increased enrollment in higher education, and have chosen to study the underlying factors – various types of access to information, an evaluation of higher education, material costs, a tendency towards furthering one's education, as well as gender and ethnic origin.

The connection between the social origin of students and their choice of the level of education is an important subject of study and a complex issue which requires an adequate response (both from the social sciences and social practice). As a result, the study of the basic determinants of the social and financial conditions of the student population is of considerable importance, due to the extent to which they influence the students' educational orientation, and the (non)existence of social inequality in education.

The basic research question is the following one – is there a connection between social origin and educational orientation among the students attending the University of Niš. Our initial assumption was that there is a connection between the social origin of the students (viewed through their parents' educational, socio-professional status and their family's material status) and the students' choice of program of study. This paper presents the results of an empirical study titled "The social origin of the student population, success in education and choice of university program of study" realized from April to June 2019, which included 13 faculties of the University of Niš and a sample of 374 students.

#### THE METHOD

The subject matter of the research is the connection between the social origin of students and their choice of program of study at the various faculties of the University of Niš. Social origin was established based on the following indicators: the parents' level of education (the educational background of their mothers and fathers), the parents' socio-professional status (their occupations, their fathers' and mothers' jobs) and the economic status of the families (the overall monthly income of the family).

In order to determine the connection between social origin and educational orientation, three groups of tasks were set. *The first group of tasks* determined: 1) the parents' educational status (their level of education); 2) the parents' socio-professional status (their occupation, their current jobs); and 3) the economic status of the students' families (their overall monthly income). *The second group of tasks* focused on the influence of the aforementioned indicators of social origin on the choice of program of study. *The third group of tasks* focused on the comparative analysis and

interpretation of the research results which refer to the differences between students attending certain faculties.

Beginning with the basic assumptions of the theory of cultural capital and the results of previous studies, the hypothesis was that the students' social origin influences their choice of program of study. The studied population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in 13 programs of study at the various faculties of the University of Niš (the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Occupational Safety, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Philosophy). The students of the University of Niš represent an important research population since their territorial origin is very diverse. They come from the villages and towns of South-East Serbia, which are currently eclipsed by a process of depopulation and the aging of the population, and their choices regarding education could in part be an indicator of the possibilities for development of this devastated area of the Republic of Serbia. Despite the very favorable geo-political position and wealth of natural resources, South-East Serbia is characterized by a very high rate of unemployment, a low standard of living, as well as the aforementioned depopulation and the aging of the population as a result of constant emigration and the decreasing number of young people living in the area. Most of the municipalities lining the borders of South-East Serbia have for decades belonged to the group of the poorest municipalities in Serbia (Report on the regional development of Serbia, 2013). "The processes of intense post-war migration from the country to the cities, from agricultural work to industrial work, as well as the effects of senilization and depopulation of the rural population in South-East Serbia have left this region a devastated area, where long-term economic development will not easily be secured, a weak and vulnerable area in terms of security, especially in the municipalities located along the border regions" (Mitrović, 2012, p. 12, authors' translation). Poverty, unemployment, economic uncertainty, couples deciding to get married increasingly later in life and an increasingly smaller number of children being born have become the basic characteristics of this area. "That is why one of the basic tasks for future policy of regional development should be quicker solutions for economic and developmental problems. [...] Through economic development it is possible to increase the employment rate of the workforce and improve the living standard of the locals which would render the region more appealing for people to live in, and this would end the basic reasons for immigration" (Božić and Golubović, 2012, p. 51, 54, authors' translation).



The sample includes all the faculties of the University of Niš<sup>2</sup>. Students of all years of study were randomly selected. The total number of students is 374 (36.4% males and 63.6% females). The percentage of students from each of the faculties is the following: the Faculty of Medicine (8,3%), Faculty of Arts (7%), Faculty of Science and Mathematics (8,8%), Faculty of Economics (7,5%), Faculty of Occupational Safety (7,5%), Faculty of Sport and Physical Education (4,8%), Faculty of Law (8%), Faculty of Pedagogy (8%), Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (8%), Faculty of Electronic Engineering (8%), Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (8%), Faculty of Agriculture (8%) and the Faculty of Philosophy (8%). The data were accumulated using a survey questionnaire from April to June 2019.

### *RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION*

Unequal resources (social, economic, cultural) determined by social origin provide different opportunities for the student population during their education. In that sense, the socio-economic and cultural elements of family life can be studied as a form of social, economic and cultural capital. Research indicates that the concept of social origin can be used to understand the differences between the members of various socio-professional groups (strata) when choosing a program of study.

The connection between the students' social origin and their choice of program of study was viewed through three levels of analysis which mutually intertwine and complement one another: 1) the social origin of the students of the University of Niš (their parents' level of education, their occupational status, and the economic status of the students' families); 2) the connection between the aforementioned indicators of social origin and the students' choice of study program; and 3) a comparative analysis of the differences among the students of the University of Niš in terms of their social origin.

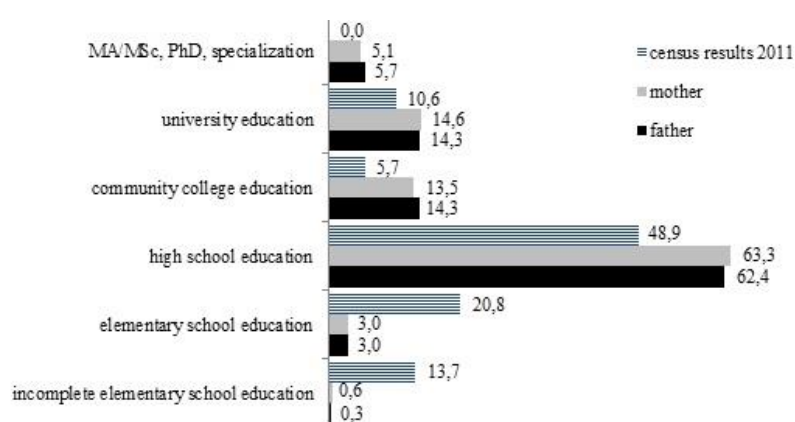
In the paper, we began with the assumption that unequal resources (social, economic, cultural and educational), determined by social origin, offer different possibilities in terms of educational orientation. The concept of social origin is suitable for the study of the basic features of the social structure of the student population. It is also a helpful means of understanding the differences between members of various socio-professional groups (strata) when it comes to selecting a program of study offered by some of the faculties of the University of Niš.

In the context of the study of the social origin of the students and their choice of program of study, it was necessary to take into consideration

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<sup>2</sup> Initially, the plan had been to include all the faculties of the University of Niš in the study (14), but due to the incomplete data that we received from the Faculty of Technology, the research results include data compiled from 13 faculties.

the role of the parents' educational status in these choices. The theory of cultural capital and family educational resources explain the importance of social origin for educational orientation and educational success. Thus, this research focuses on the educational status of the students' families, as well as on the connection between the educational status of the families and the students' choice of program of study. The research results which refer to the first dimension of social origin – the educational status of the students' parents (graph 1) indicate the dominant presence of parents with a high school education (62,4% of the fathers and 63,3% of the mothers).



Graph 1. *The level of education of the fathers and mothers of the students of the University of Niš*

(Source: The educational structure of the population of the Republic of Serbia, SORS, 2011)

The second most prevalent level of education of the students' fathers and mothers is a university education, then a community college education, and finally a postgraduate degree – master's degree, doctoral degree, specialization<sup>3</sup>.

Some findings are of particular importance for the initial hypothesis of the research. Compared to an elementary school education, a higher education is almost five times more frequent among the students' parents, as is community college education. If we were to compare the prevalence of parents with a lower level of education (an incomplete elementary school education or elementary school education) and a higher level of education (community college education, university education, graduate studies) we can note more significant differences. It was determined that 3,3% of the students' fathers and 3,6% of the mothers have a lower level of education,

<sup>3</sup> In Volume 3, Level of education, literacy and computer literacy, SORS (2013), no data were provided for postgraduate studies – master's degree, doctoral degree, specialization, while the category 'unavailable' does exist, with a recorded value of 0,40, p. 18.

while 34,3% of the students' fathers and 33,2% of the mothers have a higher (high) level of education. Thus, higher levels of education are ten times (in the case of the fathers) and nine times (in the case of the mothers) more frequent among the students' parents. If the parents' levels of education were to be compared to the level of education of the population of Serbia over the age of 15 (SORS, 2013, p. 18), we could note significant differences: a smaller percentage of parents without an education and with an incomplete elementary education (0,5:13,7), or an elementary education (3,0:20,8), and a significantly greater percentage of parents with a high school (62,9:48,9), high (13,9:5,7) and higher education (14,5:10,6).

One of the aims of the research was to determine if there were any significant differences between students attending certain programs of study at the University of Niš in terms of their parents' level of education (table 1). The assumption that the parents' educational status leads to inequality in education is of a quantitative, but also qualitative character (choice of program of study). It was evaluated empirically, and the findings indicate the existence of a connection between the parents' level of education and the students' choice of program of study.

The research findings confirm the hypothesis that significant differences exist among the students based on the connection between their fathers' level of education and the students' educational orientation. By calculating  $\chi^2$  and the contingency coefficient (after the data regarding level of education was collapsed into three categories: 1) no education, an incomplete elementary education, and an elementary education, 2) high school education and grammar school education, and 3) college education, university degree, master's degree and doctoral degree), a statistically significant connection among these variables was confirmed (Pearson Chi-Square=47,63; df=24; sig.=0,00; Contingency Coefficient=0,34; sig.=0,00). When we compare this choice to the level of education of the students' fathers, we get a characteristic image which indicates the prevalence of students whose fathers have a high school education (four years of study) and differences in terms of the students' educational orientation. Students whose fathers have an incomplete elementary education or who only finished elementary school are enrolled to a much smaller extent at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Occupational Safety, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, and the Faculty of Electronic Engineering. Students whose fathers have a community college education most frequently attend the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education and the Faculty of Law (13,2% each), while students whose fathers have a university education mostly attend the Faculty of Electronic Engineering (20,8%) and the Faculty of Medicine (15,1%). Students whose fathers have a master's degree mostly attend the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (25,0%) and the Faculty of Arts (15,0%), and those whose fathers have a doctoral degree mostly attend the Faculty of Electronic Engineering (100%).

Table 1. *The level of education of the students' fathers and mothers and their choice of university program of study*

Faculty	The type of school completed by the students' father/mother													
	Incomplete elementary school education		Elementary school education		Three and four-year vocational high school		Grammar school		Community college and university		MA/MSc and PhD		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Medicine	-	-	-	1	16	18	-	-	12	11	2	1	30	31
Arts	-	-	-	-	13	11	2	1	8	9	3	5	26	26
Science and Mathematics	-	-	-	1	20	20	-	-	5	11	6	2	1	33
Economics	-	-	-	3	21	15	-	1	5	9	2	-	28	28
Occupational Safety	-	-	1	1	17	14	-	3	9	7	-	1	27	26
Sport and Physical Education	-	-	-	1	6	7	3	3	9	7	-	-	18	18
Law	-	-	1	-	13	14	3	3	12	11	1	2	30	30
Pedagogy	-	-	4	2	22	17	1	2	1	9	2	-	30	30
Mechanical Engineering	-	-	1	1	17	18	2	3	9	8	-	-	29	30
Electronic Engineering	1	1	1	-	9	14	2	2	15	9	2	4	30	30
Civil Engineering and Architecture	100	50	9,1	-	4,2	6,8	12,5	7,1	14,2	8,7	9,5	21,1	8,1	8,1
Agriculture	-	1	3	1	23	24	-	1	4	3	-	-	30	30
Philosophy	-	-	-	-	9,8	8,7	6,2	3,6	5,7	9,6	9,5	5,3	8,1	8,1
Total	1	2	11	11	215	207	16	28	106	104	21	19	370	371
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Once the educational level of the students' mothers is analyzed, there is a noticeable dominant presence of mothers with a vocational high school education (4 years), but also differences in terms of the students' educational orientation. Young people whose mothers have an incomplete elementary education or only have an elementary school education mostly study at the Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Occupational Safety, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, and the Faculty of Science and Mathematics. On the other hand, students whose mothers have a community college education are mostly students of the Faculty of Pedagogy (16%) and Faculty of Philosophy (14%), while students whose mothers have a university education mostly attend the Faculty of Law (16,7%), Faculty of Economics (13%), Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (13%) and the Faculty of Medicine (11,1%). When it comes to a postgraduate education, students whose mothers have a master's degree more often attend the Faculty of Arts (35,7%), Faculty of Electronic Engineering (28,6%) and the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture

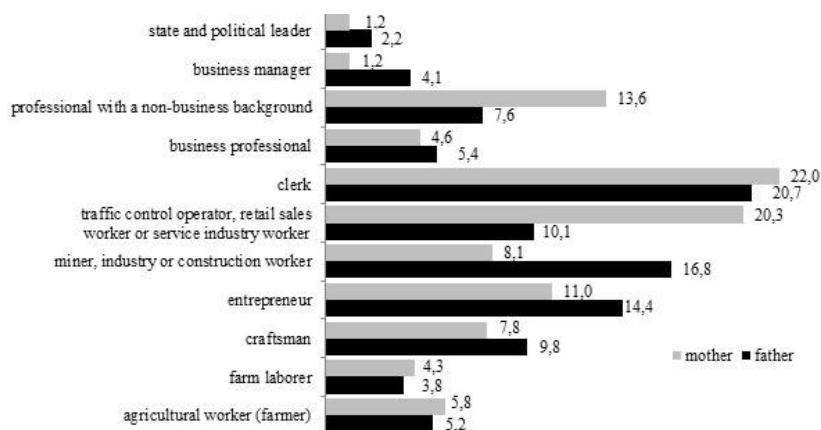
(14,3%), while students whose mothers have a doctoral degree study are more often enrolled in the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (40%), Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Occupational Safety, and the Faculty of Law (20% each).

Thus, children whose parents have a lower level of education (an incomplete elementary education and elementary education) mostly choose the Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. In the case of the Faculty of Pedagogy, these results are not surprising, considering that doctors and teachers are highly regarded in rural areas, and that research results indicate (Ivković, 2004, p. 211-220) that rural youth whose parents have a lower level of education and who originate from families with a more moderate financial background more frequently opt for the profession of a teacher. The choice of these three faculties in part can be explained by lower material costs, higher enrollment rates, shorter duration of the program of study, but also the desire to achieve an educational status higher than that of their parents. Students whose parents have a higher education more frequently attend the Faculty of Medicine; students whose fathers have a higher education attend the Faculty of Electronic Engineering; and students whose mothers have a high education attend the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economics. This could be explained by the effects of the cultural and educational capital of the family, as well as parental expectations that higher education would help their children preserve their social positions and their acquired social reputation. Children whose parents have a master's or doctoral degree mostly attend the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Faculty of Art, and the Faculty of Electronic Engineering, which is in accordance with the tenets of the theory of cultural and educational capital, i.e. their way of life, personal desires and abilities.

The second dimension of the students' social origin was viewed through the analysis of their parents' socio-professional status<sup>4</sup>, that is, their parents' occupations (graph 2).

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<sup>4</sup> The classification was devised in accordance with the social stratification proposed by S. Cvejić (Cvejić, 2000, p. 293–306), with certain necessary adaptations so that certain occupations provided for the mothers and fathers could be incorporated into the existing categories. The modified and extended social stratification includes the following: 1) high-ranking leadership positions (high-ranking and mid-ranking politicians, high-ranking managers and high-ranking entrepreneurs), 2) low-ranking leadership positions (mid-ranking politicians, mid and low-ranking managers and mid-ranking entrepreneurs); 3) mid-level business owners (smaller entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals); 4) mid-ranking professionals (professionals and low-level managers, bosses); 5) transitional positions (foremen, clerks and technicians); 6) upper lower level positions (highly skilled workers, agricultural workers who work their own land); 7) lower level positions (skilled workers, semi-skilled workers, and non-skilled workers, agricultural workers who work other people's land), 8) security service workers, 9) others. The category of *other* mostly refers to the unemployed, pensioners and housewives. Since it is not possible to determine their socio-professional classification, this category was excluded from further analysis.



Graph 2. *The socio-professional status of the students' parents*

The analysis of the research results indicates a social differentiation of the student population included in the study, but also a certain characteristic distribution of their parents' generation based on their socio-professional groups (strata). The greatest prevalence is that of students whose fathers are *clerks*<sup>5</sup>, then students whose fathers are *miners, industrial workers and construction workers*. The distribution of the students' mothers based on socio-professional groups (strata) differs significantly from the distribution of their fathers. The greatest prevalence is that of students whose mothers are *clerks*, and to a lesser extent we find students whose mothers are *traffic control operators, retail sales workers and service industry workers*. When the prevalence of the students' parents is compared to the prevalence of certain professions in the overall population of Serbia<sup>6</sup>, we can note a significantly smaller prevalence of farmers (5,5:11,8), and a greater prevalence of parents who are clerks (21,4:7,3) and professionals (15,6:14,8).

When we compare the socio-professional structure of the students' parents, we can note significant differences among certain socio-professional groups, especially among traffic control operators, retail sales workers and service industry workers (twice as many of the mothers perform these jobs than do the fathers – 20,3:10,1), followed by miners, industrial workers and construction workers (twice as many of the fathers perform these jobs – 16,8:8,1) and professionals with a non-business

<sup>5</sup> Because of the overlap between the variables of socio-professional status and university education, it was necessary to collapse the differentiated scale of parental occupation so that this socio-professional group would also include the occupations of nurse and medical technician.

<sup>6</sup> A more detailed comparison is not possible due to the more detailed classification of occupations in the Census of 2011 (SORS, 2014, p. 15).

background (where we find almost twice as many of the mothers – 13,6:7,6). These differences confirm that a traditional division between professions into “male” and “female” still exists, and that mothers are more often employed in the service industry than the fathers, and that the fathers are more often industrial or construction workers. There is a greater prevalence of mothers among professionals with a non-business background, which can be explained by the fact that this socio-professional group includes teachers, elementary and high school teachers, which are traditionally more often women. Namely, the research results indicate that the profession of a teacher, especially of the elementary school teacher, has become engulfed by a strong feminization (Ivković, 2004, p. 214). Even though the fathers and mothers were predominantly not state and political leaders, there were still twice as many fathers in those professions than mothers (2,2:1,2). There are also four many times as many fathers in managerial positions (4,1:1,2), which indicates that the traditional pattern of men more often occupying managerial positions and more significant positions in society has not been overcome, and where the role of the women/mothers is more often tied to the family.

In the study of the connection between the socio-professional status of the students' parents and their educational orientation, the hypothesis was that students tend to choose those programs of study which are closest to the social status of their parents, while exhibiting pronounced aspirations for moving up on the social ladder (Marković Krstić, 2014). This tendency of movement towards higher social positions can be realized through a higher level of education and employment, in accordance with the acquired level of knowledge, and through jobs which provide a better socioeconomic status than that of their parents (both in terms of income and reputation). Thus, we studied the connection between two variables, the first an independent one – the socio-professional (strata) status of the parents (the father), and the other a dependent one – the choice of a particular program of study (table 2).

The research results presented in Table 2 indicate that there are students originating from various socio-professional groups attending the selected faculties. Children of agricultural workers more often study at the Faculty of Agriculture than at other faculties (26,3%) and at the Faculty of Law (15,8%), while the children of farm laborers more often study at the Faculty of Agriculture (35,7%) and the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education (14,3%). Students whose fathers are craftsmen predominantly attend the Faculty of Pedagogy (16,7%), Faculty of Agriculture, and the Faculty of Economics (13,9% each), while the children of entrepreneurs attend the Faculty of Economics (13,2%), Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Faculty of Agriculture, and the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (11,3% each). The children of miners, industry workers and construction workers mostly attend the Faculty of Philosophy (19,4%), and Faculty of Occupational Safety (16,1%), while the children of traffic control operators, retail sales workers and service industry workers mostly attend the

Table 2. *Socio-professional status and choice of program of study*

Faculty	Socio-professional status (the father's occupation <sup>7</sup> ) of the students										Total	
	Agricultural worker	Farm laborer	Craftsman	Entrepreneur	Miner, industry or construction worker	Traffic control operator, retail sales worker, service industry worker	Clerk	Business professional	Professional with a non-business background	Business manager		State and political leader
Medicine	2 <b>10,5</b>	0 0	3 8,3	3 5,7	3 4,8	3 8,1	10 <b>13,2</b>	2 10,0	2 7,1	0 0	2 <b>25,0</b>	30 8,2
Arts	1 5,3	1 7,1	3 8,3	3 5,7	2 3,2	1 2,7	6 7,9	3 <b>15,0</b>	4 <b>14,3</b>	1 6,7	1 <b>12,5</b>	26 7,1
Science and Mathematics	1 5,3	1 7,1	2 5,6	6 <b>11,3</b>	7 <b>11,3</b>	4 10,8	5 6,6	4 <b>20,0</b>	3 10,7	0 0	0 <b>0</b>	33 9,0
Economics	2 <b>10,5</b>	1 7,1	5 <b>13,9</b>	7 <b>13,2</b>	3 4,8	3 8,1	4 5,3	1 5,0	1 3,6	0 0	0 0	27 7,3
Occupational Safety	1 5,3	1 7,1	1 2,8	2 3,8	10 <b>16,1</b>	1 2,7	7 9,2	1 5,0	1 3,6	0 0	1 <b>12,5</b>	26 7,1
Sport and Physical Education	0 0	2 <b>14,3</b>	2 5,6	4 7,5	3 4,8	0 0	5 6,6	0 0	3,6 0	1 <b>0</b>	<b>12,5</b> 0	18 4,9
Law	3 <b>15,8</b>	1 7,1	1 2,8	4 7,5	3 4,8	2 5,4	9 <b>11,8</b>	1 5,0	6 <b>21,4</b>	<b>0</b> 0	0 0	30 8,2
Pedagogy	2 <b>10,5</b>	1 7,1	6 <b>16,7</b>	4 7,5	<b>8</b> <b>12,9</b>	<b>5</b> <b>13,5</b>	1 1,3	0 0	2 7,1	0 0	0 <b>12,5</b>	30 8,2
Mechanical Engineering	0 0	1 7,1	2 5,6	2 3,8	4 6,5	6 <b>16,2</b>	6 7,9	2 10,0	0 0	6 <b>40,0</b>	0 0	29 7,9
Electronic Engineering	1 5,3	0 0	3 8,3	3 5,7	0 0	2 5,4	9 <b>11,8</b>	2 10,0	4 <b>14,3</b>	5 <b>33,3</b>	1 12,5	30 8,2
Civil Engineering and Architecture	1 5,3	0 0	2 5,6	<b>6</b> <b>11,3</b>	4 6,5	2 5,4	<b>8</b> <b>10,5</b>	<b>3</b> <b>15,0</b>	2 7,1	1 6,7	0 0	29 7,9
Agriculture	<b>5</b> <b>26,3</b>	<b>5</b> <b>35,7</b>	5 <b>13,9</b>	<b>6</b> <b>11,3</b>	3 4,8	<b>3</b> <b>8,1</b>	2 2,6	<b>0</b> 0	0 0	0 0	1 <b>12,5</b>	30 8,2
Philosophy	0 0	0 0	1 2,8	3 5,7	12 <b>19,4</b>	5 <b>13,5</b>	4 5,3	1 5,0	2 7,1	2 <b>13,3</b>	0 0	30 8,2
Total	19 100%	14 100%	36 100%	53 100%	62 100%	37 100%	76 100%	20 100%	28 100%	15 100%	8 100%	368 100%

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (16,2%), Faculty of Pedagogy, and the Faculty of Philosophy (13,5% each). Children of clerks are mostly students of the Faculty of Medicine<sup>8</sup> (13,2%), Faculty of Law, and Faculty of

<sup>7</sup> The results which refer to the socio-professional status of the fathers are presented in detail, since the results which refer to fathers are more complete than the results which refer to the mothers of the students (4,8% of the students did not answer this question, which can in part be interpreted by a higher unemployment rate of the students' mothers).

<sup>8</sup> The prevalence of children of clerks (including the occupation of a nurse and medical technician) at the Faculty of Medicine can in part be explained by the hereditary nature of the occupation. This includes the frequency of transferring an occupation from one generation to another, i.e. the preparation of younger people (their education) to perform the same activities and have the same occupations as their parents. Even though based on the results we cannot make any direct conclusions regarding the hereditary nature of the occupation as part of the father – child (student) relationship, considering that students are



Electronic Engineering (11,8% each). At the Faculty of Science and Mathematics (20%), Faculty of Arts (15%) and the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (15%) we mostly find children of business professionals, while the Faculty of Law (21,4%), Faculty of Arts (14,3%) and Faculty of Electronic Engineering (14,3%) are more frequently attended by children of professionals with a non-business background. Students who are children of business managers are more often students of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (40%) and the Faculty of Electronic Engineering (33,3), while the children of state and political leaders mostly attend the Faculty of Medicine (25%). Based on the analysis of the prevalence of students from certain socio-professional groups at the faculties of the University of Niš, we can note a social differentiation in terms of their educational orientation. It can be explained by socialization which from early childhood includes the acceptance of a certain socio-professional model and way of life, but also any attempts at obtaining a university education (acquiring the necessary qualifications and gaining employment) which would provide the child with a social position higher than that of their parents. In that sense, it is understandable that the children of agricultural workers and farm laborers most frequently opt for the Faculty of Agriculture, the children of entrepreneurs the Faculty of Economics, the children of miners, industrial and construction workers the Faculty of Occupational Safety, the children of traffic control operators, retail sales workers and service industry workers choose the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, and the children of clerks the Faculty of Medicine.

When analyzing the social origin of the students and their educational orientation, another dimension was taken into consideration – the economic status of the students' families. The parents' economic status is in part transferred onto the children in the form of unequal opportunities for acquiring an education. The advantage of children originating from families with a higher economic status is not reflected only in the financial preconditions needed for their continued education, but also in the greater opportunities for choosing a program of study in accordance with their wishes, interests and aspirations. Unlike them, young people from poor environments, low-income families, must adapt their desires regarding programs of study to the financial situation of their families, the physical availability of the schools, and the cost of studying (Džuverović, 1991; Ivković, 2003; Marković Krstić, 2014).

When it comes to the overall monthly income of the students' families, groups of income were formed ranging from – *no income* to – *in excess of 300000 dinars* (the difference between the categories was 20000 dinars). Based on the research results, the most prevalent category was –

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taking part in the educational process/preparations for taking up a certain profession, it is still possible to note certain tendencies at this level of analysis.

80000–100000 dinars (13,4%). An overall income of 61000–80000 dinars was reported by 9,9% of the students, and an income of 41000–60000 dinars was reported by 7,5% of the students, the same as those who reported an income of 21000–40000 dinars. One family has no income, and three families have an income of up to 10000 dinars. In order to determine any differences in the students' educational orientation in relation to their overall family income, the categories were collapsed into low, average and higher family income. Considering that the average monthly income of households in Serbia in 2019 was 66880 dinars (SORS, 2020, p. 1), the benchmark for the average total monthly income was the 60000-80000 dinars category. The distribution of students based on these categories was: no income and up to 60000 dinars – low income (18,7%), 61000–80000 dinars – average income (9,9%), and 81000–300000 dinars and more – higher income (34,5%). More than one third of the students (36,6%) did not provide their family's overall monthly income, which could in part be explained by the fact that the students did not want to present any data on the (low) financial status of their family. There are almost twice as many students whose parents have a higher income than those whose parents have a low income (18,7:34,5), which confirms the justification of the thesis on the better material status of the families of students included in the research, compared to the overall income of families in Serbia in general (Džuverović, 1991; Marks, 2005).

Even though the chi-square test indicates that there is no difference in terms of educational orientation, considering the prevalence of certain categories of income (Pearson Chi-Square=26,34; df=24; sig.=0,34; Contingency Coefficient=0,32; sig.=0,34), it can be noted that higher overall monthly incomes were noted for the families of students attending the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Occupational Safety, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, of Electronic Engineering, and of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture. A low family income was determined for the families of students attending the Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Medicine.

In the context of analyzing the impact of the economic status of the family on the students' educational orientation, we could ask the following question – is economic status transferred from the parents onto their offspring, that is, is there any intergenerational transfer of income (do rich parents have rich children)? The economic status of the family directly determines the financial status of the children – at the *starting point* in life. However, this initial financial position which is transferred from the parents to their children only at first glance appears to be initial. It lasts until the children acquire their own financial and social position, which is the result of their role (primary occupation) in the social distribution of labor. If young members of the family actively take part in the work process, in addition to the successful completion of a higher education program, this could lead to a change in their inherited financial status.

However, some economic studies have indicated that the contribution of education to later economic success can only in part be explained by the cognitive skills acquired in school (Bowles and Gintis, 2002, p. 1–18). Thus, linear movement in the sphere of transfer of family financial status can only be justified in part, since at the same time this movement can (to an extent) be quickened and focused upward mostly thanks to individual cognitive engagement and activities (level of education and success in education).

*Table 3. The financial status of the students' families and choice of program of study*

Faculty	Overall monthly income of the family			
	Low	Average	Higher	Total
Medicine	7	1	7	15
	46,7	6,7	46,7	100
Arts	6	2	6	14
	42,9	14,3	42,9	100
Science and Mathematics	7	3	15	25
	28,0	12,0	60,0	100,0
Economics	5	2	7	14
	35,7	14,3	50,0	100,0
Occupational Safety	3	1	9	13
	23,1	7,7	69,2	100,0
Sport and Physical Education	2	2	8	12
	16,7	16,7	66,7	100,0
Law	1	1	14	16
	6,2	6,2	87,5	100,0
Pedagogy	6	4	10	20
	30,0	20,0	50,0	100,0
Mechanical Engineering	7	3	11	21
	33,3	14,3	52,4	100,0
Electronic Engineering	4	3	13	21
	20,0	15,0	65,0	100,0
Civil Engineering and Architecture	2	5	11	18
	11,1	27,8	61,1	100,0
Agriculture	12	5	7	24
	50,0	20,8	29,2%	100,0
Philosophy	8	5	11	24
	33,3	20,8	45,8	100,0
Total	70	37	129	236
	29,7	15,7	54,7	100,0%

The results of studies carried out in Serbia indicate that young people with more economic, cultural and social (personal and family) capital are more likely to quickly and successfully transition into the job market (Mojić, 2012, p. 126). Higher education brings a more widespread social network (of the parents and children) and enables one to find a job more easily. Due to the strengthening of regional inequality and the centralization of the economy in Serbia, the areas around the nation's capital are becoming more privileged compared to other regions (Tomanović and Stanojević, 2015, p. 24). The research findings indicate that there is a great flexibility in work strategies –

deprofessionalization (accepting work irrespective of one's qualification, accepting jobs which require lower qualifications than a young person has acquired during their education). This flexibilization is the consequence of the inequality between the system of education and the job market. When it comes to employment, or the evaluation of factors which enable one to obtain work (the importance that young people ascribe to education and professionalism as factors necessary for employment), research shows that the young think that political ties (political capital) are the most important factor of employment, followed by social capital (acquaintances, friends), and only then by professionalism and level of education (Tomanović and Stanojević, 2015, p. 37).

### *CONCLUSION*

The research on the social origin of the students of the University of Niš, that is, the social dimension of educational orientation, was realized with the aim of viewing and analyzing the hypothesis regarding the social determination of the choice of program of study. The social origin of the students was analyzed through three dimensions: the first dimension consists of the parents' educational level of the parents; the second dimension of the parents' socio-professional status; and the third dimension of the financial position of the family (the overall monthly income of the family).

The research results indicate a social differentiation among the students of the University of Niš, which is manifested in two of the three studied dimensions. The first, the dimension of education, indicates that the parents' educational status is of great significance for the students' educational orientation. There are differences among the students in terms of their choice of program of study based on whether their parents have a lower or higher level of (educational) capital, that is, whether they live in poorer or richer cultural environments. The differences are manifested in the form of students whose parents have a university education attending certain faculties (the Faculty of Electronic Engineering, the Faculty of Medicine) and those whose parents have lower levels of education attending others (the Faculty of Pedagogy, the Faculty of Agriculture).

When it comes to the second dimension – the parents' occupational status (socio-professional status), we can note a specific distribution of the students' parents based on their socio-professional groups/strata (a prevalence of the 'transitory' and middle-class strata) and significant differences in terms of educational orientation. The research results have confirmed that there is social differentiation in terms of educational orientation. The basic findings of the research indicate that the children of agricultural workers and farm laborers mostly attend the Faculty of Agriculture, the children of craftsmen attend the Faculty of Pedagogy, the children of entrepreneurs attend the Faculty of Economics, and that the children of miners, industrial and

construction workers the Faculty of Philosophy. The children of traffic control operators, retail sales workers and service industry workers, and children of business managers, most commonly attend the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, while the children of clerks and children of state and political leaders are mostly to be found at the Faculty of Medicine. The Faculty of Science and Mathematics is mostly attended by the children of business professionals, and at the Faculty of Law by the children of professionals with a non-business background.

The third studied dimension – the connection between the family's financial status and the students' educational orientation has not indicated any significant differences among the students of the University of Niš. Most of the students reported an average financial status and there was no significant differentiation among students attending different faculties. However, the research results did indicate a greater prevalence of higher income families compared to low income families among students attending all the faculties, except that of the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Medicine. In that sense, in addition to cultural capital, the financial income of the family (economic capital) can also in part be considered an important determinant of continuing one's education and educational orientation.

The research results of the social dimension of the educational orientation of the students of the University of Niš have confirmed the impact of the parents' educational status and professional activities on the choice of university program of study and the necessary preparation needed to perform certain socio-professional roles (occupations). That is why studying at the university level should provide young people with the possibility of performing more complex socio-professional roles (occupations) and achieving a higher position on the social ladder, that is, a social position higher than that of their parents. At the same time, the confirmed hypothesis regarding the social differentiation in educational orientation indicates the need for conceptualizing and realizing adequate educational policy measures in order to overcome the existing social inequality in education.

The results on the social differentiation in educational orientation confirm the ongoing problem of the possible inclusion of young people who originate from various social strata in higher education. Education to a great extent depends on family resources and includes significant material investment. Certain systemic measures of support in terms of education are more readily available to young people with greater cultural capital. D. Mojić indicates that young people with higher economic and cultural capital (inherited from their families) are more likely to gain access to institutional mechanisms of support during their education (student loans and scholarships), which perpetuates inequality based on inherited family resources. Relying on family resources in a way has become a part of the national strategy in education, where all the shortcomings of the education system are made up for precisely by using family resources (all types of capital – economic, cultural and social). He believes that when it comes to

education in Serbia, we can speak of a combination of a subordinating (familistic) and post-socialist regime (social order) of the transition of young people, but with an excessive reliance on family resources (Mojčić, 2012, p. 95–109). Accordingly, “a broader social community should build a legal regulation which would broaden the activities of the job market so that it could recognize the quality and ability of individuals independently of their families’ social and cultural capital. The community at large should also create an infrastructure which would ease education to the highest level for children from poor families, that is, provide them with the necessary conditions for affordable housing, a proper diet, and conditions for learning during their studies. Employers should recognize the interest and need to recruit, during their education, young and talented people through scholarships and internship programs for students of various ages” (Miladinović, 2014, p. 205, authors’ translation).

In addition to confirming the current nature of the problem, the aforementioned results indicate the necessity of a social intervention in the sphere of educational policy. They also point to the social responsibility that higher education institutions have to recognize their role in the reproduction of social inequality with the aim of overcoming it, and to enable a more just distribution of social resources. In that way, education would, as one of the channels of social mobility, and as a means of social promotion, be provided with an appropriate position on the scale of social valuation.

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## СОЦИЈАЛНО ПОРЕКЛО СТУДЕНТСКЕ ОМЛАДИНЕ И ИЗБОР СТУДИЈСКИХ ПРОГРАМА ФАКУЛТЕТА УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У НИШУ

**Сузана Марковић Крстић, Лела Милошевић Радуловић**  
Универзитет у Нишу, Филозофски факултет, Ниш, Република Србија

### Резиме

У нашем друштву се уочавају разлике у социоекономском положају младих људи које имају важну улогу у њиховом школовању, посебно приликом избора студија. Истраживање социјалног порекла студената је од великог значаја, јер указује на основна социјална обележја младих људи који бирају студијске програме одређених факултета и омогућавају њихово осамостаљивање и стицање адекватног друштвеног положаја.

Емпиријско истраживање спроведено је у периоду април–јун 2019. године, на узорку од 374 студента 13 факултета Универзитета у Нишу. Испитано је социјално порекло студената, као значајна детерминанта избора студијских програма факултета, које се операционализује кроз три димензије (образовни статус – школска спрема родитеља, социопрофесионални статус родитеља – занимање / радно место и материјални статус породице – укупан месечни приход породице).

У фокусу рада су питања какво је социјално порекло студената и да ли (и како) социјално порекло детерминира избор студијских програма појединих факултета. У том смислу, рад је структурисан тако да први део чини теоријско-методолошка основа истраживања, у којој су представљена нека од теоријских становишта у проучавању социјалних неједнакости у образовању, а у другом делу су представљени резултати истраживања социјалног порекла студената Универзитета у Нишу, као детерминанте избора студијских програма факултета.

Емпиријски налази су потврдили да постоје значајне разлике у погледу социјалног порекла студената различитих факултета. Утврђено је да постоји социјална диференцираност избора факултета, а значајне детерминанте избора факултета су образовни и социопрофесионални статус родитеља. Социјална детерминананост избора факултета испољава се у виду веће заступљености (у односу на друге факултете) студената чији родитељи имају високо образовање на Медицинском факултету и Електронском факултету, те чешће опредељења студената чији родитељи имају нижу школску спремину за Педагошки факултет и Пољопривредни факултет. Утицај друге димензије социјалног порекла студената (социопрофесионалног статуса родитеља) огледа се у постојању значајних разлика међу студентима када је избор факултета у питању. Социјална диференцираност студената потврђена је најчешћим избором Пољопривредног факултета од стране деце сељака, као и деце сељака-радника, док деца занатлија најчешће бирају Педагошки факултет, деца предузетника Економски факултет, а деца радника у рударству, индустрији и грађевинарству Филозофски факултет. Деца радника у саобраћају, трговини и угоститељству и деца привредних руководилаца најчешће бирају Машински факултет, док деца службеника и деца државних и политичких руководилаца најчешће бирају Медицински факултет. Најчешћи избор деце стручњака у привреди је Природно-математички факултет, а деца стручњака ван привреде Правни факултет.

С обзиром на то да су резултати истраживања студената Универзитета у Нишу потврдили претпоставке да је социјално порекло, посматрано кроз призму образовног и социопрофесионалног статуса родитеља, значајна детерминанта избора студијских програма факултета, неопходна је интервенција друштва у виду спровођења одговарајућих мера и акција у сфери образовне политике, ради превладавања постојећих неједнакости у образовању и праведније прерасподеле образовних ресурса.