

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF THE WORLD SYSTEM

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Abstract

The paper discusses the role of higher education in the reproduction of society. In the context of the world system, an attempt is made to shift the focus of reproduction from individual social formations to the world system as a whole. While Marxist and functionalist theories, which are used as a theoretical framework in this paper, were primarily focused on the reproduction of class societies at the level of social formations, this paper considers reproduction at the level of the world system. Analogous to internal class selection, it is claimed that nation-states are drawn into the reproduction of the world system so that peripheral countries train a part of their personnel for free for the countries of the core. This reproduction, which is based on unequal relations in the wider world economy, explains the phenomenon of 'brain drain.' In accordance with that, the possibility of political interventions within the individual states of the (semi)periphery, which would significantly disrupt the current systemic processes of reproduction, is viewed as pessimistically inadequate.

Key words: education, reproduction, core-periphery, brain drain, globalisation.

ВИСОКО ШКОЛСТВО И РЕПРОДУКЦИЈА СВЕТСКОГ СИСТЕМА

Апстракт

У раду се разматра улога коју високо образовање има у репродукцији. Фокус репродукције се у контексту светског система покушава изместити са појединачних друштвених формација према светском систему као целини. Док су марксистичке и функционалистичке теорије, које се у овом раду користе као теоријски оквир, биле првенствено усмерене на репродукцију класних друштава на нивоу друштвених формација, у овом раду се репродукција разматра на нивоу светског система. Аналогно унутрашњој класној селекцији, тврди се да националне државе бивају увучене у репродукцију светског система тако да земље периферије један део кадрова бесплатно школују за земље центре. Овом репродукцијом која је заснована на неједнаким односима у шире схваћеној светској економији се објаш-

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њава феномен „одлива мозгова“. И у складу са тиме се песимистично посматра могућност политичких интервенција у оквиру појединачних држава (полу)периферије које би битно пореметиле токове актуелних системских процеса репродукције.

Кључне речи: образовање, репродукција, центар-периферија, одлив мозгова, глобализација.

INTRODUCTION

In previous years, the problem of young people leaving their countries has been increasingly discussed in the public sphere. This phenomenon can be viewed from several perspectives. One of the most frequently mentioned is economic, which primarily observes this phenomenon from the perspective of human capital and looks for economic losses in the departure of young people.

It should be noted that the thesis of this paper is an ambitious undertaking that should be elaborated more concretely, then empirically verified, before one can speak about possible conclusions with greater certainty. The intention is for this paper to represent only a pilot for what could follow, i.e. to put certain theses formed through intuition and experience on paper, although not as a ‘pure’ idea, but with certain confirmations that come from already conducted research or published documents that are (in)directly related to our thesis.

The thesis consists of the following. The role of higher education in modern societies should not be viewed primarily through its role in class reproduction within one social formation. More precisely, the unit of analysis should not be an individual society, but a global society – the unit of analysis is the world system. Accordingly, this paper combines Marxist and world-systems theories in order to gain a better understanding of contemporary social processes related to education that go beyond the level of a single social formation, which is predominantly a methodological unit used by Marxists. Therefore, it follows Wallerstein’s idea that core-periphery relations are hierarchical and based on the division of social labour, which is the main reason for the existence of core-periphery zones, and the distribution of income and quality of life that they generate (Wallerstein, 1995, p. 30-1). In order to demonstrate this thesis, this paper is structured in such a way that the reproductive role of education is first considered as part of sociological theories that analyse certain individual social formations. Functionalist and Marxist theories of education will be discussed first. Then, the aspect of considering education from a world-systems perspective is introduced, and then it is extended to the issue of ‘brain drain’ in order to move to the concrete level of Serbian higher education and certain state plans and laws. In this way, the individual society is analysed in relation to the world system level.

Therefore, the thesis consists in considering the role of class reproduction, which we intend to present in a wider social context. In the case of a country located on the (semi)periphery of the world system, such as Serbia, the social context contains elements of a neo-colony position. In such a society, the need for a highly educated population cannot be of primary importance, nor can the need for scientific centres and scientific research. However, this does not mean, as it might be logical at first glance, that this should lead to a decrease in the number of students (although, later we will see that this decrease also occurs) because universities in Serbia do not train a highly educated population exclusively for the country's own needs. Rather, the position of higher education is oriented towards external factors, which in the case of Serbia are primarily the countries of the centre of the EU. This is the basis of the basic thesis that we will develop in the following chapters of this paper.

THE REPRODUCTIVE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

While the thesis of this work is broadly based on the world-systems theory, its constitutive elements are based on theories of education that can be called reproductive theories and classified into functionalist and Marxist theories.

According to Kant, education planners should keep in mind that children should not be educated only according to existing circumstances but also with a focus on improving in the future, which should be the principle of humanity (Kant, 2007, p. 446). Along the way, they encounter an obstacle embodied by parents and their aspirations for children to fit into the existing system and find a better future for themselves within that system. Therefore, there is a contradiction between parents and rulers (nowadays we would say states), since parents have an interest in taking care of their own children in the existing world, while rulers see their subordinates as instruments for their own projects (ibid.). However, Kant claims that this contradiction does not take place in such a way that those who have power and authority, i.e. the rulers or the state, manage education in their own interest, but in such a way that humanity as a whole is at a loss because neither side holds the general development of humanity as its own goal (ibid.).

Therefore, Kant already notices the reproductive function of the educational system. However, only later in Durkheim do we find clearer outlines of this idea. Durkheim also holds to the universal aspect of education, that is, to its role in all of humanity. However, in addition to general education, education should also develop individual functions, that is, it should create in children the function of physical and mental states that society believes should belong to everyone, as well as certain physical and mental

states that a particular caste, class, family or profession considers necessary for each of its members (Durkheim, 1981, p. 40).

Therefore, the educational system should work to achieve the highest possible level of social homogeneity, but Durkheim notes that education also supports diversity and specialisation - organic solidarity. The greater the division of labour, the more education will develop its specificities, but always with this basic idea of preserving society as a whole (*ibid.*). Also, in Durkheim, we find the claim that education does not have an individual as its goal and its development is instead the basic goal of restoring the conditions of the existence of society itself (*ibid.*, 80).

Half a century after Durkheim, Bowles and Gintis dealt with a similar topic, although the functionalist perspective is complemented by a Marxist perspective. Bowles and Gintis note that in an economy like the capitalist one in which companies are oriented towards the creation of profits, education comes as a certain support that should enable and support these goals. They single out three functions within that process, namely technical efficiency, control and legitimacy (Bowles & Gintis, 2011, p. 81-2). Technical efficiency refers to the maximisation of production in terms of raw materials, means of work and labour; control refers to the top-down control of production as well as the maintenance of these power relations; lastly, legitimation should present these power relations as fair, or at least as necessary (*ibid.*).

Moreover, they go a step further and claim that the roots of inequality in the US are precisely found in the class structure, and the system of gender and racial power relations, and that the school system is among those institutions that serve to perpetuate these structures. In this way, they reject the idea that the education system should serve to reduce inequality and place it in a completely opposite position. Only if the capitalist economy is overcome could the school system change its purpose and begin to really work for the equality of all people (*ibid.*, p. 85).

In a similar period, that is the period after 1968, which no doubt encouraged the authors to analyse the education system with greater attention, in France, which was particularly affected by the revolutionary student movement, Bourdieu and Passeron, as well as Althusser, appeared on the scene. For all three, the reproductive role of the educational system is in focus, and for Bourdieu and Passeron, reproduction is in the very title of their work, while for Althusser, the focus is on ideology and the role that education plays in the ideological reproduction of the system. While Althusser tried to present his thesis as generally valid for the capitalist system, Bourdieu and Passeron mostly focused on the empirical investigation of the French social and educational system, which is nevertheless specific in its organisation and largely unique in Europe.

However, both Bourdieu and Passeron deal with the issue of ideological reproduction and the role that education plays in that process, with

the fact that they do not write about ideology but about symbolic violence. Their claim is that any pedagogical activity is, in fact, symbolic violence because it imposes cultural arbitrariness through arbitrary power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 5). This applies not only to the educational system but also to the pedagogical activity that takes place within the family, although schools are still central institutions. It is about the fact that the dominant classes of a society set a certain pedagogical activity as dominant and that it, therefore, corresponds to their objective material, symbolic and pedagogical interests (*ibid.*, p. 7).

In contrast to Bourdieu and Passeron, who offer rich empirical material from French pupils and students, Althusser presents a philosophically abstract thesis that focuses on ideological reproduction, but no less on the material reproduction of the conditions of production that are related to it. This connection between class relations and educational systems is also highlighted by this author. Under capitalism, the workforce acquires skills more and more outside the production process itself - in schools and other institutions (Althusser, 2009, p. 13). Today, these skills include quite ordinary skills such as reading, writing, and addition, but also certain elements of scientific or literary culture that are considered important for production management. In addition, the school teaches the rules of behaviour and morals, as well as respect for the social division of labour and, thus, the order of class dominance (*ibid.*, p. 14). In this, one can find agreement between Althusser, and Bourdieu and Passeron, since schools are institutions that legitimise and reproduce certain positions that are not neutral but based on class division and power relations.

Althusser presents the reproduction of class divisions very plastically. Around the age of sixteen, a large number of young people end up in production, while the rest continue further education until they fill the positions of lower and middle-level staff, workers, petty or middle officials, and the petty bourgeoisie. And then the last part reaches the top and gets stuck in intellectual semi-employment, in the agents of the structure of exploitation like managers and capitalists, in the agents of repression like politicians, administrators, policemen and soldiers, or in the agents of professional ideologues like priests (*ibid.*, p. 44). Therefore, in this plastic representation, the educational system is something like a restaurant manager who directs guests to those seats that are reserved for them, or are empty. In this sense, education does not create new positions or reduce the differences between these positions. Its role is that of an instrument that is primarily an instrument of the ruling class in an effort to maintain class rule indefinitely.

EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORLD SYSTEM

As can be seen in the previous part of this paper, the presented ideas are characterised by the agreement that education should be researched at the level of social formation. However, this makes it difficult to understand the reproductive role of education today. In the modern era, when the sovereignty of national states is rapidly eroding, and when transnational political and economic institutions are increasingly important, it would be wrong to expect or think that a national state can have control over its own education or that it uses education for the needs of its own reproduction and development.

It is only with Arnove that we find the starting point that we try to apply in this paper. He very explicitly advocates methodological changes, claiming that if we analyse education as a closed national system, we fail to capture the position of a country within the international system (Arnove, 1980, p. 50). In fact, he claims that the position in the international system conditions economic, political, socio-cultural factors on educational development or under-development. Additionally, it allows us to understand the continuous dominance of the language of the metropolis in the colonies, the types of reforms and their frequent failures, the distribution of the skills that are learned or the research that is carried out (*ibid.*). In this way, Arnove makes a call for educational research in the context of world-system theory, which should be comparative and international.

This global perspective includes the period when educational systems only began to develop in the colonies, so quite logically they did not arise endogenously, but were processes governed by external factors. This is the period when philanthropic organisations such as Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie began to circulate more and more strongly, followed by creditor organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF (*ibid.*, p. 51). It should be borne in mind that these organisations can exert important and deep influences in countries of the core, let alone in the colonies and peripheral states that are inferior in the economic or political field. Such poor countries often cannot develop education or even finance it without loans or aid, which of course does not come with arms wide open, but carries with it conditions and requirements. It is estimated that in 1971, between 1.5 and 1.6 billion dollars arrived in the countries of the Third World for education costs (*ibid.*, p. 52).

This is the period of the Cold War, so the facts should be seen in that context. Therefore, the role of American philanthropic organisations is understood as supporting national education systems for the purpose of connecting their institutions with the dominant values of the American corporate state (*ibid.*, p. 55). The activities of these organisations lead to: the creation of leading universities in important geo-strategic locations such as Nigeria, Zaire, Ethiopia and Kenya; emphasis on social science research related to manpower planning programs; training programs for public ad-

ministrators; and teacher training and curriculum development that would direct Africans to select American universities where they will acquire advanced skills and return to leadership positions in local universities, teacher training institutions, or ministries of education (*ibid.*, p. 56). The influence and success of these foundations is convincingly evidenced by the fact that 66% of East African university-educated people were part of a Rockefeller Foundation program, and that percentage rises to 80% when only professors and deans are considered (*ibid.*).

Arnove combines the economic and cultural-ideological functions of education on a very broad front. On the ideological level, the 'ideological packaging' of globalisation that is delivered to national and local policies through transnational paradigms is noticeable (Arnove, 2009, p. 110). As part of that ideological package, there is also the orientation of educational institutions towards economic goals and strengthening the country's position in international competition, and not towards the goals of national cohesion through equal treatment of different ethnic groups, etc. (*ibid.*). So, it seems that, in this respect, Durkheim's cohesive function in creating homogeneity is slowly losing its importance.

It should also not be surprising that dominant educational policies are initiated from the top of international and national bureaucracies, and that economic goals are primary (*ibid.*, p. 113). Giroux goes so far as to claim that neoliberalism is waging a war against the welfare state and education. In the war against education, the aim is to shape identity, desires and ways of subjectivity that will be in agreement with market values, market needs and relationships (Giroux, 2014, p. 14-15). The current outcome of this struggle is reflected in the accelerated corporatisation and militarisation of universities, i.e. the loss of academic freedom and the treatment of students as ordinary consumers to whom colleges should provide certain skills that they will use in the workplace. This leads to the slow death of the university as a centre of critical thought, and civic values and orientation towards the public good (*ibid.*, p. 16).

So, we see that education is globalised, but something more should be said about its character. The globalisation of education can also be seen in the fact that schooling is becoming oriented towards the global labour market (Spring, 2015, p. 2). If this is a basic orientation of the educational system, then it is quite expected that different nations adopt similar educational practices, curricula, school organisations and pedagogical practices – that the global discourse has a key influence on national education policy makers, school administrations, faculties and teachers, and that international organisations and non-governmental organisations that create global networks in which the flow of ideas and practices takes place are at the forefront of this discourse (*ibid.*, 5). The key thing that is interesting for us is the effect of world migration.

THE SO CALLED 'BRAIN DRAIN': BRAIN CIRCULATION

The term brain drain itself is thought to have originated in the UK as a description of the large influx of Indian scientists. Otherwise, the more neutral term of brain circulation is often used, which includes the possibility of experts returning to their countries of origin (*ibid.*, p. 195). Of course, the largest migratory movements are from poor to rich countries, so part of the world's number of workers in rich countries is 16%, but as much as 60% of global migrants live in those countries (*ibid.*, p. 189).

Regarding emigration, it has been observed that the rate of emigration decreases with the size of the country, so average emigration rates are 7 times higher in small countries with less than 2.5 million inhabitants than they are in large countries with over 25 million inhabitants. It is assumed that emigration rates are highest in middle-income countries where families have the means to emigrate, while they are lower in the poorest countries due to the more limited ability to borrow or use human capital. Therefore, the regions most affected by the brain drain are the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America (Docquier, Rapoport, 2011, p. 5).

Docquier and Rapoport argue that it is possible to observe the following consequences of migration. If the brain drain from the country of origin is large enough to cause productivity gains in the leading economies, this will further widen the differences in technological progress. However, they note that the concentration of human capital in advanced economies can stimulate the spill-over of technological development to poorer countries. Then, the emigration of highly skilled labour can increase the unemployment of skilled labour. This occurs because the educated elites of developing countries are demanding higher wages, while lower-skilled workers are also responding with their own demands. The result is that there is an overall increase in unemployment. Additionally, the effect noticed last is the impact of creating a shortage in certain professions (teachers, engineers, doctors, nurses). If these professions significantly affect the productivity of other workers or the accumulation of human capital, then this shortage will have a highly negative effect on the country from which they left (*ibid.*, 19-20). The conclusion that the authors draw from their analysis is quite disconcerting. Their claim is that international migration from poor to rich countries makes human capital even scarcer where it is already scarce, and more abundant where it is already abundant, which of course further leads to an increase in inequality between countries, including differences within rich countries (*ibid.*, p. 50-1).

It should be noted that these international migrations are not only fuelled by the economy. Rizvi, therefore, insists that they are both cultural and political. He notes that there are strong diaspora networks that encourage people to see emigration as something completely normal, and that provide support during the quite complex immigration process. Also important are the policies that the most developed countries put in place to be

pro-immigration for the highly skilled or those who possess skills that the country currently deems necessary. And finally, countries attract and invite immigration through international education policies (Rizvi, 2005, p. 176).

Therefore, it is expected that there are different points of view towards brain drain. Logically, the brain drain countries see the phenomenon as part of neo-colonialism, and national leaders claim that national development is slowed or prevented due to the loss of talented youth. Often those who decide to emigrate are accompanied by the stigma of disloyalty and disinterest in the development of their own country (ibid., 181). This leads Rizvi to the claim that the very concept of brain drain is problematic in the era of globalisation when the notion of where someone is physically located is becoming less and less important, and the notion of what social, cultural and economic contributions they make to the country with which they identify is becoming more and more important (ibid., p. 189).

However, he notes that changing the concept of brain drain with brain circulation does not solve the problem, given that it is indisputable that it is not a neutral process, and that the process is clearly based on unequal distribution of chances and asymmetric flows of power. He rejects the term brain drain, leaving behind the problem of the national, thinking that this is the era of globalisation and deterritorialisation, simultaneously claiming that within this deterritorialised social reality, this process creates global inequalities not only in terms of capital but also in terms of people, information and skills. All this leads to the reshaping of the space of identity and requires new forms of observation of the relationship between globally mobile students and workers, and their obligations towards the nation-state (ibid., p. 190).

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SERBIA AND ITS POSITION IN THE WORLD SYSTEM

Considering the position of Serbia, which can be called (semi)peripheral, and the theoretical and social context mentioned so far, we should now move more specifically to the case of Serbia. More specifically, we are interested in the period after the Bologna reform.

“The misery of European higher education institutions has its name: Bologna” (Liesmann, 2008, p. 37) – these harsh words, which are very easy to remember, partially describe the state of Serbian faculties as part of European ones. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to attribute all of the shortcomings to Bologna. The focus of this analysis is on the extent to which the Bologna Process has facilitated student mobility. Liesmann states that the argument according to which Bologna serves to increase the mobility of European students is rather weak if it is known that only about 10% of students enjoy a change of faculty during the semester (ibid., 38).

Liesmann rejects that thesis and posits another, which claims that the entire point of the reform is the acceleration i.e. the shortening of the duration of studies, with an increase in the number of academic citizens (ibid.). If we accept this thesis, then the conclusion is that the Bologna reform in Serbia does not affect mobility, but only the shortening of studies. However, these two theses are not contradictory. Moreover, they can be seen as complementary. More precisely, the reform was carried out in order to integrate the education system of Serbia with the EU system, and a result of this integration is the mobility of students from Serbia, with the aim being not to study at European universities, but to remain in those countries as part of the workforce after graduation.

According to existing data, of the total number of people who left Serbia, as many as 90,000 are highly educated (Šuvaković, 2019, p. 254), while about 10,000 students are studying abroad at the moment, which leads the author to conclude that “little Serbia finances the economic recovery of the USA and other Western countries by creating a workforce with the profile they need” (ibid.). Of this number of highly educated people who are no longer in Serbia, it is believed that 6 to 10,000 are PhDs (Mitrović, 2020, p. 108). Otherwise, the number of students in Serbia decreased by 15% in the last 8 years, which is attributed to demographic trends, while the percentage of highly educated people increased from 18.7% in 2015 to 20.4% in 2019 (Education and upbringing strategy in the Republic of Serbia until 2030, 2021).

When examining students’ attitudes about brain drain, the author came to results that were quite expected. More than half (56.6%) believe that the economic situation is the cause of this phenomenon, followed by the neoliberal strategy of dependent modernisation, which 71.9% of respondents see as the cause (ibid., p. 106-7).

Serbia’s position in the EU integration process then represents a paradoxical position. This is how the importance of chapter 26 on education is presented:

Education and culture is reflected in the fact that in the developed economies of the EU it is recognized that the main development resource is human capital, and its quality primarily depends on the offer of appropriate education and training. With the Lisbon Strategy, from 2000, the European Council set the goal of the EU becoming the most competitive and dynamic economy based on knowledge, capable of sustainable economic growth, with greater employment opportunities, better jobs and greater social cohesion. The legal framework, which contains the guidelines for creating a knowledge society in the EU, is manifested through a large number of EU documents (Bologna Declaration, Lisbon Strategy, Copenhagen Declaration, etc.).

(Negotiations on Serbia’s accession to the European Union,
Chapter 26)

On the other hand, integration is defined in the following manner in Article 32 of the Law on Higher Education:

The Ministry takes care of harmonizing the system of education and upbringing of the Republic with trends in the development of education in Europe. In order to fulfill this goal, the Ministry undertakes all necessary actions for:

- 1) ensuring full participation in European Union programs for cooperation in the field of education and training and monitoring the effects of participation in these programs;
- 2) realization of the participation of representatives of the Republic in working groups and activities organized as part of the Open Method of Coordination, the Bologna Process and other similar initiatives initiated at the level of the European Union and Europe as a whole.

In order to participate better and more effectively in the aforementioned European initiatives, the Ministry cooperates with other state bodies, educational institutions, citizens' associations and other organizations if necessary, and may appoint their representatives to working groups from paragraph 1, point 2) of this article.

(Law on Higher Education, 2021, article 32)

And this is how Serbia defines its position in negotiations with the EU regarding Chapter 26:

The new enrollment system for basic studies through the establishment of a unified system will ensure enrollment in relation to needs, that is, it will increase the number of students in priority areas. The concept of "student at the center of learning" will be further elaborated through changes in accreditation standards. The goals towards which higher education strives are the improvement of cooperation with employers and the economy, the strengthening of innovative potential and the increase of innovative outcomes, as well as the strengthening of the entrepreneurial component of higher education, which will be realized through various financial incentives from the economy and science.

(Negotiating position of the Republic of Serbia for the Intergovernmental Conference on the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union for Chapter 26, 2016)

We said that the position seems paradoxical considering the incompatibility of the integration of the education system of Serbia into the EU system and the simultaneous development of the domestic education system. Integration cannot take place in an equal way when it is dominated by unequal relations of economic, political and cultural power. Integration can rather resemble 'sucking' that underlines the peripheral position of the domestic education system. From the previously mentioned survey of attitudes, we see that students understand very well that the economy is one of the main causes of young people leaving the country. How will that closer

integration then help them stay? That is, will not the result be exactly the opposite, and will not greater integration mean an easier departure of active students as well as graduates?

It is particularly worrisome when what is emphasised as part of Serbia's position in the negotiations on the chapter on education is the improvement of cooperation with employers and the economy, along with the strengthening of the entrepreneurial component of higher education. Education is completely subordinated to economic trends. On the other hand, one should ask the question of why we should believe that the market is an entity that should determine educational processes. Why should the number of places at faculties be planned according to market needs? What does this mean for a country like Serbia, which is on the semi-periphery of the world and the periphery of the European system?

We tried to answer the last question with this paper. The education system of Serbia will not be subordinated to its own market trends, but to the market trends primarily in the central countries of Europe. This means that it is becoming less important that there is a shortage of health personnel in Serbia, and more important that this shortage also exists in Germany. In this sense, our educational system is deterritorialised. It is financed by the citizens of Serbia, and the fruits are reaped by the global deterritorialised system – rich countries that can offer higher wages to a highly educated workforce. Serbia is still somewhere at the beginning of this process and it remains to be seen whether this process is sustainable in the future. Will education be largely covered by budget funding, or will it gradually turn into an institution that will be attended by students from wealthier families who would enrol in faculties with plans to leave Serbia? Superficially, such a system is more cost-effective from a pure and limited economic point of view, and will be more integrated both with market trends in Serbia and with trends in the world market.

We have evidence that this is being thought about extensively in the public documents of the development strategy of the Ministry of Education:

Also, as numerous analyzes have shown, the higher education financing system should be improved in such a way that the established financing model encourages the quality, efficiency and success of studies. This means that, within the framework of this strategic measure, the development of such a model will be started, which will include, among other things, issues of financing low SES students, financing students who show exceptional results, ways of financing that enable continuous improvement of the infrastructure of the Higher Education Institution, as well as financing research work in the field of science and art and work on innovations. In order to monitor the implementation and efficiency of the established funding model, an information system will be developed. All changes in the financing system of HE will be introduced in the new Law on Higher Education. Providing support for the implementa-

tion of the new financing model at the level of HE will be realized through trainings in university centers. After three years of implementation of the new HE financing system, its evaluation will begin.

(Education and upbringing strategy
in the Republic of Serbia until 2030, 2021)

Like the previously mentioned statements in the theoretical part, we can note that the case of Serbia is not without the mediation of international institutions. In the same development strategy document, we find listed the following international institutions that have agreed upon projects with the Ministry of Education:

The following projects are implemented from the funds of contracted loans and credits: - 'School modernization program' - funds of the European Investment Bank - EIB - 'Education for social inclusion' - funds of the Development Bank of the Council of Europe - CEB - 'Inclusive preschool education and upbringing' - funds of the International bank for reconstruction and development - 'Student housing in Serbia' - Development Bank of the Council of Europe - CEB Implementation of the project is planned: - 'Improving university education' - funds of the Development Bank of the Council of Europe - CEB.

(Education and upbringing strategy in the Republic of Serbia until
2030, 2021)

Not only does the domestic education system finance rich European countries but it also takes loans from those countries in the whole process, so it borrows money and pays it back with interest, and provides the graduated student for free. Integration therefore looks very nice, when viewed from one perspective. From a domestic perspective, it is very dark and must remain so, because integration, which is presented as a positive term, actually obscures unequal relations based on the basic world division of labour. Within that division of labour, as a country on the European periphery, Serbia integrates itself as a country with cheap labour. As a remnant of the socialist period, it inherits a well-developed education system that enables it to be a country of cheap, highly educated labour. As such, it is ideal for the education of doctors and medical staff, engineers and other professions that have a 'pass' on the world market.

CONCLUSION

The education system globally acts as a unitary and self-regulating system that does not need special state interventions, especially under the influence of non-governmental organisations or supra-state international organisations. After all, Bologna was created as an agreement between the ministers of the leading European countries. In such a context, the power of (semi)periphery countries like Serbia is insignificant, and as we have

seen, institutions present integration as incentives for progress. Powerless to reject these processes and to lead an autonomous educational policy, they increasingly become a leaf in the wind that turns as the countries of the core blow.

Even if the Ministry of Education could lead an autonomous education policy that would be followed by an agreed demographic policy, it remains very questionable how much effect it would have, bearing in mind the mentioned thesis, which states that the economy is, in fact, the decisive factor for students' decision to leave the country. In this sense, as part of a global market in competition with global players, it seems that small countries cannot offer enough to keep students in the country, at least from an economic perspective. Serbia is not in the position of Asian countries like Japan, Korea, and China, which fearlessly educate their students abroad, knowing that there is a local tradition and patriotic culture with an economic perspective that will bring them back after their studies, and enable national development.

Bearing this in mind, we return to what was said in the introduction, that the possibility of politics to solve this problem is very small. Brain drain is not primarily a political, but rather an economic problem, and politics as a primarily national field cannot exert sufficient influence during processes that are international. This leads to the pessimistic conclusion that the state can at best do 'damage control,' minimise departures and try to retain some cohorts of talented students. Otherwise, we can expect a further decline in the student population, an increase in student departures and a deepening of the gap compared to the countries of central Europe.

The picture of the future of higher education in Serbia becomes a little brighter only when you look at secondary education and the penetration of dual education, which seems a few shades darker. However, ideology always represents a kind of reaction to existing things, and many will look at these dark shades as a light of hope, a possibility of salvation by leaving a country with no perspective for one of the European countries that offer better living conditions and the development of scientific and intellectual abilities.

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ВИСОКО ШКОЛСТВО И РЕПРОДУКЦИЈА СВЕТСКОГ СИСТЕМА

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Резиме

Улогу високог школства у савременим друштвима не треба првенствено посматрати кроз улогу у класној репродукцији унутар једне друштвене формације. У складу са методолошком променом јединице анализе коју уноси светско-системска теорија, јединица анализе не треба бити појединачно друштво, већ гло-

бално друштво – јединица анализе је светски систем. Теза која се испитује у овом раду састоји се у разматрању једне од улога, у овом случају улоге класне репродукције, која се представља у ширем друштвеном контексту. У случају држава које се налазе на (полу)периферији светског система попут Србије и које садрже елементе положаја нео-колоније, потреба за високо образованим становништвом не може бити од примарног значаја, као уосталом ни потреба за научним центрима и научним истраживањима. У њима се наставља интензивно одвијање репродукције високо школованих кадрова јер универзитети не школују високо образовано становништво искључиво за сопствене потребе, већ се позиција високог школства оријентише према спољним факторима. Земље (полу)периферије учествују у репродукцији високо школованих кадрова за земље центра. Будући да су економски фактори одлучујући у миграторним кретањима и стварању феномена „одлива мозгова“, аутономне одлуке националних држава у циљу спречавања ових штетних процеса су ограничене и готово сведене на минимум. У том контексту се одвија глобализација и детериторијализација образовног система у оквиру које националне државе на својој територији образују кадрове који ће бити интегрисани унутар земаља које нису учествовале у трошковима школовања. На тај начин земље центра добијају готово бесплатну високо квалификовану радну снагу.