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Editors

Assoc. Prof. Dr.sc Goran Ilik
Assoc. Prof. Dr.sc Angelina Stanojoska

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INCOME, INSTITUTIONS AND EDUCATION AS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS¹

Predrag Jovanović, PhD,

Principal Research Fellow, *Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade,*
avepedja@gmail.com

Ana Vuković, PhD

Research Associate, *Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade,*
avukovic@idn.org.rs

Ivana Ostojić, Ms Econ Sc

Special Consultant, *Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade,*
ivanaostojic27@yahoo.com

Abstract

The levels of gross domestic product (GDP) and personal income are not the only determinants of citizens' quality of life and of the level to which they will be able to achieve their human rights. Human development is a wider concept that involves the creation of an environment that will enable citizens to fulfill their needs and interests. Despite rising GDP and income in the past period, Serbian society became more closed regarding mobility to higher levels of education. Moreover, during the past decade, the rise of GDP and income was followed by the weakening of institutions, stagnation in the fight against corruption, and poorer rule of law. One of the consequences of rising inequalities and weakening of the rule of law and institutions were more intensive migrations from Serbia to Western European countries although income lag was reduced.

Keywords: *human rights, rule of law, institutions, education, income*

INTRODUCTION

Human rights include persons' rights on an adequate standard of living, appropriate housing, health care, education, etc. Higher level of meeting those goals indicates citizens' better quality of life that means they achieve in practice their rights to a greater extent.

Citizens are very sensitive regarding their human rights and in case they can't achieve them on an acceptable level they tend to leave the country and migrate to those countries where human rights are satisfied at a higher level. That tendency

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was clearly recognized in the past few decades worldwide. In this paper, we will focus on migrations within Europe – from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to the Western ones during the past three decades.

Citizens and state authorities may perceive the relevance of specific components of quality of life and human rights differently. Governments tend to overestimate the positive effects of rising GDP or income per capita on quality of life as well as on standard of living. However, (Petrović, Brčerević and Šaranović 2020, 38) shows that increased GDP should not be equated with a standard of living rise. The authors illustrated that by comparing changes in GDP with a rate of migrations that were considered as indicators and consequence of changes in quality of life. They compared GDP per capita in CEE countries with the ones in Western European (WE) countries and concluded that GDP in the Central and Eastern European countries was 38% of the GDP of their western neighbors in 2000 while in 2018 the share increased to 60% indicating that the lag has narrowed. However, in the same period, the level of migrations from East to West of Europe intensified indicating that the gap in the standard of living between the two groups of countries did not follow the GDP patterns.

According to (Petrović, Brčerević and Gligorić 2019, 20), although GDP and income level are powerful factors of migrations, they are not the most significant ones. Namely, rule of law, strong and independent institutions, corruption control as well as the quality of public services (such are health service, education, administrative services, etc.) had a dominant impact on migrations within Europe. That explains the higher share of emigrants in the working-age population in Croatia with an average salary of 900 euros compared to a significantly lower share of emigrants from Latvia and Lithuania whose citizens have an average salary ranging between 800 and 850 euros.

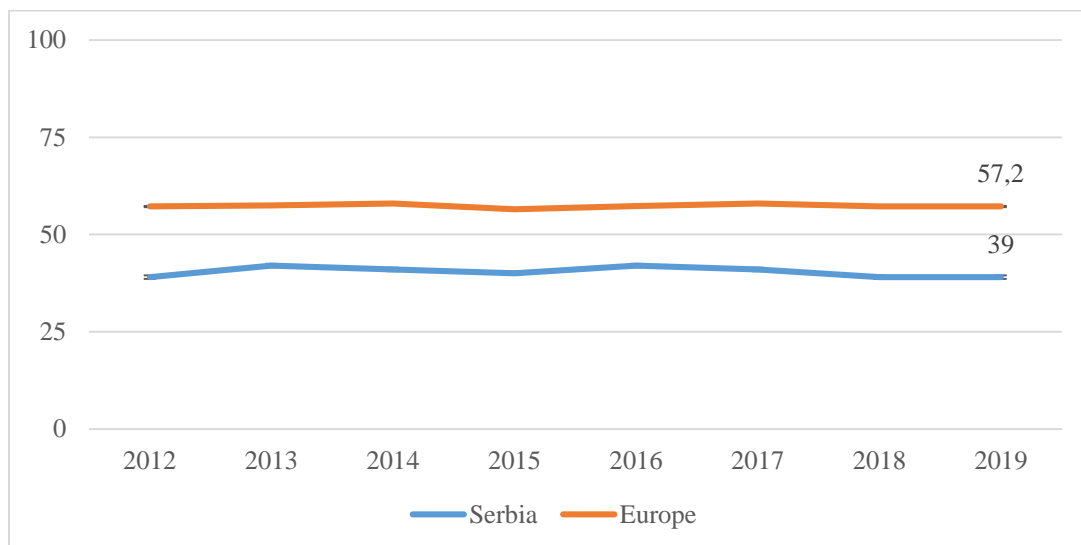
The econometric model (Petrović, Brčerević and Šaranović 2020, 40) was applied in order to project changes in migrations from Serbia to WE countries in three different scenarios. The first one is so called “status quo” with no changes in income and with absence of reforms related to rule of law, institutional building and curbing corruption. In that scenario, research team estimated that emigration from Serbia will continue to rise in the period 2021-2025 reaching 1,2 – 1,3% of the working-age population compared to present 1%. In the second scenario, if average salaries reach 900 euros (presently an average salary is 500 euros) which is a target set by the Government for 2025, the moderate slowdown of the negative tendency could be expected – a share of emigrants from Serbia would be 1,05 to 1,10% in its working-age population. Finally, in the third scenario, if institutions are strengthened properly, rule of law reach EU recommended standards, as well as a level of corruption is reduced to moderate level, emigration rate from Serbia could be decreased to 0,85 – 0,90%.

It could be assumed that the rate of emigration indicates differences in quality of life and level of human rights among countries. In other words, people are moving from countries with a lower standard of living and actual human rights to those with higher standards where they can truly achieve their human rights. Thus it would be important to detect at which level is Serbia in terms of corruption, rule of law and institution building presently and what are major causes of the current

situation. Furthermore, it should be analyzed why previous measures and activities in that respect, undertaken during the past two decades in Serbia and strongly supported by EU and other international organizations (IOs) did not bring expected results. Finally, recommendations on how to avoid the past practice of inefficient, superficial, and formal changes with poor effects in practice would be presented.

RULE OF LAW AND CORRUPTION IN SERBIA

According to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Serbia is a country with high corruption risk, with a score of 39² in 2019 (Transparency International 2020). As it could be seen at Graph 1, Serbia had significantly higher level of corruption than the European countries (Graph 1).



Graph 1: CPI changes for Serbia and Europe

Source: www.transparentnost.org.rs, July, 2020.

Serbia has a corruption risk that is more than one third higher than an average one in Western European and EU countries (66). Even within a group of Central and Eastern European countries, Serbia is in the lower part of the list (Table 1).

Table 1: CPI of the former socialist countries of Europe

Country	CPI
Estonia	74
Slovenia	60
Lithuania	60
Poland	58
Czech Republic	56
Latvia	56

² CPI range from 0 for the highest level of corruption to 100 indicating corruption free countries.

Georgia	56
Slovakia	50
Croatia	47
Romania	44
Hungary	44
Montenegro	45
Belarus	44
Bulgaria	43
Armenia	42
Serbia	39
Bosnia and Herzegovina	36
Northern Macedonia	35
Albania	35
Moldova	32
Ukraine	30
Russia	28

Source: www.transparentnost.org.rs, July, 2020.

In the past two decades, Serbia made significant progress regarding CPI. In 2000, Serbia's CPI was only 1,3 placing it at the bottom of the Global Corruption Perception list as one of the most corrupted countries in the world. However, during the first decade of the 21st century, Serbia almost tripled its CPI score to 3,5 in 2010.

A decade later, in 2019, CPI was 39 at the same level as it was in 2012. Thus the period of the past two decades in the 21st century could be divided into two sub-periods: the first one marked by breakthrough and dynamic improvement and the second decade characterized by minimal progress (0,4 for the whole decade) that could be considered as stagnation.

The key obstacle is the low level of rule of law characterized by poor implementation of regulation and contracts. One of the most striking examples is that the Government, in the past seven years, practically stopped the processes of selection and dismissal of directors and civil servants on appointed positions that were its obligation according to the Public Enterprise Law and Civil Servants Law. In that way, majority of directors in the public sector remained in the acting position that made them highly vulnerable to be dismissed without any explanation.

Furthermore, the largest infrastructure projects were excluded from the Public Procurement Law (PPL) based on international agreements concluded with certain countries on a bilateral basis. Those agreements served as a basis for avoiding transparency and open competition procedures provided by the Law indicating a high risk of unfavorable terms in spending citizens' money. The absence of rule of law in the sphere of public procurement undermines the standard of living and quality of public services since large amounts of money are spent on non-transparent and on an inefficient way thus reducing available funds for other purposes of vital importance for citizens.

In general, the decision-making process of state authorities is nontransparent resulting in questionable decisions. Recent large construction works in the City of Belgrade that raised the huge interest of the local community, but with

no answers from authorities were good examples of that practice. Serbian Free Access to Information of Public Importance Law is among the most advanced laws in this area on the world, however, enforcement of the Commissioners' decisions were poor since state authorities refused to comply with the decisions.

Similar situations are in the areas of financing political parties and election campaigns as well as in prevention of officials' campaigns during elections that are highly regulated, but almost completely ignored by authorities and state officials when it comes to implementation of the regulation. Significant weaknesses in enforcement of the regulation in this area lead to undermined trust of citizens in the election process thus hurting their right to vote.

EU progress reports pointed out the huge gap between the quality of legislation measured by the level of alignment with directives on one side and the effectiveness of its implementation on the other side. We can illustrate that on an example of public procurement that is closely linked with the issues of corruption and rule of law, directly affecting the standard of living and quality of services that meet citizens' rights on education, health, etc.

During the past decade, legislative activities in the area of public procurement were intensive in Serbia. Concretely, in 2012 the new PPL was adopted and it was amended in 2015, followed by the adoption of the new PPL in 2019.

Although the amending of the laws enabled further alignment with EU directives that was not a key challenge. Namely, in EU Progress report 2016 for Serbia in Chapter 5, Public procurement, it was said: "The legal framework is broadly in line with the *acquis*" and then more specific: "The law on public procurement is largely aligned with the *acquis* on classical and utilities procurement". At the same time, real-life public procurement status was significantly different from its regulation status i.e. what was "on paper": "Serbia is moderately prepared in this area which is particularly vulnerable to corruption. Further efforts are needed to prevent corruption from occurring during the procurement cycle. Significant efforts are needed to further improve competition and transparency in public tenders" (European Commission 2016, 4).

Instead of focusing efforts on how to provide a strict implementation of the regulation that is already "largely aligned with *acquis*", Serbian authorities decided to prepare a new Law in 2018. The same could be said for the whole area of the corruption control in Serbia: "The legal framework for the fight against corruption is broadly in place" and further "corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem. There have been limited results from the implementation of adopted legislation" (European Commission 2016, 4).

Intensive activities on amending laws and adopting the new ones, served to Serbian authorities to present themselves to the international community as well as to Serbian public that they work on curbing corruption and on rule of law strengthening. Since the impact of previous provisions was limited due to low enforcement capacities and efficiency, it was hard to expect that changed provisions would have different effects.

In that way, the gap between legislation and practice was widening with legislation being improved over time while practice being poorer. The outcomes

were more widespread corruption and weaker rule of law that undermined citizens' rights on adequate civil services such as education, medical care, etc. Non-transparent and non-competitive spending of taxpayers' money increased the risk of abuse and corruption thus hurting citizens' standard of living as one of the most important human rights.

In order to change the negative tendency of the increasing gap between legislation and its implementation, it is important to put in focus factors that caused such weak implementation of the regulation. By reducing obstacles to efficient implementation of legislation, Serbia would enable achieving a higher level of citizens' rights, better public services such as health care, education, etc. and a higher standard of living making the citizens ready to provide support for further reforms.

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW AND INSTITUTIONS BUILDING

One of the key prerequisites for ensuring citizens' equal rights and full access to public services of adequate quality are institutions. In a narrow sense, institutions could be defined as public entities and regulatory bodies. A wider definition of institutions would include, apart from state and regulatory bodies, laws, rules, formal management processes such as public financial management, procurement, human resource management (OECD 2015, 4-5).

The factor of crucial importance for success in upgrading institutions is a clear political will. In its absence, superficial formal changes combined with the strengthening of negative tendencies regarding the status and capacities of institutions will occur. Experiences of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries proved that political will for reforms including improved status and capacities of institutions was created primarily under external (EU) pressure as a part of the accession process.

Lack of genuine domestic (local) initiatives for institution building and rule of law raised a question on how sustainable they were. A SIGMA/OECD study assessed civil service reforms in CEE countries five years after accession to the EU (SIGMA 2009, 15). The study included countries that joined the EU in May 2004 and examined the extent to which these countries have continued the reform of civil service after accession and the extent to which their civil service systems fit the European principles of administration in 2009.

The paper argued that only a minority of countries had made progress since gaining full EU membership in 2004. According to the level of development of civil services systems reached five years after accession, three groups of countries could be distinguished. The first group was countries that continued pre-accession reforms and upgraded their civil service systems. In Lithuania, Latvia, and to a lesser extent Estonia, the civil service system achieved a relatively high degree of fit with European principles of administration, but the achievements still remain vulnerable and unconsolidated.

The second group of countries (Hungary and Slovenia) were classified as cases of "constructive reform reversals". Both countries have made progress in some areas of civil service governance but the fit with European principles had declined in others. Overall, the civil service systems in Hungary and Slovenia

demonstrate an intermediate degree of fit with European principles of administration.

The third group of countries (Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic) were classified as cases of “destructive reform reversals”. In all three cases, civil service institutions had been eliminated since accession, without the establishment of new frameworks. Until 2009, the civil service systems of these three Member States had not reached an intermediate degree of compatibility with European standards of administration.

Based on the study findings, it could be concluded that most of the transitional countries lacked awareness of the importance of a professional and efficient civil service with high integrity. Their readiness for reforms was motivated primarily to fulfill EU requests. Once the EU was “pleased” and “green light” for accession from Brussels received efforts on institutional development ceased. The conclusion of the paper was that only three Baltic countries continued with reforms in this area after accession.

Lack of awareness of national authorities on the importance of rule of law and institutional building and thus an absence of authentic domestic initiative in upgrading them was clearly recognized in countries that joined EU in the next wave of EU enlargement – Bulgaria and Romania, in January 2007 as well. Furthermore, it could be said that external (EU) pressure played a key role in the process of reforming and strengthening the rule of law and institutions in Croatia that joined the EU in July 2013.

In Serbia, processes of upgrading rule of law and of developing institutions were induced, guided, and kept running due to the strong involvement of the EU Commission as a part of the wider accession process. When in EU the issue of enlargement was replaced by the necessity of internal reorganization after the UK Brexit referendum vote in June 2016, the reform processes in Serbia, including the strengthening of rule of law and institutions were abandoned. Step back in mentioned areas in Serbia was visible particularly since 2016 that coincide with Brexit referendum and with a weakening of EU interest for enlargement. Poorer performance of Serbian institutions resulted in a higher perception of corruption – Transparency International CPI score was 42 in 2016 while in 2019 it dropped to 39.

Moreover, Freedom House in its “Freedom in the World 2019” report downgraded Serbia to the status of “partly free” country. Serbia was one of the countries with the biggest declines in its democracy score, alongside Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Venezuela. Freedom House uses 25 indicators to rank countries on a 100-point scale. These indicators include electoral processes, human rights, and rule of law (Freedom House, 2019).

The transitional process enabled CEE countries to develop institutions, taken on a broader sense, much faster than it took Western countries to develop their own. For example, Croatia completed transitional process that ended up with joining the EU within a period of a decade. The “cost” of such fast pace is weak ownership by local authorities resulting in questionable and vulnerable sustainability.

It could be concluded that a key prerequisite for improving the quality of citizens' lives and for raising the availability of civil rights in practice is to provide a political will for reforms that would include upgrading the rule of law, institutional building as well as the fight against corruption. The incentive for creating such will could come either from outside (primarily from the EU, in the context of EU accession process of the Western Balkan countries) or from inside by domestic stakeholders such as political parties, business community, non-governmental organizations, etc. It is important to emphasize that in this paper we discuss how civil rights are applied in citizens' everyday life and not about the formal aspect since most of the rights are already available ("on paper") to our citizens by a constitution and by other relevant laws that were prepared as a part of the process of harmonization with EU standards.

Furthermore, in the absence of strong political will and commitment to the strengthening of rule of law and institutions, it is reasonable to re-examine usefulness of the present form of international assistance to reforms in these areas. Namely, although there is no genuine will for reforms, international organizations led by the EU continue to provide large technical assistance to Serbia in institutional capacity building and in strengthening rule of law. Trainings and promotions of "best practice" cases form a significant part of IPA and other international projects aimed to improve the way local institutions operate. However, if managers and employees of beneficiary institutions are not truly committed to reforms, trainings have a little impact if all.

According to the survey on motivation of public officers in public procurement (IPSOS 2019), majority of the officers were reluctant to take any action that required additional efforts and that brought more risk than usual. In other words, they prefer routine, not change. The consequence is that only minority of officers are truly willing to learn new techniques and procedures that would improve their performance as well as the performance of their organizations.

In case that agile, ambitious officers are faced with barriers and rigid systems within organizations unprepared for changes, they usually decide to leave the organization moving to more dynamic entities where they can meet their personal need for professional improvement. In that way, public institutions are left with fewer officers that possess advanced knowledge and have to rely more on those who are not interested in changes and who perceive training as "an unnecessary burden" to their everyday work.

The experience of reforms in Serbia, in the past two decades, proved that steps forward in the rule of law and in the development of institutions were critically dependent on the attitude of decision-makers. Where directors and heads of public authorities initiated and supported continuous reforms, chances for success were high. Otherwise, even the best trainings would have very limited impact due to the absence of will to implement newly acquired knowledge. Moreover, institutions that should serve as "pillars" of reforms in many cases were losing their "institutional memory" over time since officers that were most prone to adopt and apply new skills would opt for leaving rigid bureaucratic organizations thus additionally diminishing potential benefits of technical assistance.

Furthermore, institutional performance is highly dependent on so-called “soft skills” that affect behavior and motivation of officers. In transitional countries, changes were not needed just in “core businesses”, but in manners of organization, management, employees’ motivation etc. Research of the influence of deadlines set by Public Procurement Law on the actual duration of public procurement processes in Serbia proved that legal deadlines explain the duration of an average public procurement process to only 24% (Čudanov, Jovanović and Jaško 2018, 365). Remaining 76% comes from the organization of the process, internal delays and “bottlenecks”, etc.

This calls attention to organizational and managerial issues that were highly neglected in search to achieve public entity major goals. For example, in the public procurement area, one of the institutional key performance goals is the higher efficiency of the procedure. The major indicator of achieving that goal is the duration of the procurement procedure measured in the number of days required to complete the procedure. In order to meet the goal of providing supply of goods, services and works smoothly, without delays, managers of Serbian public procurement entities focused their initiative on cutting legal deadlines for the submission of bids. However, they overlook that EU countries undertake procurement procedures within the same legal deadlines as set by directives without delays. The reason lies in higher efficiency due to better organization and management.

Directors of Serbian public authorities make limited efforts aimed to organize the process at the level of organization better, to establish efficient monitoring and control mechanisms that would prevent irregularities and to enable detection of misuse much easier. Instead of focusing strictly on cutting deadlines through amendments of the Law, it is necessary to pay attention to the organization’s operational processes. Moreover, IOs should include in their programs of assistance, besides Law amendments, expertise in organization, management, and managerial responsibilities, in particular. In recent years, international organizations have already recognized the importance of this kind of expertise for institution building in transitional countries (SIGMA 2009, 21-5).

It could be concluded that current practice of providing expertise by IOs to the countries in transition aimed to develop institutions, strengthen the rule of law and curb corruption is far from being sufficient for success of reforms. It is important to keep in mind that the key prerequisite for achieving “zero tolerance” to corruption, strict implementation of rules relying on strong institutions with sufficient capacities independent from the influence of political parties and particular interest groups is to create and keep domestic political will for changes required to meet the abovementioned goals. Once the political will and orientation are provided, international technical assistance could be productive, not before.

The behavior of institutions’ managers should be targeted including the creation of a proper set of incentives for them, both positive (recognitions) and negative (sanctions), for acting in the desired manner. Improved evaluation undertaken by the local civil sector and other domestic stakeholders as well as by IOs would require shifting focus from formal changes to the practical ones. Evaluation should take into account if certain activities led to changes of real

indicators, not to simply report that planned activities were performed. The necessity of adopting a new approach to evaluation and to the assistance concept has already been recognized by IOs with World Bank's "Project for Results" (P4R) as one of the successful examples. Moreover, extension of technical assistance should be conditioned by achieving targets in practical sphere in the previous project as it was the case in the P4R. The new approach would help to avoid a scenario where frequent legal changes disguise lack of implementation, creating an illusion to domestic public as well as to the international community that local authorities are active in establishing rule of law, institutional development and fight against corruption while there is no progress in real life of their citizens.

EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT – FORMAL RIGHT AND REALISTIC POSSIBILITIES

In addition to income, education is another important indicator of human development. Defining the Education Strategy and Education Policy as a public policy sub-discipline should give everyone an equal right to education, especially the availability of higher education levels. The realization of an equal right to education is conditioned by the degree of social development and the represented level of poverty and economic inequalities.

The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia until 2020 deals with the determination of the purpose, goals, directions, instruments, and mechanisms of development of the education system in Serbia over the past ten years and attempts to shape the development of this system in the best-known way. The projection relied on the state of the system at the time when the strategy was prepared and was guided by the expected life and development needs of society in Serbia.³

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia until 2020 specifies individual activities defined by the goals and priorities of the Strategy, elaborates ways of implementation, deadlines, key actors and executors, instruments for monitoring and set indicators of progress, as well as of procedures for reporting and assessing the effects of the foreseen strategic measures.

The Action Plan set out four goals for the long-term development of education that are binding on the education system as a whole and for every part of it. The goals are: 1) increasing the quality of educational processes and outcomes to the maximum attainable level - one arising from scientific knowledge of education and reputable educational practices; 2) increasing the coverage of the population of the Republic of Serbia at all educational levels, from pre-school education to lifelong learning; 3) achieving and maintaining the relevance of education, especially that which is wholly or partly financed from public sources, by matching the structure of the education system to the immediate and developmental needs of individuals, economic, social, cultural, media, research, educational, public, administrative and other systems and 4) increasing the efficiency of use of all

³ National documents: <https://erasmusplus.rs/nacionalni-dokumenti/>, 13 February 2020.

education resources, that is, completing education within the stipulated period, with a minimum extension of time and reduced school leaving.⁴

From the late 1960s and early 1970s the idea of the necessity of changes in the educational process matured, and “from that moment until today we can talk about a permanent reform of education in our society, that has been going through periods of ups and downs” (Miladinović 2011, 27). For example, in socialist Serbia, the children of the peasants made it relatively easy – especially when compared to the present day – to move into all secondary and higher occupations (Antonić, 2013, 161).

However, some research on the social structure in Serbia indicates that the right to education, especially to higher levels of education, depends on belonging to a particular social class. Thus, for example, in contrast to the period before the 1990s, members of the lower classes are not able to educate and do not have access to higher levels of education.

Social mobility was significantly reduced after the collapse of socialism and the following crisis that hit the country during the 1990s. This can be seen from the research conducted by Lazić and associates in 1997. The share of executives with peasant origin fell to 46 percent and of professionals to 41 percent, “the data point to the structural consolidation of deagrarianization carried out in socialism and the beginning of a linear reproduction of the layered structure. 'Private' kinship still strongly links the layer of farmers to the layer of small entrepreneurs, while the agricultural background of executives is gradually declining as new generations arrive in this layer. There are fewer farmers, and their offspring are increasingly struggling to enter higher positions in the social hierarchy” (Cvejić 2006, 137).

The survey by Lazić et al (2012), with Cvejić (2012) reporting on mobility findings, shows a further decline in agricultural and worker backgrounds among the upper classes. For executives this share fell to 22,5 percent (1988: 83,9 percent; 1989: 61 percent; 1997: 46 percent), for professionals to 37 percent (1988: 66,2 percent; 1989: 43,9 percent; 1997: 41 percent), while for private entrepreneurs it fell to 50 percent (1988: 71,3 percent; 1989: 57,1 percent; 1997: 68 percent). Although some of this decline can be explained by different patterns “the trend of increasing recruitment from the upper class and class consolidation is clear”, that is, “the recruitment circle for the higher layer is increasingly closing in the relation of the higher layer - the expert layer” (Cvejić 2012, 150-1). When it comes to professionals, while previously the children of peasants or workers were relatively easy to reach specialist positions, and especially clerical ones, nowadays opportunities for social ascent through education are much less favorable: “The offspring of parents who have no more than primary education are most likely to receive secondary education, and the offspring of parents with secondary education are more likely to go to universities so that in only two generations can a number of lower-class members be expected to reach middle one” (Cvejić 2012, 152).

The higher education system organized in this way additionally closes the already closed social structure (Miladinović 2011, 41). Whether Serbia will resolve

⁴ Action Plan: http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Akcioni_plan.pdf 27 January 2020.

the economic hardships of a (semi)peripheral society remains to be seen, “but even with this trend stopped, it is unlikely that Serbia, in terms of intergenerational mobility, will ever be as open in the near future as it was during the 1960s and 1970s” (Antonić 2013, 167).

The results of the research on (in)equality in the ability of members of a different class to educate, especially the lower social strata, show that Serbian society is more closed, ie. that mobility to higher levels of education is no longer an option available to all members of society. The young experts with a degree became Serbia’s export item. It is obvious that in Serbia the components of human development – income and education, especially the availability of higher education, are in a direct correlation. Based on research on economic and educational inequalities, we can conclude that Serbian society since the 1990s has become a society where mobility to higher places in the social structure based on educational qualifications is increasingly an individual privilege, rather than a more widely understood right to an education that is accessible to all regardless of the social stratum they come from.

CONCLUSION

Human rights include persons’ rights on an adequate standard of living, including appropriate housing, health care, education, etc. A higher level of meeting those goals indicates citizens’ better quality of life that enables them to achieve their human rights to a greater extent. State authorities tend to overemphasize economic components of standard of life such are GDP and personal average income. The consequence is that they make an equation between the rise of GDP and quality of life. However, in many cases, such it was in Serbia during the past decade, the higher rates of GDP rise than in WE countries were followed by deterioration of other components of quality of life such were: reduced corruption, strong and independent institutions, rule of law, mobility to higher education for all structures of society, etc. Based on migration trends within the EU, it could be concluded that citizens value the abovementioned non-monetary components even more than income. State authorities should put in focus on sustainable development goals such as are rule of law and education in order to create a better quality of life for their citizens.

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