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Driving forces of labour migration as barriers to labour migrants' professional mobility: The case of Yugoslav labour migration

Mato BOŠNJAK*

Abstract

After consolidation following the Second World War, the Yugoslav regime began modernising the country and transforming means of production, which resulted in a fragile economy and increasing labour surplus. The reforms coincided with economic development and increasing demand for migrant workers in several countries in the western hemisphere. Consequently, the migration of Yugoslav labour emerged and expanded for more than a decade. This article discusses developments conditioning and sustaining Yugoslav labour migration and Yugoslav workers' labour market performance in industrial countries of Western Europe. This article draws on empirical literature and theoretical understandings of labour migration merged with the perception of temporariness of labour migrants' relocation. The article argues that Yugoslav workers' labour market performance in Western Europe was an outcome of interactions between driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration, practices of its main agents, and the surrounding socioeconomic contexts.

Keywords: labour market mobility, professional stagnation, occupational distribution, professional subordination, Yugoslavia

Introduction

In 1963, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia)² officially recognised and legalised the increasing labour emigration and embarked on constructing the mechanisms of its control, galvanisation, and utilisation. Embracing emigration was essentially the Yugoslav regime's way of accepting its inability to control the state's borders and populations' spatial movements and providing an economic and social development able to contrast the conditions in the countries of the industrialised West.³ Western countries were welcoming the labour of Yugoslav workers because of rapid economic and social developments which were invoking shortages in certain sectors of Western

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² Yugoslavia was a federation of six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia (today North Macedonia), Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, and two autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

³ The term "West" is used as a collective designation of economically and industrially advanced countries.

labour markets characterised by working conditions increasingly unappealing to the domestic workforce.⁴ Since the labour migration was of mutual interest, the Yugoslav regime and the countries receiving Yugoslav labour designed various mechanisms to facilitate, sustain, and control migration currents and to utilise its economic contexts. Labour migration was declared, emphasised, and nurtured as temporary by Yugoslavia and by most of the receiving countries, and it was widely embraced by Yugoslav labour migrants.⁵ However, social and economic developments had reconditioned migration into enduring relocation for most migrating workers and their families. Despite their potentially permanent settlement, Yugoslav workers were forgoing major developments within receiving countries, experiencing insignificant professional progress and labour market mobility.⁶

This article aims to propose an understanding of Yugoslav workers' labour market performance in the labour-receiving countries of Western Europe between 1963 and 1991.⁷ By looking through theoretical lenses at empirical studies on Yugoslav labour migration and its main agents, the article frames and merges contexts and developments conditioning Yugoslav workers' occupational and hierarchical distribution within labour markets of Western European labour-receiving countries. The article bridges theoretical understandings of initiation and perpetuation of labour migrations and embeds in the framework the perception of labour migrants' temporariness, a hallmark strongly characterising the Yugoslav labour migration. The article argues that the narrow occupational distribution and insignificant professional progress among Yugoslav workers in Western labour markets were conditioned by the workers' perception of temporariness regarding their relocation, embedded in the social contexts of the Yugoslav society and societies of receiving countries, and sustained by the main drivers of Yugoslav labour migration.

⁴ The term Yugoslav, when denoting people, is used as a geographical term and does not connote ethnicity. Ethnic identifications of migrants from former Yugoslavia are irrelevant for this article. By "Yugoslav workers", the article refers to all workers originating from the former Yugoslavia and working in Western Europe, including labour migrants' spouses and children. The term "labour migrants" seems inappropriate for these latter categories since they migrated as family members. However, the majority was quickly integrated in the labour markets of Western Europe.

⁵ By "receiving countries" and "receiving societies", the article refers to countries and societies hosting Yugoslav labour migrants.

⁶ This article is not denying that other migrant groups were encountering similar conditions and outcomes. The perception of temporariness, occupational concentration, and multidimensional exclusion of labour migrants was common across labour receiving countries of the industrialised West. However, the history of other labour migrant groups is outside this article's scope.

⁷ The article focuses on this period and regards it as the period of 'Yugoslav labour migration' because the main principles and driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration analysed in the article operated between 1963, when Yugoslavia institutionalised labour migration, and 1991, when the country, its influence over labour migration and migrants' attachment to Yugoslavia ceased to exist.

The article examines empirical studies concerning the demographic, economic, political, and social dimensions of Yugoslav labour migration. The analysed studies explore social and economic conditions in Yugoslavia; general aspects of Yugoslav labour migration; particularities of labour migration to Austria, France, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany); and the occupational distributions and workers' performances in the labour markets of the named countries. The selection of the studies was conditioned by their contribution to the understanding of social and economic aspects conditioning and characterising Yugoslav labour migration and positions of Yugoslav workers within labour-receiving countries of Western Europe. The article draws its arguments on empirical findings illustrating interactions and interdependencies between the main driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration and the frequent attitudes and practices of its main agents.

Unlike previous studies, which focus on a particular problem or a narrow geographic area, this article contributes to existing knowledge by identifying and framing frequent practices, major developments, and persisting conditions shared by Yugoslav workers in all major labour-receiving countries throughout the period of Yugoslav labour migration. Moreover, by employing the notion of labour migrants' temporariness, the article expands the understanding of Yugoslav workers' positions in major labour-receiving countries of Western Europe. Although recognised by several studies as a persisting characteristic of Yugoslav labour migration, the notion of temporariness was overseen as one of the fundamentals of Yugoslav workers' occupational distribution and labour market mobility in Western Europe. On a general level, the article expands understandings of migrant workers' career stagnation and the role of institutional and socioeconomic settings in creating and sustaining barriers to migrant workers' access to professional development opportunities that often seem inclusive and accessible.

The article is organised into six sections. After the introduction, the article presents the analytical framework and describes general conditions initiating and shaping the emigration of Yugoslav labourers. The third and fourth sections discuss driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration and practices surrounding Yugoslav labour migrants. The sixth section discusses the occupational and hierarchical distribution of Yugoslav workers and their labour market performance.

1. Analytical framework

As analytical framework, this article combines dual labour market theory, network theory, and the theory of cumulative causation of labour migration since these theoretical perspectives explain

the main economic and social driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration and the interactions between them. The article embeds in the framework the notion of the perception of labour migrants' temporariness, which is here defined as an individual, collective, and institutional expectation in the temporary character of labour migrants' relocation, embedded in social and economic contexts of labour-sending and labour-receiving societies.

The dual labour market theory (Piore, 1979) explains international labour migration as a process driven by developed economies' structural and perpetual need for labour eligible for jobs in lower layers of the labour market. These needs emerge from social and economic developments – such as increasing incomes, standard of living, educational levels, and professional aspirations among the domestic workforce – and invoke segmentation of labour markets into primary and secondary. Domestic workers mostly occupy the primary sector, where employees receive stable jobs, good and improving conditions, benefits, and opportunities for professional development. In the secondary sector, jobs are characterised by low wages, low social value, lack of stability, low working conditions, and almost non-existent opportunities for advancement, which gradually repels domestic workers. Migrants from developing countries – where job opportunities are limited, working conditions worse, and incomes notably lower – take these jobs because they believe their migration and employment are only temporary and because they usually compare their own positions with conditions in their areas of origin, rarely perceiving themselves as a part of the host society (Massey *et al.*, 1993). They ignore the social contexts of their jobs since working in the least prestigious sectors of the developed economies offers broad possibilities within their societies of origin, to which they mostly strive to return.

Migrant workers' economic progress and the corresponding elevation of their social status alter the conditions, values, aspirations, and economic capabilities within their communities of origin (Massey *et al.*, 1993). Newly accumulated economic capital – distributed through remittances and investments in agriculture, movable assets, and real estates – catalyses social prestige and migrants' upward social mobility and alters the economic conditions and perception of migration within the sending communities. Migration and its associated social and economic aspects become gradually ingrained in the repertoire of sending communities' values and practices, which increases migration aspirations and capabilities among their members. Eventually, knowledge and narratives about migration diffuse beyond these communities' borders, which motivates additional movements and invokes the cumulation of migration over time and space (Massey *et al.*, 1993). Coincidentally, peoples' interpersonal ties also have the capacity to sustain and expand migration and make it essentially independent from institutional mechanisms. By linking migrants and potential migrants, interpersonal ties become a phenomenon defined by social scientists as “migrant networks”, which

can increase people's capability for migration by reducing the risks and costs of the migratory process (Massey, 1993). Through such networks, working abroad becomes increasingly accessible to potential migrants and a reliable source of economic incentives within the sending society. In receiving societies, the jobs migrants increasingly occupy gradually lose social value and become labelled as "immigrant jobs", further repelling domestic workers and creating additional needs for immigrants (Massey *et al.*, 1993; Piore, 1979). Immigrant labour becomes anchored in the core functioning of the developed economies and labour markets. However, the perception of its temporary character endures and shapes the surrounding social contexts.

2. Preconditions of Yugoslav labour migration

After the Second World War, Yugoslavia was characterised by a fragile economy, dysfunctional labour market, underdeveloped industry and educational system, and antiquated agriculture (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2020a; 2020b). After two decades of a socialist regime, and a significant development in comparison with previous periods, the regime was not able to completely abolish these conditions and establish a well-functioning social and economic system, and a stable development. Its social, economic and financial reforms, as well as the modernisation of industry and agriculture lacked the cohesion between country's economic capacities and the development of society. Gradually, the reforms generated a significant surplus of labour and lack of job opportunities that large dismissals of industrial labour surplus during 1960's further increased. These outcomes affected foremost unskilled workers, peasants, and young people in rural areas. Coincidentally, inflation was constantly rising and causing a chronic devaluation of incomes, continuous economic uncertainty, and a widespread stagnation in the living standard (Brekalo and Penava Brekalo, 2018; Dobrivojević Tomić, 2020a; 2020b). However, the rapid transition to industrial economy and modern society correlated with notable developments within Yugoslavia, such as rising levels of equality, education, and economic capabilities among the Yugoslav population and the development of modern mass media. These developments tend to increase people's aspirations, freedoms, and mobilities and their desires to realise these aspirations through migration (de Haas, 2021).

After the regime's embracement of labour migration, the movement of Yugoslav workers towards Western countries steadily grew, turning to a massive emigration after the comprehensive socioeconomic reform in 1965. The reform exacerbated economic uncertainty, affecting foremost peasants and the working class and producing an even larger number of the unemployed. In contrast, Western countries were experiencing a fast-expanding industrial and economic progress, as well as

rapidly increasing living standards and educational and professional aspirations among domestic workers. These developments invoked labour shortages in certain sectors of Western labour markets since domestic workers were no longer as keen to take low-valued and non-prosperous jobs. To sustain the economic development and expanding industries and meet the growing demand for eligible labour, Western countries began supporting their employers' recruiting in developing countries, where labour was abundant and significantly cheaper. Yugoslavia was one of the main sources of eligible labour for several countries in Western Europe. By the beginning of the 1970s, approximately 1.3 million Yugoslav citizens were living and working in the industrial countries of Western Europe and overseas (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007).

The massive emigration was halted by the economic aftermath of the oil crisis in the mid-1970s. However, it did not completely cease because demand for migrant labour was still characterising Western economies. It continued as a more selective process, restricted to skilled workers, reunion of family members, and re-migration of previous migrants.

3. Towards the utilisation of migration's potentials

In the early 1960s, the Yugoslav regime was gradually abandoning the communist promise of full employment and the policy of extensive emigration restrictions, perceiving emigration as an opportunity to discharge the surplus of unskilled and poorly educated job-seekers (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Novinščak, 2012). After the reform in 1965, galvanising and sustaining emigration from rural Yugoslavia became a state policy and one of the main objectives of local employment offices (Baučić, 1971; Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007). The magnitude of this strategy is illustrated in the regime's negotiations of the labour recruitment agreement with West Germany and its repetitive demands to include unskilled workers in regulated recruitments, as well as its efforts to control completely the recruitment procedures (Ivanović, 2012; Novinščak, 2012; Shonick, 2009). While West Germany, Austria, and Sweden were able to influence regulated recruitments (Frank, 2005; Ivanović, 2012; Shonick, 2009), French employers completely depended on Yugoslav employment offices' selection of workers (Ivanović, 2012).

The Yugoslav regime also perceived labour migration and the surrounding context as a platform for the development of closer economic and political cooperation with Western Europe (Ivanović, 2012). Pillars of this strategy were bilateral agreements signed with most of the countries frequently recruiting Yugoslav labour. The agreements were officially presented as a caring measure for protecting migrant workers and their families by regulating recruitment processes and migrants' labour and social rights (Novinščak, 2009). Notwithstanding, the agreements enabled the Yugoslav

regime and the governments of receiving countries' institutional and interstate control over migratory processes and its agents and their institutional support for the fluent migration of desirable and eligible labour. For the Yugoslav regime, the agreements also enabled interference with the social and cultural life of its citizens abroad, which was important for ideological, political, and economic reasons. Fears that political emigrants will influence labour migrants and turn them against Yugoslavia forced the regime to be active and influential among the migrant cohorts. Yugoslavia's perpetual need for foreign currencies, meagre in national banks but substantial among migrant workers, required a constant nurture of their sense of belonging to their communities of origin. The presence of the Yugoslav regime among labour migrants frequently manifested through establishing informational offices in the receiving countries, interfering in migrants' cultural and social associations, distributing Yugoslav media, and implementing or participating in various educational programmes in the receiving countries (Brunnbauer, 2012; Ivanović, 2012; Molnar, 2022).

Deeper cooperation with capitalist countries was a significant shift in the principles of the Yugoslav socialist regime, which first had to pass several ideological, political, and institutional barriers (Novinščak, 2009). To the opposing voices, the regime explained emigration as a benefit for the workers, a process of acquiring knowledge and skills which will ease their integration into the Yugoslav labour market after their return (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007). In addition, migration restrictions were incompatible with the official conception of Yugoslav society and the state governing through "humane socialism", including the individuals' right of working abroad (Novinščak, 2012). However, this conception only officially included everybody since the regime had instructed local employment offices to limit the emigration of skilled and educated individuals (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Dragišić, 2014). Moreover, no matter the professional characteristics of Yugoslav labour migrants, their emigration was proclaimed and emphasised as temporary throughout the existence of socialist Yugoslavia. This was clearly stated in the Yugoslav regime's definition "workers on temporary work abroad", which also included those not working, such as children and unemployed spouses.

4. Cumulative causation and utilisation of labour migration

Although the Yugoslav regime and major receiving countries had considerable impact on the migration of Yugoslav workers (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Dragišić, 2012; Frank, 2005; Ivanović, 2012; Molnar, 2014; Novinščak, 2012; Shonick, 2009), institutional and interstate mechanisms were generally incapable of shaping and controlling migration flows and the recruitment of Yugoslav

workers. Migration was mostly driven by a cumulative nexus occurring on the micro and meso levels of the Yugoslav and receiving societies, supported by Western employers and by the inertness of Yugoslav authorities. As migration expanded in the second half of the 1960s, the Yugoslav labour migrants and the surrounding socioeconomic context became increasingly prominent within the Yugoslav society. Migrants' experiences and a perceived economic success, as well as narratives constructed around migration and conditions in the West, were changing society's values and perceptions of work in the West. The manifestation of accumulated wealth – in the form of tractors, cars, modern goods (Ivanović, 2012; Schierup, 1973; Slavnić, 2006), and the luxury houses labour migrants were erecting in their villages (Bratić and Malešević, 1982; Brunnbauer, 2012; Schierup, 1973) – was not only witnessed and admired by the migrants' relatives and neighbours but also reported by Yugoslav media and broadly depicted by Yugoslav cinema (Dragišić, 2015; Ivanović, 2012). Impressions of the West, “where the money falls from the sky” (Slavnić, 2006, p. 111), were spreading through Yugoslav society and increasing its migration aspirations.

Coincidentally, transnational networks between migrants, their communities of origin, and Western employers increased the migration capabilities of potential migrants and caused further cumulation of labour migration. Studies have shown both the exceptional abilities of Yugoslav interpersonal ties to sustain migration and facilitate the enrolment of countrymen in the new social and work environment and Western employers' utilisation of these networks' capacities (Ehn, 1975; Frank, 2005; Jurić and Vujević, 2020; Knocke, 1986; Lorber, 2017; Mežnarić, 1977; Schierup, 1973; Stiever Lie, 1983). Migrant networks often linked villages or municipalities with Western employers, who preferred to avoid institutional procedures by recruiting relatives and acquaintances of already employed migrants. Employing through unregulated channels was not only cheaper and faster but also guaranteed a sustainable flow of verified and eligible workforce. It also established social control within workplaces, since a person recommending a relative or a friend usually bears the responsibility for their behaviour and performance (Frank, 2005). Therefore, West German employers had developed a strategy of direct recruitments from specific Yugoslav areas identified as a reliable source of labour, which was considerably more efficient than the procedures determined by the recruitment agreement (Ivanović, 2012; Novinščak, 2012). Swedish and Danish employers seemingly practiced the same strategy: The cases of a village where almost all who migrated were working in Denmark (Schierup, 1973) and of an industrial town in rural Sweden where the majority of labour migrants originated from two neighbouring Yugoslav villages are clear examples (Ehn, 1975). Moreover, Swedish employers occasionally demanded labourers from certain Yugoslav areas even when they were recruiting through regulated channels (Frank, 2005).

Unregulated recruitments were facilitated by some Yugoslav local employment offices by either misinterpreting or overlooking the regime's emigration policy (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Novinščak, 2012). Many municipal authorities acted as representatives of Western employers, intentionally overlooking the emigration policy and recruitment regulations because they were dependent on the economy surrounding labour migration (Brunnbauer, 2012; Novinščak, 2012). Regardless of intentions, these institutional practices made work abroad additionally accessible to potential migrants, further contributing to the cumulative causation of Yugoslav labour migration. Consequently, some Yugoslav villages and municipalities were turning into "communities of labour migrants", where cars were outnumbering cows (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007) and where almost everybody was working abroad (Ivanović, 2012). Since these practices were widespread within rural municipalities, the local authorities, the migrants, and Western employers were ultimately complying with the regime's policy of galvanising emigration from rural Yugoslavia.

Since the Yugoslav economy was constantly fragile, the remittances, labour migrants' savings, and the economy that developed around labour migration became increasingly important on all levels of Yugoslav society. Although many migrants were not financially supporting their families and relatives or saving money in Yugoslav banks (Hoffgräf and Selnik, 2021), the economy surrounding labour migrants was crucial for the well-being of Yugoslav local and national economic systems and international trade (Baučić, 1974; Bernard, 2019; Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Dragišić, 2009; 2014; Ivanović, 2012; Novinščak, 2012; Shonick, 2009; Vedriš, 1981). To persuade migrants to transfer their savings to Yugoslav banks or to invest in the Yugoslav local and national economy, the regime employed its informational offices and migrants' social clubs abroad (Dragišić, 2012; Ivanović, 2012). The regime was constantly creating new mechanisms and strategies for extracting migrants' financial capital, such as enabling migrants to purchase shares in public companies and utilising their local patriotism by campaigning for donations to their communities of origin. The money was officially intended to modernise industry and establish new factories, develop local and national infrastructure, and build schools and similar projects (Ivanović, 2012; Vedriš, 1981). The small-scale consumption of a private household was equally important for the regime, since paying for certain products in foreign currencies was rewarded with an exchange rate increased by 20% (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007). Moreover, paying in foreign currencies gave precedence when purchasing scarce goods and products with a long delivery delay (Baučić, 1974). But the utmost proof of desperation for labour migrants' money is illustrated in the regime's abandonment of the ground principle of the labour market's functioning by allowing labour migrants to, through purchase of shares, "buy" an employment for themselves or for a family member (Ivanović, 2012).

By establishing a web of mechanisms to encourage consumption and investments in the Yugoslav financial system and socioeconomic development, the Yugoslav regime nurtured migrants' sense of belonging to Yugoslavia and their perception of the temporariness of their migration. For migrants, contributing to the development of the villages, towns, and municipalities of their origin gave social meaning to their work and confirmed the temporary character of their migration (Ivanović, 2012). Through these contributions and the manifestation of purchasing capacities, migrants' jobs gained the value, recognition, and prestige lacking in the host societies, while the accumulation of economic capital in Yugoslav banks and enterprises promised an effortless return and re-integration. Moreover, these practices strengthened migrants' orientation to Yugoslav society, further distancing them from social contexts in the receiving countries. Nonetheless, migrants' contributions and consumption had a limited effect on the Yugoslav economy and the development of rural communities (Baučić, 1971; 1974; Bernard, 2019; Brunnbauer, 2012). Many who returned faced difficulties in integrating into society and its socioeconomic conditions and experienced discrimination by labour market authorities, forcing them to re-emigrate (Brunnbauer, 2012).

5. Yugoslav workers and the realities of dual labour markets

Yugoslav workers migrated for a variety of reasons. The desire for emancipation and personal development, as well as a quest for adventure and new experiences, was a common migration motive among Yugoslav migrants (Ehn, 1975; Knocke, 1986; Lorber, 2017; Mežnarić, 1977; Morokvašić, 1972; Svanberg, 2005). However, they migrated predominantly for economic reasons – to escape potential poverty, purchase a vehicle, build a house, or start a business after they return – perceiving their migration as temporary and striving to return as soon as they accumulate enough money to realise their aspirations (Čačić, 1988; Hoffgräf and Selnik, 2021; Jurić and Vujević, 2012; Lorber, 2017; Morokvašić, 1972; Slavnić, 2006; Svanberg, 2005). Despite their search for economic prosperity, the majority of migrants did not originate from Yugoslavia's poorest areas, nor were they representatives of the least educated Yugoslav population. This applies foremost to pioneering labour migrants, who often migrated from the most developed parts of Yugoslavia, and to those recruited selectively by Western employers based on their vocational training and work experience. However, the majority were of modest background, originating from rural Yugoslavia, and migrated as young, poorly educated, unskilled, and without significant work experience (Baučić, 1973; Brčić, 1990; Čačić and Kumpes, 1989; Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Dragišić, 2014; Knocke, 1986; Lorber, 2017; Morokvašić, 1972; Pepeonik, 1975). These characteristics largely determined their positions within Western labour markets. Among the minority who migrated as vocationally trained and with

experience of working in Yugoslavia, professional degradation was common, as well as misrecognition of their educational achievements (Brčić, 1990; Frank, 2005; Lorber, 2017; Meurle and Andrić, 1971; Paulson *et al.*, 1994; Stiever Lie, 1983).

Regardless of sociodemographic characteristics, Yugoslav workers were least desirable for their educational and professional capacities. Swedish employers perceived them as eligible for heavy labour and monotonous work (Augustsson, 1995; Frank, 2005; Meurle and Andrić, 1971; Paulson *et al.*, 1994) and as a national group that generally accepted subordination and inequality (Frank, 2005). Austrian employers sought almost exclusively low educated and unskilled workers from the Yugoslav periphery (Ivanović, 2012). The West German government and employers favoured Yugoslav workers because of their general lack of interest in labour movements, politics, and communist propaganda (Molnar, 2014; Shonick, 2009). Yugoslav workers' opposition to workers' union campaigns for decreasing the length of the working week, and their official requests to work overtime (Ivanović, 2012) made them certainly even more desirable to West German employers. Similar patterns of excessive work, passive participation in workers' unions and other social associations, and indifference in own working positions and in the social contexts and developments in the receiving countries were common among Yugoslav workers in other major receiving countries (Čačić, 1988; Dragišić, 2009; Drobnić, 1990; Frank, 2005; Ivanović, 2011; Knocke, 1986; Meurle and Andrić, 1971; Morokvašić, 1972). These attitudes are understandable because Yugoslav workers perceived their life in the West as temporary and invested rather in social development of their societies of origin. However, these attitudes made them constantly eligible for the work in secondary labour market and are explicit reflections of their occupational distribution and a widespread labour market immobility.

5.1. Occupational distribution and career development

In Western labour markets, Yugoslav workers mostly occupied sectors and jobs where skills, work experience, and proof of vocational training were irrelevant. However, they were neither proportionally concentrated in the same occupational sectors nor solely occupied lowest ranking positions. The latter was common among male workers, who were more often recruited selectively, based on their education and skills. In general, Yugoslav workers' occupational distribution was dependent on their passage to employment and the needs of a particular labour market. Regardless, they commonly experienced subordination and low labour market mobility. Throughout their working lives, the majority occupied manual jobs in subordinate categories of secondary labour

markets. Their widest subordination was in Austria, where approximately 90% of the first generation of Yugoslav labour migrants were working as unskilled or low-skilled labourers (Fassmann *et al.*, 1997). Even their descendants experienced low professional progress, with approximately 50% working as unskilled in the secondary labour market (Fassmann *et al.*, 1999). In West Germany and Switzerland, Yugoslav workers experienced slightly higher mobility, but even in these countries, the overwhelming majority were unskilled or low-skilled labourers (Fassmann *et al.*, 1999; de Coulon, 1999). In contrast, workers of native origin, as well as immigrants from Western European countries, experienced greater upward labour market mobility in all three countries, no matter the level of education and years of work experience. While Austrian, West German, and Swiss labour markets were strongly ethnically segregated, Swedish and Norwegian ones were largely stratified on the basis of gender. Certain ethnic stratification was manifested through a strong concentration of some immigrant groups in a few particular occupations (Leiniö, 1988; Stiver Lie, 1983). In Sweden, Yugoslav workers experienced moderately higher upward labour market mobility than in other countries, but in the course of the 1980s, during the transition to post-industrial society, their professional progress and income development became insignificant while their traditionally high labour market participation degraded (Ekberg, 1994). Declines were especially high among Yugoslav men since they were mainly distributed within heavy industry, in jobs that were steadily disappearing from the Swedish labour market.

Professional progress was especially low among Yugoslav female migrants, regardless of the receiving country. They often experienced intersectional subordination and discrimination based on class, gender, and ethnicity, and they lacked professional ambitions, opportunities, and strategies to change their positions (Knocke, 1986; Lorber, 2017; Morokvašić, 1979; Stiver Lie, 1983). The overwhelming majority spent their entire working lives as unskilled workers in low-paid and labour-intensive jobs in service sectors, seasonal occupations, and assembly lines in the heavy or garment industry, often working illegally and unprotected by the welfare system (Brčić, 1990; Ivanović, 2012; Knocke, 1986; Lorber, 2017; Podgorelec, 1990; Švob and Brčić, 1985). Consequently, many experienced severe health issues (Podgorelec, 1990) since extensive physical labour, poor working conditions, and uneven working times traditionally characterised these jobs. According to Ivanović (2012), one of the main reasons for the often illegal work and exploitation of Yugoslav women in West Germany was the state's policy of denying work permits to women who immigrated to join their husbands. However, Brčić (1990) found that even in the 1980s, after the official abandonment of the guest working system, approximately one third of Yugoslav women included in the study did not sign contracts with West German employers. Illegal work, as a primary or secondary source of income, was also common among Yugoslav men, especially during the most intensive years of

Yugoslav labour migration (Dobrivojević Tomić, 2007; Ivanović, 2012; Jurić and Vujević, 2020). Working extra hours, in shifts and during weekends, was common among both genders (Ivanović, 2012; Lorber, 2017; Morokvašić, 1972; Stiever Lie, 1983).

Yugoslav workers' participation in Western labour markets, in terms of both gainful employment and working hours, was high throughout the entire period of Yugoslav labour migration. Remarkably high was labour market participation among women, often reaching similar proportions as male workers (Leiniö, 1988, Lorber, 2017; Stiver Lie, 1983; Švob and Brčić, 1986). They mostly worked in typical "female branches" – namely, in service-oriented sectors (such as cleaning, housekeeping, and maintenance) or in the garment and food industries. However, Yugoslav women often neglected the conventional, gender-based occupational segmentations within developed economies, where the primary and secondary labour markets eventually divided horizontally, making certain branches restricted to minorities and immigrants or only to women (Reich *et al.*, 1973). It was common among Yugoslav women and men to perform jobs in the same occupational categories, mostly in industrial sectors characterised by a strong concentration of male workers (Brčić, 1990; Leiniö, 1988; Stiver Lie, 1983; Švob and Brčić, 1985). This is partially due to the pursuit of higher salaries in heavy industry sectors (Leiniö, 1988), where employers with highly standardised production and assembly lines targeted cheap labour, traditionally abundant among immigrant women. However, the convenience of migrating and finding employment through networks, as well as Western employers' perception of Yugoslav workers as eligible for certain jobs, certainly contributed to a gender-based occupational equality among Yugoslav workers.

5.2. Barriers to professional progress

Yugoslav networks were an immensely valuable resource for solving migration issues and finding employment. This is clearly demonstrated in the rapid galvanisation of Yugoslav labour migration and in institutional inability to control it. However, within the host societies, these networks turned Yugoslav workers into a static social group and workforce. They experienced a widespread isolation from the social contexts of host societies and a strong orientation towards their countryman (Čačić, 1988; Dragišić, 2009, 2012; Ivanović, 2011, 2012; Jurić and Vujević, 2021; Knocke, 1986; Meurle and Andrić, 1971; Morokvašić, 1972). The clearest example is that of a Swedish manufacturing company where the most effective to acquire higher skills and advance through the hierarchy was to connect with supervisors of Swedish and Finnish origin (Paulson *et al.*, 1994). Those connections enabled employees to participate in internal courses for skill improvement, which usually

brought a promotion to a higher position. Because of Yugoslav workers' ethnically framed social networks and disinterest in expanding them, supervisors generally mistrusted their loyalty, reliability, education, and skills. Consequently, Yugoslav workers predominantly performed manual jobs at the bottom of the company's hierarchy, seldomly engaging in internal courses and experiencing promotions.

The effect of expanded social networks is illustrated in Lorber's (2017) study of Yugoslav female workers in Austria. The study shows that only women who established and maintained strong social connections with their employers and supervisors of native origin acquired higher educational merits and advanced professionally. However, these women were a rare exception, since the overwhelming majority of Yugoslav women worked in the lowest layers of Western labour markets (Brčić, 1990; Ivanović, 2012; Lorber, 2017; Švob and Brčić, 1986; Pepeonik, 1975).

Constrained by their belief of the temporariness of their migration and their focus on acquiring social and economic assets that were only relevant in their area of origin, Yugoslav workers largely failed to invest in social and professional capital valuable in the receiving countries and convertible during economic crises and changes in means of production. Many failed to invest in the social and professional development of their descendants, who often experienced similar patterns of educational stagnation, occupational distribution, and low labour market mobility (Čačić and Kumpes, 1989; Fassmann *et al.*, 1999; Ivanović, 2012; Paulson *et al.*, 1994; Vegar, 1986;). However, seeing these outcomes only from Yugoslav workers' perspective means ignoring the social and economic practices characterising modern economies with segmented labour markets. Social isolation, occupational concentration, and professional immobility of labour migrants (and racial and ethnic minorities) are deeply embedded in the nature of segmented labour markets. These conditions are the main pillars in sustaining social hierarchies and economic stability and are therefore favoured by employers and acceptable for governments (Massey *et al.*, 1993). Namely, improving conditions in the secondary labour market would invoke a chain reaction of demands and necessities to improve conditions on all levels of hierarchy (Piore, 1979). Therefore, employers would rather recruit within social categories that conform to the existing system, while governments are satisfied with juridical equality within the labour market. Migrants' labour is also a key component in sustaining the service sectors of modern economies, as well as branches and industries employing cheap labour to remain competitive in the global market. Identified as eligible for lowest working positions and perceived as temporary labourers throughout their work lives, Yugoslav workers were one of the migrant groups sustaining Western secondary labour markets during the immigration restrictions invoked by the oil crises of the 1970s and throughout the transition from industrial to post-industrial economies in the 1980s. They fulfilled a structural demand for migrant labour in modern economies (Massey *et al.*, 1993).

Moreover, most of the receiving countries at the time were avoiding the complete inclusion of labour migrants, perceiving them as guests, and reducing them to the simple category of “temporary worker” who will return home when their labour becomes redundant (Castles and Davidson, 2000). Accordingly, the social exclusion and educational and professional immobility of migrant workers were of trivial significance in comparison with receiving countries’ social and economic interests and their economies’ perpetual demand for migrant workers. Combined with the conditions of dual labour markets (such as ethnic and occupational segregation, intensive labour, and overtime work), this institutional attitude fostered the exclusion of Yugoslav labour migrants from the developments of host societies and, subsequently, amplified both their sense of belonging to the society of their origin and their belief in eventual re-migration.

A few institutional initiatives to increase labour migrants’ educational capacities included programmes in primary and secondary education or courses in native languages. Alternatives offered by employers included official adult education and courses for skill improvement, both of which were conducted in the languages of the host societies, which Yugoslav workers rarely mastered.

Scholars have mostly overseen educational and professional opportunities and barriers that Yugoslav workers had experienced in the receiving countries, as well as their attitudes and perspectives regarding their own educational and professional progress. Several Swedish qualitative studies have provided some knowledge by showing that Yugoslav workers’ attitudes spanned from completely indifferent to ambitious and that they experienced continuous discrimination by their employers regarding opportunities for professional development (Augustsson, 1995; Knocke, 1986; 1994; Paulson *et al.*, 1994). However, as limited investigations, these studies do not provide a wider understanding of the opportunities and barriers Yugoslav workers have experienced in Sweden. A brief description of educational opportunities in Austria and West Germany was provided by Ivanović (2012), who found that both countries had several educational programmes for adults available to immigrant workers; however, only a small proportion of Yugoslav workers engaged in these programmes, which Ivanović (2012) ascribed to their commonly poor knowledge of the German language. Notwithstanding, their eagerness to work overtime, by taking extra shifts and working during weekends, further reduced their possibilities of pursuing education and professional development. According to Ivanović (2012), Yugoslav workers who learned German and acquired higher skills were usually promoted to higher positions of responsibility. However, the study did not focus on their educational paths and the extent of their professional advancement. Brčić (1990) found that until the mid-1980s, approximately 10% of Yugoslav women and roughly 30% of men in West Germany had increased their professional skills and experienced certain professional advancement.

However, compared to native workers and immigrants from other European countries, this mobility was mostly insignificant (Fassmann *et al.*, 1999). Brčić (1990) believed Yugoslav workers were participating in courses provided by employers and designed to train employees for positions they were already holding. In other words, the purpose of the courses was to verify the skills Yugoslav workers already possessed. Since the courses were neither officially acknowledged nor transferable to other workplaces (Brčić, 1990), we can fairly argue that certifications additionally bound workers for their workplace and hierarchical position while their further professional advancement was largely dependent on the employer's will.

During the 1970s, Yugoslav educational institutions had been engaging in the education of Yugoslav workers in Austria and West Germany (Ivanović, 2012), implying that migrants would not acquire considerable skills by working abroad. The results of quantitative studies (Fassmann, 1997; Fassmann *et al.*, 1999) indicate that these educational initiatives were of minor significance for Yugoslav workers' professional capacities and upward labour market mobility. These programmes may have distanced Yugoslav workers even further from the West German and Austrian educational contexts and, therefore, even from opportunities for social inclusion. Nevertheless, by allowing Yugoslav institutions to implement teaching on their soil, West Germany and Austria were confirming the perception of Yugoslav workers as temporary settlers whose educational capacities are the concern of Yugoslav institutions. West Germany even offered education to labour migrants' children in history, mother tongue, and geography, conducted by teachers appointed by the Yugoslav regime, officially preparing pupils for their eventual return to Yugoslavia (Ivanović, 2012). Similar educational programmes, designed with arguably similar intentions, were implemented in all major receiving countries to nurture the social and cultural distinctiveness of labour migrants and their descendants and their geographic attachment to their countries of origin. For the Yugoslav regime, these programmes were an instrument of mediating its propaganda and shaping the educational development of labour migrants' descendants (Dragišić, 2014; Ivanović, 2012); they also constituted a durable platform for constant interference with Yugoslav citizens abroad. Arguably, these educational programmes affected not only pupils but also their parents, additionally strengthening their sense of belonging to Yugoslavia and fortifying the perception of the temporariness of their migration.

Conclusions

This article has drawn connections between the economic and social factors conditioning Yugoslav labour migration and Yugoslav workers' career development in Western European countries during the period between 1963 and 1991. The article has shown a strong correlation

between the driving forces of Yugoslav labour migration, the perception of its temporariness, and a narrow occupational and hierarchical distribution among Yugoslav workers in Western labour markets. As the article demonstrated, Yugoslav workers' widespread professional stagnation was shaped by social and economic conditions characterising Yugoslav labour migration and the societies of receiving countries, and it was governed by the practices and attitudes of regimes, institutions, and Western employers. Yugoslav workers perpetuated these conditions and practices with their own perspectives regarding their migration and working positions and with their attitudes toward the social contexts of Yugoslavia and the receiving countries.

Furthermore, the article has illustrated how the correlation between Yugoslav workers' indifference to the social contexts of receiving countries and the principles of the dual labour market excluded them from the educational systems of receiving countries and the opportunities for career development. Migrating predominantly in search of economic prosperity, with limited educational capacities and low professional aspirations, and guided by the perception of temporariness of their migration, Yugoslav workers mostly invested in social and economic possessions valuable in their communities of origin. These attitudes and practices perpetuated their occupational concentration in the lowest positions of the secondary labour market and the corresponding social exclusion. Accordingly, they ethnically framed their social environment within the receiving countries, continuously attaching themselves to Yugoslav socioeconomic contexts and nurturing the sense of belonging to their area of origin and the belief in the temporary character of their migration. The Yugoslav regime, guided by its own economic and political interests, constantly encouraged these attitudes, practices, and outcomes, often with support, or indifference, from the receiving countries.

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