



*Mato Bošnjak*

## **For the benefit of the state**

Yugoslavia's agenda for controlling, shaping, and utilising  
labour migration, 1962-1975



**FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE STATE**



To my mother and sister,  
whose labour and life's work  
have never been properly  
recognised and rewarded.

# **For the benefit of the state:**

## **Yugoslavia's agenda for controlling, shaping, and utilising labour migration, 1962-1975**

Thesis for Doctoral Degree (PhD) in History and History Didactics

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and utilising labour migration 1962-1975

Malmö University  
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# Sammanfattning

Denna avhandling undersöker det socialistiska Jugoslaviens institutionell-organisatoriska ramverk för styrningen av arbetskraftsmigration under 1960- och 1970-talen. Avhandlingen består av tre referentgranskade vetenskapliga artiklar, en referentgranskad litteraturoversikt artikel, och sex kapitel. Den undersöker och analyserar jugoslaviska statens prioriteringar, problemformuleringar och strategiska målsättningar som formade uppbyggnaden och den fortsatta utvecklingen av ramverket för styrningen av arbetskraftsmigration. Vidare rekonstruerar och kontextualiserar avhandlingen jugoslaviska myndigheters attityder, strategier och praktiker i regleringen av arbetskraftsmigration.

Avhandlingen bygger i huvudsak på en omfattande undersökning av jugoslaviska primärkällor, samlade i jugoslaviska arkiv och producerade av centrala aktörer involverade i migrationsstyrningen och uppbyggnaden av dess institutionella och organisatoriska ramverket. Analysen kompletteras av samtida publicerad och opublicerad statistik samt en bred analytisk genomgång av empiriska studier om jugoslavisk arbetskraftsmigration publicerade under de senaste fem decennierna. Det teoretiska ramverk som tillämpas i avhandlingen är hämtad från nyinstitutionalistiska perspektiv.

Avhandlingens övergripande argument är att den jugoslaviska staten utformade, implementerade och kontinuerligt omformade det institutionell-organisatoriska ramverket för migrationsstyrning i syfte att stärka statens kapacitet att styra och forma arbetskraftsmigrationen, utnyttja dess ekonomiska potential och påverka dess utfall i enlighet med statens strategiska intressen.

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine socialist Yugoslavia's institutional-organisational framework for governing labour migration in the 1960s and 1970s. The thesis investigates the evolving priorities, problem framings, and strategic objectives that informed the framework's construction and transformations, and the Yugoslav authorities' aims, attitudes, strategies, and practices in the governance of labour migration. In doing so, the thesis identifies, reconstructs, and contextualises the Yugoslav authorities' objectives, traces how these evolved over time, and demonstrates how they were pursued and operationalised through specific institutions and organisations.

Scholarship on Yugoslav labour migration emerged almost simultaneously with the phenomenon itself. Contemporary studies engaged with the dynamics of Yugoslav labour migration, concentrating primarily on the social and economic drivers operating at the micro- and meso-levels, and on the broader social and economic consequences of migration for migrants, their areas of origin, and Yugoslavia in general.<sup>1</sup> This body of research drew largely on ethnographic approaches and quantitative data. It typically interpreted outward labour migration as the outcome of economic development, economic restructuring, and rising unemployment in Yugoslavia, interacting with the increasing labour demand in the industrialised Western countries.<sup>2</sup> Within this literature, the role of the Yugoslav state appeared only sporadically and often implicitly. For example, in references to state's economic incentives designed to stimulate migrants' remittances and consumption, to the number of workers dispatched abroad through Yugoslav employment offices, or to Yugoslavia's bilateral labour recruitment agreements with Western states.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Ivo Baučić, 'Socijalno-ekonomske posljedice vanjskih migracija radne snage iz Jugoslavije', *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 33–34:1 (1971) 25–57; Silva Mežnarić, 'Motivi odlaznja slovenskih radnika na rad u Njemačku, produžavanja boravka i vraćanja u Sloveniju', *Revija za sociologiju* 7:1–4 (1977) 20–42; Mirjana Morokvašić, 'Jugoslavenke – migranti o sebi', *Sociologija i prostor* 63–64 (1979) 102–112; Milan Mesić, 'Vanjske migracije i socijalna struktura', *Migracijske i etničke teme* 3:1 (1987) 5–18. See also the synthesis of research published between 1965 and 1982 in Silva Mežnarić, 'Sociology of migration in Yugoslavia', *Current Sociology* 32:2 (1984) 41–88.

<sup>2</sup> The terms 'Western' and 'the West' are used in this thesis as a collective designation for economically and industrially advanced countries of the Western hemisphere, including Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Ivo Baučić, 'Osnovna struktura obilježja jugoslavenskih radnika u inozemstvu', *Acta Geographica Croatica* 12:1 (1973) 35–88; Ivo Baučić, 'Some Economic Consequences of Yugoslav External Migrations,' in *Les travailleurs étrangers en Europe occidentale: Actes du Colloque organisé par la*

Recent scholarship on Yugoslav labour migration, benefiting from broader access to archival sources, has increasingly focused on the proactive role of the Yugoslav state in constructing institutions for governing labour-migration at both domestic and interstate levels.<sup>4</sup> However, studies focus predominantly on developments from the late 1960s and on the challenges and shortcomings characterising Yugoslavia's governing of labour migration. Particular attention is given to the interstate regulation of labour migration with the Federal Republic of Germany (FR Germany), its political background, and the effectiveness of the resulting regulatory mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> Studies commonly emphasise the complexity of these interstate negotiations, noting that relations between the two states were heavily burdened by the legacies of the Second World War but also by Yugoslavia's socialist state orientation and its recognition of the German Democratic Republic. However, FR Germany was the principal destination for labour migrants from Yugoslavia and the country's important economic partner. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, functioned as one of the key labour suppliers for FR German economy. Accordingly, both states regarded cooperation on labour migration as symbolically and practically significant, adjusting their employment and foreign policies in order to reach it.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the bilateral regulation of Yugoslav labour migration to Austria is generally presented as a straightforward process, unburdened by political tensions or major disagreements.<sup>7</sup> A reason for such a conclusion could result from the limited attention scholarship has devoted to identifying or analysing possible

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*Commission nationale pour les études et les recherches interethniques, Paris-Sorbonne, du 5 au 7 juin 1974* (Nice 1976), 87–104; Leszek A. Kosiński, 'Yugoslavia and international migration', *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 20:3 (1978) 314–338; Zlatko Pepeonik, *Ekonomska migracija u Švedskoj* (Zagreb 1980); Zvonimir Baletić, 'International migration in modern economic development: With special reference to Yugoslavia,' *International Migration Review* 16:4 (1982) 869–899.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Ivana Dobrivojević, 'U potrazi za blagostanjem. Odlazak jugoslovenskih radnika na rad u zemlje Zapadne Evrope 1960–1976,' *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (2008) 89–100; Vladimir Ivanović, *Geburstag pišeš normalno. Jugoslovenski gastarbajteri u SR Nemačkoj i Austriji 1965–1973* (Beograd 2012); Petar Dragišić, 'Searching for El Dorado: workers from Serbia temporary employed abroad from the 1960s to the dissolution of Yugoslavia', *Tokovi istorije* 3 (2014) 131–142.

<sup>5</sup> Karolina Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending of Yugoslav 'Gastarbeiter' to Germany: between socialist demands and economic needs,' in: Ulf Brunnbauer (ed), *Transnational societies, transterritorial politics: Migrations in the (post-)Yugoslav region, 19th–21st Century* (Munich 2009) 121–143; Vladimir Ivanović, 'Zaključivanje sporazuma o angažovanju jugoslovenske radne snage sa SR Nemačkom', *Hereticus* 4 (2009) 25–40; Kaja Shonick, 'Politics, culture, and economics: reassessing the West German guest worker agreement with Yugoslavia', *Journal of Contemporary History* 44:4 (2009) 719–736.

<sup>6</sup> Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending', 129–140; Ivanović, 'Zaključivanje sporazuma', 29–40; Shonick, 'Politics, culture, and economics', 735–736.

<sup>7</sup> Petar Dragišić, 'Jugoslovenski ekonomski migranti u Austriji od početka 60-ih godina do raspada Jugoslavije', *Tokovi istorije* 1–2 (2009) 55–64, 55–56; Ivanović, *Geburstag pišeš normalno*, 131–134; Vida Bakondy, 'Austria attractive for guest workers? Recruitment of immigrant labor in Austria in the 1960s and 1970s', in Günter Bischof and Dirk Rupnow (eds), *Migration in Austria* (New Orleans 2017) 113–138.

issues underlying the regulatory arrangements. Another explanation may lie in the commitment of both Austria and Yugoslavia to Cold War neutrality, which created a diplomatic environment more conducive to pragmatic cooperation.

Nevertheless, in both FR Germany's and Austria's case, studies emphasise limited effectiveness of regulatory frameworks that emerged. Studies highlight in particular institutional arrangements that enabled employers to bypass Yugoslavia's control mechanisms: the provision in recruitment agreements that allowed FR Germany's employers to submit nominative requests for Yugoslav workers directly to municipal employment offices; and FR Germany's and Austria's relaxing of visa regimes for the purpose of employment.<sup>8</sup>

A valuable contribution to understanding Yugoslavia's efforts to manage and shape labour migration is provided by Sara Bernard's study of the country's challenges in managing return migration. Despite focusing on return migration, Bernard's study offers important insights into shifting and diverse attitudes among Yugoslav social, economic, and ruling elites regarding outward and return labour migration. The study also demonstrates concerns voiced in the press and academic studies and debated within major political forums that labour migration undermined domestic labour market needs for skilled and highly skilled workers, especially in the country's more developed parts.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the study demonstrates the political debates and tensions, public discourse, and economic and political forces that fuelled the reshaping of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy in the early 1970s. The study shows that these developments have elevated divisions between employment policies of Yugoslav republics and their attitudes towards labour migration. They culminated in the introduction of institutional measures aimed at restricting recruitment of qualified and highly qualified workers from the country's more developed parts and improving the utilisation of remittances for promoting return migration.

Exploring the same period, but focusing on policy formation, Mark Baskin examines attitudes within the wider Yugoslav political establishment and how the processes of opinion-formation among policymakers shaped the development of Yugoslavia's migration policy and, in turn, the development of institutional arrangements governing labour migration. According to Baskin, labour migration was gradually elevated in the perspective of Yugoslav policymakers from a marginal issue to a central policy concern in the 1970s. This growing concern,

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<sup>8</sup> Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending', 140; Ivanović, *Geburtstag pišeš normalno*, 126–127, 135–141; Bakondy, 'Austria attractive for guest workers', 122–123.

<sup>9</sup> Sara Bernard, *Deutsch marks in the head, shovel in the hands and Yugoslavia in the heart: The gastarbeiter return to Yugoslavia (1965–1991)* (Wiesbaden 2019), 53–68.

according to Baskin, enabled the emergence of a an increasingly broad constellation of federal and republican ministries and socio-political organisations that, particularly after 1968, began devoting sustained attention to migration.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Baskin analyses the formulation of a more elaborate labour migration policy in the early 1970s, interpreting it as a clear strategic shift and a more decisive effort by Yugoslav policymakers to integrate international labour mobility into a more coherent, country-wide institutional framework.<sup>11</sup>

William Zimmerman, Ulf Brunnbauer, and Brigitte Le Normand have placed more focus on early attitudes and practices within the Yugoslav political establishment, highlighting the state's role in labour migration through its changes in attitudes towards cross-border movements and institutional and organisational engagement.<sup>12</sup> While none of these studies offers an examination of regulated labour migration or the full scope of its institutionalisation at domestic and international levels, each nevertheless enriches our broader understanding of the Yugoslav state agency in these processes.

Zimmerman assigns only limited attention to the early institutionalisation and organised implementation of employment abroad, placing greater emphasis on developments after 1965 in shaping Yugoslavia's governing of labour migration. The study nonetheless offers compelling insights that enrich our understanding of the emergence of the institutional framework governing labour migration and its capacity to mobilise large numbers of migrant workers. A key insight concerns the transformative impact of the 1963 constitutional reform, which guaranteed the individual right to choose an occupation and place of work, alongside the concurrent liberalisation of passport regulations.<sup>13</sup> Together, these institutional changes created conditions highly conducive to labour migration. According to Zimmerman, they formed part of a deliberate strategy to encourage outward mobility and must be understood in the context of Yugoslavia's broader economic and political realignment towards the West.<sup>14</sup>

Brunnbauer, on the other hand, challenges interpretations of a "double rupture" in socialist Yugoslavia's migration policy - first with the establishment of communist rule in 1940s and later with the liberalisation of outward labour

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Baskin, *Political innovation and policy implementation in Yugoslavia: The case of worker migration abroad* (Michigan 1986) 70–85.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 143–168.

<sup>12</sup> William Zimmerman, *Open Borders, Nonalignment, and the Political Evolution of Yugoslavia* (Princeton 1987); Ulf Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State Since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lanham 2016); Brigitte Le Normand, *Citizens without borders: Yugoslavia and its migrant workers in Western Europe* (Toronto 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment*, 75–77.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 80, 90.

migration in the early 1960s. Instead, Brunnbauer argues for continuities linking the immediate post-war years with both the interwar period and subsequent policy developments in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup> In this context, the liberalisation of labour migration policy in the early 1960s did not represent a radical break; rather, it built upon the experimental background of the 1950s. Namely, the Yugoslav state and state-affiliated organisations' encounters with migrants and the accumulated knowledge these interactions generated. Brunnbauer argues that the discourses, perceptions, and dispositions formed during 1950s decisively influenced the government's decision to liberalise the border regime and shaped its increasingly tolerant approach to labour migration, as the authorities recognised its inevitability and the benefits of migrants' remittances.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, Yugoslavia's labour migration policy evolved as a pragmatic response to mounting social and economic difficulties. The state abandoned restrictive measures in favour of regulated labour migration, accepting ideological compromises to establish the control over migration, maintain migrants' loyalty to socialist Yugoslavia, and secure foreign currency inflows through remittances.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Brigitte Le Normand argues that Yugoslavia's policy shift towards labour migration was a gradual process, shaped by economic pressures and expanding social practices of cross-border mobility. In contrast to the frequent emphasis in the research on the exceptional nature of Yugoslavia's willingness to permit outward labour migration despite its socialist system, Le Normand maintains that these cross-border mobilities constituted a continuation of well-established migration patterns predating the Cold War. Yugoslavia's labour-migration policy thus did not originate solely in the economic reforms of the 1960s but developed largely in response to workers' necessities and aspirations to seek employment abroad and the rising number of both regulated and illegal border crossings.<sup>18</sup> As these movements generated an array of political and administrative challenges and fears, such as the fear over the loss of skilled workers and labour migrants' loyalty to the state, Yugoslavia liberalised the border regime and introduced mechanisms to regulate labour migration.<sup>19</sup> Le Normand argues that central to this process was the state's construction of a specific migrant category, defined as "our worker temporarily employed abroad": understood as surplus rural labour displaced by economic modernisation,

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<sup>15</sup> Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe*, 259–262.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 289–290.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 290–299.

<sup>18</sup> Le Normand, *Citizens without borders*, 30–34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 33–35.

economically motivated for migration rather than politically driven, and expected to return to Yugoslavia. This conceptualisation underpinned Yugoslavia's approach to labour migration and structured the regulatory, administrative, and ideological frameworks through which it was governed.<sup>20</sup> The study proceeds by analysing how the Yugoslav state perceived Yugoslav migrants and sought to cultivate and sustain relationships with them and how migrants responded to those efforts.

### *Thesis' scope, research focus, and results*

The primary focus of this thesis is the decade between 1963 and 1973 - the period of most intensive Yugoslav labour migration, during which the Yugoslav state constructed and operationalised a comprehensive, country-wide system for managing outward labour migration. This focus is shaped on the one hand by Yugoslavia's official decision to liberalise migration to the West for the purpose of employment in 1963. On the other hand, it is shaped by the oil shock in 1973, the resulting economic crisis, and Western industrialised countries' restrictions on further labour immigration. The analysis nevertheless begins in 1962, in order to trace the gradual institutionalisation and state organisation of labour migration, and the emergence and consolidation of the attitudes, problem formulations, and objectives that underpinned this process. It also extends beyond 1973, demonstrating that Yugoslavia's did not relinquish its underlying objectives with labour migration. Rather, these objectives continued to shape Yugoslavia's labour migration policy.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to existing scholarship on Yugoslav labour migration, this thesis systematically examines the formation of institutional-organisational framework governing Yugoslav labour migration from 1963 onwards and traces its subsequent changes. In doing so, it demonstrates how the framework was progressively designed, operationalised, and reconfigured in response to its operation, and elucidates the central role played by the Yugoslav state and state-affiliated organisations in consolidating and expanding its operational scope. Moreover, unlike existing scholarship, the thesis places particular emphasis on the practical implementation of state-regulated labour migration by

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>21</sup> The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia comprised six republics - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia - and two autonomous provinces within Serbia - Kosovo and Vojvodina. Each republic and province held certain autonomy in managing their internal affairs, including labour migration. However, the state's labour-migration policy and the institutional-organisational framework for its implementation were formally applied across the federation, even if their practical realisation may have varied among republics and provinces.

Yugoslav political and employment authorities, demonstrating their visions and strategies and practical efforts to structure, standardise, and align the implementation of labour migration and the surrounding social and economic dimensions with the state's policy objectives.

The thesis relies predominantly on Yugoslav primary written sources produced by key stakeholders involved in labour migration and its governing and supports the analysis with the contemporary published and unpublished statistical data. The majority of written sources were produced for internal use and communication among the relevant governing bodies and administrative organisations. They served to report on trends and developments in regulated and irregular labour migration, to propose institutional and organisational responses to such developments, and to direct or coordinate their implementation. As such, they illuminate discussions, directives, and practices unfolding beyond officially declared objectives and policy pronouncements, enabling this thesis to identify Yugoslav state's explicit aims, objectives, and priorities with labour migration and the means of their achievement. These findings are complemented by an analysis of empirical evidence presented in studies on Yugoslav labour migration, which illuminate migrants' behaviour within the broader landscape of labour migration and reveal the Yugoslav state's exceptional capacity to exert political and ideological influence over its migrant population and, ultimately, to uphold key dimensions of state sovereignty.

The findings presented in this thesis are interpreted through theoretical lens of new institutionalism, which views institutions as rules and norms that constrain, guide, and provide opportunities for actors operating within them. It aims to explain why and how institutions are constructed, maintained, and changed over time and how they impact societies, economies and international communities, emphasising historical developments and contexts through which institutions take shape and evolve. Central to this perspective is the view that institutions impact human behaviour and the behaviour of entities they devise, such as organisations, associations, and states. Institutions also impact social and economic exchanges by structuring incentives, shaping expectations, and defining forms and limits of conduct.<sup>22</sup>

Situated within this conceptual and methodological framework, this thesis advances the overarching argument that the Yugoslav establishment designed,

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Keohane, *International institutions and state power: essays in international relations theory* (New York 2018) 2–7; Douglass North, *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance* (Cambridge 1990) 3–10; W. Richard Scott, *Institutions and organizations: ideas, interests, and identities* (Thousand Oaks 2014) 30–43.

implemented, and repeatedly changed institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration to increase the state's capacity to govern labour migration and shape its outcomes in accordance with state's strategic interests. As "Yugoslav establishment", this thesis views the high-ranking political and administrative bodies governing Yugoslavia's internal and external affairs. These encompass the Yugoslav president, the federal and republican governments and their respective secretariats, Yugoslavia's diplomatic missions, and migration committees and commissions. In addition, the thesis views as the member of the establishment the Federal Employment Bureau, which functioned as the state's central organisation for regulating labour migration and for safeguarding and expanding Yugoslavia's institutional architecture governing labour migration. It also incorporates the Alliance of Trade Unions, which played a significant role in shaping and monitoring labour migration cohorts and in promoting the rights and welfare of Yugoslav labour migrants.<sup>23</sup> To varying degrees, all these entities were instrumental in the Yugoslav state's agenda to govern labour migration and shape its outcomes.

The thesis advances this argument by demonstrating that institutionalised, state-facilitated labour migration emerged as a central and persistent concern in deliberations among the Yugoslav political and employment authorities from the early 1960s onwards. It did so particularly in response to unemployment and labour-market imbalances in Yugoslavia, the increasing irregular labour migration, and the economic challenges confronting the Yugoslav state. In this context, state governing and employment authorities engaged in active and strategic labour migration management, seeking to respond simultaneously to several developments: the growing outward mobility of the Yugoslav workforce, increasing demand for Yugoslav labour from Western employers, and emerging priorities to retain migrants within Yugoslavia's institutional and organisational system. They also sought to prevent migrants' social and political disengagement from Yugoslavia and to align their migration motivations with the state's institutional arrangements and financial interests.

Through an examination of strategies and practices surrounding the regulation and implementation of recruitment for employment abroad, the thesis reconstructs the motivations, aims, and objectives underpinning the Yugoslav establishment's efforts to construct, expand, and recalibrate the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration. It demonstrates that this

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<sup>23</sup> The term 'Yugoslav' when applied to people - for example, 'Yugoslav labour migrants' or 'Yugoslav workers' - is used in this thesis purely as a geographical and state-based designation, not as an ethnic category. Migrants from Yugoslavia were ethnically diverse, but those distinctions are not relevant for this thesis' inquiry.

framework was fundamentally designed to advance the Yugoslav state interests by bringing labour migration under the state's control; to shaping it strategically in accordance with domestic labour-market conditions; and to utilise the recruitment and employment of Yugoslav workers abroad for immediate and long-term economic benefits of the Yugoslav state.

The Yugoslav state's *control* over labour migration is examined in this thesis as Yugoslav establishment's efforts to channel labour migration through state-sanctioned institutional and organisational mechanisms designed to regulate and monitor labour migration under the authority of Yugoslav state organisations. The expectation underpinning these arrangements was that formalised state-controlled channels of workers' recruitment and placement would enable the state to shape labour migration flows by shaping the composition of labour migrant cohorts in accordance with formulated state priorities.

By *shaping* labour migration, this thesis captures the Yugoslav establishment's efforts to influence the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of labour migrants so that they corresponded to objectives framed as beneficial for the Yugoslav labour market and economy. This entailed, in particular, prioritising employment abroad of unemployed unskilled workers and surplus skilled labour, especially from economically underdeveloped parts of the country, while constraining the migration of skilled and highly skilled labour deemed needed by the Yugoslav labour market.

Realisation of these objectives was, moreover, guided by the Yugoslav establishment's broader endeavour to harness and utilise the perceived potentials of labour migration. By *utilising* labour migration, this thesis encapsulates the Yugoslav establishment's efforts to design, expand, and progressively refine the institutional-organisational framework governing labour emigration in ways intended to generate tangible benefits for the state. These efforts have been ground in the aim to discharge unskilled unemployed, but they extended far beyond. The Yugoslav establishment sought to secure structured and continuous financial contributions from labour migrants and their employers and host states. At the same time, it aimed to leverage labour migration as a process of skill formation by envisaging the transformation of unqualified migrants into qualified returnees capable of contributing to Yugoslavia's development upon their return. Moreover, utilisation encompassed the efforts to use labour migration as an instrument of foreign economic policy, linking its interstate regulation to broader objectives of economic cooperation with Western states.

At the same time, this thesis does not deny the Yugoslav establishment's concern for the welfare of labour migrants or the efforts to enhance their

protection. By officially framing labour migration as a temporary structural necessity, designating migrants as “our workers temporarily employed abroad”, and emphasising their anticipated return, the Yugoslav state both assumed responsibility and claimed sovereign authority over them. This thesis demonstrates a range of institutional and organisational measures that the Yugoslav establishment, acting both unilaterally and in cooperation with Western states, embedded within the regulatory framework governing employment abroad to protect and strengthen labour migrants’ working rights and social standing during the whole migratory process. Although most of these measures simultaneously served as instruments of state influence and control, reinforcing its efforts to capitalise on labour migration, their protective and welfare-oriented dimensions should not be dismissed.

### *Thesis’ contribution*

There is a broad consensus in migration research that labour-sending states anticipate deriving financial benefits from their emigrant populations and support labour migration as a means of alleviating domestic unemployment. This consensus is most firmly established within scholarship on contemporary international migration, where labour-sending states are recognised as having incorporated economic gains of outward migration into their macroeconomic strategies.<sup>24</sup> What remains less well understood, is how labour-sending states construct, change, and operationalise institutional and organisational mechanisms through which these objectives are pursued, and which specific instruments they develop and deploy in the process.

This thesis demonstrates that one of the principal labour-sending states of the post-war decades did not merely anticipate and await the beneficial effects of labour migration to materialise. Instead, it actively and persistently sought to provoke and intensify those effects by constructing and adjusting the framework governing labour migration. Through the evidence-based and deliberate design of new institutions and organisations, and modifications to existing ones, the Yugoslav state sought to create a governing framework composed of constructive linkages between institutions regulating different aspects of labour migration - from workers’ recruitment and deployment, their social and working rights, and their life abroad, to their return and reintegration into Yugoslav society and

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Robyn Rodriguez, ‘The labor brokerage state and the globalization of Filipina care workers’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33 (2008) 794–800; Nicola Yeates, ‘Production for export: the role of the state in the development and operation of global care chains’, *Population, Space and Place* 15 (2009) 175–187.

economy. Together, these institutional and organisational measures increasingly strengthened the Yugoslav state's capacity to shape the demographic and professional characteristics of labour-migrant cohorts and to extract economic returns from their employment abroad.

By demonstrating the Yugoslav state's agency in labour migration, this thesis makes a significant contribution to research on post-Second World War migrations. States' agencies feature increasingly in historically oriented migration studies, as scholars gained broader access to archival sources. However, research focus remains predominantly on labour-receiving states, mostly economically advanced states of the Western hemisphere.<sup>25</sup> Such focus has inevitably established a conventional understanding that international labour migrations have been foremost orchestrated by western labour-receiving states.<sup>26</sup> This thesis contributes by demonstrating a labour-sending state's direct and multifaceted involvement in the mobilisation, mediation, and interstate regulation of labour migration.

This thesis also carries important implications for organisational studies and institutional theory and debates about how institutions are constructed, reshaped, and strategically mobilised. The thesis contributes by demonstrating how an authoritarian socialist state shaped and governed a policy arena that spanned both domestic and international domains. Existing institutional scholarship focuses mainly on Western liberal democracies, where political and economic entrepreneurs typically operate with greater autonomy and a wider repertoire of instruments.<sup>27</sup> As a consequence, the centrality of the socialist state and the role

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, research syntheses that highlight the decisive agency of states in international labour migration but whose analyses and arguments are predominantly grounded in empirical findings from labour-receiving countries: Carl Strikwerda, 'Tides of migration, currents of history: the state, economy, and the transatlantic movement of labor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *International Review of Social History* 44 (1999) 367–394; Christoph Rass, 'Temporary labour migration and state-run recruitment of foreign workers in Europe, 1919–1975: a new migration regime?', *International Review of Social History* 57 (2012) 191–224; Sara Bernard, 'The regulation of international migration in the Cold War: a synthesis and review of the literature', *Labor History*, 64:4 (2023) 330–357.

<sup>26</sup> For notable exemptions see, Ahmet Akgündüz, *Labour migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960–1974: a multidisciplinary analysis* (Aldershot 2008); David Fitzgerald, *A nation of emigrants: how Mexico manages its migration* (Berkeley 2009); Natasha Iskander, *Creative state: forty years of migration and development policy in Morocco and Mexico* (Ithaca/London 2010); Giota Tourgeli, 'Migration policies and development doctrine in Greece,' in: Maria Damilakou and Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos (eds.) *Migration and development in Southern Europe and South America*, (Routledge, 2022), 15–29.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, several influential literature reviews, research syntheses, and theoretical contributions that draw almost exclusively on Western scholarship and empirical cases from liberal-democratic labour-receiving states: Lynne Zucker, 'Institutional theories of organization', *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987) 443–464; Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, 'Political science and the three new institutionalisms,' *Political Studies* 44 (1996) 936–957; Kathleen Thelen, 'Historical institutionalism in comparative politics,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999) 369–404; Scott, *Institutions and organizations*; Julie Battilana, Bernard Leca, and Eva Boxenbaum, 'How actors change institutions: towards a theory of institutional entrepreneurship', *The Academy of Management Annals* 3:1 (2009) 65–107.

of authoritarian interest-driven political leadership in designing, implementing, and changing institutions and organisations has been largely overseen. By analysing the aims, practices, and governing strategies of a socialist state, this thesis significantly broadens the empirical and conceptual foundations of organisational studies and institutional theory. It contributes to a more globally grounded understanding of how institutional and organisational frameworks emerge, how they are reshaped, and how governmental bodies and state organisations operate within and across them.

Furthermore, by focusing on the governance of international labour migration, the thesis provides a compelling empirical case of a single policy arena simultaneously structured through domestic and international institutional arrangements. The thesis demonstrates how Yugoslavia constructed, expanded, and changed institutional and organisational arrangements across domestic and international arenas and how these arrangements interacted and operated in practice. This multi-scalar and multi-layered process of institutional development demonstrates the complexities of institutional design, particularly in a setting where domestic institutions were still emerging and where international cooperation generated both pressures and opportunities for the Yugoslav state. Moreover, by analysing the practical implementation and utilisation of institutionalised labour migration, rather than its formal design alone, the thesis further contributes by showing how institutions evolve through use and practice, and knowledge accumulation and its interpretation.

The thesis also advances our knowledge of career transitions by shedding light on how emigration states shape migrants' career trajectories and by invoking a reconsideration of how migrants' career trajectories are formed and supported in transnational contexts. The thesis contributes by demonstrating how labour-sending states, through their migration management regimes, can actively work to shape and structure labour migrants' educational, professional, and career trajectories. The thesis shows that a state engaged in institutionalised international migration can simultaneously assume the roles of counsellors, educators, and employment mediators. Moreover, it shows that during the post-war decades the Yugoslav state took such a role and enabled and facilitated cross-border professional transitions, shaping workers' employability abroad, and establishing institutional conditions for their safe mobility within international employment systems.

In socialist Yugoslavia, working abroad could thus constitute a state-engineered career pathway. The Yugoslav establishment introduced a series of measures designed to support transitions from unemployment in Yugoslavia

to employment abroad. These measures included matching workers to foreign labour-market needs and employers' requirements; improving workers' professional and linguistic competencies through pre-departure training; and providing information on living and working conditions abroad. These measures closely resemble contemporary schemes designed to facilitate migrant workers' professional transitions and career development, while also shaping migrant cohorts and their migration pathways.<sup>28</sup> However, such measures rarely feature in discussions of how states engaged in institutionalised international migrations, and particularly labour-sending states, support migrants' professional transitions and career development. This omission reflects the field's tendency to approach career guidance through nationally or regionally confined lenses.<sup>29</sup> By analysing these measures and the Yugoslav state's engagement in regulated international labour migration more broadly, the thesis demonstrates how an interest-driven labour-sending state can construct transnational corridors for professional transitions and how career guidance and counselling can extend beyond national frameworks into coordinated inter-state employment systems.

### *Disposition*

This thesis is composed of an introductory framework and four peer-reviewed academic articles. The introductory framework consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two discusses the theoretical perspectives from the different strands of new institutionalism and relates them both to the empirical findings and cases analysed in this thesis and to broader developments in Yugoslav labour migration. Thereafter, Chapter Three describes the empirical sources on which the thesis is based, the process through which they were retrieved and analysed, and their analytical potential and limitations.

Chapter Four outlines Yugoslavia's framework for governing labour migration by tracing its institutional and organisational development and elaborating the principal aims and objectives pursued by the Yugoslav establishment and

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Robyn Rodriguez and Helen Schwenken, 'Becoming a migrant at home: subjectivation processes in migrant-sending countries prior to departure', *Population, Space and Place* 19 (2013) 375–388; Weiqiang Lin et al., 'Migration infrastructures and the production of migrant mobilities', *Mobilities* 12:2 (2017) 167–174; Priya Deshingkar, 'The making and unmaking of precarious, ideal subjects – migration brokerage in the Global South', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45:14 (2019) 2638–2654.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Andreas Fejes, Michèle Chamberland and Ronald Sultana, 'Migration, educational and career guidance and social inclusion', *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* 22 (2022) 347–361; Ronald Sultana, 'For a postcolonial turn in career guidance: the dialectic between universalisms and localisms', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 51:2 (2023) 262–273; Tristram Hooley et al., 'A systematic review of research into career guidance policy in the Nordic countries (2008–2022)', *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 10:2 (2024) 126–139.

embedded in the framework. The chapter expands and further contextualises findings and arguments presented in the four articles. It complements articles by presenting empirical findings, arguments, and lines of reasoning that could not be included within the constraints of the article format or the distinct analytical focus of each contribution. In doing so, the chapter empirically and analytically contributes to the thesis's inquiry and overarching argument by further elucidating historical and institutional dimensions of Yugoslavia's labour migration governance.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the chapter contributes by expanding the conceptual and contextual understanding of both the articles' findings and the wider institutional and organisational dynamics of Yugoslav labour migration.

Chapter Five contains summaries of each article, highlighting their main findings and arguments. Chapter Six contains the thesis's overarching conclusions. Thereafter follow the four peer-reviewed academic articles.

The first article is a research article published in the journal *Social History*. It explores the institutionalised forms of female labour migration from Yugoslavia, situating this process within its broader historical context and analysing its management by Yugoslav employment authorities.<sup>31</sup> The second article is a research article accepted for publishing by the *Journal of Migration History*. The article examines the Yugoslav state's agenda in bilaterally regulating labour migration with Sweden, focusing on the labour recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance.<sup>32</sup> The third article is a research article published in the journal *Labor History*. It explores the Yugoslav state's efforts to institutionalise and implement labour migrants' pre-departure training in cooperation with Western states and employers.<sup>33</sup> The fourth article is a review article published as a working paper in the *CES Working Paper Series* of the Centre for European Studies. The article draws on empirical studies of Yugoslav labour migration. It explores the impact of the principal forces driving and

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<sup>30</sup> 'Labour migration governance' or simply 'migration governance' is understood in this thesis as more than regulation of cross-border mobility. Following Andrew Geddes, migration governance migration governance is understood as encompassing institutions, policies, and organisational processes and practices through which migration is managed across multiple levels of authority. Migration governance operates within broader economic, political, social, demographic, and environmental systems that shape the conditions and drivers of mobility. It involves a wide array of local, national, and international actors with states holding a central position because borders define migration as the states' concern. See: Andrew Geddes, 'Migration governance', in: Peter Scholten (ed.), *Introduction to Migration Studies* (Springer 2022) 311–322, 313–315.

<sup>31</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Between unemployment and migration: institutionalised female labour migration from socialist Yugoslavia, 1963–1973', *Social History* 51:1 (2026) 59–76.

<sup>32</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Labour migration in the service of the sending state: Yugoslav state agenda in regulating labour migration to Sweden', *Journal of Migration History* (2026, forthcoming).

<sup>33</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry: socialist Yugoslavia's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training', *Labor History* (2024) 1–25.

sustaining Yugoslav labour migration on the social and professional standing of Yugoslav labour migrants in Western European countries.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Driving forces of labour migration as barriers to labour migrants' professional mobility: the case of Yugoslav labour migration', *CES Working Papers* 15:2 (2023) 194–215.

## 2 Theoretical framework: institutions and institutional construction and change

To more comprehensively grasp the emergence, development, and operationalisation of Yugoslavia's framework for governing labour migration it is essential to consider the functions of institutions, the rationales underpinning their construction and evolution, and the role of organisations within the framework. The analytical framework developed for this purpose draws upon overlapping, yet often independently studied, strands of institutional theory. The genres employed in this thesis are labelled as new institutionalism and include new institutional economics, sociological institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and conceptualisation of international institutions. While some of these perspectives are drawn upon more extensively than others, their selection is informed by both the empirical material and the analytical demands of the thesis. Specifically, this thesis requires an analytical framework capable of capturing and deepening the understanding of the aims and objectives pursued by the Yugoslav establishment and embedded within the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration alongside its contradictions, ambiguities, and limitations.

The governing mechanisms employed by the Yugoslav establishment were multifaceted, characterised by overlapping institutional, organisational, and social layers. They operated across multiple levels of the Yugoslav and Western labour-receiving societies and involved a diverse array of migrants. Brigitte Le Normand points out that Cold War migrant categories were rarely clear-cut, as economic motives, political circumstances, forms of displacement, and precarity frequently overlapped and defied classifications imposed by states and international organisations.<sup>35</sup> Yugoslav migrant cohorts were no exception. Furthermore, Yugoslavia's governing mechanisms encompassed Yugoslav employment offices and social services and their Western counterparts; Yugoslav enterprises and transport firms; Western employment authorities and employers.

To encompass and control an increasing number of actors involved in labour migration, the Yugoslav establishment constructed and frequently modified a

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<sup>35</sup> Brigitte Le Normand, 'Yugoslavia', in: Anna Mazurkiewicz (ed), *East Central European migrations during the Cold War: a handbook* (Berlin/Boston 2019)368–395, 369.

governing framework composed of institutions regulating labour migration and organisations tasked with implementing those institutions. This thesis treats institutions and organisations as analytically distinct, in line with prevailing perspectives in new institutionalism. According to these perspectives institutions are composed of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements, encompassing rules and norms and guidelines and opportunities that shape human behaviour.<sup>36</sup> Institutions may emerge from below, as shared norms, customs, or practices that gradually become institutionalised, or they may be deliberately designed and codified to serve specific purposes. Depending on their origin and mode of institutionalisation, they can exhibit one or all of the above-mentioned elements to varying degrees.

Institutions in this thesis include Yugoslavia's laws and constitution, bilateral recruitment agreements and conventions on social insurance Yugoslavia signed with Western labour-receiving states, and Yugoslavia's labour migration policy. Robert Keohane refers to such institutions as "specific institutions" composed of enduring and interconnected systems identifiable in space and time, containing rules, prescribing behaviour, and intended to constrain activities and shape expectations.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Douglas North refers to such institutions as "formal institutions", comprising humanly constructed constraints expressed through formally written rules.<sup>38</sup>

Although scholars of international institutions tend to focus on multilateral institutions, this thesis treats bilateral labour recruitment agreements and conventions on social insurance as international institutions. Namely, these agreements expressed the governing principles in written form, regulating the selection, recruitment, and employment and living conditions of migrant workers, and thereby structuring interactions among states, individuals, and organisations. They embedded values such as reciprocal state obligations and intergovernmental cooperation between labour-sending and receiving countries, and influenced their expectations in the international exchange of labour. Their durability and capacity to constrain activities and expectations and thus shape the behaviour of international actors constitute them as institutionalised mechanisms rather than

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<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Oran Young, 'International regimes: toward a new theory of institutions', *World Politics* 39:1 (1986) 104–122; Paul DiMaggio, 'Interest and agency in institutional theory', in: Lynne Zucker (ed.), *Institutional patterns and organizations: culture and environment* (Cambridge 1988) 3–21; Keohane, *International institutions*, 2–7; North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 3–10; Roger Friedland and Robert Alford, 'Bringing society back in: symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions', in: Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (eds), *The new institutionalism in organisational analysis* (Chicago 1991) 232–267; Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 30–43.

<sup>37</sup> Keohane, *International institutions*, 108, 163–164.

<sup>38</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 4.

mere contractual arrangements.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, as Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell argue, international institutions foster cooperation, facilitate the management of specific policy domains, promote standardised practices, and contribute to the stability of the international order.<sup>40</sup> Bilateral labour agreements and conventions on social insurance exemplify these institutional functions, as they not only regulated cross-border labour mobility but also facilitated stability and order in the international exchange of labour.

Following Jacob Hacker, Paul Pierson, and Kathleen Thelen, this thesis treats Yugoslavia's labour migration policy as a formal institution. These scholars argue that such policies define rules for social interaction enforced through public authority and facilitate the creation of organisations whose existence and actions are backed by state power. By virtue of their durability and structuring effects, such policies may be analysed as state institutions due to their capacity to shape behaviour and expectations and contribute to institutional and organisational changes.<sup>41</sup> Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, published in October 1963, encompassed all these characteristics. It established rules for sending workers abroad, served as a foundation for institutional changes, and catalysed the creation of different organisations tasked with managing, controlling, or exploring labour migration. These features underscore the policy's role as a durable institution and an integral component of Yugoslavia's migration governance.

A principal characteristic of institutions is that they do not operate in isolation, and actors are rarely influenced exclusively or continuously by a single institution. As Roger Friedland and Robert Alford argue, the core institutions of modern society, such as capitalism, the family, and the bureaucratic state are interdependent and frequently marked by tensions and contradictions.<sup>42</sup> For instance, capitalist markets may depend on the traditional institution of the family to supply the labour force, while the structural demands of the labour market, such as unstable employment conditions or low wages which favour capitalists, may erode the family's capacity to sustain labour force reproduction.

In the Yugoslav context, a foundational formal institution shaping state governance was the federal order, which conferred significant authority on the

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<sup>39</sup> Young, 'International regimes', 107–108; Keohane, *International institutions*, 163–164.

<sup>40</sup> Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio, 'Introduction', in: Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (eds), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (Chicago 1991), 1–38, 6–7.

<sup>41</sup> Jacob Hacker, Paul Pierson and Kathleen Thelen, 'Drift and conversion: hidden faces of institutional change', in: James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (eds), *Advances in comparative-historical analysis* (Cambridge 2005) 180–208, 183.

<sup>42</sup> Friedland and Alford, 'Bringing society back in', 256.

republics and autonomous provinces to govern matters within their respective jurisdictions, including labour migration originating from their territories. As this thesis demonstrates, this distribution of authority profoundly shaped Yugoslavia's governance of labour migration and conditioned the federal government's capacity to influence the practical organisation and implementation of labour migration policies.

Further foundational institution, shaping both the state governance and the Yugoslav society was the system of self-management. Initially implemented in industrial enterprises as a model of workplace democracy that conferred decision-making authority to employees' representatives, the system was later extended to encompass state organisations and public service. Although in practice its democratic character was mostly symbolic or limited, the self-management system was pervasive institutional-organisational framework that structured interactions and mutual obligations in between socio-economic actors and between them and the state. Nevertheless, it remains largely absent from this thesis. This omission is a consequence of the empirical sources analysed for this thesis. The analysed sources do not engage with the institutional framework of self-management nor do they reflect its potential influence over or tensions and contradictions with the institutional framework governing labour migration. Furthermore, the analysed sources do not show whether, or in what ways, self-management influenced the organisations responsible for implementing institutionalised labour migration.

Organisations are understood in this thesis as physical entities with identifiable features such as offices, personnel, equipment, budgets, assignments, and operational rules. North defines organisations as purposive entities established to pursue specific objectives, such as wealth, influence, or authority, within the constraints and opportunities shaped by the institutional structure of the society. They are deliberately created in response to institutional arrangements and operate within the boundaries set by formal and informal rules.<sup>43</sup> Scott similarly posits that organisations are established to pursue particular goals, structured around the belief that these goals should be pursued through systematic, formalised, and codified procedures.<sup>44</sup> In the same vein, Keohane characterises international organisations as purposive entities deliberately established by the states, which designate them operational rules and responsibilities and capacities

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<sup>43</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 4–5, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 111.

to manage, monitor, and respond to activities regulated by international institutions.<sup>45</sup>

Based on these definitions, this thesis includes as organisations those entities that were closely embedded in the processes of structuring and monitoring of labour migration, and practical implementation of employment abroad. In other words, organisations are treated analytically as actors operating within the institutionalised domains of Yugoslav labour migration. Accordingly, the thesis does not examine internal organisational dynamics, such as internal rules, resource allocation, authority structures, or power relations, nor how organisations themselves adapted these elements in response to institutional changes and external pressures. Rather, it focuses on their role within the institutional-organisational framework governing Yugoslav labour migration, and on their practices in implementing the rules and norms defined by that framework.

The most prominent organisations included in this thesis are Yugoslavia's governmental and migration coordinating bodies, the Federal Employment Bureau, and republican employment offices. While the degree of institutional embeddedness varied across these organisations, all exhibited one or more of the defining characteristics outlined above and constituted integral links in the chain of Yugoslavia's labour migration governance.

## Institutions

A major contribution of new institutionalism lies in its efforts to provide conceptual clarity regarding the nature and functions of institutions. North takes foremost an economic perspective and emphasises the constraining nature of institutions, describing them metaphorically as 'the rules of the game' or a humanly devised complex of constraints that structure human interaction and define the boundaries of choice. According to North, institutions consist of both codified rules, such as laws and constitutions, and of unwritten norms, such as ethical standards and informal codes of conduct. They shape political, social, and economic exchange by providing a stable framework for everyday life and by reducing uncertainty inherent in human interaction.<sup>46</sup>

North's conceptualisation of institutions is a response to neoclassical economic theory, particularly its assumptions of frictionless human exchange, perfectly defined property rights, and costless access to information. North argues that

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<sup>45</sup> Keohane, *International institutions*, 3–5.

<sup>46</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 3–4, 25

these assumptions fail to account for the challenges of coordination and cooperation under conditions of uncertainty, cognitive limitations, and imperfect interactions. Moreover, the neoclassical theory struggles to explain the persistence of inefficient yet enduring forms of exchange, especially in historical settings and economically underdeveloped societies.<sup>47</sup>

Taking primarily a sociological point of view, Scott also recognises the capacity of institutions to constrain and shape behaviour by delineating legal, moral, and cultural boundaries that distinguish acceptable from unacceptable conduct. However, Scott usefully places an emphasis on the enabling dimension of institutions, arguing that they support and empower activities and actors by providing stimuli, guidelines, and resources for action.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Scott's insights on cultural-cognitive dimension of institutions provides a useful guidance for a layered analysis of Yugoslavia's labour migration and its governing. The cultural-cognitive dimension refers to the shared ideas and understandings that shape how people perceive social reality and interpret what things mean. Symbols, such as words, signs, and gestures, matter because they influence the meanings we attach to actions and objects.<sup>49</sup> From this perspective, institutions are not just rules or structures. They are built on socially constructed frameworks of shared meanings that guide behaviour, facilitate actions, and make them understandable.

Typical examples from Yugoslav labour migration include the terms 'temporary work abroad' and 'our workers abroad', both widely employed across political, organisational, and everyday contexts. As Le Normand argues, these terms were far from purely descriptive, as they carried symbolic significance that shaped how migration was understood and governed.<sup>50</sup> These terms framed labour migrants as an integral part of Yugoslavia, implied their return and underscored a sense of reciprocal obligation between them and the Yugoslav state. As Bernard suggests, this framing played an important role in enabling the large scale of Yugoslav labour migration, as its temporary character secured political support from both sending and receiving states, and made the migration and separation more tolerable for workers and their families.<sup>51</sup>

These conceptual insights provide a framework for understanding the coexistence of liberal and restrictive elements of the institutional-organisational framework governing Yugoslav labour migration. Thereby, they allow this thesis

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 11–16.

<sup>48</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 58.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 59–70

<sup>50</sup> Le Normand, *Citizens without borders*, 35.

<sup>51</sup> Bernard, *Deutsch marks in the head*, 33–34.

to examine the contradictory nature of Yugoslavia's framework governing labour migration - both as a system designed to enable and stimulate labour migration from Yugoslavia and a system of constraints, designed to structure and control labour migration currents. For instance, the Yugoslav establishment created migration commissions at both republican and federal levels to promote the migration of categories designated for employment abroad and to structure their recruitment in line with the objectives of labour migration policy.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the policy's liberal treatment of labour migration, reinforced by constitutional and legal provisions, enabled irregular and loosely regulated recruiting of Yugoslav labour.

Ambiguous nature and irregular outcomes often stem from the fundamental characteristic of institutions. Namely, institutions are rarely perfect and are frequently disregarded or violated. Even by their creators, co-creators, or designated custodians, as such behaviour may serve strategic interests or respond to shifting political and economic pressures. This characteristic of institutions is particularly relevant to this thesis, as the thesis frequently highlights how the Yugoslav establishment perceived inconsistencies within, disregard for, and misuse or violation of the institutional framework governing labour migration. These perceptions were accompanied by ongoing efforts to refine, enhance, and render the institutional-organisational framework more effective.

Imperfection of institutions, and their disregard, misuse, and violation is possible because institutions, as Hacker, Pierson, and Thelen argue are multifunctional instruments that can be interpreted and utilised in diverse ways to serve different interests.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, North observes that institutions have always encompassed those elements that enhance productivity and those that hinder it, thereby creating opportunities for both constructive and exploitative behaviour and for ignorance and violations.<sup>54</sup>

Keohane and Oran Young offer valuable insights into why states often downplay or disregard international institutions. Keohane argues that international institutions are inherently weaker than the persistent dynamics of interstate competition and the dense and cohesive institutional structures found within modern states. Consequently, domestic priorities and pressures, along with political and economic rivalries between states, tend to exert a stronger influence on state behaviour than international institutional commitments.<sup>55</sup> Young argues

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<sup>52</sup> Bošnjak, 'Between unemployment and migration', 64–65

<sup>53</sup> Hacker, Pierson and Thelen, 'Drift and conversion', 185.

<sup>54</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Keohane, *International institutions*, 6.

that actors engaged in international institutions do not necessarily view the mechanisms of their implementation as authoritative and the outcomes they produce as binding. Instead, engagement in international institutions is mainly driven by actors' pursuit of benefits, and they may feel no obligation to comply with institutional requirements if non-compliance offers greater advantage.<sup>56</sup>

A telling example from post-war labour migrations is the tendency of Western states to prioritise domestic employment and immigration policies, and to support their employers' demands for a suitable workforce, over interstate recruitment agreements.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Yugoslavia, this behaviour significantly undermined the effectiveness of organised interstate recruitment as envisaged in bilateral labour recruitment agreements.

Young argues that states rarely invest in formal compliance mechanisms capable of eliminating violations of international institutions, as such investments entail significant costs and tend to yield diminishing returns well before compliance is achieved.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, despite regular and detailed reporting on these developments, the Yugoslav establishment failed to establish effective enforcement mechanisms, either independently or in cooperation with Western governments. Instead, as this thesis demonstrates, it mainly relied on the gradual strengthening of the institutional framework governing labour migration, the efforts of designated organisations to uphold that framework, and appeals to Western governments and employment authorities.

## Institutional construction and change

Central insights of new institutionalism emphasise that formal institutions are not static but emerge and change in response to shifting political, economic, and social conditions. This process tends to be gradual and is strongly shaped by existing formal and informal institutions and their historical legacies. It is further conditioned by political, economic, and cognitive capacities of actors pursuing institutional construction or change and by those resisting them. Therefore, institutions are rarely perfect and regularly produce unintended outcomes.

Theoretical perspectives on institutional construction and change serve in this thesis as analytical tools for unpacking and examining the Yugoslav establishment's motivations and ambitions to regulate labour migration. They

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<sup>56</sup> Oran Young, 'International regimes: problems of concept formation', *World Politics* 32:3 (1980) 331–356, 332–341; Young, 'International regimes', 119.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Johannes-Dieter Steinert, 'Migration and migration policy: West Germany and the recruitment of foreign labour, 1945–61', *Journal of Contemporary History* 49:1 (2014) 9–27; Bakondy, 'Austria attractive for guest workers', 113–138.

<sup>58</sup> Young, 'International regimes: problems of concept', 336.

serve to contextualise and integrate the prevailing forces that shaped the design and subsequent changes of the institutional-organisational framework governing Yugoslav labour migration. They clarify how evolving objectives were pursued through that framework and how institutionalisation operated at both domestic and international levels. They also enhance the understanding and contextualisation of ambiguities characterising the framework.

This thesis views the Yugoslav establishment - the president, the government, governmental bodies, the Federal Employment Bureau or, more broadly, the Yugoslav state - as the principal agent in the construction and changes of the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration. This perspective emerges from the empirical sources analysed for this thesis, which consistently portray the Yugoslav establishment as a unified actor, both domestically and internationally. This is hardly surprising given the authoritarian order of the Yugoslav state, defined by a one-party system and a single ideological orientation, which fostered a high degree of political, ideological, and bureaucratic consensus.<sup>59</sup>

Scott points out that the modern state holds a unique position in institutional construction and change because it is legitimately endowed with special powers and prerogatives. This foundational role allows the state to legitimately shape and reshape institutional structure.<sup>60</sup> By the same logic, states are also the main architects of international institutions. Although international institutions have considerable impact on their freedom of acting, states nevertheless construct such institutions aiming to facilitate particular objectives and aims perceived as jointly or individually beneficial.

Young points out that states often encounter suboptimal or even harmful outcomes when acting independently in international arena. As a result, they accept constraints imposed by international institutions as a strategic means of improving particular outcomes. In this context, states often face strong incentives to enter into binding international agreements as a means of managing the costs and benefits of international interaction and enhancing their long-term welfare. Accordingly, the emergence of international institutions is primarily driven by states' perceptions of the practical benefits of interstate cooperation under

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<sup>59</sup> However, it is important to acknowledge that certain actors within the Yugoslav political landscape, such as the Federal Employment Bureau, republican governmental bodies, and the Central Alliance of Trade Unions, possessed agency and frequently pursued own interests. However, whether these organisations invested own resources to design and promote particular institutional changes remains unclear in the sources examined for this thesis.

<sup>60</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 121–122, 142

conditions of interdependence, and not by their moral convictions or ideological adherence to international norms or solidarity.<sup>61</sup>

According to Powell and DiMaggio, the logic behind the construction of international institutions closely parallels that found in domestic affairs: international institutions tend to emerge when the costs of communication, monitoring, and enforcement are low relative to the benefits they provide. Thus, states agree to bind themselves to international institutional arrangements in order to realise joint gains or maximise own benefits, even though doing so may constrain their broader freedom of action.<sup>62</sup>

John Duffield makes a further insightful point by noting that international institutions often determine what qualifies as a particular international activity and contribute to shaping the social meaning of behaviour in the international arena. Furthermore, they often define, create, and regulate activities that would not otherwise exist.<sup>63</sup> In the context of postwar regulation of labour migration, such activities include the establishment of joint commissions by labour-sending and labour-receiving states for the selection of workers and the monitoring of recruitment procedures. These bodies were tasked, among other responsibilities, with operationalising the meaning of interstate labour exchange. Their creation and effective functioning were enabled by the interstate institutionalisation of labour recruitment and the rules and norms designated to implement those recruitments.

A fundamental distinction characterises international institutions: they are typically established by certain states and subsequently joined by others. As Young insightfully observes, actors within the international community often face a constrained set of institutional arrangements from which to choose, as the range of available options is limited. Consequently, newly independent states are generally compelled to integrate into pre-existing international institutional frameworks and adopt their foundational principles.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, socialist Yugoslavia, as a latecomer to the international system of regulated labour migration, had little alternative but to engage with the established mechanisms of interstate cooperation and adhere to the prevailing norms and rules governing the international exchange of labour. Namly, since 1919, labour-sending and labour-receiving states have collaborated in regulating labour migration through various

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<sup>61</sup> Young, 'International regimes', 119.

<sup>62</sup> Powel and DiMaggio, 'Introduction', 7.

<sup>63</sup> John Duffield, 'What are international institutions?', *International Studies Review* 9:1 (2007) 1–22, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Young, 'International regimes', 120.

forms of recruitment agreements which by the 1950s had evolved into a dominant system comprising both multilateral and bilateral arrangements.<sup>65</sup>

Keohane extends this insight by arguing that international institutions do not merely constrain states' behaviour but actively reshape their interests, capacities, and identities. Accordingly, they can become a source of strategic orientation and transformation rather than mere alignment or adaptation.<sup>66</sup> Thus, while Young's perspective highlights Yugoslavia's constrained entry into a system designed and mastered by other states, Keohane's view underscores the transformative potential of its institutional engagement on the international level. It captures both Yugoslavia's endeavour to be recognised as a respected participant in the system of international labour migration but also the strategic ambitions and initiatives undertaken by the Yugoslav establishment to exploit that system. Namely, enabled by opportunities forged by bilateral agreements, Yugoslavia demonstrated a broad capacity to advance its interests through proactive engagement in institutional entrepreneurship at the interstate levels.<sup>67</sup>

### *Institutional entrepreneurship*

Institutional entrepreneurship is a concept introduced by Paul DiMaggio, aiming to address a major limitation in institutional theory - the underemphasis of interest and agency in the process of institutional change. DiMaggio argued for a more explicit recognition of the role of interest-driven actors in shaping institutional outcomes, emphasising that institutional continuity and change are often the result of contests between those who support and those who oppose construction or change of particular institutional arrangements. Those actors who leverage resources, mobilize support, and strategically intervene to create or change institutions in ways that reflect and promote their interests are institutional entrepreneurs. Their endeavours involve legitimising new institutional structures and often unfold across the broader organisational field. Their success depends on access to both material and symbolic resources needed to construct and justify institutional arrangement they are pushing forward.<sup>68</sup>

More importantly for this thesis, the successful institutionalisation depends on demand characteristics, that is, the existence of unmet needs among clients, the public, or the state that a new institutional arrangement can credibly address.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Christoph Rass, 'Temporary labour migration and state-run recruitment of foreign workers in Europe, 1919–1975. A new migration regime?', *International Review of Social History* 57:S20 (2012) 191–224, 201.

<sup>66</sup> Keohane, *International institutions*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 7–11, 15–19; Bošnjak, 'Labour migration in the service'.

<sup>68</sup> DiMaggio, 'Interest and agency', 14.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

Namely, persistently unmet or only partially fulfilled needs of the Yugoslav state that institutionalised labour migration was intended to respond to, illuminate the underlying rationale for the Yugoslav establishment's continuous engagement in the process of changing the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration.

North's insight on institutional change is equally important for this thesis, as it provides further conceptual lens through which the Yugoslav state's persistent engagement with institutional entrepreneurship can be understood as a response to enduring, unmet demands. North contends that institutional change occurs when actors perceive that they could solve problems and improve their performance and outcomes by modifying the existing institutional framework at some margin. Such change is pursued through small-scale, gradual adjustments and involves revising specific rules, procedures, or practices within the broader institutional structure, rather than implementing comprehensive institutional reforms.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, North argues that institutional change is facilitated by the bargaining power of individuals and organisations, and that significant change of formal rules occurs only when it aligns with the interests of those possessing sufficient bargaining strength.<sup>71</sup>

In a more recent contribution on institutional entrepreneurship, Julie Battilana, Bernard Leca, and Eva Boxenbaum have elaborated that actors may be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs even if they do not succeed in effecting an institutional change, provided they meet two key criteria. First, they must initiate a form of divergent institutional change - a significant departure from established institutional rules and norms. Second, they must actively engage in the implementation of this change, demonstrating a commitment to altering existing arrangements.<sup>72</sup>

This insight is particularly valuable for this thesis, as it allows for a more nuanced recognition of the Yugoslav establishment's institutional entrepreneurship, particularly in cases where institutional change was only partially realised or ultimately unsuccessful. Additionally, it enables the identification of episodes that are poorly documented in archival sources and might otherwise be dismissed as marginal or inconsequential. One such episode is demonstrated in the article comprising this thesis that explores the Yugoslav establishment's agenda regarding labour migrants' pre-departure trainings. This agenda included an attempt to institutionalise a structured programme that would

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<sup>70</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 8, 100.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>72</sup> Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum, 'How actors change institutions', 68–72.

both prepare workers for employment abroad and align their selection with the strategic objectives of the Yugoslav state.<sup>73</sup> Another episode is demonstrated in the article exploring the Yugoslav establishment's ambitious attempts to align the convention on social insurance with Sweden with the state's policy objective of financially capitalising on labour migration.<sup>74</sup> Although these initiatives leveraged little success, they reflect the Yugoslav establishment's constant and proactive engagement in institutional entrepreneurship.

At the same time, a number of scholars highlights the influential role played by a diverse range of interest-driven stakeholders in the construction and change of institutional arrangements.<sup>75</sup> These stakeholders include economic actors and their interest organisations, social associations, or social movements and groups. These actors may exert influence through various means, such as disregarding or challenging existing institutionalised rules and norms, misinterpreting them, or introducing new ideas and practices that ultimately reshape the institutional landscape. The most prominent "other" in this thesis are Western employers and employment authorities and Yugoslav labour migrants. Alarming reports on their disregard for, circumvention of, or direct violations of Yugoslavia's institutional framework stimulated the Yugoslav establishments' further institutional entrepreneurship and thus contributed institutional changes.

### *Institutional conversion and layering*

A further manifestation of the Yugoslav political establishment's dedicated and strategic engagement with institutional changes is its use of institutional conversion and layering for achieving specific objectives. According to Kathleen Thelen and Hacker, Pierson, and Thelen conversion is a common mode of institutional change, whereby existing institutional framework is redirected to serve new purposes without altering its formal structures.<sup>76</sup> This process usually unfolds when new goals are adopted for a given institutional framework, or when additional stakeholders are incorporated into a coalition that supports, upholds, or benefits from that framework. By adjusting the framework to the composition or priorities of these coalitions, its functions can be redefined while preserving its

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<sup>73</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry'.

<sup>74</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Labour migration in the service'.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, Friedland and Alford, 'Bringing society back in', 253–256; Battilana, Leca and Boxenbaum, 'How actors change institutions, 88–91; Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 121–122, 142; Patrick Emmenegger, 'Agency in historical institutionalism. Coalitional work in the creation, maintenance, and change of institutions', *Theory and Society* 50:4 (2021) 607–626, 612–616.

<sup>76</sup> Kathleen Thelen, *How institutions evolve. The political economy of skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan* (Cambridge 2004) 36–37; Hacker, Pierson, and Thelen, 'Drift and conversion', 185.

continuity. Conversion thus allows for the implementation of substantial institutional change in response to emerging imperatives or challenges, particularly in contexts where comprehensive institutional change is politically or practically unfeasible.

Layering refers to a mode of institutional change whereby new elements, such as rules, procedures, or organisational components, are added to an existing institutional framework without dismantling its core structure.<sup>77</sup> These additions may appear marginal, but they can significantly alter how the original framework operates by introducing new logics, priorities, or incentives. Layering is particularly useful for strategically driven actors when they pursue strategic institutional change under the guise of continuity.

The Yugoslav establishment frequently employed layering to enhance the effectiveness of the framework governing labour migration and align institutions more closely with the state's existing and new aims and interests. Gradual changes of the law regulating employment abroad, demonstrated in this thesis, represent one such example.<sup>78</sup>

A salient example of institutional conversion is the revision of labour migration policy in 1970, followed by the change of the law governing employment abroad. To this framework, a new institutional layer was added: the interrepublican agreement on the implementation of employment abroad.<sup>79</sup> The Yugoslav establishment implemented these changes to adapt the institutional framework governing labour migration to the increasing challenges of controlling migration outflows and to accommodate the preferences and imperatives of Yugoslav enterprises and their political patrons regarding the labour migration and return of qualified workers. These conversions enabled a significant institutional change while preserving continuity in the state's policy of supporting and mediating employment abroad of unqualified workers and qualified labour surplus.

### *Limits and fragility of institutional design*

As elaborated above, institutions are neither flawless nor fixed; they exhibit inherent imperfections and remain vulnerable to neglect, disregard, and violation. According to new institutionalism, imperfections and vulnerabilities are intrinsic to the design of institutions, including the design of institutional change.

North argues that institutions are rarely created or changed to be socially efficient. Rather, they are intended to serve the interests of those with the

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<sup>77</sup> Thelen, *How institutions evolve*, 35.

<sup>78</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>79</sup> See chapter four.

bargaining power to devise and implement them. According to North, socially efficient institutions may emerge, but only under specific circumstances. For instance, when the immediate objectives of powerful actors align with, or gradually come to align with, the interests of broader society.<sup>80</sup>

North further underlines cognitive and institutional limitations to designing a perfect institution. To enhance the likelihood of successful institutional change, actors pursuing institutional change collect information and cultivate knowledge about the problem that the institutional framework should address. However, their capacity to initiate and implement institutional change is conditioned by the existing formal and informal institutions and the constraints and opportunities they provide, and by the normative views of how the world should be organised. Furthermore, the knowledge these actors cultivate and rely on is imperfect, cognitively processed, and subjectively interpreted.<sup>81</sup>

Additionally, as Scott argues, institutional design is not purely a matter of agency. It is also socially structured. It is shaped and limited by prevailing social and cultural expectations, and varies greatly among actors and among social structures. In other words, what institutional designers can do or choose to do is influenced by the society and formal and informal institutions they live within.<sup>82</sup>

Paul Pierson emphasises historical legacies of formal and informal institutions that limit institutional design. Such legacies frequently influence institutional designers, preventing them to act in a fully rational or strategic manner.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, Pierson underlines that actors involved in institutional design operate with short-term horizons and are often guided more by a notion of what is currently appropriate than by a clear understanding of what would be genuinely effective. These aspects reduce their strategic flexibility, making it difficult to design perfectly suited institution, even when the design is driven by detailed learning process. As a result, institutional arrangements often yield a range of outcomes, many of which are unintended, unforeseen, or undesirable, and may generate long-term consequences.

North offers further important insight into the imperfect performance of institutions by emphasising the enduring influence of norms and conventions on the behaviour of individuals and organisations. According to North, aspects like customs, traditions, and established codes of conduct serve as a bridge between past and present, shaping expectations and behaviours in ways that persist over

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<sup>80</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 16.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 23, 100.

<sup>82</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 95.

<sup>83</sup> Paul Pierson, *Politics in time. History, institutions, and social analysis* (Princeton and Oxford 2004) 109–122.

time. In everyday interactions, whether within families, kinships, social networks, or economic exchanges, individuals and organisations are predominantly guided by norms and conventions. While formal institutions may underpin, guide and even shape these informal practices, they are rarely the immediate source of decision-making in daily life.<sup>84</sup>

These insights help explain why many aspects of social order endure even in the aftermath of radical institutional transformation, such as a successful and comprehensive revolution. A typical example from Yugoslav labour migration is the persistence of migrant networks linking specific regions within Yugoslavia to communities of their relatives and compatriots settled in the West.<sup>85</sup> These networks were rooted in long-standing traditions of migration to Western countries which continued and expanded in socialist Yugoslavia, resisting most institutional arrangements crafted by the Yugoslav establishment. On the receiving end, migration through networks was a convenient mechanism for acquiring labour and early accepted as a norm, as Western labour-receiving states and employers frequently welcomed that form of migration and, during periods of labour shortages, even facilitated through formal institutional channels.<sup>86</sup>

Despite their initial and persistent imperfection, formal institutions tend to survive and be maintained and reproduced, albeit with changes and adjustments. One explanation for their persistence, carefully summarised by Paul Pierson, involves the operation of self-reinforcing mechanisms, which stabilise and perpetuate institutional arrangements over time, making their continued implementation a path-dependent process.<sup>87</sup> These self-reinforcing mechanisms include both the resources that institutional entrepreneurs employed to push forward their institutional model and the subsequent investments in administrative infrastructure, enforcement mechanisms, or in the establishment and maintenance of institutionalised interstate exchanges.

Yugoslavia's institutional framework governing labour migration produced also tangible benefits - most notably, substantial inflows of foreign currency and a release valve for rising domestic unemployment. These outcomes further reinforced the framework's perceived necessity and path dependency, making its

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<sup>84</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 6, 36–37.

<sup>85</sup> Bošnjak, 'Driving forces of labour migration', 200–202.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Johannes-Dieter Steinert, 'Migration and migration policy, 26–27; Olle Jansson, 'Employer agency and migration networks in post-war Sweden: the case of manufacturing companies and migrant workers in Västmanland County,' *Journal of Migration History* 4 (2018) 187–210; Bošnjak, 'Driving forces of labour migration', 201.

<sup>87</sup> Pierson, *Politics in time*, 17–53.

maintenance and improvement more logical than its radical change or dismantling.

### Interplay between organisations and institutions

As mentioned above, North describes institutions as ‘rules of the game’. Rules define how the game is played and the players aim to win through a combination of skill, strategy, and coordination. They do so sometimes by following the rules and sometimes by breaking them. Organisations, according to North, are the players. Their emergence, form, and evolution are shaped by the surrounding institutional structure and by factors like technological conditions, resource availability, and the preferences of those establishing them. These factors influence objectives organisations pursue, their operational effectiveness, and the types of knowledge and skills they acquire in the process. In this sense, the institutional environment channels organisations’ goals, learning, capability development, and performance.<sup>88</sup>

Scott similarly posits that organisations are embedded in institutional structures and established to pursue particular goals, metaphorically calling them “creatures of their institutional environments”.<sup>89</sup> According to Scott, organisations are shaped by the particular historical and cultural contexts, and reflect both prevailing technical knowledge and shared social beliefs. They are structured around the belief that valued goals should be pursued through systematic, formalised, and codified procedures. In this respect, organisations are not merely practical entities but also socially constructed responses to a world progressively interpreted through the lens of logic, and institutional rules and norms. As these beliefs spread across domains such as education, healthcare, commerce, and governance, organisations emerge as the dominant form through which collective action is coordinated and rendered effective.<sup>90</sup>

However, Scott underlines, to endure and succeed within their social contexts, organisations require more than access to resources and technical competence. They must also be recognised as legitimate actors whose operations are appropriate and acceptable within particular social or legal framework.<sup>91</sup> A clear example from this thesis that reflects Scott’s arguments is the Yugoslav government’s continuous struggle to secure the recognition of organisations

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<sup>88</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 5, 73.

<sup>89</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 217.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

tasked with regulating labour migration as primary, legitimate, and authoritative organisations for selecting and sending workers abroad.<sup>92</sup>

North observes that, over time, organisations develop routines, coordination mechanisms, and problem-solving capacities that reflect accumulated knowledge and experience, thereby enhancing their effectiveness. As they pursue their goals, organisations influence and gradually reshape the institutional environment in which they operate, thereby contributing to its change.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, Scott recognises that most organisations are not merely passive entities focused only on achieving socially or otherwise valued goals but are typically constituted as active agents. As such, they respond to institutional, social, and cultural pressures with strategic and creative intent, and through collaboration with other organisations adopting similar goals or facing similar constraints, they may resist, reshape, or reinterpret the demands placed upon them.<sup>94</sup>

These conceptual insights enable this thesis to both describe responsibilities and practices of Yugoslav state organisations involved in the regulation of labour migration and illuminate less visible functions they performed within the broader institutional framework - functions that extended beyond the execution of routine administrative tasks. Some of these organisations, like republican employment offices, the Federal Employment Bureau and Yugoslav embassies, were not only responsible for regulating labour migration and Yugoslav workers' status abroad, but also for monitoring and documenting developments within regulated and irregular labour migration, the Yugoslav labour market, the labour markets of Western industrialised countries, and the broader migration landscape. In doing so, they pursued their principal operational purposes, while simultaneously gathering information and cultivating knowledge about various domains of labour migration. This knowledge production constituted a vital resource for Yugoslav governing bodies and institutional designers and, ultimately, shaped the design and evolution of the institutional-organisational framework regulating labour migration.

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<sup>92</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 7–11; Bošnjak, 'Between unemployment and migration', 69–71.

<sup>93</sup> North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 5, 73–80.

<sup>94</sup> Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 217.

### 3 Empirical sources and methods

This thesis draws on a wide array of archived primary written sources, encompassing documents produced by Yugoslavia's federal, republican, and municipal authorities, and embassies and consulates. These sources are complemented and further contextualised through the use of Yugoslav published and unpublished statistical data summaries.

I have retrieved written sources from several archival collections held in the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. I selected the Archives of Yugoslavia on the basis of their extensive holdings relevant to labour migration governance at the federal level. To ensure both the feasibility and the representativeness of the research, I included the Croatian State Archives into the research. This choice was further shaped by the Republic of Croatia's early and comprehensive involvement in labour migration, with a disproportionately high share of Yugoslav labour migrants and its strong engagement in the governance of external migrations. Together, these archives enabled me to retrieve a robust evidentiary corpus comprising approximately 7 500 pages of written material.

The method I applied for the retrieval, organisation, and analysis of sources followed the principles of qualitative historical inquiry. I gathered and structured the archival material in accordance with the thesis's research focus and general research questions. I have critically examined the sources using established principles of source criticism. In doing so, I treated written records as situated testimonies shaped by the historical contexts and circumstances of their production.

Analytically, I engaged in a process of reconstructing how actors within Yugoslavia's political and employment authorities interpreted labour migration, how these interpretations shaped the institutional-organisational framework governing it, and which objectives and practices evolved in response to trends and developments within and surrounding labour migration. I placed a particular emphasis on identifying patterns across sources and archival collections - patterns revealing consistencies and changes in policy objectives, in the development of the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration, and in the practices of labour migration implementation. Through this structured and interpretive, mosaic-like analytical strategy, I traced the emergence, evolution,

and implementation of Yugoslavia's framework for governing labour migration in a manner sensitive to Yugoslavia's broader institutional structure and to broader historical contexts.

The analysis was considerably enhanced and facilitated by the use of modern tools for collecting and engaging with written material. As mentioned, I have retrieved from the archives approximately 7 500 pages of written material. The magnitude of this corpus necessitated an analytically structured mode of my engagement that enabled coherent, systematic, and analytically purposeful navigation across the whole material. I have scanned all material and converted it into searchable text using the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. The use of this technology has enabled me efficient reading and navigation across this large volume of material. It facilitated the identification of recurring themes and formulations, and supported the tracing of patterns across sources, archival collections, and time. In doing so, it both enhanced the systematic analysis of evidence and increased the visibility of the developments, continuity, and changes within Yugoslavia's labour migration governance.

These methods and technological possibilities have also illuminated some inherent constraints of archival research. Roberto Franzosi points out that historians researching archives deal with data created by others for purposes that are not those of the historians themselves.<sup>95</sup> This can be extended by noting that such material is also preserved by others according to archival logics and priorities that are not necessarily aligned with historical inquiry. Furthermore, my research was also conditioned by another inherent limitation of archival inquiry that Franzosi underscores: the impossibility of generating new data by questioning the authors of preserved documents.<sup>96</sup> In other words, I was limited to what was available in the archives - to testimonies recorded by contemporaries and deemed worthy of preservation by archivists.

Additionally, my research could only encompass a fraction of the empirical sources available in the archives, as the sheer volume of available material makes comprehensive examination physically and temporally impossible within the scope of a single thesis. And, to maintain research focus and analytical coherence, I had to privilege certain sources over others. As Franzosi points out, to achieve a coherent representation, historians must silence certain historical events to emphasise others and they must actively choose to ignore whole domains of

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<sup>95</sup> Roberto Franzosi, 'Historical knowledge and evidence', in: Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds) *The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis* (Oxford 2006), 438–453, 439–440.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 440. Of course, this constraint is contingent on other factors as well, such as the historical distance of the document's creation.

history. However, Franzosi continuous, historians must be selective because it is hardly possible to include in a study every detail from the past. If they tried to do so, they would end up creating a disorganized collection of events without a coherent or meaningful story.<sup>97</sup>

This selectivity does not merely reflect practical necessity but also speaks to the nature of historical writing itself. As Michael Gill, David Gill, and Thomas Roulet point out, historians produce *a* historical account and not *the* historical account, reminding us that the past is not simply discovered but also actively constructed through interpretation of sources. Therefore, historical accounts should not be understood as the privileged truth claims.<sup>98</sup>

These observations should not be mistaken as disregard for the archival collections consulted, the empirical sources analysed, or the details embedded within them. On the contrary, this thesis is firmly grounded in empirical research and strives to construct a historically reliable account by tracing sequences of events, elucidating their interdependencies and connections, interconnecting theoretical perspectives and empirical data, and presenting the findings with transparency and analytical rigour. It does so in the conviction that the written material produced by key stakeholders within the Yugoslav labour migration governance apparatus offers critical insight into the aims, objectives, and practices underpinning the design, changes, and implementation of the institutional-organisational framework that governed Yugoslav labour migration.

Nonetheless, the reductionist approach to empirical sources is evident throughout, as substantial body of available documentation has been excluded. For instance, sources pertaining to Yugoslavia's interactions with labour migrants abroad and to social and cultural policies directed at migrants and their families. Also omitted are records detailing the relationships between Yugoslav social organisations and public service and their foreign counterparts. To large extent, sources illuminating the mobilisation of migrants' economic capital for domestic development projects have likewise been set aside. These materials undoubtedly offer rich and multifaceted insights into Yugoslavia's relationship with its citizens abroad, the institutional architecture surrounding their social, political, and economic activities, and the mechanisms designed to attract remittances and foster a sense of national belonging. However, they do not directly address the central concerns of this thesis. Namely, the aims, strategies, and practices of Yugoslavia's political establishment and governing organisations in shaping,

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<sup>97</sup> Franzosi, 'Historical knowledge and evidence', 442–443.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Gill, David Gill, and Thomas Roulet, 'Constructing trustworthy historical narratives: criteria, principles and techniques,' *British Journal of Management* 29 (2018) 191–205, 192.

controlling, and utilising labour migration, and the principal forces driving institutional changes in these domains.

## Archives of Yugoslavia

From the Archives of Yugoslavia, I have mostly retrieved and analysed materials from the collections of the Office of the President, the Federal Executive Council (the Federal Government), and the Federal Employment Bureau. I researched the president's and the federal government's collections because these entities possessed the authority to direct, shape, and influence political, social, and economic developments, including institutional and organisational changes. I researched the archival collections of the Federal Employment Bureau because the Bureau served as the principal federal organisation responsible for coordinating and managing labour migration both within Yugoslavia and internationally.

Across these collections, I consulted a wide range of reports, correspondences, and letters produced by federal governmental bodies, embassies and consulates, and the Federal Employment Bureau and republican employment offices. Taken together, these sources provided me with a multifaceted insight into how the Yugoslav establishment learned about labour migration and how it framed its developments, how it framed the functioning of the institutional–organisational framework governing labour migration, and how it evaluated and discussed the actions and strategies of foreign recruiters of Yugoslav workers. They also illuminated discussions and decisions concerning the construction, implementation, and changes of institutional and organisational arrangements for regulating labour migration and the role of Yugoslav political and employment authorities in these developments. However, these sources rarely disclose how recruitment processes and workers' deployment were carried out in practice. Descriptions of procedures, actors involved, and their lived experiences appear only sporadically. As a result, the thesis necessarily maintains its analytical focus at the macro level, reconstructing institutional and organisational developments rather than offering a description of recruitment practices.

In the Archives of Yugoslavia, I have also consulted several collections of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ). SSRNJ was the country's largest sociopolitical organisation encompassing representatives from political bodies, social associations, and various sociopolitical and economic organisations. Its platforms functioned as forums for public deliberation on a wide range of issues relating to Yugoslavia's social, economic,

and political life, including the implementation of laws, regulations, and policy measures. Within the SSRNJ's archival collections, I examined the collections of its Coordination Committee for Workers Abroad, the Commission for Foreign Relations, and the Conference for the Social Activity of Women (commonly referred to as the Women's Conference).

The majority of documents I retrieved from the SSRNJ collections concern Yugoslavia's social, economic, and cultural policies directed at labour migrants and their families, and the broader developments within migrant communities both at home and abroad. These documents were therefore of limited relevance to the central research focus of this thesis. However, I retrieved from SSRNJ's collections several analytically valuable reports produced by governmental bodies and the Federal Employment Bureau, which I used to support the thesis' key arguments. In addition, I used sporadically sources produced by the SSRNJ's sections to enhance the contextual insight into the wider social and economic dynamics in Yugoslavia and within Yugoslav labour migration.

I also consulted the archival collections of the Federal Committee for Labour and Employment, which operated between 1974 and 1978. As this period was predominantly characterised by Western state's restrictions to labour immigration, return migration of Yugoslav labour migrants and the Yugoslav state's efforts to regulate it, the sources retrieved from the Committee's collections primarily address those developments. While they constitute only a small portion of the empirical material used in the thesis, they offer important perspectives on the state's adaptation to new circumstances in international arena and adaptation of the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration.

## Croatian State Archives

Like other republics and autonomous provinces that constituted socialist Yugoslavia, during the period covered by this thesis, Croatia mostly managed its internal affairs with a degree of administrative autonomy, including matters related to labour migration. Although the institutional framework regulating labour migration was applied across the federation, republics and provinces retained the capacity to adapt its implementation to the specific conditions within their territories. Therefore, there is no doubt that archival research in other former Yugoslav republics would significantly enrich this analysis. However, the majority of sources that I retrieved from the Croatian State Archives and base my arguments on are produced by federal governmental bodies and pertain to

Yugoslavia as a whole. Like the documents consulted in federal archives, these sources offer multifaceted insights into the aims, objectives, and practices of the Yugoslav authorities regarding labour migration, the strategic approach to its regulation and management, and perspectives on domestic employment conditions and international labour migration.

In addition to sources produced on the federal level, I have also retrieved and analysed sources that pertain specifically to circumstances regarding employment, unemployment, and labour migration in Croatia. However, given the thesis's focus on the perspectives and agency of the Yugoslav state as a whole, I have used such sparingly, to complement or further contextualise sources produced on the federal level.

From the Croatian State Archives, I consulted the collections of the Republican Commission for Emigrants' Issues, the Republican Secretariat for Labour, and the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity. I selected these collections on the presumption that they would contain material documenting Croatia's and Yugoslavia's strategic institutionalisation and governance of labour migration and documents about the practical management of labour migrants' recruitment.

Until 1965, the Republican Commission for Emigrants' Issues served as Croatia's highest-ranking governmental body responsible for a broad range of migration-related matters. These included regulation and monitoring of cross-border mobility, maintenance and development of relationship with migrant communities and their organisations, and the provision of legal and other forms of assistance to migrants and their families. The Commission therefore held privileged access to information concerning labour migration and related developments. Accordingly, its archival collections contained a spectrum of documents on early institutionalisation, organisation, and implementation of labour migration and the establishment's discussions surrounding those aspects. In 1965, most of the Commission's responsibilities were transferred to the Croatian Republican Secretariat for Labour.

The (Croatian) Republican Secretariat for Labour, its successor the Republican Committee for Labour and Employment, and their subordinate body, the Republican Employment Office, were key organisations in the implementation of regulated labour migration in Croatia. From their archival collections I have retrieved reports, policy proposals, and directives concerning both general aspects of labour migration and concrete implementation of regulated employment abroad, its achievements, and shortages. Unfortunately, the archival documentation covering regulated labour migration during the most intensive period of state-facilitated recruitment for work abroad (1966–1973) was not

accessible during my research at the Croatian State Archives. This limitation hindered the retrieval of sources that would have been of considerable value for analysing Yugoslavia's labour migration management during this critical phase, particularly documents detailing distribution of Western requests for Yugoslav labour. Consequently, the sources used for examining these aspects pertain mostly to the years 1963 to 1965. For later years, I relied on a small number of documents that I retrieved from federal archival collections in Belgrade. Although significantly smaller in scope, these sources nevertheless offered crucial insights into Yugoslavia's management of labour migration.

I have retrieved further valuable sources from archival collections of the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity. Established in 1965, the Institute conducted research on migrants and national minorities across Croatia, Yugoslavia, and beyond Yugoslavia's borders. It carried the research primarily by academic staff and within a scientific research framework. However, the Institute was closely affiliated with state organisations responsible for monitoring and regulating external migrations, and it operated under the supervision of Croatia's highest-ranking political authorities, which appointed its directors.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the Institute functioned as a purposive research organisation, established to advance academic research and contribute the Yugoslav establishment's knowledge base for governing migrations.

Most of the documents I retrieved from the Institute's archival collection were produced by the Institute itself and take the form of research and field-based investigative reports on labour migration. However, I have also retrieved reports and directives authored by Croatian governmental and employment authorities, which frequently offered explicit insights into the Yugoslav establishment's aims, objectives, and deliberations surrounding labour migration.

## Statistical data summaries

This thesis supports the analysis of archival sources with contemporary Yugoslav statistical data which I have retrieved from Yugoslavia's official statistical yearbooks and the Federal Employment Bureau's statistical overviews of employment abroad mediated through Yugoslav employment offices.

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<sup>99</sup> According to the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity's own report. See: Croatian State Archives (Hrvatski državni arhiv – subsequently HDA), Republican Secretariat for Labour (Republički sekretarijat za rad – subsequently RSR) 1609 307, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, *Izveštaj o radu Zavoda za migracije i narodnosti od 1965. do 1970.*, 1970.

At the time of writing, the statistical yearbooks were available in digital format via the online repository of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.<sup>100</sup> From these yearbooks, I extracted values illustrating employment and unemployment trends in Yugoslavia, the educational attainment of unemployed jobseekers, and employment facilitated through public employment offices.

The Federal Employment Bureau's statistical overviews of employment abroad are available in printed form at the Archives of Yugoslavia. These overviews document employment abroad mediated by municipal employment offices since 1965. The overviews offer valuable insight into the expansion of regulated labour migration and the educational profiles of migrants recruited through Yugoslav employment offices. Together with data retrieved from the statistical yearbooks, these figures support the analysis and contextualisation of written sources. Namely, they frequently formed the empirical basis upon which the Yugoslav establishment changed the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration. Thus, they also enable a more detailed understanding of the developments and trends discussed in written sources.

## Classification and analytical use of primary written sources

Drawing on Michael Heller's framework, the primary written sources analysed in this thesis can be broadly classified as reportative documentary and reportative narrative.<sup>101</sup> Reportative documentary sources are generated during the operations of an office, organisation, or organisational structure, offering insights into concrete practices and activities. Reportative narrative sources are descriptive and informational, providing accounts of events, actions, and strategies that occurred or were anticipated.

From all archival collections I researched, I have retrieved and used both reportative documentary and reportative narrative sources. I have also retrieved and analysed sources that contain elements of both documentary and narrative reporting, offering accounts and explanations of the actions undertaken by their creators, and anticipations of future developments and intended measures.

Reportative documentary sources used in this thesis include government directives; correspondences and brief reports exchanged between federal governmental bodies; correspondences and briefings submitted by embassies and consulates; correspondences between employment authorities at federal,

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<sup>100</sup> See Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/publikacije/>.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Heller, 'Rethinking historical methods in organization studies: organizational source criticism', *Organization Studies*, 44:6 (2023), 987–1002.

republican, and municipal levels; and proposals concerning the establishment or changes of policies, institutions, and organisations governing labour migration.

Reportative narrative sources were produced by federal and republican governmental bodies and employment authorities, and to a lesser extent, by embassies and consulates. These sources include both comprehensive and summary reports on past and ongoing developments in Yugoslav and international labour migration, conditions in the Yugoslav labour market and those of Western labour-receiving countries, and various assessments of the social, political, and economic impact of labour migration on the Yugoslav state, economy, and society.

Regardless of source type, whether they were reportative documentary, reportative narrative, or containing elements of both, I have focused primarily on materials produced for internal use, with particular attention to documents authored by entities within the Yugoslav governing structure who held the authority to design and implement policies, initiate and shape actions, or design and influence institutional and organisational changes. These include the federal and republican governments and their respective bodies, the president's office, and, in specific cases such as labour recruitment, employment authorities at the federal and republican levels. To a lesser extent, I have also drawn on documents produced by organisations closely affiliated with the state. Among these, the most significant have been the Alliance of Trade Unions and the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity. These materials were also produced mostly for internal use.

The proximity of all these entities to developments central to the aims and research questions of this thesis renders the sources they produced particularly valuable. Moreover, several sources they produced are marked not only as "for internal use only" but also as "confidential" or "highly confidential." As such, they were accessible to a limited circle of stakeholders and thus contain less polished discourse. Systematically sorted, cross-examined, and meticulously analysed, these sources have provided me with privileged insight into the Yugoslav establishment's perceptions, aims, and actions. It is on the basis of this corpus of internal and confidential documentation that the principal arguments of this thesis rest.

As Jonathan Obert observes, archival collections often comprise a diverse and unsystematically compiled array of materials, requiring researchers to actively situate, connect, and interpret them in order to extract meaningful insights.<sup>102</sup> In

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<sup>102</sup> Jonathan Obert, 'Comparing complex cases using archival research', in: Erica Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith (eds), *Rethinking comparison: innovative methods for qualitative political inquiry* (Cambridge 2021), 129–151, 131.

line with this observation, I have approached archival sources with a structured but flexible strategy that allowed for thematic classification, chronological organisation, and the tracing of patterns and relationships across sources.

As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, I have scanned all archival sources and converted them into searchable text using OCR technology. I did not apply any formalised computational method for processing large volumes of texts. Instead, I utilised the possibilities of digitised material and searchable text in a relatively straightforward manner. For instance, I classified sources according to their authors and the authors' positions within Yugoslavia's governing structure. I also categorised both whole documents and relevant sections by their relevance to the thesis's aims and research questions, organised findings chronologically, and grouped materials thematically. Furthermore, using OCR has facilitated identification of new and recurring trends and developments, enabled the cross-referencing of themes and actors across different documents and archival collections, and allowed me to locate specific information within particular documents, folders, or entire collections. In other words, I was able to navigate large volumes of written material efficiently and to enhance the systematic organisation and analytical use of the whole archival corpus I retrieved.

Although a small portion of scanned documents remained unconverted into searchable text due to their physical degradation, the sources' digitised form has facilitated analysis in multifaceted ways. It has facilitated keyword searches, chronological mapping, and cross-examination and cross-referencing across documents and archival collections. It has facilitated multiple readings and connections to be made between sources written by different authors at different times and for different purposes and identification of persistent, new, and less evident patterns. Likewise, it has facilitated identification of relationships between sources, the contexts in which they were written, and the connections between past and subsequent events illuminated in individual sources. Thereby, it has allowed me to piece together evidence spread across several archival collections and numerous documents of various form, scope, and purpose.

A good example of the added analytical advantage afforded by this approach is visible in my examination of the Yugoslav establishment's agenda regarding labour migrant's pre-departure training. The sources' digitised and searchable form has enabled me effective identification and meaningful correlation of documents stored across several different archival collections in the Yugoslav Archives and the Croatian State Archives. At first sight, most of these documents appear to be unrelated while other could be classified as irrelevant for the whole thesis. For example, the sources' digitised and searchable form has allowed me

to connect the letters from municipal authorities to the Federal Employment Bureau with the Bureau's reports on meetings with FR Germany's employment authorities.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, it enabled me to link a report from Yugoslavia's Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, held in the Croatian State Archives, with a report from the Federal Employment Bureau stored in the Yugoslav Archives.<sup>104</sup> The Secretariat briefly reported on events that occurred under its jurisdiction during the initial months of 1971, including the visit of the FR German Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to Yugoslavia in January. The Bureau documented its own meeting with FR Germany's employment authorities in March the same year. Read alongside one another, both reports contained short but important and closely related passages concerning Yugoslavia's and FR Germany's cooperation on pre-departure training.

Finally, it is important to note that several previously classified and highly classified documents contained an additional page listing the individuals for whom the documents were intended. For ethical reasons, I did not scan these pages. I have likewise not used those names in any capacity in my analysis, as the communication patterns between specific members of the Yugoslav establishment, and their individual understandings or actions, fall outside the analytical scope of this thesis.

### Source criticism

Paul Ricoeur compellingly argues that history is a school of suspicion, undergoing a crisis of belief in the trustworthiness of a documentary evidence because it is a testimony of another.<sup>105</sup> However, as Ricoeur fairly points out, it is the amount of confidence in one historical testimony that enables us to doubt other testimonies.<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless, historical testimonies require careful and critical evaluation if the reconstruction of a historical account is to carry scholarly credibility and interpretive reliability. Rather than assuming archival materials to be neutral artefacts, I approached them with an awareness that they are regularly shaped by different agendas and social, political, and economic contexts, and preserved according to selective preservation practices.

I have evaluated sources under principles of contemporaneity, independence, impartiality, and trustworthiness and reliability.<sup>107</sup> The sources fully meet the

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<sup>103</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 19.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>105</sup> Ricoeur, *Memory, history, forgetting*, 180-181.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>107</sup> Heller, 'Rethinking historical methods', 992.

requirement for contemporaneity, as they include writings and data contemporary to the aspects under analysis. Most sources meet the requirements of independence (particularly those upon which I base my arguments) since they are written by actors directly involved in the institutionalisation, organisation, monitoring, and implementation of labour migration. On the other hand, the requirements for impartiality, trustworthiness and reliability are mostly weak, as the material was predominantly written by actors who had a vested interest in tailoring their writings to make documents serve additional purposes.

The evaluation of sources was facilitated by the method I applied to explore them. Namely, the sources' digitised and searchable format increased their accessibility for repeated and multiple readings and comparison. This has facilitated the evaluation of sources, their meaning, and significance through a process of continuous investigation and reinvestigation, interpretation and reinterpretation, contextualisation and recontextualization, and comparison and confrontation. Moreover, it has facilitated the evaluation of sources' internal validity - whether and to what extent sources written by different authors at different times and for different purposes are interdependent or bear a causal relationship.<sup>108</sup> This approach has significantly reduced the risk of falling into the trap, emphasised by Carlo Ginzburg, of oversimplifying the relationship between historical documents and past realities by treating a single source as a transparent window into the past.<sup>109</sup>

One advantage of the archival sources used in the thesis is that political and administrative authorities frequently shared materials, particularly those pertaining to entire Yugoslavia and interests and policies of the Yugoslav state. This is obvious from the fact that I repeatedly found reports produced by different actors in different archives but also suggested by the lists of individuals and entities within the governing structure to whom reports were intended. Further advantage is that analysed sources include multiple actors' perspectives on the same issues within labour migration, and their suggestions or instructions for addressing those issues. These aspects support the reasoning that knowledge about labour migration circulated across the upper echelons of the labour migration's governing structure, and that the policy guidelines were, in general, disseminated and familiar across that structure. Taken together, these features supported the analysis of the Yugoslav establishment as an integrated entity with broadly shared aims and objectives concerning labour migration.

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<sup>108</sup> Obert, 'Comparing complex cases', 136.

<sup>109</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, 'Checking the evidence: the judge and the historian', *Critical Inquiry* 18:1 (1991) 79-92, 83-84.

Despite these favourable characteristics, most sources I analysed exhibit multiple shortcomings. For instance, most sources present a unified perspective on issues within labour migration and with the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migrations, and a unified perspective on their solutions. This is particularly evident in comprehensive narrative reports written by governmental bodies, which are often tailored to a broader audience within the political and administrative authorities. This unified approach in writing reports is unsurprising considering the authoritarian nature of the Yugoslav state and its governing by a one-party system and a single ideology. These aspects almost certainly shaped the outlooks of those producing the documents and, inevitably, left their imprint on the ways issues were represented in writing.

By drawing on such sources, this thesis will inevitably portray the Yugoslav political establishment and state and state-affiliated organisations as a unified collective actor. This was surely not the case. Especially in the early 1960s when the Yugoslav government struggled to justify the state's support to labour migration to capitalist countries, and during the 1970s when shortages of skilled labour emerged in the more developed parts of Yugoslavia. However, aspects like positions, opinions, and gains and losses of individual actors and particular entities within the Yugoslav governing and political structures is beyond this thesis scope.

A further limitation in the analysed sources is the frequent lack of clarity regarding who was responsible for taking some action, when the action was to be taken, and by what means - a feature often characterising even the government's and the president office's directives. Sources containing suggestions or instructions for responses to developments within labour migration and for further institutional building are often characterised by indicative language and non-binding formulations. Moreover, documents issued as formal directives frequently contain broadly interpretable provisions, and reports on past events are repeatedly characterised by vague explanations and arguments regarding inconsistencies in the functioning of the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration. Even less is clear which state organisations have been responsible for those inconsistencies.

On the one hand, these ambiguities reflect the Yugoslav establishment's limited knowledge of labour migration and its lack of administrative experience in governing it. They also suggest the establishment's reliance on Yugoslavia's governing structure and delegation of responsibility. However, they also reflect the nature of discourse within authoritarian, one-party systems, where language

is commonly and strategically used to reinforce the power structures and politics and ideologies of the ruling elite.

In addition to these ambiguities in written sources, the unpublished statistical material presents further challenges. The trustworthiness and reliability of statistical summaries presented in the Federal Employment Bureau's monthly statistical overviews can be reasonably called into question. Namely, it could have been in the Bureau's interest to present labour migration as primarily regulated and aligned with the state's labour migration policy. Nevertheless, despite this potential institutional bias, these statistical data summaries are consistent over time and thereby offer a valuable reference point for a broader understanding of trends and developments in Yugoslav labour migration. Importantly, the purpose of these data summaries in this thesis is not to determine the precise quantities and categories of workers mediated by Yugoslav employment offices, but to illustrate these developments and further contextualise patterns and trends identified in written sources.

## 4 Yugoslavia's institutional-organisational framework for governing labour migration: background, aims, and development

*“Private mediation of Yugoslav workers’ employment abroad should, by all means, be prevented [...] Employment abroad should be permitted and facilitated for those unemployed workers who are unable to attain jobs within the country and who are not needed by the domestic economy.”<sup>110</sup>*

This statement from the Croatian Secretariat for Economic Affairs captures the essence of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, publicly announced on 23 October 1963, through the *Instruction on Procedures for Employment Abroad* published in the country's official gazette.<sup>111</sup> This ‘Instruction’ guided republican and municipal authorities in implementing labour migration but also signalled to foreign recruiters that Yugoslavia was positioning itself as a willing and organised labour-sending country within international labour migration. The announcement was not abrupt but a culmination of a gradual process of the border regime liberalisation and the establishment of legal foundations. It was shaped by shifting attitudes within the Yugoslav establishment, which, from the late 1950s gradually accepted labour migration as acceptable and compatible with the Yugoslav state's broader economic objectives.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, it was preceded by the liberalisation of passport issuance, amnesty of illegal emigrants labelled as

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<sup>110</sup> HDA, Republican Commission for Emigrant Issues (Republička komisija za iseljenička pitanja - subsequently RKIP) 1609 34, Izvršno vijeće Sabora NRH, Sekretarijat za opće privredne poslove, *Zaključci odbora izvršnog vijeća za opća privredna pitanja od 22.X.1962*, 22 October 1962, 1. All translations are by the author.

<sup>111</sup> In original: ‘Uputstvo o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu’. See Archives of Yugoslavia (Arhiv Jugoslavije – subsequently AJ), Archives of the President of the Republic (Arhiv predsednika republike – subsequently APR), III-A-1-e 16, Savezni Sekretarijat za rad, *Informacija o Uputstvu o zapošljavanju naših radnika u inostranstvu*, 29 October 1963. See also, *Službeni list SFRJ* 42/1963, *Uputstvo o postupanju pri zapošljavanju radnika u inostranstvu*, 1963.

<sup>112</sup> See Brunnbauer, *Globalising Southeastern Europe*, 259-262, 284-286; Le Normand, *Citizens without borders*, 29- 35.

economic migrants, and a constitutional amendment guaranteeing individuals the right to choose an occupation and employment (including employment abroad). These institutional changes supported the liberalisation of labour migration both practically and ideologically.<sup>113</sup>

The 'Instruction' had been approved a year earlier by the Executive Committee of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, country's largest sociopolitical body.<sup>114</sup> The Socialist Alliance encompassed representatives from a wide array of organisations and associations, including state's governing and administrative organisations, republican Socialist Alliances of Working People, trade unions, and cultural, economic, and educational organisations and associations. Thus, its endorsement of the 'Instruction' effectively represented the approval of Yugoslavia's 'working people', the principal agents and carriers of the country's socialist project. It conferred not only legitimacy upon the labour migration policy, but also political and ideological validation to the Yugoslav establishment to advance its labour migration project.

As it was published officially, the "Instruction" contained limited detail on administrative procedures and general principles for deploying workers abroad. Therefore, in January 1964, the federal Secretariat of Labour issued a more comprehensive internal instruction.<sup>115</sup> This instruction articulated Yugoslavia's labour migration policy by explaining the state's aims with labour migration and providing republican and municipal political and employment authorities with a more detailed guidance for sending workers abroad. It was signed by the Secretary of Labour himself, underscoring the political weight of the labour migration policy and the federal government's accountability, and showing that employment abroad was not merely administrative but a politically charged operation.

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<sup>113</sup> Prior to the proclamation of the federal "Instruction", the Republic of Croatia adopted in July 1963 an internal "Instruction" for regulated employment abroad. I will not discuss Croatian policy measures, as they applied solely to the territory of Croatia and because they closely reflected the policy objectives and guidelines debated at the federal level during 1962 and 1963 and adopted in the federal "Instruction" in October 1963. See HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, *Zaključci Izvršnog vijeća Sabora SR Hrvatske o postupku sa zahtjevima za privatno zapošljavanje u inozemstvu*, 3 June 1963; HDA, Institute for Migration and Ethnicity (Zavod za migracije i narodnosti – subsequently ZMN) 1610 15, Republički sekretarijat za rad, *Informacija o provođenju Zaključaka Izvršnog vijeća Sabora Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske u postupku sa zahtjevima za privatno zaposlenje u inozemstvu*, 22 October 1963.

<sup>114</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, *Zaključci sa sjednice Sekretarijata Izvršnog odbora SSRN Jugoslavije od 22.X.1962. "O problemima privatnog zapošljavanja naših građana u inostranstvu"*, 22 October 1962.; AJ, APR III-A-1-e 16, Generalni sekretarijat predsednika republike, *Informacija u vezi predloga Saveznog sekretarijata za rad o regulisanju odlaska naših građana na rad u inostranstvu*, 09 September 1963.

<sup>115</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

That the Yugoslav establishment conceived labour migration as a countrywide, and strategic project - and a responsibility shared across the state's horizontal structures and vertical hierarchies - is evident from the following statement from the Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction:

“The complexity of the matter requires that all relevant authorities and organisations be involved in the work related to implementing labour migration and resolving questions concerning the employment of our citizens abroad. These bodies must cooperate and coordinate with one another in addressing issues within their respective areas of responsibility. To this end, commissions have been established within the federal and republican secretariats of labour. It would be beneficial for similar commissions to be formed within municipal employment offices as well. In addition to other members, it is advisable for these commissions to include representatives from trade unions, chambers of commerce, internal affairs, social insurance, and the republican institutes for technical cooperation with foreign countries.”<sup>116</sup>

This chapter outlines continuities and changes in Yugoslavia's institutionalisation and implementation of labour migration, broadly following a chronological development presented in Table 1. The chapter elaborates the principal aims and objectives set out in the Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction and demonstrates that they remained foundational to framework governing Yugoslav labour migration, persisting through policy shifts and institutional and organisational changes. The chapter shows that these aims and objectives were codified in legislations regulating Yugoslav labour migration and were integral to Yugoslavia's efforts to institutionalise labour migration at the interstate levels. The chapter also outlines how Yugoslavia's regulation of labour migration evolved from liberalisation in the 1960s to selective restriction and return-oriented policies in the 1970s, reflecting tensions between institutional freedoms and the Yugoslav state's imperatives and concerns. Nevertheless, the chapter shows that the principal aims and objectives framed in early 1960s and set out in the Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction in January 1964 also underpinned policies and legal provisions aimed at reducing labour migration and promoting return migration in the 1970s.

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<sup>116</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964, 13.

**Table 1 Institutional and organisational changes in Yugoslavia's labour migration governance<sup>117</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Institutional and organisational changes</b>
1962	Liberalisation of passport issuing. Amnesty law.
1963	Constitutional change. Individual right to choose occupation and employment. Publication of Instruction on procedures for employment abroad. Formation of federal and republican migration commissions.
1965	Law on the organisation and financing of employment. Establishment of the Federal Employment Bureau. Labour recruitment agreement with France.
1966	Labour recruitment agreements with Austria and Sweden. Convention on social insurance with Austria. Amendment of the Law on the organisation and financing of employment.
1968	Labour recruitment agreement with FR Germany. Convention on social insurance with FR Germany. The agreement on labour migrants' unemployment provisions with FR Germany. Convention on social insurance with Sweden.
1970	Labour recruitment agreements with Australia, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Revision of the state's labour migration policy.
1973	Law on the basic conditions for the temporary employment and protection of Yugoslav citizens working abroad.
1974	Social agreement on the temporary employment of Yugoslav citizens abroad and their return from work abroad.

## Addressing unemployment, labour surpluses, and the country's uneven development

As evident from the introductory quote, the strategic discharge of unemployment and labour surpluses under controlled conditions constituted a central objective of Yugoslavia's liberalised labour migration policy. Those initially identified by the Yugoslav establishment as 'the unemployable' and 'the unneeded', and thus eligible for employment abroad, were unqualified unemployed individuals.<sup>118</sup> By

<sup>117</sup> The table excludes most conventions on social insurance Yugoslavia signed with Western labour receiving countries and includes only those accorded significance in the analysed sources. This exclusion is also inevitable, as most conventions were signed before the liberalisation of labour migration and therefore fall beyond the timeframe of this study.

<sup>118</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Kabinet predsednika republike, *Izvod iz informacije o zapošljavanju jugoslovenskih državljana u inostranstvu*, 6 March 1962.

the mid-1960s, this unofficial categorisation expanded to include all categories of unemployed and employed labour surplus.<sup>119</sup>

A broader understanding of this change of policy objective emerges when juxtaposed with official data on unemployment trends presented in Table 2. The table reveals a persistent and steep increase in unemployment: between 1960 and 1979, the number of registered unemployed rose from 159,000 to over 762,000, presenting an almost fivefold increase. Notably, unqualified and semi-qualified individuals constituted the overwhelming majority of the unemployed in the early 1960s, accounting for over 80 per cent. However, from the mid-1960s, the share of qualified and highly qualified, and individuals with intermediate and higher education expanded significantly. These trends highlight the deepening imbalance in Yugoslavia's labour market and its diminishing capacity to absorb surplus labour. According to Janez Malačič, between 1952 and 1975, official unemployment in Yugoslavia expanded at an average annual rate of 11.4 per cent, while employment grew at a markedly slower rate of 4.5 per cent.<sup>120</sup>

However, according to Susan Woodward and Darko Suvin, Yugoslavia's official unemployment rates did not even nearly reflect actual level of unemployment but its rather narrow and ideologically shaped definition. For instance, massive labour reserves in rural areas and agriculture were not accounted for in the employment and unemployment statistics.<sup>121</sup> An implicit acknowledgment of hidden labour reserves came from the Serbian Republican Employment Bureau in 1971. The republican Bureau reported that, in rural Serbia alone, between 500,000 and 900,000 individuals constituted a labour reserve.<sup>122</sup> The republican Bureau's inability to provide even a close estimate of labour surpluses underscores the systemic limitations of Yugoslavia's employment data and illustrates the profound opacity of the country's labour market.

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<sup>119</sup> AJ, K-III 1327 Bilten 3/1966, *Zaključci izvršnog odbora SO SSRNJ o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 1966.

<sup>120</sup> Janez Malačič, 'Unemployment in Yugoslavia from 1952 to 1975', *Eastern European Economics* 17:4 (1979) 85–109, 89–91.

<sup>121</sup> Susan Woodward, *Socialist unemployment. The political economy of Yugoslavia, 1945-1990*, (Princeton 1995), 196–198; Darko Suvin, 'On Class Relationships in Yugoslavia 1945–1974, with a hypothesis about the ruling class', *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 20:1 (2012) 37–71, 43–45.

<sup>122</sup> AJ, Federal employment Bureau (Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja - subsequently SBPZ), 467 11 31, Republički zavod za zapošljavanje Beograd, *Zapošljavanje u inostranstvu do 1975. godine - Prognoza kretanja - Osnove za politiku*, October 1971.

**Table 2 The structure of unemployed in Yugoslavia (1960-1979) by educational attainment**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total number of registered unemployed</b>	<b>High, higher, and intermediate education (%)</b>	<b>Qualified and highly qualified workers (%)</b>	<b>Semi-skilled, unskilled, and lower education (%)</b>
1960	159 230	5,18%	11,24%	83,59%
1961	191 283	2,75%	11,15%	86,09%
1962	236 563	2,12%	13,14%	84,74%
1963	230 272	3,58%	13,08%	83,34%
1964	212 486	4,09%	10,94%	84,96%
1965	236 969	4,53%	11,69%	83,78%
1966	257 607	6,70%	13,44%	79,87%
1967	269 067	9,79%	14,75%	75,46%
1968	310 997	13,82%	15,78%	70,41%
1969	330 626	13,07%	13,83%	73,09%
1970	319 600	13,24%	12,73%	74,03%
1971	291 300	14,35%	13,70%	71,95%
1972	315 300	15,13%	15,13%	69,74%
1973	381 600	16,64%	17,22%	66,14%
1974	448 600	17,70%	18,84%	63,46%
1975	540 100	17,29%	19,16%	63,54%
1976	635 300	17,36%	19,94%	62,69%
1977	700 400	19,16%	20,47%	60,37%
1978	734 800	21,09%	19,42%	59,49%
1979	762 000	22,94%	18,15%	58,91%

Source for years 1960-1969: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1970* (Beograd 1970), 98.

Source for years 1970 and 1971: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1973* (Beograd 1973), 107.

Source for years 1972-1979: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1980* (Beograd 1980), 136.

Increasing unemployment and growing labour surpluses constituted only one set of factors that prompted Yugoslav authorities to support labour migration. At the same time, the country faced economic crises, rising inflation, a stagnating living standard, and widening social inequalities. As Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić carefully demonstrated, Yugoslav society during the 1950s and 1960s experienced profound socio-economic turbulence.<sup>123</sup> Economic instability, stagnant wages, and increasing job insecurity steadily eroded the purchasing power of the majority and undermined Yugoslavia's project of development and modernisation. Meanwhile, following a brief period of economic growth in the late 1950s, societal aspirations and expectations rose, shaped increasingly by consumerist values. This shift was financed largely through foreign loans, actively encouraged by the political establishment, and promoted by the media through advertising and celebratory narratives of modernisation.<sup>124</sup> The influx of loaned capital facilitated rising imports and expansion of domestic production, the growth of the welfare system, public housing, and infrastructure, making a range of consumer goods more available, desirable, and symbolically significant. However, access to these provisions was uneven. The distribution of incomes, welfare benefits, and publicly funded housing was skewed in favour of highly skilled workers, politically influential individuals, and other privileged groups while peasants and lower-income segments were largely excluded.<sup>125</sup>

According to Dobrivojević Tomić, the Yugoslav establishment regularly discussed these developments and the growing discrepancies between societal aspirations, the official narrative of modernisation and development, and the country's actual economic capacities.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, as Josip Mihaljević demonstrated, the political leadership was thoroughly informed of these issues through numerous letters from workers which conveyed personal experiences and

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<sup>123</sup> Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić, 'Od krize do krize. Životni standard u Jugoslaviji 1955–1965', *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 56:1 (2016) 145–160, 150–154; Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić, 'Prilog proučavanju životnog standarda i društvenog položaja radnika uoči privredne reforme 1965', *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (2020) 249–272, 253–255; Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić, 'Harbingers of crisis. Labour strikes in Yugoslavia (1958–1974)', *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (2019) 161–174.

<sup>124</sup> See also: Igor Duda, 'When capitalism and socialism get along best: Tourism, consumer culture and the idea of progress in Malo Misto', in: Rory Archer, Igor Duda, and Paul Stubbs (eds), *Social inequalities and discontent in Yugoslav socialism* (London and New York 2016) 173–192.

<sup>125</sup> See also: Brigitte Le Normand, 'The house that socialism built: reform, consumption, and inequality in postwar Yugoslavia', in: Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger (eds), *Communism unwrapped: consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (Oxford 2012) 351–373; Rory Archer and Goran Musić, 'Approaching the socialist factory and its workforce: considerations from fieldwork in (former) Yugoslavia', *Labor History* 58:1 (2017) 44–66.

<sup>126</sup> Dobrivojević Tomić, 'Od krize do krize', 150–154; Dobrivojević Tomić, 'Prilog proučavanju', 253–255.

perspectives on social and economic hardships, including limited and unequal access to economic opportunities, welfare provisions, and public housing.<sup>127</sup>

Thus, for many in Yugoslavia, the standard of living and equitable access to opportunity structures promised through official discourse were becoming increasingly unattainable. By contrast, labour migration was emerging as a more accessible and concrete alternative as Yugoslav establishment promoted it as a legitimate employment alternative and Western employers both welcomed and actively recruited Yugoslav labour. These opportunities were further facilitated by Yugoslavia's efforts to integrate its economy into global markets and expand the country's tourism sector.<sup>128</sup> Together, these international engagements exposed Yugoslavia more directly to foreign, primarily Western, influences, reduced barriers to cross-border movement, increased the visibility of Yugoslav labour within international labour markets, and propelled outward migration.

### Preventing emigration of skilled and highly skilled labour

Particular concern among the Yugoslav establishment was the outward migration of qualified, highly qualified, and highly educated individuals. It repeatedly framed their migration as profoundly detrimental to the country and its security and an undermining factor for the state's financial investment in education and industrial competitiveness. For instance, in 1962, the government's Committee for Foreign Economic Relations emphasised that the education of highly skilled individuals represented a substantial financial loss, estimating the cost of training a single student at approximately \$6,700. This sum, according to the Committee, could not be recovered through remittances even after several years abroad.<sup>129</sup>

Equally concerning for the Committee was the risk that Western enterprises would exploit the expertise of Yugoslav qualified and highly qualified workers to gain access to sensitive information about the country's industrial sector.<sup>130</sup> Similar concerns were voiced by the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, which argued that Western employers recruited Yugoslav qualified and highly qualified workers not only for their technical competencies but also for their knowledge of

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<sup>127</sup> Josip Mihaljević, 'Social inequalities from workers' perspective in 1960s socialist Yugoslavia', *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest* 1 (2019) 25–51.

<sup>128</sup> Igor Tchoukarine, 'Yugoslavia's open-door policy and global tourism in the 1950s and 1960s', *East European Politics and Societies* 29:1 (2015) 168–188, 173–177; Andrej Turković and Ivan Obadić, 'A socialist developing country in a western capitalist club: Yugoslavia and the OEEC/OECD, 1955–1980', in: Matthieu Leimgruber and Matthias Schmelzer (eds), *The OECD and the international political economy since 1948*, (Springer 2017) 89–111, 89–97.

<sup>129</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, Odbor za ekonomske odnose s inostranstvom, *Status i mogućí devizni priliv od naše radne snage u inostranstvu*, 1 November 1962.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

domestic conditions and the competitive needs of Yugoslav enterprises.<sup>131</sup> This vulnerability, it contended, stemmed from the system of workers' self-management, which granted such workers extensive insight into production processes, financial operations, and the capacities and deficiencies of industrial facilities.<sup>132</sup> According to the Secretariat, Western firms capitalised on that knowledge, thereby enabling Yugoslav labour migrant to inadvertently contribute to the advancement of the country's economic competitors.

Concerns about security and industrial competitiveness feature less prominently in the analysed sources than anxieties over potential brain drain and the shortage of skilled and highly skilled labour within Yugoslavia caused by labour migration.<sup>133</sup> A recurrent conclusion shared by the Yugoslav establishment was that the migration of skilled and highly skilled labour, particularly of such individuals already employed in Yugoslavia, could be mitigated through further development of institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration on domestic and interstate levels and stricter regulation of labour migration. However, the constitutional reform of 1963, which guaranteed individuals the freedom to choose their employment, precluded any explicit prohibition on working abroad. Consequently, the Yugoslav establishment was unable to restrict or withhold administrative support from qualified individuals seeking employment abroad. Doing so also risked driving migration further into irregular channels and placing such workers beyond the reach of any state institutional framework and oversight.

The Yugoslav establishment's adherence to these principles is evident in the Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction from January 1964. The Secretariat stated that "employment offices are obliged to accept the application of any worker, regardless of their level of qualification, employment status, occupation, financial situation, or other circumstances."<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-e 16, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, *Naši radnici u inostranstvu i razni aspekti ovog problema*, November 1962. See also HDA, ZMN, 1610 15, *Neka zapažanja, problemi i mjere rada prema iseljeništvu i našoj radnoj snazi u inozemstvu*, 1963.

<sup>132</sup> Qualified and highly qualified employees comprised the overwhelming majority of members in the decision-making bodies of Yugoslav self-managed enterprises. See Mato Bošnjak, 'Hope and despair: female workers' professional status in Yugoslav industry', *Economic and Industrial Democracy* (2025) 1–24, 13.

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, *Naši radnici u inostranstvu i razni aspekti ovog problema*, November 1962; AJ, Federal Executive Committee (Savezno izvršno veće – subsequently SIV), 130 780, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, Savezni sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, Centralno veće SSJ, *Informacija o problemima u vezi sa zapošljavanjem naših građana u inostranstvu*, June 1964; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Generalni sekretarijat predsednika republike, *Porast odlazaka naših radnika na rad u inostranstvo*, October 1965; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Predsednik Saveznog izvršnog veća, *Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini*, June 1969.

<sup>134</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964, 7.

Nevertheless, the Secretariat's instruction underscored that the primary objective of regulatory measures was to prevent the migration of skilled and highly skilled in order to safeguard the domestic economy from brain drain and the loss of personnel essential to Yugoslavia's development.<sup>135</sup> This objective was articulated in broader terms, requiring consideration not only of local labour needs but also of the wider demands of the Yugoslav economy. To achieve this aim, republican and municipal authorities were expected to exert political influence to dissuade such individuals from emigrating and to collaborate in offering them suitable employment. Otherwise, employment abroad for such individuals was to be facilitated only in exceptional cases, and only if they were deemed surplus to domestic labour market. Alternatively, they could be employed in Yugoslav enterprises engaged in business projects and cooperations abroad.

Such decisive measures were not coincidental, as the outward migration of skilled and highly skilled labour posed a serious challenge to Yugoslavia's industrialisation and economic development. In the early 1960s, such labour remained scarce in Yugoslavia due to structural legacies inherited from the pre-socialist period, including low levels of educational attainment across the population and the underdevelopment of educational, industrial, and tertiary sectors. Although Yugoslavia introduced a range of measures to expand the educational system and enhance the population's professional skills, these efforts were significantly constrained by social inequalities, stark geographical disparities in economic development, and entrenched conventional attitudes that largely excluded women and peasants from educational opportunities.<sup>136</sup>

From the late 1960s, with the coming of age of the post-war generation, educational and professional capacities among the Yugoslav workforce increased substantially. However, according to contemporary observers, this progress was unevenly distributed across the country and broadly misaligned with the demands of the Yugoslav labour market, contributing to labour surpluses in some parts of the country and to shortages of certain categories of labour in other parts.<sup>137</sup> Consequently, as will be shown later in this chapter, institutional changes and policy shifts introduced in early 1970s placed particular emphasis on hindering outward migration of categories deemed necessary for particular segments of the Yugoslav labour market and organising the return of labour migrants whose skills were required in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Hope and despair', 7-18.

<sup>137</sup> See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezni savet za rad, *Zaposlenost i zapošljavanje, Deo II - rezime prvog dela i predlozi mera*, March 1968; AJ, SSRNJ, 142 A-484, Predsedništvo Saveza komunista Jugoslavije, *Idejne osnovne socijalističkog preobražaja vaspitanja i obrazovanja*, February 1974.

## Maintaining labour migrants' ties to socialist Yugoslavia

Another principal aim of Yugoslavia's labour migration governance was to maintain labour migrants' ties and loyalty to socialist Yugoslavia by including them into the state's institutional and organisational structure. This, in turn, would also counteract the influence of political émigrés on labour migrants. This objective was to be pursued through pre-departure preparation in Yugoslav employment offices - by informing workers about their labour and social rights, and socioeconomic conditions and the basic legal structures in destination countries.<sup>138</sup> Further pursuit of these objectives was envisaged to take place in the countries of destination, through the activities of Yugoslav consulates and embassies.<sup>139</sup> Both phases were conceived as complementary measures to facilitate migrants' integration and adaptation to life abroad while simultaneously reducing their need to rely on informal networks of political émigrés.

In line with these objectives, the Secretariat's internal instruction from January 1964 emphasised the importance of familiarising workers with conditions in the destination country, including legislation, social rights and obligations, and appropriate norms of conduct.<sup>140</sup> To support this, the instruction called for the creation of a suitable socio-cultural environment abroad, including access to Yugoslav media and regular contact with diplomatic representatives. The instruction suggested that these provisions are stipulated through agreements with foreign employers. It even proposed that employment authorities maintain records of employers who failed to meet such stipulations, and that any future requests from such employers for Yugoslav workers should be rejected.

Over time, Yugoslavia established a network of organisations and individuals in countries hosting large numbers of Yugoslav labour migrants. These included Yugoslav official information centres and social workers, cultural organisations, and Yugoslav social clubs and their alliances.<sup>141</sup> While simultaneously fostering

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<sup>138</sup> HDA 1609 34, *Aktuelni zadaci u vezi sa privatnim i organizovanim zapošljavanjem u inostranstvu – Teze*, January 1963; HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>139</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, *Aktuelni zadaci u vezi sa privatnim i organizovanim zapošljavanjem u inostranstvu – Teze*, January 1963; HDA, ZMN, 1610 15, Izvršno vijeće Sabora NR Hrvatske, *Aktuelna pitanja i zadaci na planu iseljeničke problematike*, 17.01.1963; HDA, RKIP, 1609 38, *Teze za novootvoreno radno mjesto pri ambasadi SFRJ u Brislu za zemlje Beneluksa o problemima i zadacima po suvremenoj migraciji jugoslavenskih radnika*, 1964.

<sup>140</sup> HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>141</sup> See, for example, reports, discussions, and policy proposals in HDA, ZMN, 1610 15, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, *Informacija u vezi sa otvaranjem informativnog centra SFRJ u SRNJ*, 16 October 1970; AJ, Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije - SSRNJ), 142 I-474, *Zapisnik vođen na godišnjoj skupštini Saveza udruženja i klubova u Svedskoj održanoj 20-og decembra 1970 u prostorijama Udruženja jugoslovena u Stockholmu u ulici Drottninggatan broj 16*, 1970;

migrants' sense of belonging to and responsibility towards socialist Yugoslavia, these actors also served as promoters and defenders of the Yugoslav state and its interests. In addition, Yugoslav authorities progressively expanded the practice of regular visits to migrant workers by delegations of various state and state-affiliated organisations, such as Yugoslav employment authorities, cultural and socio-political organisations, and trade unions.<sup>142</sup>

Such organisations also engaged in a more or less systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of knowledge on multiple dimensions of labour migration. Gradually, Yugoslavia developed a comprehensive “knowledge production apparatus” by expanding the operational scope of existing organisations and establishing new organisations tasked with monitoring and documenting labour migration.<sup>143</sup> These organisations operated either within Yugoslavia or abroad, or across both spheres. They included different forms of organisations, such as federal and republican governmental bodies, employment authorities and migration commissions, political and socio-political bodies, cultural and academic organisations, Yugoslav banks, and the Alliance of Trade Unions. The knowledge they gathered and reported covered a broad range of issues regarding migrant’s demographic characteristics, occupational profiles, wage levels, living conditions, or family life.

Yugoslav organisations did not hesitate to employ covert methods in their efforts to gather knowledge useful for the Yugoslav establishment. One example is the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity, which systematically analysed letters sent by Yugoslav citizens abroad to Croatian Radio-Television and the newspaper *Vjesnik*.<sup>144</sup> In these letters, Yugoslav citizens abroad shared own experiences or sought information and guidance on issues affecting their lives. The Institute transcribed numerous letters and used them to compile a report analysing issues

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HDA, RSR, 1609 473, Komitet Saveznog izvršnog veća za pitanja spoljnih migracija, *Osnovne koncepcije za socijalni rad među jugoslovenskih radnicima zaposlenim u inostranstvu*, 1971.

<sup>142</sup> See examples of reports from such visits in HR, RKIP, 1609 36, Savet za pitanja iseljenika Beograd, *Izveštaj sa puta u SR Nemačku*, 25 December 1964; HR, RKIP, 1609 38, *Zapisnik sa sastanka kolegija i vanjskih saradnika RKIP održanog dne 17.III 1965.god. u IOh*, 17 March 1965; HR, RSR, 1609 662, *Informacija sa službenog puta u Saveznu Republiku Njemačku od 13. do 23.12.1974.*, 25 December 1974.

<sup>143</sup> In addition, Yugoslavia gradually developed a substantial body of academic research on migration, which produced a significant number of studies. For an overview and synthesis of this research see Mežnarić, ‘Sociology of migration’.

<sup>144</sup> Croatian Radio regularly broadcast a programme entitled *To our citizens in the world*, which encouraged Yugoslav migrants to write to the show with specific questions and concerns, ranging from legal regulations in Yugoslavia to broader issues regarding their lives and work. *Vjesnik* and its weekly edition *Vjesnik u srijedu* was a major newspaper widely circulated among Yugoslavs abroad, featuring sections dedicated to correspondence with readers.

of concern to the Yugoslav establishment.<sup>145</sup> These issues included Yugoslav workers' migration routes, their working conditions and access to insurances abroad, family circumstances in Yugoslavia, and experiences with Yugoslavia's foreign currency and toll regulations.

A more controversial approach shows the analysis of surveys conducted in 1966 among Yugoslav labour migrants across different European labour-receiving countries. According to the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity, the survey was commissioned by the Croatian Republican Employment Office, Privredna Bank of Zagreb, the Federal Council for Emigrant Issues, the newspaper *Vjesnik*, and Croatian Radio-Television.<sup>146</sup> On the introduction page, the survey is presented as a study intended to inform the development of policies aimed at strengthening Yugoslavia's support for migrant workers and their families.<sup>147</sup> The survey contained questions on aspects like migration aspirations and trajectories, employment abroad and prior employment in Yugoslavia, income abroad and spendings, economic aspirations, and financial savings in Yugoslavia and abroad.<sup>148</sup> Coincidentally, similar surveys were conducted among spouses and dependants of labour migrants in Yugoslavia and among workers preparing to depart for employment abroad.<sup>149</sup>

In 1967, the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity used survey data to prepare a comprehensive internal report analysing labour migrants' financial capacities, economic attitudes, and financial plans, with particular focus to the mobilisation of labour migrants' savings for deposit in Yugoslav banks. The report includes analyses of various economic aspects, such as migrants' incomes and savings, expenditures in host countries and on dependants in Yugoslavia, savings in foreign currency accounts in Yugoslav banks, and reasons for not depositing foreign currency in Yugoslav banks.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> HDA, ZMN, 1610 15, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, *Analiza jednog dijela pisama upućenih RTV-Zagreb i redakciji VUS-a u toku 1970. godine od naših građana na privremenom radu u inozemstvu*, 1970.

<sup>146</sup> HDA, RSR, 1609 307, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, *Izveštaj o radu Zavoda za migracije i narodnosti od 1965. do 1970.*, 1970.

<sup>147</sup> HDA, ZMN, 1610 25, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, Katedra za socijalnu psihologiju Sveučilišta u Zagrebu i Redakcija emisije „Našim građanima u svijetu“, *Anketa o radu u inozemstvu*, 1966.

<sup>148</sup> For a more detailed overview of the survey's implementation, findings, and related discussions, see LeNormand, *Citizens without borders*, pp. 39–47.

<sup>149</sup> HDA, ZMN, 1610 11, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, *Što misle o zapošljavanju u inozemstvu radnici koji se pripremaju da po prvi put podju na rad van domovine*; HDA, ZMN, 1610 11, *Anketa za članove porodica građana zaposlenih u inozemstvu*.

<sup>150</sup> HDA, ZMN, 1610 11, Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, *SFRJ i Evropske migracije rada*, 1967. The report bears a handwritten note on the cover stating, “*This is how it was reported to the bank*” (my translation). However, the foreword to the report makes clear that the copy preserved in the Institute's archive was circulated to other concerned stakeholders as well.

The Yugoslav establishment drew extensively on such reports and other knowledge generated by the state's "knowledge production apparatus" when crafting institutional and organisational adjustments deemed necessary for achieving the state's policy objectives. For instance, the 1964 report on controversies and institutional inconsistencies surrounding labour migration immediately impacted the Yugoslav government and catalysed further development of the framework regulating labour migration at domestic and international levels.<sup>151</sup> Another illustrative example is a policy proposal for organised return migration from 1975 submitted by the Federal Committee for Labour and Employment. According to the Committee, the investigation underpinning the proposal was informed by contributions from three major Yugoslav academic institutes and by years of experience and measures undertaken by Yugoslav enterprises and administrative and political authorities.<sup>152</sup> Thus, the proposal exemplifies the establishment's commitment to responsive and evidence-based mode of governance. This is further reflected in the Committee's assertion that "if the ongoing research shows that other policy measures are necessary and purposeful, the policy shall subsequently be supplemented and adjusted to new needs and demands."<sup>153</sup>

### The quest for foreign currencies

Reports such as those discussed above, particularly the analyses of labour migrants' economic attitudes, concerns, and practices, formed an important part of the Yugoslav establishment's knowledge base for pursuing another central objective of its labour migration policy. Namely, to structure, regulate, and maximise foreign currency inflows generated by remittances from labour migrants (as well as other migrant groups) and to leverage their increasing purchasing power. The mutually reinforcing relationship between the state's support to labour migration and its economic potentials is clearly exemplified by a 1962 report of the Government's Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, which listed "the substantial increase in foreign currency inflows" as the first benefit of liberalised labour migration policy.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 9–10.

<sup>152</sup> AJ, SSRNJ, 142 698, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Radni materijal za izradu programa mera i akcija za postepeno vraćanje Jugoslovenskih radnika sa rad iz inostranstva i njihovo radno angažovanje u zemlji*, June 1975, 2.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>154</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, Odbor za ekonomske odnose s inostranstvom, *Status i mogućí devizni priliv od naše radne snage u inostranstvu*, 1 December 1962, 4.

This focus on foreign currency inflows was rooted in the economic imperative arising from Yugoslavia's chronic deficit in balance of payments in foreign currencies.<sup>155</sup> Consequently, Yugoslavia developed a complex network of social, cultural, and economic institutional and organisational mechanisms designed to attract remittances, stimulate consumption, and encourage investment from labour migrants and other categories of Yugoslav migrants residing abroad. These mechanisms operated both domestically and abroad, enabling migrants to deposit foreign currencies in Yugoslav banks, contribute to infrastructure projects in Yugoslavia, invest in Yugoslav enterprises or private businesses, finance their own education in Yugoslav adult schools established abroad, consume Yugoslav media and cultural productions placed abroad, and much more.<sup>156</sup>

Yugoslavia also introduced tax exemptions for purchase of certain domestic products using convertible foreign currencies, accompanied by a preferential exchange rate of 20 per cent.<sup>157</sup> According to Ivo Baučić, paying in foreign currencies even gave precedence when purchasing scarce goods and products with a long delivery delay.<sup>158</sup> These benefits were strictly limited to transactions made through the Yugoslav banking system and the eligible products could only be acquired in stores authorised by the Yugoslav National Bank, thereby enabling the state to exercise control over the circulation of foreign currency.

However, these institutional mechanisms achieved only limited success in directing labour migrants' savings into Yugoslav National Bank. Already contemporary observers noted that labour migrants predominantly spent their earnings on expenditures considered non-productive from the perspective of the broader Yugoslav economy, such as imported prestige items and consumer goods and oversized luxury houses.<sup>159</sup> A 1970 report from the Yugoslav Consulate in Frankfurt (FR Germany) on the possibilities for guiding Yugoslav labour migrants to deposit their savings in Yugoslav banks, effectively captures these trends and the prevailing attitude of the Yugoslav authorities towards the

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<sup>155</sup> On Yugoslavia's deficit in balance of payments see Branko Čolović, 'Balance of payments', in: Radmila Stojanović (ed.), *The functioning of the Yugoslav Economy* (London 1982) 120–143.

<sup>156</sup> For an outline of these and similar measures see Ivanović, *Geburtstag pišeš normalno*, 267–296.

<sup>157</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, *Rešenje o oslobodenju od plaćanja dela društvenih prihoda za određenu robu prodatu u zemlji za strana sredstva plaćanja*, October 1962.

<sup>158</sup> Ivo Baučić, 'Some economic consequences', 94.

<sup>159</sup> See, for example, Ivo Baučić, 'Socijalno-ekonomske posljedice vanjskih migracija radne snage iz Jugoslavije', *Geografski glasnik* 33–34 (1971/72) 25–59, 42–53; Carl-Ulrik Schierup, *Houses, tractors, golden ducats: prestige game and migration. A study of migrants to Denmark from a Yugoslav village*, (Aarhus 1973), 41–48. See also an unpublished study based on interviews with labour migrants: HDA 1609 307, Institut za geografiju sveučilišta u Zagrebu i Republički zavod za zapošljavanje Zagreb, *Uvjeti vraćanja i mogućnosti zapošljavanja radnika iz SR Hrvatske koji su na radu u inozemstvu*, June 1971.

migrants' economic capacities.<sup>160</sup> The Consulate underlined that Yugoslavia's existing strategy was essentially an improvised attempt to extract foreign currency from migrants in the most straightforward and least costly manner, while simultaneously enabling their use for non-productive purposes.

In parallel with these indirect mechanisms, the Yugoslav establishment pursued more direct institutional solutions, embedding them in the regulation of employment abroad. Since the introduction of the liberalised labour migration policy, it adjusted and expanded the state's institutional toolkit by implementing measures able to secure more direct, immediate, and controllable financial returns from labour migration.

One set of measures concerned the payment of workers' and their dependants' social and health insurance contributions. The Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction from January 1964 stipulated that workers departing for countries with which Yugoslavia had not concluded a convention on social insurance were required to submit documentation confirming that social and health insurance had been secured through a foreign provider.<sup>161</sup> Otherwise, the insurance had to be paid by the workers in foreign currencies and include workers' immediate family members. Furthermore, workers were required to remit foreign currencies through the Yugoslav National Bank to cover eventual legal obligations towards dependants such as divorced spouses, children from dissolved marriages, and elderly parents. Workers had to acknowledge these obligations in a written declaration included in their application for employment abroad. The same provisions applied to those who migrated through irregular channels and sought to regularise their status.<sup>162</sup> That one objective was to commodify workers' access to social and health insurances highlights the expression used by the General Secretariat of the President, which referred to these measures as the "sale of rights to social insurance".<sup>163</sup>

During 1964, the Yugoslav establishment was thoroughly informed that these provisions were largely unenforceable because Yugoslav banks were poorly equipped to collect and manage financial transactions and because the Yugoslav authorities lacked mechanisms to compel labour migrants and their employers to

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<sup>160</sup> HDA, RSR, 1609 307, Generalni konzulat SFRJ Frankfurt, *Štednja naših građana zaposlenih u SR Nemačkoj i njena stimulacija*, 21 May 1970.

<sup>161</sup> HR, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>162</sup> See also HDA, RKIP, 1609 38, *Zahtev za naknadno odobrenje privremenog zaposlenja u inostranstvu i za regulisanje socijalnog osiguranja u Jugoslaviji za vreme tog zaposlenja*, 1963.

<sup>163</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Generalni sekretarijat predsednika republike, *Problemi savremene ekonomske emigracije*, 04 November 1964, 1.

comply with regulations.<sup>164</sup> Against this background, the Yugoslav establishment sought to negotiate new conventions on social insurance, or to revise existing ones, with states hosting Yugoslav labour migrants. Conventions on social insurance stipulated the automatic recognition and protection of migrants' rights by obliging signatory states to cover parts or the entirety of their social and health insurance and, to a considerable extent, those of their dependants. At the same time, the establishment viewed conventions on social insurance as institutions capable of structuring payments for migrant workers' insurances, thereby ensuring more regular and larger inflows of foreign currency to Yugoslavia.<sup>165</sup>

Further opportunities to secure foreign-currency inflows forged the conclusion of bilateral labour-recruitment agreements. Recruitment agreements obliged Western recruiters to bear the costs associated with workers' selection and medical examinations, their travel to destination countries, and, where necessary, the provision of accommodation and meals for workers awaiting transfer. They also included clauses obliging Western states to enable Yugoslav citizens to remit foreign currencies to Yugoslavia without any limitations.<sup>166</sup> In this way, the agreements established an alternative to conventions on social insurance by creating an additional institutionally mediated channel for the transfer of foreign currency to Yugoslavia. This channel complemented and reinforced existing documentary requirements that obliged labour migrants to remit foreign currency, both to cover insurance obligations and to provide financial support for dependants residing in Yugoslavia.

Most bilateral labour recruitment agreements stipulated that labour migrants' could receive pre-departure training, arranged in Yugoslavia and financed by western employers or host-country employment authorities. This was a forward-looking element of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, expressed already in the Secretariat's internal instruction from January 1964. The instruction stipulated that Yugoslav workers' individual employment agreements with foreign employers should include provisions for the professional training and skill development during their employment abroad.<sup>167</sup> This objective

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<sup>164</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Generalni sekretarijat predsednika republike, *Problemi savremene ekonomske emigracije*, 04.11.1964.

<sup>165</sup> Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 8–9.

<sup>166</sup> AJ, K-III 1327, Bilten 3/1966, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Francuska. Odlazak radnika u Francusku po osnovu međudržavnog sporazuma*, 1966; AJ, K-III 1328 Bilten 7/1967, *Sporazum između Vlade Kraljevine Švedske i Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije o zapošljavanju jugoslovenskih radnika u Švedskoj*, September 1966; AJ, SBPZ, 467 11 31, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama - analiza* -, 1971.

<sup>167</sup> HR, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

reflected the Yugoslav government's expectation that workers would acquire enhanced professional competencies abroad and contribute to domestic economic development upon their return. Over time, this objective assumed a more prominent place within the Yugoslav establishment's strategy for labour migration. It developed into an effort to institutionalise pre-departure training as a systematic channel for recruiting unskilled workers from Yugoslavia's least developed areas and to financially benefit from western payments for workers' training and from workers' subsequent remittances.<sup>168</sup>

Despite the introduction of an increasingly multifaceted institutional-organisational framework, Yugoslav establishment was continuously informed about its limited effectiveness in harnessing financial potentials of regulated labour migration. For instance, in 1966, the Federal Employment Bureau, identified the collision between Yugoslavia's regulations and that of Western host states as one of the principal obstacles, noting that much of Yugoslavia's regulation targeting labour migrants depended on the legal provisions of the host countries.<sup>169</sup> In June 1968, the Yugoslav government attributed limited collection of foreign currencies to the absence of a convention on social insurance and a bilateral labour recruitment agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>170</sup> Namely, these agreements encompassed provisions on workers' recruitments, transport, and social and health insurance affecting the largest cohort of Yugoslav labour migrants abroad. In September of the same year, the government's Committee for Emigration Issues extended this diagnosis to shortcomings within Yugoslavia's own governing and administrative structures, acknowledging that

“the inflow of foreign currency could have been significantly higher if Yugoslav employment organisations had been more effective in leveraging the financial benefits of bilateral recruitment agreements and conventions on social insurance, and if (Yugoslav) financial organisations had been more focused and better organised in mobilising the financial savings of labour migrants”.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> See Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry'. Pre-departure training programme was also framed as a safeguard for ensuring migrants' return as healthy workers unlikely to burden the welfare system, on the assumption that trained workers were less prone to work-related injuries.

<sup>169</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini*, 1966.

<sup>170</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Kabinet predsednika Saveznog izvršnog veća, *Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini*, June 1969.

<sup>171</sup> AJ, SBPZ, 467 11 26, Savezno izvršno veće, *O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije*, September 1969, 23.

Taken together, these assessments underscore the government's conception of bilateral labour recruitment agreements and social insurance conventions as lucrative regulatory instruments and as vital components of its strategy to extract foreign currency from labour migration. They also point to the government's perception of a close interdependence between the regulation of employment abroad, workers' social rights and health insurance, and the state's capacity to capture and structure foreign currency inflows.

As early as January 1971, the government took more decisive steps towards further institutionalising the mobilisation of labour migrants' financial potentials by instructing the Secretariat of Finances to formulate concrete measures aimed at increasing the inflow of remittances.<sup>172</sup> According to the Secretariat of Finances, such measures entailed a close coordination between concerned governmental bodies, the Alliance of Trade Unions, and the National Bank of Yugoslavia.<sup>173</sup> Five years later the government gladly reported that such efforts gave positive results pointing out that on the yearly basis foreign currency inflows increased from 35 million in 1964 to 1,6 billion dollars in 1974.<sup>174</sup> However, these values are also influenced by the fact that from 1968 labour migration significantly expanded. According to Yugoslav official estimations, in 1964 approximately 140 000 Yugoslav citizens worked abroad compared to approximately 1.1 million in 1973.<sup>175</sup>

The Table 3 illustrates the inflow of foreign currencies to Yugoslavia between 1970 and 1977, disaggregated into three principal sources: exports, remittances from migrant workers, and tourism income. During this period, remittances increased substantially, from \$501.5 million in 1970 to over \$2.1 billion in 1977. The increase represented a more than a fourfold rise. Although exports remained the dominant contributor to foreign currency inflows, remittances consistently ranked second, accounting on average for over 22 per cent of total inflows. Thus, the table reflects the central role of labour migration for Yugoslavia's state finances and access to foreign currencies.

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<sup>172</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Zaključci Saveznog izvršnog veća o nekim elementima politike zapošljavanja u inostranstvu*, 25 January 1971.

<sup>173</sup> HDA, RSR, 1609 662, Savezni sekretarijat za finansije, *Informacija o merama usmerenim na prikupljanju ušteda od naših radnika na privremenom radu u inostranstvu*, 05 January 1973.

<sup>174</sup> AJ, APR III-A-1-e, 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Program mjera i akcija za postepeno vraćanje jugoslavenskih radnika s rada iz inozemstva i njihovo radno angažiranje u zemlji*, May 1976.

<sup>175</sup> AJ, SSRNJ, 142 A-740, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Izveštaj o ostvazivanju politike zapošljavanja, zapošljavanja u inostranstvu i postepenog vraćanja jugoslovenskih građana sa privremenog rada iz inozemstva u 1977.godini - Analitičko-dokumentaciona osnova -*, March 1978.

**Table 3 Inflow of foreign currencies to Yugoslavia per year (1970-1977), in billions of USD<sup>176</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Migrant workers</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
1970	1,71	0,5	0,27
1971	1,88	0,72	0,36
1972	2,38	0,96	0,46
1973	3,03	1,4	0,63
1974	4,1	1,62	0,7
1975	4,26	1,7	0,77
1976	5,16	1,88	0,8
1977	5,45	2,1	0,84

Source for years 1970 and 1971: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1975*, (Beograd 1975) 291.

Source for years 1972-1977: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1980*, (Beograd 1980) 206.

### Initial regulatory framework for employment abroad

In addition to outlining the overarching aims and objectives of labour migration policy, the Secretariat of Labour's internal instruction from January 1964 provided guidance on implementation of employment abroad. It specified procedures for regulating labour migrants' social and health insurance and for organising their recruitment. As described above, insurances had to be paid either by the workers, their foreign employers, or host countries through conventions on social insurance.

Regarding workers' deployment, the Secretariat's instruction reaffirmed the official "Instruction" and adhered to Yugoslavia's federal and decentralised governing structure. It emphasised that municipal employment offices carried the administrative and organisational responsibility for implementing recruitment for employment abroad under direct authority and guidance of republican

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<sup>176</sup> Based on currency parity displayed in the quoted Statistical Yearbooks: 1 US dollar = 12.50 dinars in 1970, 15 dinars in 1971, 17 dinars in 1972 and 1973, 18.25 dinars in 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977.

employment offices.<sup>177</sup> Exception was made for qualified and highly qualified individuals, whose employment abroad required approval from a responsible republican employment office. Further exception were foreign requests seeking groups of thirty or more workers. Copies of such requests were to be forwarded to the Federal Secretariat of Labour and to all republican employment offices, enabling them to express interest in participating in the fulfilment of such request. Subsequently, the Commission within the Federal Secretariat for Labour reviewed these request alongside proposals from republican Employment offices and adopted a final decision on whether the foreign employer's request should be accepted and how it will be distributed among republics. Thereafter, concerned republican employment offices distributed requests to municipal employment offices under their jurisdiction.<sup>178</sup>

This system was intended to ensure that foreign requests for Yugoslav workers were met in accordance with the objectives of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy. However, the system's complexity inevitably shaped the recruitment process into a heavily bureaucratized and slow procedure. It was further complicated by the requirement that workers taking employment abroad had to complete multiple procedural steps at several different authorities in order to regulate their status and obligations.<sup>179</sup>

These procedural complexities inevitably fostered labour migration through networks and loosely regulated recruitment channels. According to the Federal Employment Bureau, during 1964 and 1965 Yugoslav employment offices mediated approximately 40% of workers who gained employment abroad.<sup>180</sup> Across reports circulated within the Yugoslav establishment, it was noted that many of those who bypassed employment offices were qualified, highly qualified, or highly educated individuals who migrated directly from positions in Yugoslav enterprises, the state administration, or public service.<sup>181</sup>

To counteract these developments and increase the control over labour migration, while simultaneously addressing emerging challenges in the domestic

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<sup>177</sup> HR, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> If those were not regulated by an eventual convention on social insurance between Yugoslavia and the hosting state. HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>180</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini*, 1966.

<sup>181</sup> See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Generalni sekretarijat predsednika republike, *Kvalifikovani radnici iz Mariborskih fabrika odlaze na rad u inostranstvo*, October 1965; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, *Pojačan interes za odlazak radne snage iz Beograda i Pančeva*, November 1965; AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini*, 1966.

economy and labour market, the Yugoslav establishment engaged in further attempts to sophisticate, expand, and strengthen the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration through strategic institutional entrepreneurship at domestic and international levels.

### From the law supporting to the law restricting labour migration

In 1965, Yugoslavia passed the *Law on the organisation and financing of employment* and established the Federal Employment Bureau as the central employment authority. The Bureau was conceived as principal organisation of the state's institutional-organisational framework for regulating labour migration and for advancing the state's objectives in managing the recruitment of workers for employment abroad. It fulfilled this role domestically by mediating between Western employers and Yugoslavia's employment offices, and bilaterally through ongoing collaboration with foreign employment authorities.<sup>182</sup> The Bureau also contributed the state's institutional building by proposing new institutional and organisational solutions and negotiating their implementation with Western employment authorities.<sup>183</sup>

In November 1966, through the amendments of the *Law on the Organisation and Financing of Employment*, sending workers abroad was legislated furthermore as the responsibility of the Federal Employment Bureau and employment offices. These amendments also formally assigned to the Bureau and employment offices duties of preparing workers for employment abroad, signing individual employment agreements with foreign employers, and managing the associated correspondence.<sup>184</sup>

The amended law essentially codified the core principles of the state's labour migration policy, thereby providing an overall stronger institutional support for labour migration. As a result, the "Instruction for implementing employment abroad" from October 1963 became obsolete and was formally abolished by the same law. Together with the establishment of the Federal Employment Bureau, this legislative development marked the formal integration of labour migration into the Yugoslav state's institutional framework and governing structure.

In line with the 1963 Constitution and the 1963 "Instruction", the amended *Law on the organisation and financing of employment* stipulated that all

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<sup>182</sup> AJ, SBPZ, 467 11 31, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama - analiza* -, 1971. See also Bošnjak, 'Between unemployment and migration', 65, 70–71.

<sup>183</sup> Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 12–19.

<sup>184</sup> Službeni list SFRJ 47/1966, *Ukaz o proglašenju Zakona o dopunama osnovnog zakona o organizaciji i financiranju zapošljavanja*, 7 December 1966.

individuals could legally apply for employment abroad through Yugoslav employment offices and receive guidance, counselling, and employment mediation. Moreover, the law explicitly obliged employment offices to assist all individuals seeking work abroad, even those who declined offers of immediate employment within the country.<sup>185</sup> These provisions have effectively undermined the state's labour migration policy and the objective of retaining qualified and highly educated workforce within the country.

These contradictions between the policy aims and legislation must be also interpreted against the backdrop of the comprehensive economic reform implemented in 1965. The reform led to widespread discharges, lack of new employment in the country, and growing labour surpluses in virtually all sectors of the economy.<sup>186</sup> It also led to accelerated integration of Yugoslavia's economy into the global market and transnational exchanges. These developments occurred simultaneously with the coming of age of post-war baby boomers, contributing to a rising unemployment among young jobseekers educated at vocational, secondary, and tertiary levels.<sup>187</sup> As showed above, from the mid-1960s onwards, the overall share of qualified and highly qualified workers, and individuals with intermediate and higher education expanded significantly, demonstrating the Yugoslav labour market's diminishing capacity to absorb such labour. Once again, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia blessed and legitimised the institutional change and state's further support to liberal labour migration regime. It declared outward labour migration of qualified and highly qualified individuals as consistent with the country's social and economic systems.<sup>188</sup>

Consolidation of state control over labour migration were to be enhanced by conclusion of bilateral recruitment agreements with as many as possible Western labour-receiving states. These agreements were ideologically sensitive and politically complex, as they formalised the allocation of Yugoslav labour to capitalist West and heightened the visibility of the Yugoslav state's inability to provide sufficient domestic employment. They also posed challenges to Yugoslav sovereignty, as most stipulated the establishment of recruitment commissions on Yugoslav soil with representatives from the signatory countries tasked with

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Carl-Ulrik Schierup, *Migration, socialism and the international division of labour: the Yugoslavian experience* (Aldershot 1990) 74–79.

<sup>187</sup> For a statistical outline of contemporary employment and unemployment among Yugoslavia's younger population see Emil Primorac and Michael Charette, 'Regional aspects of youth unemployment in Yugoslavia', *Economic analysis and workers' management* 21:2 (1987), 193–219.

<sup>188</sup> AJ, K-III 1327 Bilten 3/1966, *Zaključci izvršnog odbora SO SSRNJ o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 1966.

controlling the selection of workers. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav establishment repeatedly framed and promoted bilateral recruitment agreements as essential instruments for facilitating the state's interests and safeguarding Yugoslav workers against exploitation abroad.<sup>189</sup>

Between 1965 and 1970, Yugoslavia signed bilateral labour recruitment agreements with nearly all Western labour-receiving states that regularly recruited Yugoslav workers.<sup>190</sup> As demonstrated above, recruitment agreements aligned with Yugoslavia's policy of economically capitalising on labour migration.<sup>191</sup> They also conformed to Yugoslavia's employment legislation and constitutional provisions, and did not constrain recruitment of qualified, highly qualified, and highly educated workforce. As a result, despite most placements involving unskilled workers, the cooperation between Yugoslav employment authorities and the employment authorities and employers of signatory countries also included qualified and highly qualified individuals. Table 4 illustrates this pattern, showing that such individuals constituted approximately 20 per cent of all placed workers. However, Table 5 suggests that this was a characteristic of Yugoslav employment mediation more broadly, as it shows similar proportions of qualified and highly qualified individuals mediated to all destination countries combined.

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<sup>189</sup> See, for example, AJ, K-III 1327 Bilten 3/1966, *Zaključci Izvršnog odbora SO SSRNJ o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 1966; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezni savet za rad, *Zaposlenost i zapošljavanje, Deo II - rezime prvog dela i predlozi mera*, March 1968; AJ, APR, III-a-1-e 16, Kabinet predsednika Saveznog izvršnog veća, *Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini*, 04 June 1969.

<sup>190</sup> These included France (1965), Sweden and Austria (1967), the Federal Republic of Germany (1968), and Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Australia (1970). Notable exceptions among labour-receiving states that hosted Yugoslav migrants were Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and, most significantly, Switzerland, which hosted dozens of thousands of labour migrants and seasonal workers from Yugoslavia.

<sup>191</sup> See also Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry'; Bošnjak, 'Labour migration in the service'.

**Table 4 Qualification levels among Yugoslav labour migrants in 1973 placed through employment offices to countries that signed labour recruitment agreements with Yugoslavia<sup>192</sup>**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total number per country</i>	<i>Upper secondary and higher education (%)</i>	<i>Qualified and highly qualified workers (%)</i>	<i>Semi-qualified and unqualified workers (%)</i>
<i>Austria</i>	54571	1,5	13,3	85,3
<i>France</i>	31370	0,7	12,9	86,4
<i>Belgium, Luxemburg, and Netherlands</i>	7600	4	10,3	85,8
<i>Australia</i>	1601	1,6	16,9	81,5
<i>FR Germany</i>	406913	1,4	20,2	78,5
<i>Sweden</i>	3065	5,7	39,3	55
<i>Total number in listed countries</i>	505120	1,4	19	79,7

Source: Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Pregled zapošljavanja u inostranstvu 1973*, PS III 271, Arhiv Jugoslavije.

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<sup>192</sup> The table includes only those individuals who were counted as present in the listed countries on the final day of 1973. See a similar table, illustrating qualification levels among Yugoslav labour migrants in 1971 placed through employment offices to countries that hosted their largest numbers, in Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 10.

**Table 5 Qualification levels among Yugoslav workers placed abroad through employment offices, 1966–1975<sup>193</sup>**

Year	Total number	Individuals with upper secondary and higher education (%)	Qualified and highly qualified workers (%)	Semi-qualified and unqualified workers (%)
1966	84101	3,4	18,1	78,5
1967	93784	4,7	20	75,3
1968	145173	4,2	24	71,9
1969	246890	2,9	22,8	74,3
1970	348643	2,3	21,4	76,2
1971	419385	1,9	20,5	77,5
1972	465349	1,9	19,6	78,5
1973	526609	1,9	19,1	79
1974	523214	1,9	18,9	79,2
1975	511320	2	18,8	79,2

Source: Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Pregled zapošljavanja u inostranstvu (1966-1975)*, PS III 271, Arhiv Jugoslavije.

Rather than creating an explicit institutional toolkit to restrict the emigration of skilled and highly educated individuals, the Yugoslav establishment pursued a strategy of constructing and adjusting institutional and organisational structures favourable to the state's labour migration policy. One such strategy is described above - the incorporation of pre-departure training into bilateral recruitment agreements and persuading signatory states to finance those trainings.<sup>194</sup> Another strategy was the deployment of Yugoslav employment officers to Yugoslavia's diplomatic missions in Western countries, proposed by the Federal Employment Bureau. The view of the Bureau and the Federal Council for Labour was that the presence of Yugoslav employment officers abroad would further structure labour migration and enhance the control over migrant cohorts through timely and responsive assessments of conditions in western labour markets.<sup>195</sup> Following

<sup>193</sup> The table includes individuals counted as present abroad on the final day of the listed years.

<sup>194</sup> Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 12–16.

<sup>195</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e-16, Savezni savet za rad, *Zaposlenost i zapošljavanje, Deo II - rezime prvog dela i predlozi mera*, March 1968; AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Predlog o potrebi*

endorsement by the Federal Assembly and the Central Committee of the League of Communists, the measure was formally mandated by the government.<sup>196</sup> Yet, its absence from subsequent reports and correspondences suggests that the Bureau failed to operationalise the measure.

A policy objective more prominent in the analysed sources was utilisation of the practice among Yugoslav large construction and industrial enterprises of deploying workers abroad. This practice occurred either through the execution of enterprises' business projects abroad or by sending workers to foreign business partners for training and specialisation. From the outset of liberalised labour migration, the Yugoslav government framed such employment as one of the most desirable forms for sending abroad qualified and highly qualified labour surplus.<sup>197</sup> This view was sustained and increasingly promoted by various stakeholders in the Yugoslav establishment as one of the principal objectives of labour migration policy throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>198</sup> The advantages of this form of labour migration were articulated in several interrelated ways; as offering greater potential for regulatory oversight of recruitment procedures, workers' salaries, insurances, and remittances. It was also promoted as beneficial for the deployed workers and for Yugoslavia's development, as workers would gain access to training and specialisation abroad and return with enhanced expertise. However, the sources suggest that this policy objective achieved only limited success, as enterprises maintained a total annual deployment of approximately 20,000 workers.<sup>199</sup>

As early as in 1970, the Yugoslav establishment had declared that labour migration had reached a critical juncture, with the emigration of qualified and highly qualified workers and individuals in their most economically productive years identified as particularly concerning. It was emphasised that any further

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*neposrednog angažovanja predstavnika Saveznog biroa u inostranstvu na zapošljavanju radnika iz zemlje*, May 1968.

<sup>196</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni savet za rad, *Zadaci saveznih organa uprave koji proizlaze iz Smernica Predsedništva Izvršnog komiteta CK SKJ i Zaključaka Savezne skupštine donetih povodom razmatranja problematike zaposlenosti i zapošljavanja*, July 1968.

<sup>197</sup> AJ, APR, III-a-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, Odbor za ekonomske odnose s inostranstvom, *Status i mogućí devizni priliv od naše radne snage u inostranstvu*, Prilog II: Sekretarijat SIV-a za rad, *Informacija o odlasku naših državljana na rad u inostranstvu*, November 1962; HDA, RKIP, 1609 34, Savezni sekretarijat za rad, *Instrukcija o sprovođenju Upustva o postupanju pri zapošljavanju u inostranstvu*, 15 January 1964.

<sup>198</sup> See, for example, AJ, K-III 1327 Bilten 3/1966, *Zaključci izvršnog odbora SO SSRNJ o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 1966; AJ, SIV, 130 780, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini*, 1966; AJ, SBPZ, 467 11 26, Savezno izvršno veće, *O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije*, 11 September 1969; AJ, SSRNJ, 142 I-698, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Analiza kretanja zaposlenosti i zapošljavanja u periodu od 1971. do 1974. godine*, March 1975.

<sup>199</sup> AJ, SSRNJ, 142 A-740, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Izveštaj o ostvarivanju politike zapošljavanja*, March 1978; HDA, RKRZ, 1609 54, Republički komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Informacija o zaposlenosti i zapošljavanju u SR Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu*, March 1980.

increase in the number of Yugoslav citizens employed abroad could pose significant risks to the country's economic and political stability and to its national security.<sup>200</sup> This stance was both facilitated by and responsive to the broader social and political discourse, in which labour migration was emerging as a contested issue associated with growing anxieties over its consequences for Yugoslav society and development. Namely, Yugoslav workers employment in the capitalist West was increasingly framed as offering limited benefits to Yugoslavia's society and as hazardous for the country's overall development.<sup>201</sup>

In November 1970, the Yugoslav government revised the state's labour migration policy.<sup>202</sup> The revised policy emphasised a more selective approach to labour migration, better aligned with domestic labour market conditions, and implemented primarily through official channels. It also sought to motivate the return of migrant workers. However, the priority was given to the return of qualified and highly qualified workers and their reintegration into sectors of the Yugoslav economy requiring skilled labour.<sup>203</sup> This policy conversion aligned with the emerging needs and demands of authorities and enterprises in more developed areas, such as Republics of Croatia and Slovenia, which were increasingly affected by shortages of skilled workforce.<sup>204</sup>

However, despite repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the high number of labour migrants, Yugoslavia's institutional and organisational measures continued to focus primarily on retaining qualified and highly qualified workers, especially from those professions deemed as scarce in the Yugoslav labour

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<sup>200</sup> See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezni savet za rad, *Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 23 June 1970; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Ured predsednika republike, Grupa za ekonomoska pitanja, *Informacija o stavu Saveza sindikata Jugoslavije o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, 14 October 1970; HDA, RSR, 1609 264, Savezni savet za rad, *Izveštaj o radu Saveznog saveta za rad u 1970. godini*, February 1971; AJ, SSRNJ, 142 I-476, Koordinacioni odbor za probleme naših radnika u inostranstvu, *Akcionni program o zadacima SSRNJ u vezi zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u inostranstvu*, 20 May 1971; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Predsedništvo SFRJ, Grupa za ekonomska pitanja, *Informacija o zapošljavanju naših građana u inostranstvu*, 14 July 1972

<sup>201</sup> See Brigitte Le Normand, 'The gastarbajteri as a transnational Yugoslav working class', in: Rory Archer, Igod Duda, and Paul Stubbs (eds), *Social inequalities and discontent in Yugoslav socialism* (London 2016) 38–57, 45–50; Ulf Brunnbauer, 'Yugoslav gastarbeiter and the ambivalence of socialism: Framing out-migration as a social critique,' *Journal of Migration History* 5:3 (2019) 413–437, 424–435.

<sup>202</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Zaključci Saveznog izvršnog veća o nekim elementima politike zapošljavanja u inostranstvu*, 25 January 1971; HDA, RSR, 1609 307, Savezni savet za rad, *Rezime materijala "Neki elementi politike zapošljavanja u inostranstvu"*, 1971.

<sup>203</sup> For unqualified returnees, reintegration into the Yugoslav economy was primarily envisioned through personal investment - typically in small private businesses, the construction of new enterprises that could offer employment, or the purchase of shares in existing enterprises as a potential pathway to employment. See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Program mjera i akcija za postepeno vraćanje jugoslavenskih radnika s rada iz inozemstva i njihovo radno angažiranje u zemlji*, May 1976. See also Bernard, *Deutsch marks in head*, 79–84.

<sup>204</sup> See Bernard, *Deutsch marks in head*, 54–58.

market.<sup>205</sup> The perceived opportunity to discharge unqualified and surplus labour to the West and economically capitalise on its migration still guided and shaped the Yugoslav establishment's attitudes towards labour migration. The key distinction was the explicit policy objective to facilitate labour migration primarily from the country's underdeveloped areas.<sup>206</sup>

These considerations are clearly reflected in the proposal submitted by the President's Office for the revised labour migration policy. The proposal outlined five benefits with continued labour migration: the broader absorption of Yugoslav labour by Western labour markets in contrast to limited domestic employment opportunities; the prospect of workers earning higher wages abroad; workers' return with valuable skills and professional experience; increased foreign currency inflows; and workers' contribution to Yugoslavia's international reputation and industrial cooperation with the West.<sup>207</sup> The Office also instructed that employment abroad includes foremost the unqualified labour surplus from the country's underdeveloped areas.<sup>208</sup>

Continued support for labour migration represented an unavoidable policy choice given the high unemployment and the limited capacity of the domestic labour market to absorb surplus labour.<sup>209</sup> Nevertheless, the revision of labour migration policy in 1970 marked a transitional phase towards institutional changes and coercive mechanisms intended to consolidate the state's control over labour migration. With the adoption of the *Law on basic conditions for the temporary employment and protection of Yugoslav citizens working abroad* in 1973, the Yugoslav federal and republican authorities initiated a decisive consolidation of the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration and measures aimed at retaining qualified workers within the country. For instance, the law clarified the governing architecture of labour-migration by specifying the respective responsibilities of governmental bodies and state organisations, and formalising the channels of cooperation among administrative

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<sup>205</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Zaključci Saveznog izvršnog veća o nekim elementima politike zapošljavanja u inostranstvu*, 25 January 1971; AJ, SSRNJ, 142 I-482, Savezni sekretarijat za rad i socijalnu politiku, *Neki problemi u vezi sa sprovođenjem politike zapošljavanja i položajem jugoslovenskih građana na radu u inostranstvu*, September 1972; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Savezno izvršno veće, *Program mjera i akcija za postepeno vraćanje jugoslovenskih radnika s rada iz inozemstva i njihovo radno angažiranje u zemlji*, May 1976.

<sup>206</sup> In the analysed sources, as underdeveloped areas from which labour migration should be facilitated, feature most prominently Republics of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Autonomous Province of Kosovo, and rural areas of Republic of Serbia.

<sup>207</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e 16, Sekretarijat predsednika republike, Grupa za ekonomska pitanja, *Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu*, July 1970.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> See Table 2.

and diplomatic authorities. Moreover, the law prohibited mediation in employment abroad for individuals who had not completed their military service or otherwise fulfilled their conscription obligations. It also prohibited the unauthorised advertising of employments abroad. Any organisation, legal entity, or individual was subject to financial penalties if they failed to implement employment abroad in accordance with the law.<sup>210</sup>

The implementation of the law was to be ensured through a coordinated agreement between concerned stakeholders in Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces. To this end, the republics and autonomous provinces concluded the *Social agreement on the temporary employment of Yugoslav citizens abroad and their return from work abroad* in 1974.<sup>211</sup> For instance, the agreement established unified principles for managing employment abroad and mandated the creation of programmes for inclusion of returning workers into the domestic labour market. It also promoted and facilitated the alignment of the law with Yugoslavia's federalism and the right of the republics and autonomous provinces to devise their own employment policies.

Coincidentally, these institutional arrangements have reconfirmed and reinforced employment abroad of unskilled labour and skilled labour surplus as an integral component of Yugoslavia's employment policy and governing system. The ultimate goal articulated during discussions surrounding the revision of labour migration policy and the subsequent institutional changes was the establishment of a rotational system of temporary labour migration. As elaborated by the Federal Secretariat for Labour and Social Policy, the ideal form of such rotational system involved workers remaining abroad for an average of three years.<sup>212</sup> Within this scheme, unskilled workers would be temporarily employed abroad, while skilled workers would return to Yugoslavia. Preferably, most unskilled workers would receive vocational training prior to departure paid by their foreign recruiters and in line with Yugoslavia's labour migration policy objectives.<sup>213</sup>

This strategy was severely curtailed by the oil crises of 1973, subsequent economic downturn, and restrictions on labour immigration imposed by Western countries, which reduced Yugoslav labour migration to only a fraction of its

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<sup>210</sup> Službeni list SFRJ 33/1973, *Ukaz o proglašenju Zakona o osnovnim uslovima za privremeno zapošljavanje i zaštitu jugoslovenskih građana na radu u inostranstvu*, 8 June 1973.

<sup>211</sup> AJ, SSRNJ, 142 I-698, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Radni materijal za izradu programa mera i akcija za postepeno vraćanje Jugoslovenskih radnika sa rada iz inostranstva i njihovo radno angažovanje u zemlji*, June 1975.

<sup>212</sup> AJ, SSRNJ, 142 I-482, Savezni sekretarijat za rad i socijalnu politiku, *Neki problemi u vezi sa sprovođenjem politike zapošljavanja i položajem jugoslovenskih građana na radu u inostranstvu*, September 1972.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* See also Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry', 13.

previous scale. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav establishment continued to promote selective labour migration as an integral component of Yugoslavia's employment policy. This commitment is evident in numerous policy proposals and reports submitted by the highest-ranking bodies within the Yugoslav governing apparatus after 1973, which advocated employment abroad, provided it occurred exclusively through regulated channels, under state's control, and aligned with the state's policies.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> See, for example, AJ, SSRNJ, 711 62, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Zapisnik o Drugom zasjedanju Mešovite komisije predviđene Sporazumom između Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i Republike Francuske o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u Francuskoj od 25. januara 1965. godine, održanog u Parizu od 22. do 24. juna 1976. godine*, July 1976; AJ, SSRNJ, 142 A-740, Savezni komitet za rad i zapošljavanje, *Izveštaj o ostvarivanju politike zapošljavanja, zapošljavanja u inostranstvu i postepenog vraćanja jugoslovenskih građana sa privremenog rada iz inostranstva u 1977. godini – Analitičko-dokumentaciona osnova*, March 1978; HDA, RKRZ, 1609 24 11B, Savezni komitet za rad, *Predlog za pokretanje postupka za pripremu predloga za zaključivanje društvenog dogovora o osnovama zajedničke politike odlaska građana SFRJ na privremeni rad u inostranstvo radi obavljanja privrednih i drugih delatnosti i zapošljavanja*, 14 December 1979; HDA, RKRZ, 1609 54, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, *Sporazum o zanimanjima radnika za koja se ne može posredovati pri zapošljavanju u inozemstvu i kriterijima za raspodelu ponuda stranih poslodavaca*, February 1981.

## 5 Summary of Articles

**ARTICLE 1**, entitled *Between unemployment and migration*, explores Yugoslavia's mechanisms of labour migration control and management devised to respond to western employers requests for Yugoslav labour and strategically channel labour surpluses to Western Europe. It focuses particularly on the regulated female labour migration between 1963 and 1973 and women's inclusion and participation in state-managed migration schemes. It demonstrates that from the outset of Yugoslavia's liberalised labour migration policy and throughout the most intensive years of Yugoslav labour migration, women constituted an integral part of the state's efforts to employ labour surplus in Western labour markets and shape labour migration currents.

Like the rest of this thesis, the article draws on documents illuminating Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, on its implementation, and internal correspondence between the governmental bodies and employment authorities involved in migration. In addition, the article makes extensive use of foreign requests for Yugoslav workers and reports on their distribution across Yugoslavia produced by authorities from across the Yugoslav governing structure. Through their analysis, the article demonstrates Yugoslav establishment's strategies regarding regulated labour migration and the employment authorities' practices of its management. Furthermore, it demonstrates that Yugoslav employment authorities systematically accommodated foreign demands for female labour in line with the objectives of the state's labour migration policy and domestic employment conditions, seeking to mobilise women from parts of the country characterised by limited job opportunities and growing labour surpluses. To achieve these objectives, Yugoslav employment authorities included women in all principal forms of state-managed labour migration. The findings presented in the article and their analysis are further contextualised through Yugoslavia's official statistical records and written sources illuminating women's positions in the Yugoslav labour market.

The inclusion of women in labour migration, as the article argues, was largely inevitable. Women constituted either a majority or a substantial proportion of categories designated for deployment to Western countries, as reflected in official statistical data presented in the article. Moreover, during the 1960s, social mobility and professional aspirations among Yugoslav women increased

markedly, with a growing number actively pursuing regular employment abroad and exerting pressure on employment offices and the capacities of domestic labour markets. These developments coincided with two crucial developments - shortages of young and female labour in Western secondary labour markets, prompting Western employers to intensify recruitment efforts in Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia's decision to liberalise and galvanise labour migration to the West.

The article concludes that the Yugoslav authorities ultimately succeeded in establishing employment offices as one of the principal actors in labour migration. However, it also underscores that both male and female migration largely occurred beyond the Yugoslav state's institutional-organisational framework, which significantly undermined the policy's intended objectives of shaping and controlling labour migration.

**ARTICLE 2**, entitled *Labour migration in the service of the sending state*, explores Yugoslavia's aims and objectives in regulating labour migrants' recruitments and working rights on interstate levels. It does so by focusing on regulation of Yugoslav labour migration to Sweden through bilateral labour recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance. In contrast to previous studies that have focused primarily on Swedish actors, this article foregrounds Yugoslavia's agency and demonstrates the state's active role in institutionalising labour migration between the two countries. It does so by drawing mainly on sources produced by the Yugoslav government and governmental bodies engaged in bilateral regulations of labour migration, making a particular use of internal correspondence and briefing materials on bilateral meetings and negotiations with Swedish officials.

The article situates Yugoslavia's agenda within the broader context of Yugoslavia's economic and financial strategies, including efforts to protect its welfare system. It demonstrates that the Yugoslav government embedded regulation of labour emigration to Sweden in a wider diplomatic and economic strategy. It aimed to attract Swedish capital to Yugoslavia, strengthen Yugoslavia's relationships with other Scandinavian countries, and facilitate Yugoslavia's integration into international trade frameworks of the European Free Trade Association and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Thus, the article highlights the Yugoslav government's pragmatic approach to navigating concurrent geopolitical complexities forged by Cold War division.

The article also demonstrates that the Yugoslav government sought to leverage both the bilateral recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance with Sweden to increase the inflow of foreign currency and to support the

country's welfare and healthcare systems. The government was particularly focused on the convention on social insurance, aiming to design it as a mechanism that could contribute to Yugoslavia's public finances for an extended period. As drafted by the Yugoslav government, the convention would do so through Swedish payments for a comprehensive social and health insurance of Yugoslav citizens who worked in Sweden, even after their return to Yugoslavia and during their pension.

Sources presented in the article indicate that the Yugoslav government adopted a similar approach towards conventions with other Western states, striving to design them in ways that would generate substantial benefits for the state's finances. To some extent, this strategy succeeded with most countries hosting Yugoslav labour migrants. However, according to the sources analysed, Swedish authorities repeatedly rejected Yugoslavia's drafts of the convention, refusing to adopt provisions that would conflict with Swedish regulations.

**ARTICLE 3**, entitled *Building the migration industry*, examines how the Yugoslav establishment sought to further utilise bilateral labour recruitment agreements to "industrialise" labour migration through the implementation of a comprehensive pre-departure training programme for labour migrants. Pre-departure training was stipulated in all bilateral labour recruitment agreements that Yugoslavia concluded with Western states, with the sole exception of Austria. However, it was included only as an optional provision, thereby granting Western signatory states discretion in deciding whether to activate and operationalise the clause on pre-departure training.

The article investigates the Yugoslav establishment's attitudes towards pre-departure training, its objectives in promoting such programmes, and its efforts to expand and more firmly institutionalise them through additional interstate negotiations and agreements. The article draws mostly on sources produced by the principal stakeholders in pre-departure training programme - the Federal Government, the Federal Employment Bureau, the Alliance of Trade Unions, and municipal employment offices. As these sources offer only a fragmented picture of the programme's practical implementation, the article provides only a brief outline of trainings carried out in Yugoslavia.

The article advances an argument that the Yugoslav establishment promoted the establishment and expansion of pre-departure training to further structure and control labour migration, align it more closely with the state labour migration policy of sending abroad unskilled labour from the country's underdeveloped areas, and increase financial returns from labour migration. These objectives

included the establishment of pre-departure training as a regularised, systematic, and firmly institutionalised platform for sending unskilled workers abroad from Yugoslavia's underdeveloped areas.

The article demonstrates that the Yugoslav establishment also expected that workers trained through pre-departure trainings will receive broader opportunities for specialisation abroad and professional advancement and, consequently, earn higher wages and remit more foreign currencies to Yugoslavia. An additional expectation was that trained workers would be less prone to occupational injuries, thereby reducing potential future pressures on the Yugoslav healthcare system. Thus, alongside conventions on social insurance signed with Western countries, pre-departure training was expected to leverage both immediate financial benefits and long-term socio-economic stability.

The sources analysed for this article show that the scope of pre-departure training programme remained limited in scope, with approximately 10 000 labour migrants receiving trainings paid by foreign employers and employment authorities. The article argues that one of the principal reasons was the Yugoslav establishment's reluctance to allocate resources for the programme's organisational development and more comprehensive institutionalisation. As the article demonstrates, the Yugoslav government consistently instructed, and other stakeholders endorsed and advanced, the position that pre-departure training should be financed by foreign employers and Western states, including even the costs for didactic materials required for implementing teaching and vocational-practical training. Meanwhile, Western employers were able to bypass Yugoslavia's employment authorities in their search for skilled labour.

**ARTICLE 4**, entitled *Driving forces of labour migration as barriers to labour migrants' professional mobility*, explores underlying forces causing and maintaining social immobility and professional stagnation among Yugoslav labour migrants. The article re-examines scholarship on Yugoslav labour migration through the lens of migration theories that explain the drivers of labour migration operating in labour-sending and labour-receiving societies. It combines the theory of dual labour market, network theory, and the theory of cumulative causation of migration. To this framework, the article adds the notion of labour migrants' perception of the temporariness of their migration - a phenomenon widely acknowledged as particularly strong and resilient among Yugoslav labour migrants.

The article complements the empirical findings presented throughout this thesis by illuminating some of the underlying social and economic forces that

drove and shaped Yugoslav labour migration and operated within its broader environment. These forces are also portrayed and discussed in archival sources produced by the Yugoslav establishment and organisations. However, unlike archival sources, the studies on which the article draws constitute academic inquiries employing diverse research methods, thereby providing more reliable and multi-layered insights into migrants' personal experiences, professional trajectories, and socio-economic positioning abroad.

The article demonstrates that social and economic forces operating in Yugoslavia and Western developed economies and driving Yugoslav labour migration exerted an omnipresent influence on the socio-economic standing of Yugoslav labour migrants in Western European host societies. Whether manifested through migrant networks that facilitated migration, social and cultural practices that shaped Yugoslav workers' everyday environments and mobility abroad, or occupational segregation arising from Western economies' structural demand for inexpensive labour and recruitment through established migrant networks, these forces formed the context within which migrants navigated their lives. Thus, the Yugoslav labour migrants, even when exercising agency and acting independently, did so largely within the boundaries of one or more institutional and organisational frameworks.

The article also demonstrates that Yugoslav migrants' attitudes towards migration, their patterns of life and work abroad, and their continued consumption of Yugoslav products and services were actively encouraged by the Yugoslav establishment, which sought to align migration outcomes with the state's broader economic and political objectives. Through policies and practices aimed at reinforcing migrants' emotional, cultural, and economic attachment to Yugoslavia the Yugoslav state further shaped their sense of belonging and their perception of temporary migration and, in effect, their social and professional positioning within host societies.

This article argues that the widespread professional stagnation experienced by Yugoslav workers resulted not only from structural constraints in segmented labour markets but also from migrants' own attitudes—particularly their limited engagement with host-country social environments and their strong attachment to Yugoslav socio-economic contexts. The enduring perception of migration as temporary, combined with a dominant orientation towards improving economic status in Yugoslavia rather than abroad, discouraged substantial investment in human capital. As a result, Yugoslav migrants predominantly remained concentrated in manual, low-skilled occupations within the secondary labour market. However, as the article emphasises, this was not only the result of labour

migrants' choices. It also stemmed from structural features characterising modern economies with segmented labour markets where social isolation, occupational segregation, and professional immobility of migrant workers and racial and ethnic minorities are deeply embedded in the organisation and functioning of labour markets.

## 6 Conclusions

This thesis has demonstrated that outward labour migration during the 1960s and 1970s occupied a strategic position within Yugoslavia's state priorities. By moving beyond officially proclaimed aims and publicly framed narratives, the thesis has uncovered the underlying objectives that compelled the Yugoslav establishment to institutionalise labour migration and to introduce subsequent institutional and organisational changes, showing that these arrangements were deliberately constructed and continually adjusted to protect and advance the state's interests. Through an examination of these developments, the state's administrative practices, and the internal discussions surrounding trends and developments in labour migration, the thesis has demonstrated the core priorities of Yugoslavia's labour-migration regulation and management and the institutionalised practices through which these priorities were operationalised.

Taken together, the empirical cases examined in this thesis reveal the Yugoslav establishment's sustained efforts to organise and regulate labour migration as a system structured through constructive linkages between institutions, the instruments devised to achieve them, and the outcomes aligned with state interests. To accomplish these objectives, the Yugoslav establishment engaged in continuous institutional entrepreneurship, which proved essential for protecting and advancing the state's interests and addressing gaps within the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration.

Conceptual debates on institutional entrepreneurship highlight that political and economic entrepreneurs mobilise relevant resources, forge alliances, and undertake purposeful actions to create or change institutional arrangements in ways that advance their strategic interests.<sup>215</sup> In the Yugoslav case, this thesis demonstrates that institutional entrepreneurship was driven by several mutually reinforcing forces. It was shaped by the Yugoslav state's interests, shaped and conditioned by domestic pressures and foreign-policy ambitions. It developed in response to an increasingly complex and dynamic migration landscape. It was further influenced by the interests and agency of a widening array of stakeholders who exploited this landscape and, in doing so, challenged the Yugoslav state

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<sup>215</sup> See, for example, DiMaggio, 'Interest and agency'; Neil Fligstein, 'Social skill and the theory of fields', *Sociological Theory* 19:2 (2001) 105–125; Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum, 'How actors change institutions'; Emmenegger, 'Agency in historical institutionalism'.

authority. It reflected the Yugoslav state's growing need to expand and adjust the institutional framework to serve both its underlying and shifting aims and objectives in the field of labour migration.

Thus, this thesis demonstrates that institutional entrepreneurship can emerge not only from political and economic entrepreneurs' interests to realise specific policy aims, but also from the practical necessities of responding to emerging priorities and challenges within a dynamic governance context. At the same time, it demonstrates that institutional entrepreneurship may take the form of a continuous and adaptive process rather than a singular or short-term intervention. Moreover, the thesis reveals that the Yugoslav state's institutional entrepreneurs, even when united by a common overarching goal, operated simultaneously across multiple organisational and political arenas, tailoring their strategies to available resources and the interests and constraints characteristic of each environment. Their institutional entrepreneurship encompassed sustained efforts to introduce, adjust, and consolidate institutional and organisational arrangements that promoted the state's strategic aims across municipal, republican, federal, and interstate governing environments.

These dynamics illuminate the ways in which institutional entrepreneurship can produce, and even rely upon, contradictions within an institutional structure it seeks to build and exploit. Institutional scholarship maintains that many modern institutions are inherently contradictory or evolve to be such, producing everyday frictions and frequently colliding with other institutions within the same institutional structure.<sup>216</sup> This thesis demonstrates that the Yugoslav establishment, even when pursuing a single overarching objective, devised and implemented institutional arrangements that were contradictory in ways that appear intentional. While it introduced institutions aimed at structuring labour migration in line with state interests, it simultaneously reconfigured other institutions in ways that limited the state's capacity to control and fully harness labour migration.

This paradoxical institutional design suggests that institutions may be deliberately constructed in contradictory ways and maintained as such by their designers, even when those very contradictions constrain or complicate the designers' own capacity to steer institutional outcomes and achieve intended objectives. In doing so, this thesis offers important implications for conceptual

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<sup>216</sup> See, for example, Friedland and Alfred, 'Bringing society back in'; Myeong-Gu Seo and W. E. Douglas Creed, 'Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change: a dialectical perspective', *Academy of Management Review* 27:2 (2002) 222–247; Royston Greenwood et al., 'Institutional complexity and organizational responses', *The Academy of Management Annals* 5:1 (2011) 317–371.

debates on institutional entrepreneurship and institutional design, and the resulting contradictions within an institutional structure.

As Yugoslav labour migration evolved, so too did the framework governing it, gradually expanding to encompass an increasingly broad constellation of domestic and foreign actors. These ranged from municipal employment offices and local political authorities to federal and republican bodies, sociopolitical organisations, and foreign employment authorities and employers. Through the incorporation of foreign actors, the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration extended beyond Yugoslav territory, while the Yugoslav state enabled these external actors to operate legitimately and exert influence on the Yugoslav soil.

Scholars of Yugoslav labour migration have emphasised the dual character of the Yugoslav establishment's approach to formal interstate cooperation through bilateral labour recruitment agreements, noting that these agreements served also its political and ideological objectives. According to this interpretation, the Yugoslav establishment viewed labour recruitment agreements as instruments through which Western governments could be lobbied or pressured to restrain the activities of political émigré organisations hostile to socialist Yugoslavia, thereby decreasing their influence on labour migrants.<sup>217</sup> Empirical foundations for these claims remain limited and the extent to which such considerations shaped actual policy is still insufficiently investigated and elaborated. Nevertheless, seen from such perspective, conventions on social insurance that Yugoslavia signed or renewed with Western states have fulfilled a same function. Arguably an even more expansive one since they applied not only to labour migrants but to all Yugoslav citizens employed or retired in signatory states, as well as their dependants, and did so for a virtually unlimited time.

Regardless of the immediate strategic interests of each party, by entering labour recruitment agreements and conventions on social insurance, Western states effectively acknowledged Yugoslavia's sovereign authority over its citizens residing within their territories. Keohane argues that state sovereignty is a legal status embedded in international practice, and its recognition entails reciprocal obligations and normative commitments that influence states' behaviour in the international arena.<sup>218</sup> By recognising Yugoslavia's sovereignty

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<sup>217</sup> Kristina Meurle and Mile Andrić, *Background to the Yugoslav migration to Sweden: case study of a group of Yugoslav workers at a factory in Sweden* (Lund 1971) 106–107, Ivanović, *Geburtstag pišeš normalno*, 116; Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending', 129–133.

<sup>218</sup> Keohane, *International institutions*, 165–166. This does not imply that sovereignty and the reciprocal obligations associated with it have been interpreted uniformly across signatory states or consistently upheld across different institutional settings of bilaterally regulated labour migration.

through the very conclusion of these interstate agreements, Western states assumed normative expectations to refrain from supporting, or even tolerating, émigré organisations seeking to undermine the Yugoslav state. Moreover, recruitment agreements and conventions created an institutional environment in which Western states were incentivised to align with Yugoslavia's interests in return for regulated and legitimate access to its labour force.

Despite these compelling insights, questions about the normative expectations and political objectives that Yugoslavia embedded in, and pursued through, interstate agreements regulating labour migration remain insufficiently explored. This thesis has shown that the Yugoslav establishment embedded the regulation of labour migration to Sweden within its broader foreign-policy strategies of enhancing Yugoslavia's international status and foreign trade. Both were significantly constrained by Cold War political and economic division and the Yugoslav establishment tried to use Sweden as a bridge to broader access to Western diplomatic arena, economies, and trade networks. These findings suggest that relations between Yugoslavia and Sweden, including those concerning labour migration, were profoundly shaped by the Cold War division, despite the official neutrality of both countries.

Future archival research focusing on the Yugoslav establishment's political agenda regarding the interstate regulation of labour migration and the diplomatic practices that followed could shed new light on whether, and to what extent, Yugoslav authorities pursued and actively used these platforms to advance the state's foreign policy objectives. Such research would make further significant contribution to understanding the agency of labour-sending states in the governance of post-war labour migrations.

This thesis has contributed to understanding the agency of labour-sending states in several important ways. One dimension of post-war labour migrations that it deepens our understanding of is the labour-sending state's engagement in labour migration management. Specifically, how a labour-sending state sought to shape and control labour mobility through deployment of existing and newly established organisations, demonstrating their operational frameworks and illuminating their administrative practices in sending labour abroad.

In the case of Yugoslav labour migration, the 1971 census is often used as illustration of the dynamic character of Yugoslav labour migration and the misalignment between its outcomes and the Yugoslav state's policy objectives. The census showed that labour migrants were better educated than Yugoslavia's general population, that many were employed in Yugoslavia prior to emigration;

and that a substantial proportion migrated as skilled or highly skilled workers.<sup>219</sup> This thesis demonstrates that anxieties about labour migration trends and developments and the resulting policy misalignment were present among the Yugoslav establishment from the very initiation of Yugoslavia's liberalised labour migration policy and remained a persistent concern throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, as thesis demonstrates, some of the principal drivers of institutional change were efforts to address these deficiencies.

At the same time, data from the Federal Employment Bureau on regulated employment abroad presented in the Table 5 suggest that the Yugoslav establishment ultimately succeeded in establishing Yugoslavia's employment offices and bureaus as prominent actors in labour migration management. By 1973, more than half a million Yugoslav citizens obtained employment abroad through official channels, representing over half of the estimated number of Yugoslav workers abroad at the peak of the migration wave.

This achievement should not be taken as evidence that the Yugoslav state mastered the regulation and management of labour migration. Ultimately, the Yugoslav establishment's persistent efforts to repair and refine the institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration provide a solid illustration of the framework's uneven and limited effectiveness. Regarding the data, it remains unclear how many officially processed placements were in fact initiated through migrant networks but processed by employment offices because migrants sought to regulate their status and social benefits. It is equally uncertain how many placements resulted from nominative requests by Western employers, themselves often shaped by network-driven recruitment processes. Nor is it clear how many cases were counted multiple times due to the widespread practice of circular migration among Yugoslav labour migrants.

Nevertheless, the data clearly illustrate the Yugoslav state's increasingly significant role in the practical implementation of labour migration and in integrating migrant workers into its institutional and organisational structures. An optimistic reading of the data highlights that regulated labour migration enabled Yugoslavia to channel predominantly unqualified workers into Western labour markets. As Table 5 shows, approximately 80% of placements mediated through Yugoslav employment offices involved unqualified workers. Furthermore, the data illustrates the Yugoslav state's emergence as a prominent actor in

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<sup>219</sup> See, for example, Leszek A. Kosiński, 'Yugoslavia and international migration', *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 20:3 (1978) 314–338, 324; Baskin, *Political innovation and policy*, 29–34; Zimmerman, *Open borders, nonalignment*, 83–89; Ivanović, *Geburtstag pišeš normalno*, 70–76; Bernard, *Deutsch marks in the head*, 24–25.

international labour migration, a position that enhanced its capacity to incorporate migrant workers into one or more of its institutional and organisational frameworks and to exercise varying degrees of authority over them and their dependants. Ultimately, it strengthens the state's bureaucratic capacity to monitor, oversee, and govern its citizens across different administrative domains, both domestically and abroad, and to harness their economic capacities.

These aspects invite comparison with contemporary labour-sending states, where efforts to regulate and harness labour migrations have become increasingly prominent and sophisticated. Research on recent labour migrations has increasingly examined how states seek to control, shape, and economically utilise cross-border labour mobility. Such research demonstrates that, over recent decades, several Southeast Asian labour-sending states have positioned themselves as organised exporters of labour and increasingly capable regulators of outward and return migrations.<sup>220</sup> For instance, the Philippines, often cited as the paradigmatic example, actively asserts influence across multiple stages of the migration process. It regulates migrant's employments abroad, seeks out and cultivates new destinations, and in some instances substitutes traditional drivers of labour mobility, such as migrant networks and private intermediaries.<sup>221</sup> Such cases have shaped conceptual debates of phenomena such as the "migration industry," "migration management," or "migration governance."<sup>222</sup>

This thesis has demonstrated that visions and practices shared by modern labour-sending states were not foreign to an ambitious and interventionist labour-sending state more than half a century ago. The Yugoslav state designed and implemented a range of institutional and organisational solutions to regulate both outward and return labour migration and to create new possibilities to discharge unemployment abroad. Although some initiatives achieved only partial success and others failed completely, they nonetheless reveal striking parallels with the institutional and organisational practices of today's labour-sending states and intermediary organisations, both of which appear in research as pioneers of

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<sup>220</sup> See, for example, Rodriguez, 'The labor brokerage state'; Yeates, 'Production for export'; Charanpal Bal and Wayne Palmer, 'Indonesia and circular labor migration: governance, remittances and multi-directional flows', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 29:1 (2020) 3–11; Wasana Handapangoda, 'The making of "passengers": the pre-departure subjectivation of Sri Lanka's aspiring migrant domestic workers heading to the Arabian Gulf', *Global Society* 38:2 (2024) 248–268.

<sup>221</sup> Rodriguez, 'The labor brokerage state'; Suzy Lee, 'Migrating beyond networks: the mechanisms of sending-state intervention', *Migration and Development* 10:3 (2021) 342–358.

<sup>222</sup> See, for example, Johan Lindquist, Biao Xiang and Brenda Yeoh, 'Introduction: opening the black box of migration: brokers, the organization of transnational mobility and the changing political economy in Asia', *Pacific Affairs* 85:1 (2012) 7–19; François Crépeau and Idil Atak, 'Global migration governance: avoiding commitments on human rights, yet tracing a course for cooperation', *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 34:2 (2016) 113–146; Geddes, 'Migration governance', 311–322.

the migration industry, migration management, and multi-level systems of migration governance.

Taken together, the empirical findings presented in this thesis carry important implications for theories of international labour migration. Prevailing migration theories tend to prioritise as forces driving and shaping labour migrations either the economic conditions in labour-receiving countries that generate demand for immigrant labour or cumulative social forces like migrant networks and intermediary organisations. Labour-receiving states have been credited with shaping migration flows through favourable legislation and immigration policies that employers can utilise to recruit eligible workers, while perpetuation of labour migration is typically conceptualised as self-perpetuating through one or more cumulative forces.<sup>223</sup> Recently, Hein de Haas has made important advances by joining structural forces and human agency into a framework for analysing human mobility, conceptualising how opportunity structures, including those shaped or sustained by sending states, condition individuals' aspirations and capabilities to migrate.<sup>224</sup> Suzy Lee, on the other hand, has increased our understanding of labour-sending states' roles by elaborating common ways through which they support labour mobility, seek to shape migration flows, or engage with their diasporas.<sup>225</sup>

Despite these advancements, migration theories still insufficiently account for the agency of the state, particularly the agency of labour-sending states and the institutional and organisational mechanisms through which they shape, control and manage, and exploit labour mobility. This thesis contributes by demonstrating that Yugoslavia's institutional-organisational framework emerged largely in response to the growing influence of cumulative social forces driving labour migration, and that, in constructing this framework, the Yugoslav state played an increasingly strong role in galvanising, shaping, and reproducing labour migration through both regulated and loosely regulated means. It did so by empowering labour migrants and Western employers through institutional arrangements and organisational support designed to facilitate labour migration; by engaging in the practical and continuous management of labour migration; and

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<sup>223</sup> See seminal comprehensive reviews and syntheses of migration theories in Douglas Massey et al., 'Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal', *Population and Development Review* 19:3 (1993) 431–466; Joaquín Arango, 'Explaining migration: a critical view', *International Social Science Journal* 52:165 (2000) 283–296; Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world* (Basingstoke and New York 2014) 25–53.

<sup>224</sup> See Hein de Haas, 'A theory of migration: the aspirations–capabilities framework', *Comparative Migration Studies* 9:8 (2021) 1–35.

<sup>225</sup> See Suzy Lee, 'The three worlds of emigration policy: towards a theory of sending state regimes', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43:9 (2017), 1453–1471.

by seeking and creating new institutional and organisational means to employ Yugoslav labour abroad.

In doing so, the Yugoslav establishment also demonstrated a capacity to mitigate geographical constraints to international labour migration. The considerable distance between Yugoslavia and certain labour-receiving states, such as Sweden and even more so Australia, posed significant barriers to large-scale migration. This was particularly significant for individuals lacking what Hein de Haas terms as migration capability: the human, social, economic, and other relevant capital necessary to undertake long-distance mobility.<sup>226</sup> In other words, for those individuals whom the Yugoslav establishment prescribed for labour migration - poorly educated, unemployed, peasant labourers - mobility was not easily achievable. For such individuals, migration corridors had to be created and expanded, and migration infrastructures - the administrative, organisational, and logistical mechanisms supporting labour mobility - had to be constructed and maintained to make the recruitment of Yugoslav labour feasible and profitable and to enable Western recruiters to recruit in Yugoslavia on a meaningful scale.

Although this thesis demonstrates how the Yugoslav state, often in cooperation with Western states, constructed mechanisms designed to direct labour migration under state orchestration, it also shows that migrants themselves exercised pronounced agency. As demonstrated across multiple empirical studies used in this thesis and supported by statistical evidence, labour migrants actively sought alternative strategies to facilitate their migration and maximise economic gains, frequently operating with only limited exposure to state oversight. In doing so, they often undermined the effectiveness of Yugoslavia's institutional-organisational framework governing labour migration, including measures intended to improve the social and economic conditions of Yugoslav migrating citizens. Their actions, in turn, contributed to institutional strain and generated pressures for ongoing adjustments, refinements, and reforms within Yugoslavia's labour migration governance.

Future research would benefit from examining how post-war labour migrants perceived the frameworks regulating labour migrations, whether primarily as a systems of constraints or as systems of opportunities and guidance, and how they utilised, circumvented, or challenged those frameworks. Such research could explore how labour migrants navigated frameworks' overlapping layers, including interstate agreements, sending and host-state institutions and

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<sup>226</sup> De Haas, 'A theory of migration', 22-23.

organisations, employers, and intermediaries, and how they exploited the framework's inconsistencies and loopholes to advance their own interests and those of their kin and origin communities.

Within the scope of this thesis, it has only been possible to examine a selection of the prominent institutions and organisations through which the Yugoslav state sought to govern labour migration. As this thesis has demonstrated, these institutions and organisations played a profound role. They were intentionally and strategically created and modified, and they became pervasive. As such, they exerted influence on the behaviour of actors within the migration environment, including the behaviour of the very actors who designed them and operated within them, and they played a central role in shaping the responsibilities, opportunities, interactions, and developments that unfolded across multiple levels of the domestic and international labour migration landscape.

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## **ARTICLES, I TO IV**



I



## Between unemployment and migration: institutionalised female labour migration from socialist Yugoslavia, 1963–1973

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores institutionalised labour migration from socialist Yugoslavia to Western capitalist countries, focusing on the recruitment of female labour migrants. By examining Yugoslav archival sources, it investigates the mechanisms of migration control and management developed by the Yugoslav government to discharge labour surplus to the West in accordance with state interests. The article highlights the alignment of women's unemployment and increased social mobility with these processes; further, it demonstrates that from the onset of Yugoslavia's liberalised labour migration policy, women were integral to the state's efforts to employ labour surplus in Western labour markets and shape labour migrants' demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Thus, the article expands the understanding of Yugoslav labour migration and governmental and institutional efforts to control and shape international migrations and underscores the value of archived sources in providing a comprehensive understanding of the state's role in labour migrations.

### KEYWORDS

Yugoslav labour migration;  
female labour migration;  
migration history; migration  
governance; Yugoslavia

The magnitude of post-Second World War labour migration from socialist Yugoslavia to Western capitalist countries reflected the country's inability to evenly provide its population with sufficient employment and remuneration.<sup>1</sup> Images of *gastarbajter*, young men departing with limited possessions from rural areas of Yugoslavia in overcrowded trains and buses, illustrated the shortcomings of the Yugoslav communist regime's promise of empowering the working class. Meanwhile, their return in the latest fashion and in Western cars filled with consumer goods, along with their ability to construct modern houses and finance their local communities' developments, highlighted Yugoslavia's failure to fulfil the aspirations of the general population for a higher standard of living and access to consumer products.<sup>2</sup> These factors – intertwined with broader economic and political forces and Yugoslavia's aim to discharge labour surplus to Western labour

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'Western' is used as a collective designation of economically and industrially advanced capitalist countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup>I. Dobrivojević Tomić, 'U potrazi za blagostanjem: Odlazak jugoslovenskih državljana na rad u zemlje zapadne Evrope 1960–1977', *Istorija 20. veka*, 2 (2007), 89–101, here 95–96; V. Ivanović, *Geburtstag Pišeš Normalno: Jugoslovenski gastarbajteri u SR Nemačkoj i Austriji, 1965–1973* (Belgrade, 2012), 277–87.

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markets – further propelled and expanded labour migration. By the 1970s, approximately 19% of all employed Yugoslav citizens had worked abroad.<sup>3</sup>

To engage in a rapidly growing labour migration and align migration currents with the state's interests, the Yugoslav government constructed and successively expanded various mechanisms of migration control and management. Studies of Yugoslav labour migration have illuminated Yugoslavia's legal and institutional frameworks and policies pertaining to labour migration and their correlation with economic conditions in Yugoslavia and Western countries.<sup>4</sup> Following their own economic and political interests, Yugoslavia and Western countries joined efforts to further institutionalise, standardise and control Yugoslav labour migration through recruitment agreements and their implementation mechanisms. Such collaborations enabled Western countries to establish their recruiting offices and networks in Yugoslavia, which facilitated their attempts to align labour migrations with their immigration policies and cater to their economies' needs for eligible labour.<sup>5</sup> For Yugoslavia, the migration of its citizens and the implementation of recruitment agreements facilitated continuous collaboration with Western countries during its endeavour to address growing unemployment, modernise its economy and further integrate it into the global market. Furthermore, collaboration with Western countries enabled Yugoslavia to extend its institutional operations beyond national borders, to the countries where most of its citizens worked and lived. Studies have demonstrated Yugoslavia's exceptional ability to influence labour migrants and their descendants through a range of social, political and economic mechanisms designed to improve their living and working conditions abroad, foster their sense of belonging to socialist Yugoslavia and direct their economic capital towards the Yugoslav economy.<sup>6</sup> A portion of this success can be attributed to the extensive research efforts of Yugoslavia's scholars and academic institutions, undertaken domestically and internationally to understand out-migration and its consequences and to develop evidence-based political responses and policies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>I. Baučić, 'Some economic consequences of Yugoslav external migrations' in *Les Travailleurs Étrangers en Europe Occidentale, actes du colloque organisé par la commission nationale pour les études et les recherches interethniques* (Nice, 1976), 87–104, here 88, available at: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/ierii\\_1764-8319\\_1976\\_act\\_6\\_1\\_898](https://www.persee.fr/doc/ierii_1764-8319_1976_act_6_1_898).

<sup>4</sup>Dobrivojević Tomić, *op. cit.*, 89–95; Ivanović, *op. cit.*, 43–48, 55–68; P. Dragišić, 'Searching for El Dorado: workers from Serbia temporary employed abroad from the 1960s to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', *Tokovi istorije*, 3 (2014), 131–42, here 131–36; C.-U. Schierup, *Migration, Socialism and the International Division of Labour: The Yugoslavian experience* (Aldershot and Brookfield, 1990), 76–97; W. Zimmerman, *Open Borders, Non-Alignment, and the Political Evolution of Yugoslavia* (Princeton, 2014), 75–81; U. Brunnbauer, 'Labour emigration from the Yugoslav area from the late 19th century until the end of socialism: continuities and changes' in U. Brunnbauer (ed.), *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics: Migrations in the (post-)Yugoslav region, 19th–21st century* (Oldenbourg, 2009), 43–47; K. Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending of Yugoslav "gastarbeiters" to Germany: between socialist demands and economic needs' in Brunnbauer (ed.), *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics, op. cit.*, 125–28.

<sup>5</sup>D. Frank, 'Immigration from Yugoslavia to Sweden 1966–1971: an analysis of the impacts of firms and state', *Journal of Migration History*, 10, 1 (2024), 120–47, here 136–46; J. Svanberg, 'Labour migration and the Swedish labour market model: a case study of recruitment of Yugoslav workers to Svenska Fläktfabriken in Växjö, 1969–1970', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36, 1 (2011), 91–113, here 98–105; K. Shonick, 'Politics, culture, and economics: reassessing the West German guest worker agreement with Yugoslavia', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44, 4 (2009), 719–36, here 732–35; Ivanović, *op. cit.*, 115–42; Novinščak, *op. cit.*, 129–40.

<sup>6</sup>B. Le Normand, *Citizens Without Borders: Yugoslavia and its migrant workers in Western Europe* (Toronto, 2021); Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, 106–31; Ivanović, *op. cit.*, 143–220.

<sup>7</sup>S. Mežnarić, 'Jugoslavenska sociologija (vanskih) migracija – pokušaj sistematizacije', *Migracijske teme i etničke teme*, 1, 1 (1985), 77–96.

This article explores Yugoslavia's efforts to control and shape labour migration by examining Yugoslav employment authorities' recruitment process and practices.<sup>8</sup> In particular, it focuses on the institutionalised recruitment of female labour migrants, a category rarely associated with Yugoslav labour migration and the typical image of the Yugoslav *gastarbajter*, despite research underscoring their role. Scholars of female labour migration have frequently emphasised women's constitutive role in the social and economic contexts of Yugoslav labour migration by investigating their perspectives and trajectories after migration.<sup>9</sup> Migrant women's experiences revealed the multi-dimensional social and economic limitations they experienced in Yugoslavia, resulting in their need or aspiration to emigrate. Although most Yugoslav women migrated to join their husbands, they frequently utilised formal and informal recruiting platforms and passages to Western countries.

This article draws on Yugoslav archival sources to further elucidate women's position in Yugoslav labour migration and their passage to Western labour markets. It demonstrates Yugoslav employment authorities' direct involvement in recruiting Yugoslav labour migrants and their efforts to strategically respond to Western employers' demands for Yugoslav workers. The article shows that from the onset of Yugoslavia's liberalised labour migration policy, women constituted an integral part of the country's institutional efforts to employ labour surplus in Western labour markets and shape the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of its migrating citizens. In so doing, this article sheds new light on Yugoslavia's role in labour migration of its citizens and contributes to studies of state and institutional efforts to control and strategically shape international migrations.<sup>10</sup> More precisely, the article contributes to an increasing body of studies of female labour migrations, which (like this article) undermine a still rather reductive view of post-Second World War female labour migrations as mere extensions of male labour migrations.

## The state and female labour migrations – a literature overview

Utilising archival sources, scholars have shown that from the earliest post-war years, women possessed migratory agency and constituted an integral part of state and

<sup>8</sup>The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia comprised six republics – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia – and two autonomous provinces within Serbia – Kosovo and Vojvodina. Each republic and province largely independently managed their internal affairs, including labour migration. However, the state's labour migration policy from 1963 was applied across the entire federation.

<sup>9</sup>V. Lorber, 'To come into focus: female "guest workers" from former Yugoslavia in Austria (1960–1980)' in G. Bischof and D. Rupnow (eds), *Migration in Austria (Vol. 26)* (New Orleans, 2017), 161–86; W. Knocke, *Invandrade Kvinnor i Lönarbete och Fack: En studie om kvinnor från fyra länder inom kommunal- och fabriksarbetareförbundets avtalsområde* (Stockholm, 1986); M. Morokvašić, 'Cash in hand for the first time: the case of Yugoslav immigrant women in Western Europe' in C. Stahl (ed.), *International Migration Today, Vol. 2, Emerging Issues* (Paris, 1988), 155–67; K. Brčić, 'Zaposlenost, uvjeti rada, položaj na poslu i doškoloavanje jugoslavenskih radnica u SR Njemačkoj', *Migracijske i etničke teme*, 6, 4 (1990), 21–31.

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, D. Fitzgerald, 'Inside the sending state: the politics of Mexican emigration control', *International Migration Review*, 40, 2 (2006), 259–93; C. Rass, 'Temporary labour migration and state-run recruitment of foreign workers in Europe, 1919–1975: a new migration regime?', *International Review of Social History*, 57, 20 (2012), 191–224; M.S. Teitelbaum, 'The role of the state in international migration', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 8, 2 (2002), 157–67; K. Natter, 'Fifty years of Maghreb emigration: how states shaped Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian emigration', Paper 95, *DEMIG Project Paper 21* (2014); for overviews and syntheses see C. Strikwerda, 'Tides of migration, currents of history: the state, economy, and the transatlantic movement of labor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *International Review of Social History*, 44, 3 (1999), 367–94; S. Bernard, 'The regulation of international migration in the Cold War: a synthesis and review of the literature', *Labour History*, 64, 4 (2023), 330–57.

interstate efforts to respond to altered post-war labour market conditions in both sending and receiving countries. Johan Svanberg's study of state-governed immigration of German female refugees from Central and Eastern Europe to Sweden during the immediate post-war years shows the blurred boundary between the Swedish reception of refugees and labour recruitment, as the Swedish textile industry employed most women shortly after their arrival.<sup>11</sup> Further, Yannis Papadopoulos and Giota Tourgeli studied female labour migration from Greece, which was successfully mediated by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration in the 1950s and 1960s. Women's migration was agreed upon between Greece, which experienced labour surpluses, and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which needed women to fill labour shortages in lower-paying, female-typical occupations.<sup>12</sup>

Institutionalised female migrations from the European periphery to industrialised countries experiencing labour shortages occurred mainly under frameworks of bilateral recruitment agreements and migration policies of labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. For instance, Monika Mattes shows how West Germany catered to the economy's need for female labourers by expanding its foreign labour recruitment policies and practices and coordinating with governments in all major labour-sending countries to ensure a steady supply of foreign female labourers and support the country's economic growth.<sup>13</sup> The most important source of foreign labour for West Germany was Turkey; Jennifer Miller's study shows that women actively participated in the whole migratory process of West German and Turkish joint institutionalised efforts to systematically channel labour migrants from Turkey to West Germany.<sup>14</sup> Austria employed a similar strategy to West Germany in recruiting female workers from Yugoslavia and Turkey; Verena Lorber's study shows that Austrian employment authorities strategically targeted Turkish and Yugoslav women to support the economy's growing demand for female labourers.<sup>15</sup>

Women also migrated for work between socialist countries, albeit in significantly smaller numbers. Labour migrations between socialist countries also occurred under frameworks of bilateral agreements, but unlike labour migrations to the capitalist West, they were implemented primarily under institutional frameworks and state control. Studies suggest that female labour migrations between socialist countries followed the same patterns as female labour migrations to capitalist countries; namely, labour-receiving countries attempted to fill labour shortages in specific manufacturing industries and labour-sending countries sought to employ labour surpluses through emigration.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>J. Svanberg, 'Migration at the multi-level intersection of industrial relations: the Schleswig-Holstein campaign and the Swedish garment industry in the early 1950s', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 66, 1 (2018), 54–72.

<sup>12</sup>Y.G.S. Papadopoulos and G. Tourgeli, 'Gendering migration in a patriarchal society: assisted female migration from Greece during the early post-war period', *Labour History*, 64, 4 (2023), 358–72.

<sup>13</sup>M. Mattes, 'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik. Anwerbepolitik, migration und geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren (Frankfurt, 2005), 33–38.

<sup>14</sup>J.A. Miller, 'Postwar Negotiations: The First Generation of Turkish "Guest Workers" in West Germany, 1961–1973' (D.Phil., New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2008), 58–62, 80.

<sup>15</sup>Lorber, *op. cit.*, 168–73.

<sup>16</sup>A.K. Alamgir, 'Recalcitrant women: internationalism and the redefinition of welfare limits in the Czechoslovak–Vietnamese labor exchange program', *Slavic Review*, 73, 1 (2014), 133–55; C. Schwenkel, 'Rethinking Asian mobilities: socialist migration and post-socialist repatriation of Vietnamese contract workers in East Germany', *Critical Asian Studies*, 46, 2 (2014), 235–58, here 242–46; O. Klipa, 'Polish women workers in Czechoslovakia: what made them to come?' *Český lid*, 98, 1 (2011), 31–52; H. Bortlová-Vondráková and M. Szente-Varga, 'Labor migration programs within the socialist bloc: Cuban guestworkers in late socialist Czechoslovakia and Hungary', *Labour History*, 62, 3 (2021), 297–315, here 301–03.

As in the case of labour migrations to most Western capitalist countries, the relocation and settlement of female labour migrants and their male counterparts were officially considered a temporary solution by both sending and receiving socialist countries.

## Empirical material

This article begins its inquiry with the implementation of the Yugoslav labour migration policy in October 1963 and explores the period of the most intensive labour migration, which lasted until 1973, when Western labour-receiving countries began restricting foreign labour recruitment due to the oil shock, the subsequent economic downturn and the decreasing need for immigrant labour. Although women migrated before and after, it was during this period that Yugoslavia commenced and extensively implemented countrywide regulated labour migration and cooperation with foreign recruiters and employment authorities. The empirical sources analysed for this article were retrieved from the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. They include Yugoslav labour migration policy; the government's and president's directives to all stakeholders on its implementation; internal correspondence between the federal and republican governmental bodies involved in migration; reports on Yugoslav labour market conditions; and internal reports on labour migration produced by federal, republican and municipal employment authorities. Additionally, the article utilises statistical records from Yugoslavia's statistical yearbooks to demonstrate female employment and unemployment in Yugoslavia during the period under investigation and with regard to Yugoslavia's labour migration policy.

The practical implementation of institutionalised labour migration was mostly decentralised and under the jurisdiction of republican and municipal employment authorities. Federal employment authorities received a significantly smaller number of foreign requests for Yugoslav workers, which they forwarded to republican employment offices. Therefore, the most explicit evidence quoted in this article concerning the recruitment of Yugoslav workers was found in Croatian archives, mainly in the archives of the Croatian Commission for Emigrant Issues. The Commission preserved reports and correspondence distributed between the republics and federation and kept records of numerous foreign requests for Yugoslav labour, translated into Croatian and processed by the Croatian Migration Commission.<sup>17</sup> These requests were sent to Yugoslav employment offices mostly from foreign employers but also from various institutions and organisations, such as Yugoslav embassies, foreign embassies and foreign employers' interest organisations.

Foreign recruiters submitted three types of labour request: nominative requests, which sought one or more workers by name; anonymous requests that sought one or more workers with certain characteristics; and anonymous requests that sought workers with certain characteristics from a specific geographical area (namely an area identified by foreign employers as rich in workers with the desired skills and characteristics).<sup>18</sup> These requests varied in specificity, but they always included the name of the employer. Most

<sup>17</sup>See Croatian State Archives (subsequently HDA), Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja, 1609, 36, 37, 38. When this article was researched the Croatian State Archives contained foreign requests processed by the Croatian Migration Commission until 1965. Therefore, for institutionalised labour migration during later years, the article uses only sources archived in the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade.

<sup>18</sup>Nominative requests were sent by primarily West German employers since the Yugoslav–West German recruitment agreement explicitly allowed it. See Ivanović, *op. cit.*, 117; Novinščak, *op. cit.*, 140.

requests also specified the desired age range of workers, the duration of the employment agreement, the salary (most often expressed as wage per hour), and provided a brief description of working and living conditions.

The analysed foreign requests often contained a comment or correction from the Croatian Migration Commission. For instance, the Commission often changed the municipal employment office responsible for implementation, obviously in an effort to strategically distribute labour migration. Some requests were marked with comments on low salaries or unsuitable working and living conditions, indicating that local employment offices had to demand better conditions. Others were marked with comments that the request could or would be partially or entirely realised in another Yugoslav republic or that the requested workers had already been recruited and had departed Yugoslavia.

### Yugoslav labour migration policy and female labour

Growing legal and illegal labour migration to the West compelled the Yugoslav government and communist establishment to take control of migration currents and standardise the recruitment procedure for employment abroad. The procedure was standardised through a liberalised emigration framework that was communicated to all stakeholders through an 'Instruction' (hereafter 'labour migration policy') on labour migration implementation published officially in October 1963.<sup>19</sup> The policy's main aim was to facilitate a temporary out-migration of the unqualified and unemployable labour surplus, mainly from rural and less developed areas, and to regulate labour migrants' work and social rights in the country and abroad. The policy allowed the migration of qualified, highly educated, and employed labour because the Yugoslav constitution guaranteed the freedom to choose job and occupation, and because unemployment among qualified and educated jobseekers was constantly growing, as were labour surpluses in certain industries.<sup>20</sup> However, the migration of these categories of labour was to be limited as much as possible.

Municipal employment offices were appointed to implement workers' recruitment under the guidance and coordination of republican Migration Commissions. At the federal level, Yugoslavia established a Commission for Employment Abroad, which was intended to coordinate republican employment authorities in conjunction with republican Commissions for Employment Abroad. The federal commission also mediated between the republican employment authorities and foreign recruiters, who applied directly to federal authorities for Yugoslav workers. This design was supposed to ensure that foreign requests for Yugoslav workers and workers' individual requests for work abroad were accommodated in accordance with the labour migration policy while simultaneously ensuring that the needs of the Yugoslav labour market for all categories of labour were not jeopardised.

Western employers had recognised Yugoslavia as a rich and accessible source of labour even before the introduction of the Yugoslav labour migration policy. Reports and directives

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<sup>19</sup>Archives of Yugoslavia (subsequently AJ), *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Izvod iz informacije o zapošljavanju jugoslavenskih državljana u inostranstvu; AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Informacija o osnovnim karakteristikama Upustva o zapošljavanju naših radnika u inostranstvu.

<sup>20</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Informacija o osnovnim karakteristikama Upustva o zapošljavanju naših radnika u inostranstvu.

issued by federal and republican authorities at the beginning of the 1960s and throughout the period under investigation witnessed the progressive expansion of multi-dimensional, mostly unregulated migration systems composed of transnational recruitment networks.<sup>21</sup> These opportunity structures further expanded Yugoslav labour migration and bridged and sustained the passage of Yugoslav workers to Western labour markets beyond or with limited institutional control. To respond to these developments, the Yugoslav government, starting in 1965, gradually signed recruitment agreements with most Western labour-receiving countries recruiting workers from Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup> In 1967, it amended the employment law which further aligned the work of employment offices with the labour migration policy and the clauses in bilateral recruitment agreements, enabling municipal employment offices to operate independently, maintain direct contacts with foreign employers and take a fee from foreign recruiters for every implemented recruitment.<sup>23</sup> The Yugoslav government also established the Federal Employment Bureau, whose duty was to monitor labour migration, negotiate future bilateral recruitment agreements, oversee their implementation, and mediate between Western recruiters and employment offices in the Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces.<sup>24</sup> The Bureau replaced the federal Commission for Employment Abroad, but according to its report from 1971, it distributed foreign requests for Yugoslav workers in accordance with criteria established by the republics during the Commission's establishment.

Since all these mechanisms were only partially effective, large proportions of skilled, highly skilled or employed workers in Yugoslavia's most prosperous industries were recruited by Western employers or migrated individually from developed regions and urban areas. To strengthen labour migration control, the Yugoslav government redesigned the labour migration policy by introducing a more stringent recruitment procedure for work abroad from 1972. For instance, the migration of certain categories of qualified and highly qualified workers was forbidden in areas experiencing shortages of such workers.<sup>25</sup> However, the core principle of the 1963 labour migration policy – namely sending unqualified and unemployable individuals to work abroad – remained unchanged.<sup>26</sup> The new recruitment procedure of 1972 further emphasised this principle.

The core principles of labour migration policies immediately affected unemployed women. As Tables 1 and 3 illustrate, between 1963 and 1973, women consistently constituted the majority in at least one category of jobseekers eligible for labour migration. In the initial years of the labour migration policy's implementation, women constituted a clear majority among all unemployed jobseekers, particularly among those lacking formal qualifications. Moreover, Yugoslav statistical yearbooks show that the share of job vacancies announced for women at

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije; AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu; AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-e-1-e-16, O Problemima privatnog zapošljavanja naših građana u inostranstvu; AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-e-1-e-16, Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini.

<sup>22</sup>Yugoslavia signed a labour recruitment agreement with France in 1965; Austria and Sweden in 1966; West Germany in 1968; and Belgium, Luxemburg, The Netherlands and Australia in 1970.

<sup>23</sup>Novinščak, *op. cit.*, 128.

<sup>24</sup>AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-31, Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslavenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama – analiza; AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-a-1-E, 16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu; AJ, *Savezno izvršno veće*, 130, F-780, Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini.

<sup>25</sup>S. Bernard, *Deutsch Marks in the Head, Shovel in the Hands and Yugoslavia in the Heart: The gastarbeiter return to Yugoslavia (1965–1991)* (Wiesbaden, 2019), 54.

<sup>26</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-e-1-e-16, Informacija o problemima zapošljavanja i merama za veće aktiviranje stanovništva.

**Table 1.** Women's employment and unemployment trends in Yugoslavia.

Year	Registered unemployed women in relation to all registered unemployed (%)	First-time registered unemployed women in relation to all first-time registered unemployed (%)	Women employed through public employment offices in relation to all employed through public employment offices (%) <sup>a</sup>
1963	54.1	66.6	22.6
1964	55.3	70.6	23.8
1965	46.8	68.2	24.4
1966	45.7	64.5	36.2
1967	44.0	62.0	28.5
1968	43.4	57.2	30.2
1969	45.2	54.7	29.3
1970	49.0	54.8	29.8
1971	50.0	56.9	34.0
1972	50.0	58.1	35.8
1973	51.1	58.1	36.2

Sources: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1970* (Beograd, 1970) for the years 1963–1969; Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1974* (Beograd 1974) for 1970–1973.

<sup>a</sup>It is unclear in Yugoslavia's statistical yearbooks whether these values also include women employed by public employment offices to work abroad.

**Table 2.** Registered unemployed women in relation to the labour force in the republics and autonomous regions of Yugoslavia (%).

Year	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Croatia	Macedonia	Slovenia	Serbia	Vojvodina	Kosovo
1963	47.3	41.3	65.0	39.2	77.0	57.2	62.6	15.6
1964	48.7	41.2	65.1	39.5	72.2	61.3	67.4	17.2
1965	39.8	34.7	57.3	37.0	60.0	55.2	56.0	11.3
1966	38.8	33.8	56.8	34.2	64.3	53.5	51.0	13.3
1967	32.0	36.3	53.5	36.3	61.7	52.1	46.1	11.5
1968	30.8	40.3	52.1	37.9	63.8	50.7	46.7	11.3
1969	31.9	44.4	57.3	39.3	67.3	52.4	49.6	10.1
1970	38.2	51.3	61.1	43.6	66.8	56.8	54.5	9.2
1971	41.8	49.3	57.1	45.0	63.1	58.6	56.4	11.1
1972	45.5	48.2	55.3	46.5	60.7	58.7	55.4	11.3
1973	49.3	48.9	55.7	50.0	60.7	57.2	56.8	13.8

Sources: Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1970*, (Beograd, 1970) for the years 1963–1969; Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1974*, (Beograd 1974) for 1970–1973.

employment offices was not nearly proportional to their share among the unemployed: 21% of all job vacancies in 1963, 21% in 1964 and 22% in 1965, the last year when it was legal to specify gender in job announcements.<sup>27</sup> Coincidentally, as Tables 1 and 2 illustrate, women's pressure on employment offices was considerable across the country. However, as Table 1 illustrates, throughout the period under investigation, employment offices' ability to find work for unemployed women was modest and not nearly proportional to their share among registered jobseekers.

One of the main characteristics of unemployed jobseekers in Yugoslavia during the period under investigation was their young age.<sup>28</sup> Young unemployed workers were

<sup>27</sup>Savezni zavod za Statistiku, *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1967* (Belgrade, 1967), 104.

<sup>28</sup>E. Primorac and M.F. Charette, 'Regional aspects of youth unemployment in Yugoslavia', *Economic Analysis*, 21, 2 (1987), 193–219, here 201–04. For a historical analysis of unemployment in socialist Yugoslavia and its impact on the female workforce, as well as the political and economic policies involved, see S.L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The political economy of Yugoslavia, 1945–1990* (Princeton, 1995).

**Table 3.** Share of registered unemployed women according to educational attainment (%).

Year	Vocational, upper-secondary, and higher	Qualified and highly qualified workers	Semi-qualified and unqualified
1963	57.5	18.4	56.5
1964	60.5	21.1	61.7
1965	58.5	18.5	57.9
1966	58.4	15.7	50.9
1967	62.3	19.0	48.2
1968	64.3	20.4	44.9
1969	67.4	24.1	43.5
1970	69.7	29.0	44.0
1971	70.6	31.6	47.9
1972	70.2	32.0	48.8
1973	69.6	32.2	49.3

Sources: Savezni zavod za statistiku, Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1970, (Beograd, 1970) for the years 1963-1969; Savezni zavod za statistiku, Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1974, (Beograd 1974) for 1970-1973.

mostly part of the generation of post-war baby boomers who came of age during major restructurings of the Yugoslav economy in the 1960s. In 1961 and 1965, the Yugoslav government implemented economic reforms to modernise the economy, increase its productivity, accelerate its transformation from labour intensive to capital intensive, and further align it with the global, primarily capitalist, market. Increasing alignment with the global market exposed Yugoslavia to Western social, economic and political influences and progressively embedded its economy and society into international flows of goods and people. The reforms had limited success domestically; for instance, the reform in 1965 resulted in countrywide dismissals, scarcity of new employment, growing unemployment, and accelerated outward labour migration.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the period under investigation, the shares of first-time jobseekers and unemployed individuals waiting for employment for six months or more constantly increased, the most intensive rise being in the share of unemployed individuals waiting for employment for more than a year.<sup>30</sup> Young people's pressure on the labour market was so intense that the Yugoslav Council of Labour listed it as one of the principal reasons for rapidly growing unemployment in the country.<sup>31</sup> Many of those young unemployed people were women, as Table 1 suggests by illustrating women's consistent majority among newly registered job seekers. From 1966, the most intense unemployment was among young women with vocational and higher education, whose share among registered unemployed constantly grew, as Table 3 illustrates. To contemporary observers in Yugoslavia, this development was already clear in 1965, as the Alliance of Workers' Unions warned that the unemployment among 'graduated young women is emerging and becoming a serious problem'.<sup>32</sup>

Reports from the Croatian and Serbian Republican Employment Bureaus illustrate employment offices' limited ability to provide women with work in Yugoslavia. In a 1964 report on employment and unemployment in Croatia, the Croatian Employment Bureau underlined the growing number of registered unemployed women, especially those who

<sup>29</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Savezni savet za rad, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu. See also Schierup, *op. cit.*, 74-84.

<sup>30</sup>J. Malačić, 'Unemployment in Yugoslavia from 1952 to 1975', *Eastern European Economics*, 17, 4 (1979), 85-109, here 96.

<sup>31</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Savezni savet za rad, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu.

<sup>32</sup>My translation. AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Problemi viška radne snage.

were unqualified and under-educated; the imbalance between women's professional characteristics and the needs of the labour market; and women's perpetual majority among the long-term registered unemployed.<sup>33</sup> The report shows that 65% of unemployed women were registered for one year or longer, 26% of the job vacancies were announced for women and only 11% of registered women were employed through employment offices. Following this report, the Croatian Parliament's Committee for Internal Affairs instructed all stakeholders to 'more freely approve unqualified women's requests to work abroad'.<sup>34</sup>

The 1971 report from the Serbian Republican Employment Bureau shows women's majority in all categories of registered unemployed jobseekers, except those with work experience.<sup>35</sup> For instance, women constituted 63% of first-time registered unemployed jobseekers, 77% of jobseekers with upper-secondary education, 68% of those registered as unemployed for one to three years and 55% of those registered for more than three years. The Bureau explained employment offices' limited ability to employ women more broadly by attributing it to imbalances between unemployed women's professional characteristics and the needs of the labour market.

When creating, expanding and legitimising the labour migration policy and its implementation mechanisms, Yugoslav policymakers regularly referred to employment offices' data on unemployment and the growing lack of employment possibilities for unqualified and certain categories of qualified jobseekers.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Yugoslav female (and male) labour migration followed the typical labour migration patterns and was most intensive in socio-economically more developed urbanised areas and municipalities, chiefly in the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.<sup>37</sup> The more progressive socio-economic development that occurred in these areas compared to the rest of the country, and which enabled women to reach the highest employment rates in the country, also enabled them to achieve higher social and spatial mobility and greater engagement in the active labour force. As migration scholars have repeatedly pointed out, labour migrations are usually most intensive in the more developed areas of labour-sending countries, where potential migrants possess more human and economic capital, thereby exhibiting stronger migration capabilities.<sup>38</sup> In the case of the aforementioned areas, the proximity to Western countries also facilitated labour migration. To counteract these trends, Yugoslav employment authorities endeavoured to distribute foreign requests for Yugoslav workers to less developed areas where employment opportunities were lower and labour surpluses higher.

<sup>33</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 36, Godišnji izvještaj službe za zapošljavanje radnika za 1963.

<sup>34</sup>My translation. HDA, *Zavod za migracije i narodnosti*, 1610, 15, Zapisnik sa sastanka u Odboru za unutrašnju politiku Izvršnog vijeća Sabora 26.V 1964.

<sup>35</sup>AJ, *Savezna konferencija socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Konferencija žena Jugoslavije*, 142-A-484, Republički zavod za zapošljavanje Beograd, Problematika zapošljavanja stručne ženske radne snage.

<sup>36</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-I-e, 16, Izvod iz informacije o zapošljavanju naših građana u inostranstvu; AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-I-e, 16, Savezni savet za rad – Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu; AJ, *Savezno izvršno veće*, 130, F-780, Predlog o potrebi neposrednog angažovanja predstavnika Saveznog biroa u inostranstvu na zapošljavanju radnika iz zemlje; AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-I-e, 16, Savezni savet za rad – Kretanje zaposlenosti u 1970. godini i predviđanja za 1971. godinu.

<sup>37</sup>I. Baučić, 'Osnovna strukturalna obilježja jugoslavenskih radnika u inozemstvu', *Acta Geographica Croatica*, 12, 1 (1973), 35–88, here 44–46.

<sup>38</sup>M. Douglas et al., 'Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal', *Population and Development Review*, 19, 3 (1993), 431–66, here 453; H. de Hass, 'A theory of migration: the aspirations-capabilities framework', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9, 8 (2021), 1–35, here 23–25.

## Women in Yugoslavia's labour migration governance

As early as February 1964, women became an integral part of institutionalised recruitment and of Yugoslavia's efforts to shape migration currents and align them with the conditions in the Yugoslav labour market. This is suggested by a report from a meeting of the federal Commission for Employment Abroad at the Federal Secretariat of Labour in Belgrade. According to the report, the Commission met to discuss foreign requests for Yugoslav workers, to agree on their distribution between republics, and to refine further inter-republican cooperation on the realisation of future foreign requests for Yugoslav workers.<sup>39</sup> Among other foreign requests, the Commission discussed requests for textile workers sent by two Swiss garment factories: one for 'six to nine qualified female workers' and the other for a 'certain number of female tailors'. The Commission decided that women would be recruited from the Republic of Macedonia 'since it experienced large surpluses of female sewers and confectionery workers'. Moreover, for a request from a Swiss chocolate factory for 50 workers, the Commission emphasised that 'exclusively unqualified female workers are to be recruited' and allocated their recruitment to Serbian and Macedonian republican employment bureaus. Similarly, the Commission decided that the request from the Swiss Association of Health Institutions for 300 unqualified workers would be fulfilled with female workers, of which 100 women would be recruited from Croatia, 80 from Serbia, 60 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 60 from Macedonia. Requests for male workers were distributed similarly, and the most outstanding is a request from a Dutch mining company for 1000 male workers, which the Commission distributed between Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

These and other examples in the analysed sources indicate intensive cooperation between federal and republican employment bureaus in the allocation of foreign requests for Yugoslav workers. For instance, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia shared another request from a Swiss chocolate factory for unqualified female workers. The Croatian Migration Commission decided that 20 women would be recruited from Croatia, 15 from Serbia and 15 from Macedonia.<sup>40</sup> The Serbian Republican Employment Bureau received a request from a West German electronics factory for 500 female workers and forwarded the request to Croatia with a comment that it was prepared to approve sending between 200 and 300 female workers from Serbia; accordingly, the Croatian Migration Commission approved sending 200 women from Croatia. Similar patterns reappeared in the distribution of requests for male workers and requests in which gender was not specified. For instance, a report from Montenegro stated that the republican employment office in 1965 sent agricultural workers to Switzerland on behalf of the Serbian republican employment office and construction workers to Austria on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina's republican employment office.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the federal Commission for Employment Abroad decided that the request from the Swiss Agricultural Association for 600 to 800 unqualified workers for work in agriculture would be

<sup>39</sup>My translation. HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, Zapisnik sa sastanka Komisije za poslove zapošljavanja u inostranstvu pri Saveznom sekretarijatu za rad održanog 29.II 1964. godine.

<sup>40</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, djel.br.155/64.

<sup>41</sup>AJ, *Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Koordinacioni odbor za pitanja jugoslovenskih radnika u inostranstvu*, 142, I-482, Informacija o zapošljavanju radne snage u inostranstvu /Crna Gora/.

distributed among Serbia, which would contribute 400 workers, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, which would each contribute 200 workers.<sup>42</sup>

Such distributions reflect federal and republican authorities' efforts to direct foreign requests primarily to areas with large surpluses of unskilled and unemployable workforce. The report from the meeting of the federal Commission for Employment Abroad in Belgrade in 1964 states that republican and federal representatives agreed to strictly adhere to the recruitment guidelines prescribed by the labour migration policy.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, with the objective of simplifying the procedure of inter-republican cooperation, they resolved that the federal Ministry of Labour would disseminate any future requests for workers sent by foreign recruiters directly to Belgrade to each republican employment bureau. Moreover, the report notes that the commission delegates agreed that 'all materials pertaining to recruitments would be delivered to stakeholders through highly confidential mail', indicating that they regarded the distribution of foreign requests as a sensitive issue.<sup>44</sup>

According to the Federal Employment Bureau's report from 1973, the distribution agreement between federal and republican employment authorities remained valid throughout the subsequent years, and the Bureau utilised it to distribute foreign requests for unqualified workers to less developed, primarily rural and agrarian areas.<sup>45</sup> However, the Bureau inexplicitly acknowledged that its endeavours were significantly undermined by the nominal requests of foreign employers and the operational independence of municipal employment offices. According to the Bureau, foreign employers had a great impact on regulated labour migration since they predominantly demanded workers through nominative requests and requests seeking workers from specific areas. The Bureau also acknowledged its inability to effectively distribute anonymous requests for female workers to the least developed republics 'because employment authorities in those republics did not show interest in their implementation'.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the Bureau emphasised that its future objective and practice would still be to distribute anonymous requests for female workers, particularly those where foreign employers did not specify a recruiting area, to employment authorities in less developed republics.

According to reports from the Yugoslav government and the Federal Employment Bureau, municipal employment offices often approached labour migration opportunistically and applied the labour migration policy flexibly and inconsistently, perceiving it as a convenient way to reduce unemployment in their areas.<sup>47</sup> Such reports frequently illustrate a lack of coordination between employment offices and republican and federal employment bureaus, which Western employers and private recruiters frequently utilised to avoid bureaucracy and quickly find the desired workforce. Reports from municipal offices to the Federal Employment Bureau suggest that Western recruiters often exploited

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<sup>42</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, Zapisnik sa sastanka komisije za poslove zapošljavanja u inostranstvu pri Saveznom sekretarijatu za rad održanog 29.II 1964. godine.

<sup>43</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>*ibid.*, my translation.

<sup>45</sup>AJ, *Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Koordinacioni odbor za pitanja jugoslovenskih radnika u inostranstvu*, 142, I-489, Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja, Informacija o raspodeli ponuda inostranih poslodavaca republičkim i pokrajinskim zavodima za zapošljavanje.

<sup>46</sup>*ibid.*, my translation.

<sup>47</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Arhiv predsjednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu; AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije.

Yugoslavia's organisational inconsistency by sending the same request to several employment offices or recruiting from one municipality despite having an agreement with another.<sup>48</sup> It was also common for foreign employers and representatives of foreign employment authorities to withdraw from agreed recruitments or not to attend workers' selection, as in the case of women from Kosovo, whose employment abroad was not realised for those reasons.<sup>49</sup>

Similar incidents to those mentioned above are frequently reflected in the Yugoslav government's and Federal Employment Bureau's reports on problems and controversies regarding workers' recruitment and unregulated labour migration.<sup>50</sup> The government usually responded with directives aimed at strengthening Yugoslavia's recruiting mechanisms and protecting Yugoslav workers from deception and eventual exploitation. The sources analysed in this article generally suggest that Yugoslav government and employment authorities not only aimed to strategically discharge labour surplus but also negotiated various benefits for recruited workers, such as transit from Yugoslavia to the destination country paid by their foreign employers, higher salaries and the equality of Yugoslav workers with the domestic workers of the host countries.

One of the measures designed to facilitate labour migrants' integration into the new workplace and social environment was pre-departure training. In almost all recruitment agreements with Western countries, Yugoslav negotiators embedded stipulations that labour migrants could receive pre-departure training paid for by their foreign employers or host countries and stipulations that also guaranteed Yugoslav migrant workers' training and specialisation in the same capacity enjoyed by citizens of the host countries.<sup>51</sup> As early as 1965, the Federal Employment Bureau initiated pre-departure training programmes and courses, which municipal employment authorities and educational institutions implemented. Reports from the Serbian Republican Employment Bureau and the Federal Employment Bureau show approximately 10,000 participants in pre-departure training programmes between 1965 and 1970.<sup>52</sup> These reports also indicate a predominance of male workers in pre-departure training programmes and courses, likely because the planned and implemented programmes primarily focused on occupations typically held by men in the French and West German metal, vehicle and construction industries. However, the Federal Employment Bureau's annual bulletin reveals that women did participate in pre-departure training programmes. In 1966, Sweden financed language and cultural introduction courses for two groups of female nurses from Macedonia and a group of textile workers from Vojvodina.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, Selekcija za SR Nemačku.

<sup>49</sup>AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, Rad komisije za selekciju radnika.

<sup>50</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Savezno izvršno veće*, 130, F-780, Informacija o problemima u vezi sa zapošljavanjem naših građana u inostranstvu; AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, Selekcije kandidatov za ZR Nemčijo. Poročilo o selekciji.

<sup>51</sup>AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-31, Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama – analiza. According to this report from the Federal Employment Bureau, the recruitment agreement with Austria did not include such a clause.

<sup>52</sup>*ibid.*; AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-26, Izveštaj o poslovanju republičkog zavoda za zapošljavanje za 1969. godinu.

<sup>53</sup>AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, *Bilten* 3, 1966, Zapošljavanje u inostranstvu. See also M. Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry: socialist Yugoslavia's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training', *Labor History* (2025), 1–25, here 11–12.

## Young, healthy, and accessible

Mirjana Morokvašić argued that migrant women, stripped of opportunities in their own country, represented a ready-made, easily obtainable and flexible labour supply for expanding Western post-war labour markets.<sup>54</sup> Yugoslavia's shrinking labour market, growing unemployment, increasing migration capabilities among women and institutional support to their migration all coincided with imbalances within Western labour markets and the urgent need for female and young workers. Rapid economic development in Western industrialised countries and the elevation of socio-economic standards among their populations brought shortages of a labour force ready to take low-wage, low-value jobs in the secondary labour market.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the increasing inability to employ the domestic workforce in these areas of work, especially women and young people who had filled these jobs previously, guided Western employers and employment authorities towards labour sources in developing countries.<sup>56</sup> Thus, while unqualified and young jobseekers, especially women, in Yugoslavia had to wait for employment for a year or more, Western labour markets craved those categories of workers.<sup>57</sup>

Foreign requests for workers submitted to Yugoslav employment offices clearly illustrate these phenomena.<sup>58</sup> The simultaneous submissions of requests from virtually all major labour-receiving countries highlights the labour shortages in industrialised Europe and the urgency with which Western employers approached Yugoslav employment offices. The substantial demand for young, unqualified workers to work in expanding industries such as the textile and food industries, as well as for skilled or experienced workers in the metal and automotive industries or the welfare and service sectors, illustrates the shortages of specific labour categories in Western labour markets. The seemingly instant and mostly unconditional approval of such requests by Yugoslav employment bureaus highlights the considerable surplus of those labour categories in Yugoslavia. Some of the most salient examples include requests from a Swiss garment factory, an Austrian garment factory and a West German hotel. Unlike most Western employers' requests, which either specified a number or a range of requested workers, the Swiss factory requested an unspecified number of qualified female tailors, the Austrian factory an unspecified number of unqualified female workers and the West German hotel an unspecified number of unqualified female workers. The Croatian Migration Commission approved these requests without any alteration or comment.

Most foreign requests sought male workers for employment in the mining, metal and construction industries, typically in large numbers ranging from a few dozen to several hundreds. Many foreign requests were gender-neutral, mostly seeking large numbers of

<sup>54</sup>M. Morokvašić, 'Birds of passage are also women . . .', *International Migration Review*, 18, 4 (1984), 886–907, here 1.

<sup>55</sup>M.J. Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant labour and industrial societies* (Cambridge, 1979), 26–32.

<sup>56</sup>*ibid.*, 26–32; D.S. Massey et al., 'Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal', *Population and Development Review*, 19, 3 (1993), 431–466, here 443.

<sup>57</sup>For instance, in 1966, West Germany altered a labour immigration regulation which allowed the issuing of work permits only to skilled Yugoslav workers, to ensure that the employment of Yugoslav female workers was not restricted. Furthermore, during the negotiations of recruitment agreements, West Germany demanded from Yugoslavia that recruitment include only skilled men, but all categories of female workers. See Novinščak, *op. cit.*, 137–38. Moreover, according to Alfonso, Switzerland preferred labour immigration over the development of family-related welfare facilities which could have facilitated domestic women's entry into the labour market. See A. Afonso, 'Migrant workers or working women? Comparing labour supply policies in post-war Europe', *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 21, 3 (2019), 251–69.

<sup>58</sup>See collections in HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 36, 37, 38.

unqualified workers for work in agriculture.<sup>59</sup> Since women constituted a large proportion of unemployed jobseekers without formal qualifications, many were probably recruited through such requests.<sup>60</sup> Some requests sought both women and men to work at the same workplace, predominantly in textile factories, hotel and restaurant facilities or in agriculture. It was common among Yugoslav labour migrants that married couples migrated together. The husband would usually migrate first, followed by the wife, who either immigrated to the husband's host country as a relative or was recruited through a nominative request.<sup>61</sup> However, the requests for Yugoslav workers analysed here do not reflect such patterns, as most sought an uneven number of men and women. For instance, a West German hotel and service company requested 35 men and 25 women, and a West German garment factory requested 10 proficient female sewers and one male tailor.<sup>62</sup> Although rare, the gender distribution could also be the opposite in requests from Western textile factories, as in the case of the Austrian factory request for 20 unqualified men and 10 unqualified women.<sup>63</sup> The factory even specified that the recruited men and women must be unmarried.

Requests seeking only women indicate that Western employers predominantly sought young, unqualified and (to a lesser extent) semi-qualified female workers. Further, they suggest that Western recruiters carefully studied the Yugoslav labour migration policy. Namely, they requested unqualified female workers even for positions typically requiring qualifications, such as nursing or tailoring, but they frequently emphasised that the recruited women needed to be either experienced workers or trained workers. Requests for unqualified and semi-qualified female workers were mainly for work in the textile and leather industries, the service and healthcare sectors, food factories and seasonal agriculture. Similarly, requests for qualified female workers were primarily for work in garment factories and the service and healthcare sectors. It is clear that women were also recruited through nominative requests, as both federal and republican employment authorities approved and archived nominative requests for female workers.<sup>64</sup> Even these requests recruited women mostly for work in the same labour market branches.

Several reports suggest that Yugoslav employment authorities' approval of requests for female nurses can be attributed to their large numbers among registered unemployed jobseekers, whereas the approval of requests for qualified female textile workers can be attributed both to their large numbers among registered unemployed jobseekers and to high labour surpluses within the textile industry. Although the textile industry flourished in Yugoslavia during the post-Second World War decades, it experienced a labour surplus throughout the 1960s, which reached approximately 50,000 by 1970.<sup>65</sup> According to a report from the Yugoslav Association for Professional Orientation from

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<sup>59</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>See Table 3.

<sup>61</sup>See, for example, Lorber, *op. cit.*, 175–77; Knocke, *op. cit.*, 81–82; Svanberg, 'Labour migration and the Swedish labour market model', *op. cit.*, 102.

<sup>62</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, request without a reference number.

<sup>63</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, br.djel. 251.

<sup>64</sup>See, for example, AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-15, Nominativne ponude za zapošljavanje radnika u inostranstvu; HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, br.dj.125/1-64.

<sup>65</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-a-1-e, 16, Informacija o problemima zapošljavanja i merama za veće aktiviranje stanovništva.

1961, 72% of unemployed qualified women had certificates to work in the textile industry and the service and sales sectors.<sup>66</sup> A decade later, reports from the Conference for the Social Activity of Women, Yugoslavia's central female organisation, presented and discussed official data that showed similar trends among unemployed women.<sup>67</sup> For instance, data from the Federal Employment Bureau for 1969 showed that women constituted approximately 63% of unemployed qualified textile female workers and 90% of unemployed nurses. These occupations were strongly feminised in concurrent Yugoslavia; therefore, it is unsurprising that women constituted the majority of unemployed jobseekers in those categories. However, the same reports show that, during the same years, approximately 50% of female Yugoslav youth attended schools for nurses and vocational education oriented towards the textile industry, with their shares among students ranging between 70% and 90% during the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>68</sup> Given these figures, it is clear that female-dominated vocational schools were educating large numbers of young women with severely limited employment prospects.

Requests for female workers suggest that foreign recruiters were aware of these aspects, and of the vast number of unemployed young women in Yugoslavia with the particular skills, qualifications and characteristics needed in the West. Foreign requests seeking women workers were often more specific in their demands for workers' characteristics than requests for male workers and gender-neutral requests. In a study of labour migration to Swedish manufacturing industries, Denis Frank highlighted the often-overt nature of Swedish recruiters' demands for Yugoslav labourers. In 1969, a Swedish garment factory went as far as to explicitly request young, unmarried and childless female textile workers from areas in northern and middle Yugoslavia.<sup>69</sup> Demands similar to the Swedish ones can be found among requests processed by the Croatian Migration Commission. Foreign recruiters primarily sought young female workers, usually between 18 and 25 or 35 years of age. If age was not specified, the requests often sought 'girls', implying a preference for young unmarried women. Two examples illustrate the frequent explicitness in requests and indicate Western employers' perception of an endless and diverse labour supply in Yugoslavia: a West German textile factory sought eight female workers, demanding that they have nimble fingers and healthy eyesight and be no taller than 162 cm.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, a West German restaurant applied for four female bartenders aged 20 to 40, requesting that they have an attractive appearance and be approximately the same age.<sup>71</sup> In the same request, the restaurant

<sup>66</sup>AJ, *Savezna konferencija socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Konferencija žena Jugoslavije*, 142, 1-619, Jugoslovensko udruženje za profesionalnu orijentaciju, Profesionalna orijentacija i zapošljavanje žena i ženske omladine.

<sup>67</sup>AJ, *Savezna konferencija socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Konferencija žena Jugoslavije*, 142, A-484, *Obrazovanje, vaspitanje i profesionalna orijentacija ženske omladine*; AJ, *Savezna konferencija socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Konferencija žena Jugoslavije*, 142, A-484, *Svesno društveno usmjeravanje privredne aktivizacije žena sa gledišta objektivnih mogućnosti i potreba u razvoju našeg društva*; AJ, *Savezna konferencija socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Konferencija žena Jugoslavije*, 142, 1 625, *Zaposlenost žena i školovanje ženske omladine*.

<sup>68</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>As Denis Frank's study shows, northern and middle Yugoslavia included Vojvodina and Northwestern Croatia, areas that had a developed textile industry. In 1967, the same factory recruited young women from areas with a developed textile industry in Macedonia, even requesting that these women be unmarried. D. Frank, 'Staten, företagen och arbetskraftsinvandringen: en studie av invandringspolitiken i Sverige och rekryteringen av utländska arbetare, 1960-1972' (D.Phil., Växjö, 2005), 199-201.

<sup>70</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, br.djel.196/64.

<sup>71</sup>HDA, *Republički komisija za iseljenička pitanja*, 1609, 37, br.djel.196/64y.

sought female and male kitchen personnel without specifying their physical appearance, requesting only that they were aged 20 to 40. The Croatian Migration Commission approved both requests without comments or significant alterations, as it did other requests with similar demands, eventually changing the municipality from which women were to be recruited or annotating that the wages offered by Western employers were too low.

## Conclusion

The Yugoslav government and employment authorities never managed to entirely steer labour migration and align its currents with the labour migration policy. Labour migration was mostly driven and sustained by cumulative driving forces operating on micro and mezzo levels.<sup>72</sup> Social networks between migrants and potential migrants and Western employers emerged early and constantly expanded. Private recruiters operated successfully across Yugoslavia – utilising weak institutional mechanisms; organisations that perceived labour migration as a lucrative opportunity, such as tourist and transport agencies; and the Yugoslav press's liberal attitude towards advertising job vacancies abroad. Moreover, Yugoslav municipal employment offices and authorities often lacked sufficient experience and capacities to implement the labour migration policy or, empowered by the employment law, approached labour migration liberally, perceiving it as a convenient way of decreasing unemployment in their areas and increasing local economic standards through labour migrants' remittances. As this article has highlighted, the Yugoslav government designed, expanded and redesigned various measures to strengthen institutional influence and control over labour migration, gradually establishing institutionalised recruitment as a significant platform in mediating employment abroad.<sup>73</sup>

This article has shown that women constituted an integral part of Yugoslavia's migration management and strategic efforts to employ labour surplus in Western labour markets and to shape the demographic and socio-economic traits of its migrating citizens. From the onset of the liberalised labour migration policy, Yugoslav employment authorities included women when evaluating, deliberating and strategically allocating Western employers' requests for Yugoslav workers. Women's inclusion in institutionalised recruitment was essentially inevitable, as they constituted either the majority or a significant proportion of the categories of unemployed jobseekers prescribed for employment abroad by the Yugoslav policy-makers. Furthermore, women's increasing social mobility and aspirations to enter the labour market and employment offices' limited ability to allocate jobs to women domestically coincided with demands for their labour in expanding sectors

<sup>72</sup>AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-e-1-e-16, O Problemima privatnog zapošljavanja naših građana u inostranstvu; AJ, *Arhiv predsednika republike*, III-e-1-e-16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu. See also M. Bošnjak, 'Driving forces of labour migration as barriers to labour migrants' professional mobility: the case of Yugoslav labour migration', *CES Working Papers*, 15, 2 (2023), 194–215, here 200–03.

<sup>73</sup>According to the Federal Employment Bureau, Yugoslav employment offices mediated employment abroad to 445,132 individuals between 1964 and 1970. AJ, *Savezni biro za poslove zapošljavanja*, 467, F-11-31, Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslavenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama – analiza - Ivo Baučić notes that, on average, Yugoslav employment offices mediated employment abroad to approximately 50% of labour migrants. See Baučić, 'Osnovna strukturna', *op. cit.*, 41.

of Western labour markets and Western employers' increasing focus on recruitment in Yugoslavia. In an effort to respond to these developments and meet the guidelines of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, Yugoslav employment authorities mediated women's employment abroad through all forms of institutionalised recruitment.

The analysed archival sources indicate that the proportion of women among labour migrants mediated by Yugoslav employment authorities was significantly lower than that of men. Nevertheless, the sources also reveal that women were the subject of employment authorities' efforts to allocate recruitment to areas with substantial labour surpluses, the inter-republican distribution of foreign requests for Yugoslav workers, and the Yugoslav government's endeavour to, in collaboration with their foreign contractors, select eligible workers and prepare them for their future living and working environments. Thus, the findings presented in this article demonstrate that archival sources, particularly those produced by employment authorities and institutions of labour-sending countries, can provide a comprehensive insight into the state's direct involvement in labour migrations.

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III



Mato Bošnjak

## **Labour migration in the service of the sending state:**

### **The Yugoslav state's agenda in regulating labour migration to Sweden\***

#### **Abstract**

In 1966, Yugoslavia and Sweden signed a labour recruitment agreement and, in 1968, a convention on social insurance. While existing studies have explored the roles of the main stakeholders in the Swedish labour market regarding labour immigration, Yugoslavia's role is entirely absent from historiography. Drawing on archival sources this article shows that the Yugoslav government embedded labour migration to Sweden in its aim to enhance Yugoslavia's foreign relations and trade. Furthermore, the article shows that the Yugoslav government aimed to use the recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance to intensify the inflow of foreign currencies to Yugoslavia and facilitate its welfare system. Thus, the article sheds new light on bilateral regulation of Yugoslav labour migration and Yugoslavia's strategies to capitalise on labour migration and expands our understanding of multifaceted links between post-war migrations, economic and political dynamics, and states' subjection of migrations to their objectives.

Keywords: labour recruitment agreement; convention on social insurance; labour migration; Yugoslavia; Sweden

#### **Introduction**

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, socialist Yugoslavia was a primary non-Nordic labour source for an expanding Swedish economy.<sup>1</sup> This development was mainly driven by Yugoslavia's labour migration policy introduced in 1963, increasing labour shortages in the Swedish labour market, and the Swedish-

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<sup>1</sup> D. Frank, *Staten, företagen och arbetskraftsinvandringen: en studie av invandringspolitiken i Sverige och rekryteringen av utländska arbetare 1960–1972* (Växjö 2005) 122–126; J. Waara, *Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen och arbetskraftsinvandringen 1945–1972* (Göteborg 2012) 41.

Yugoslav cooperation on recruitments conducted on Yugoslav soil. Sweden and Yugoslavia formalised their cooperation on labour migration in September 1966 through a labour recruitment agreement designed to ensure labour migrants' rights and implement their migration under Yugoslav and Swedish policies. In June 1968, the two countries further regulated migrant workers' status through a bilateral convention on social insurance. In less than a decade after the implementation of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy and less than half a decade after the ratification of Swedish-Yugoslav labour recruitment agreement, the number of Yugoslav citizens in Sweden increased by more than six times—from approximately 5,000 to approximately 34,000.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, research has remarkably overlooked the role of Yugoslavia in formalising and facilitating labour migration cooperation between the two countries. Research on labour migration to Sweden have prominently explored the evolution and implementation of Sweden's immigration control mechanisms and the attitudes and strategies of the main stakeholders in the Swedish labour market.<sup>3</sup> Studies generally agree that the increasing uncontrolled immigration of workers from Southeastern Europe during mid-1960s prompted negotiations between the Swedish state and representatives of trade unions and employers, leading to a redefinition of Swedish immigration policy and labour recruitment agreements with Yugoslavia and Turkey.<sup>4</sup> As in most labour-receiving countries, employers facing labour shortages favoured a liberal immigration policy, and trade unions advocated for immigration restrictions, the employment of domestic labour reserves, and the protection of immigrant workers' social and labour rights. The Swedish state sought to regulate its borders and labour supply and support the booming economy. Meanwhile, the Yugoslav government's efforts to advance the Yugoslav state's interests and protect its labour supply, ensure a

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<sup>2</sup> Frank, *Staten, företagen och arbetskraftsinvandringen*, 15; Waara, *Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen och arbetskraftsinvandringen*, 41. During this period, Yugoslav labour migrants in Sweden were outnumbered only by labour migrants from Finland.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Jesper Johansson, *Så gör vi inte här i Sverige. Vi brukar göra så här.: Retorik och praktik i LO:s invandrarpolitik 1945–1981* (Växjö 2008); Johan Svanberg, 'The contrasts of migration narratives. From Germany to the Swedish garment industry during the 1950s', *Journal of Migration History* 3:1 (2017) 131–156; Olle Jansson, 'Employer agency and migration networks in post-war Sweden: the case of manufacturing companies and migrant workers in Västmanland County', *Journal of Migration History* 4:1 (2018) 187–210; Johan Svanberg, 'Labour migration and the Swedish labour market model: A case study of recruitment of Yugoslav workers to Svenska Fläktfabriken in Växjö, 1969–1970', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36:1 (2011) 91–113; Denis Frank, 'Immigration from Yugoslavia to Sweden 1966–1971: an analysis of the impacts of firms and state', *Journal of Migration History* 10:1 (2024) 120–147.

<sup>4</sup> As well as an interstate cooperation on labour recruitment with Greece.

stable passage for Yugoslav citizens migrating to Sweden, and secure their social and labour rights remained unexplored.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding Yugoslavia's stated concern for the wellbeing of its migrant citizens, this article examines the Yugoslav government's objectives in the institutional regulation of Yugoslav labour migration to Sweden. The article demonstrates the Yugoslav state's role in institutionalising labour migration to Sweden and situates this process within the broader embedment of labour migration in the Yugoslav government's economic and financial agendas and efforts to insulate and safeguard Yugoslavia's welfare system. It shows that the Yugoslav government embedded the regulation of labour emigration to Sweden within a wider ambition to strengthen relations with other Scandinavian countries and to facilitate Yugoslavia's integration into international trade frameworks. Furthermore, the article shows that the Yugoslav government sought to leverage the labour recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance with Sweden to increase the inflow of foreign currency and support domestic social welfare and healthcare systems. In doing so, this article contributes to scholarly efforts to elucidate the role of states as active and deliberate agents in international labour migrations and how labour migrations were integrated into state strategies in the post-Second World War period.

Research examining the bilateral institutionalisation of Yugoslav labour migration have predominantly focused on its institutionalisation to the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to as 'West Germany') in 1968 and the associated political and ideological complexities.<sup>6</sup> West Germany was the most common destination for Yugoslav labour migrants, making Yugoslavia one of the main sources of migrant labour for the West German economy. Nevertheless, labour migration cooperation and bilateral institutionalisation posed challenges for both states. Specifically, their relationship was burdened by the legacies of

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<sup>5</sup> Kristina Meurle's and Mile Andrić's contemporary case study remained the only effort to contextualise the Swedish-Yugoslav recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance, albeit from a contemporary perspective and a focus on workers' rights. See Kristina Meurle and Mile Andrić, *Background to the Yugoslav migration to Sweden: case study of a group of Yugoslav workers at a factory in Sweden* (Lund 1971) 105–117.

<sup>6</sup> Yugoslav labour migration extended across a range of Western labour-receiving countries, with Austria, France, Sweden, and Switzerland among the principal destinations, and the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Norway forming additional migration routes. However, research has only sporadically addressed the Yugoslav state's role in shaping these movements, focusing instead on migrants' lived experiences or their encounters with Yugoslavia's and host countries' social, economic, and cultural policies. See, for, example, Suzanne Stiver Lie, *Immigrant women in Norway: immigrant women and their work* (Hong Kong, 1983); Verena Lorber, 'To come into focus: female "guest workers" from former Yugoslavia in Austria (1960–1980)', in Günter Bischof and Dirk Rupnow (eds), *Migration in Austria* (Salzburg, 2017), 161–187; Brigitte Le Normand, *Citizens without borders: Yugoslavia and its migrant workers in Western Europe* (Toronto 2021); Marina Durović-Andić, 'De jugoslaviske helsearbeiderne i Norge 1967–1990: en historie nedenfra', *Arbeiderhistorie* 38:1 (2024) 132–149.

the Second World War; furthermore, Yugoslavia's designation as a socialist communist country and its recognition of East Germany were incompatible with West Germany's foreign policy, which was shaped by the Cold War division. Yugoslavia's increasing openness to cooperation with Western countries, alongside its endeavour to extend institutional influence over the largest cohort of its migrating citizens, significantly contributed to the formalisation and consolidation of bilateral labour migration frameworks. In addition, scholars have convincingly demonstrated that the bilateral regulation of workers' recruitments and their working and social rights was eventually realised because West Germany moderated its foreign policy, linking the agreement with Yugoslavia to its efforts to enhance relations with socialist countries in Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Recent research shows that West Germany's integration of Yugoslav labour migration into its foreign political and economic policies during the Cold War was not unique.<sup>8</sup> Namely, the political and economic divisions of the Cold War have influenced international migrations and their regulations since the immediate post-Second World War years. States within the Western bloc strategically directed international migrations both within Europe and beyond—to economically advanced Commonwealth countries, the United States of America, and affiliated countries in South America—through a system of bilateral and multilateral agreements, interstate organisations, and strategic migration policies. These institutional mechanisms were supposed to counteract the establishment of communism in developing countries and nations devastated by war. Furthermore, they supported the strategic displacement of labour and thus economic development within the Western bloc while simultaneously undermining the socialist notion of economic development. During the Western economic boom from the late 1950s onwards, these mechanisms continued to enable Western capitalist countries to utilise large-scale labour migrations as an

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<sup>7</sup> Vladimir Ivanović, 'Zaključivanje sporazuma o angažovanju jugoslovenske radne snage sa SR Nemačkom', *Hereticus – Časopis za preispitivanje prošlosti* 4 (2009) 25–40; Kaya Shonick, 'Politics, culture, and economics: reassessing the West German guest worker agreement with Yugoslavia', *Journal of Contemporary History* 44:4 (2009) 719–736; Karolina Novinščak, 'The recruiting and sending of Yugoslav "Gastarbeiter" to Germany: between socialist demands and economic needs', in: U. Brunnbauer (ed), *Transnational societies, transterritorial politics. Migrations in the (post-)Yugoslav area, 19–21 centuries* (München 2009) 121–144.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Emmanuel Comte, 'Waging the Cold War: the origins and launch of Western cooperation to absorb migrants from Eastern Europe, 1948–57', *Cold War History* 20:4 (2020) 461–481; Sara Bernard, 'The regulation of international migration in the Cold War: a synthesis and review of the literature', *Labor History* 64:4 (2023) 330–357; Rory Archer, Sara Bernard, and Yannis Papadopoulos, 'Introduction. The Cold War of labour migrants: opportunities, struggles and adaptations across the Iron Curtain and beyond', *Labor History* 64:4 (2023) 321–329; Maria Damilakou and Loukianos Venturas, 'Discourses on Latin America: the migration-development nexus', in: Loukianos Venturas (ed), *International "migration management" in the early Cold War: The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration* (Corinth 2015) 293–312.

additional instrument to elevate their economic development and to present the capitalist model of socioeconomic development as superior.<sup>9</sup> However, existing research on state agency in the regulation and governance of post-war labour migration has predominantly focused on the role of economically advanced Western labour-receiving states.<sup>10</sup> This focus has often marginalised the agency of labour-sending states or reduced their involvement to functionalist explanations and mere motivations to alleviate domestic unemployment, discharge labour surpluses, and capitalise on migrant workers' remittances.<sup>11</sup>

For the Yugoslav state, institutionalising labour migration cooperation with Western countries was crucial for economic, political, and ideological reasons. By focusing on the most intensive years of labour migration in the late 1960s and early 1970, scholars of Yugoslav labour migration have explored a range of institutionalised mechanisms that the Yugoslav state apparatus implemented both domestically and abroad.<sup>12</sup> These mechanisms facilitated the perpetuation of Yugoslavia's sovereignty and ideological influence over Yugoslav labour migrants and their dependants, sought to improve their socioeconomic positions abroad, and aimed to maintain their connection to Yugoslavia's society and economy. Many of these mechanisms interfered with labour migrants' social and cultural lives, nurturing their sense of belonging to Yugoslavia and counteracting the influence of political émigré organisations hostile towards socialist Yugoslavia. However, boundaries between the state's political, philanthropic, and economic measures were often thin or blurred, as most of these measures directed migrants' remittances, consumption, and investments towards Yugoslavia.

It was mainly international institutionalisation of labour migration that enabled the Yugoslav state apparatus to legitimately extend its operations beyond Yugoslavia's borders and advance the state's political and economic interests and

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<sup>9</sup> Bernard, 'The regulation of international migration in the Cold War', 335–338.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas Massey, 'International migration at the dawn of the twenty-first century: The role of the state', *Population and Development Review* 25:2 (1999) 303–322, 310–311; Hein de Haas, 'A theory of migration: The aspirations-capabilities framework', *Comparative Migration Studies* 9:8 (2021) 1–35, 3.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Christopher Rass, 'Temporary labour migration and state-run recruitment of foreign workers in Europe, 1919–1975: A new migration regime?', *International Review of Social History* 57:S20 (2012) 191–224, 204–213; Johannes-Dieter Steinert, 'Migration and migration policy: West Germany and the recruitment of foreign labour, 1945–61', *Journal of Contemporary History* 49:1 (2014) 9–27, 13–19; Bernard, 'The regulation of international migration in the Cold War', 335–338.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Ulf Brunnbauer, 'Labour emigration from the Yugoslav area from the late 19th century until the end of socialism: Continuities and changes', in: Ulf Brunnbauer (ed.), *Transnational societies, transterritorial politics. Migrations in the (Post-)Yugoslav region, 19th–21st century* (München 2009), 19–45; Vladimir Ivanović, *Geburstag pišeš normalno. Jugoslovenski gastarbajteri u SR Nemačkoj i Austriji, 1965–1973* (Beograd 2012); Nikola Baković, 'Tending the 'oasis of socialism.' Transnational political mobilization of Yugoslav economic emigrants in the FR Germany in the late 1960s and 1970s', *Nationalities Papers* 42:4 (2014) 674–690; Brigitte Le Normand, *Citizens without Borders*.

ideological agenda. Although it involved granting Western private recruiters and employment authorities a degree of operational freedom on Yugoslav territory, it simultaneously enabled the Yugoslav state to increase control over and, to a certain extent, strategically shape workers' recruitments and direction of labour migration flows.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars of international institutions, such as Robert Keohane and Oran Young, conceptualise international institutions as mechanisms designed or accepted by states to constrain state behaviour, shape the expectations of international actors, advance particular national interests, and reduce the uncertainty inherent in international and inter-state interactions. Keohane argues that international institutions play a crucial role in shaping state behaviour by altering the incentive structures that states face in the international arena, even when fundamental interests of these states are autonomously defined.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, international institutions facilitate cooperation by helping states reduce uncertainty and transaction costs, thereby making international interactions more predictable and efficient, and enabling actions that would otherwise be difficult to achieve in the anarchic international system. Young similarly argues that international actors often accept institutional constraints as a strategy to maximise their long-term gains, regardless of their attitudes toward the collective benefits of a particular institutional framework.<sup>15</sup> These actors choose those institutional frameworks that best serve their own welfare, even if doing so involves accepting certain limitations. Therefore, international institutions are not static structures but dynamic outcomes of ongoing strategic interaction, shaped and reshaped through negotiation among actors with varying interests and capabilities. While international institutions influence state behaviour in the global arena, Keohane argues that states' interests and capabilities are primarily shaped by domestic factors, such as national policies and objectives.<sup>16</sup> These factors often exert a stronger influence on state behaviour in the international arena than international institutions, whose impact remains limited in comparison to the more robust structures and strategies of nation-states.

To contextualise the aims, objectives, and actions of the Yugoslav government, this article encompasses the period between 1962 and 1975, when Yugoslavia

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<sup>13</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry: Socialist Yugoslavia's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training', *Labor History* (June 2025) 1–25; Mato Bošnjak, 'Between unemployment and migration: Institutionalised female migration from socialist Yugoslavia, 1963–1973', *Social History* 51:1 (forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *International institutions and state power: Essays in international relations theory* (London and New York 1989), 5–7.

<sup>15</sup> Oran R. Young, 'International regimes: Toward a new theory of institutions', *World Politics* 39:1 (1986) 104–122), 119–121.

<sup>16</sup> Keohane, *International institutions and state power*, 5–7.

implemented an extensive institutionalisation of outward and return labour migration. However, the primary temporal focus is the period between 1965 and 1968, during which Sweden and Yugoslavia engaged in intensive bilateral meetings and negotiations concerning the recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance. The analysis is based on primary written sources retrieved from the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. The sources are produced by Yugoslavia's highest ranking governing bodies, including the Federal Employment Bureau, which was the principal body implementing Yugoslav labour migration from 1966 onwards. Specifically, the analysed sources include internal reports on developments in labour migration, the government's and the president's office's suggestions and directives on response to these developments, and brief reports and letters sent between government departments.<sup>17</sup>

### Yugoslavia's labour migration governance

As Ulf Brunnbauer demonstrated, from the late 1950s on, Yugoslavia commenced a more comprehensive alignment of external migrations with its economic and financial policies, while gradually relaxing its border-control regime, accepting labour migrations, and recognising them as a significant source of foreign currencies.<sup>18</sup> In October 1963, the Yugoslav government institutionalised this approach. It issued an official 'Instruction for employment abroad' (hereafter 'labour migration policy') to all stakeholders regarding the regulation of workers' recruitment for employment abroad. The policy was essentially the government's response to rapidly rising unemployment across much of the country, alongside the population's increasing aspirations and capabilities to seek employment abroad, and Western employers' growing demand for Yugoslav labour. With the policy, the government principally aimed to constrain and limit the migration of qualified and highly qualified workforce, facilitate the temporary migration of unqualified and unemployable labour surpluses, particularly from rural and less developed areas, and economically capitalise on labour migrants' employment in the West.<sup>19</sup> Although Yugoslavia had expanded its engagement with the West over the previous decade, the policy nevertheless marked a distinctive step, making Yugoslavia the only European

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<sup>17</sup> Brief reports and letters sent between government departments quoted in this article often lack a title. Therefore, they are here referred to in English as 'Correspondence' with a document's reference number.

<sup>18</sup> Ulf Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: emigrants, America, and the state since the late nineteenth century* (Lanham 2016) 284–300.

<sup>19</sup> Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Arhiv Predsednika Republike (APR), III-A-1-e, 16, Informacija o Upustvu o zapošljavanju naših radnika u inostranstvu, 29 October – 5 December 1963.

socialist country to institutionalise and support labour migration to the capitalist West.

To ensure that labour migration was implemented in accordance with the policy and to safeguard the needs of the Yugoslav labour market across all occupational categories, the government tasked municipal employment offices with overseeing the recruitment of labour migrants, under the supervision and coordination of republican and federal migration commissions.<sup>20</sup> However, this framework enabled the Yugoslav authorities to exert only partial control over workers' recruitment and cross-border movements. The Yugoslav government and the president's office were continuously informed that labour migration was largely driven by unregulated and loosely regulated mechanisms, such as networks between labour migrants and potential migrants in their area of origin, and often supported by Western employers and private recruiters.<sup>21</sup> Already in June 1964, an internal investigative report was jointly submitted by the Federal Secretariat for Labour, the Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs, the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, and the Council of the Alliance of Trade Unions.<sup>22</sup> The report emphasised an increasing country-wide misalignment of labour migration with the state's policy. It attributed these developments primarily to limited capacities among Yugoslav employment offices, which hindered the effective implementation of labour migration and fostered private recruitment practices. Moreover, the report asserted that a significant proportion of Yugoslav workers were engaged in illegal employment abroad and that even those recruited through formal channels frequently encountered violations of their employment contracts. The report argued that these developments often led to the professional exploitation of workers, relegating them to menial and physically demanding occupations.

Consequently, according to the report, a considerable number of these workers returned to Yugoslavia with occupational injuries and unregulated working rights, thereby placing additional strain on the national welfare system. The Yugoslav authorities, the report argued, lacked the means to enforce accountability among foreign employers and thus were unable to secure reimbursement for the social and health insurance and medical treatment of these individuals. As a solution for these issues, the report suggested the establishment

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<sup>20</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Informacija o Upustvu o zapošljavanju naših radnika u inostranstvu, 29 October – 5 December 1963.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, O problemima privatnog zapošljavanja naših građana u inostranstvu; AJ, Savezno izvršno veće (SIV), 130 F-780, Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Problemi savremene ekonomske migracije.

<sup>22</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-780, Informacija u vezi problema sa zapošljavanjem naših građana u inostranstvu.

of a centralised, nationwide employment office to coordinate and oversee the employment of workers abroad and to ensure the consistent implementation of regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, it recommended a detailed review and amendment of Yugoslavia's existing bilateral conventions on social insurance and the conclusion of conventions on social insurance with West Germany, Austria, and Sweden.

According to minutes from the Yugoslav government's meeting held shortly after the report's submission, the government fully endorsed its findings and arguments.<sup>23</sup> It responded by expanding the institutional and organisational framework governing labour emigration. In 1965, it established the Federal Employment Bureau, which acted both as a facilitator of Yugoslavia's objectives regarding labour migration and as a defender of the labour migration's institutional framework. Among the bureau's primary duties were regulating migration flows, overseeing migrant workers' employment conditions abroad, and negotiating and implementing bilateral recruitment agreements with Western countries.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, starting in 1965 Yugoslavia gradually signed recruitment agreements and amended existing or signed new conventions for social insurance with nearly all Western labour-receiving countries that recruited workers from Yugoslavia.<sup>25</sup> Recruitment agreements expanded the institutional framework governing Yugoslav labour migration by incorporating employment authorities employers of signatory countries through establishment of bilateral recruitment commissions. From the perspective of the Yugoslav government, these agreements were intended to affirm the legitimacy of the institutional framework governing labour migration and to strengthen the Yugoslav state's control over workers' recruitments.<sup>26</sup> The conventions were supposed to ensure that migrant workers' social rights were respected by their host countries and that the costs for their and their dependants' social and health insurance were covered by these host countries.

By institutionalising labour migration on the international level, the Yugoslav government was not only addressing shortages in its institutional framework but also responding to changes in the Yugoslav economy and society and within the

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<sup>23</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-170, Izvod iz zapisnika sa sjednice Saveznog izvršnog veća - u užem sastavu, održane 10. juna 1965.

<sup>24</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini.

<sup>25</sup> Yugoslavia signed labour recruitment agreements with France in 1965, Austria and Sweden in 1966, West Germany in 1968, and the Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, and Luxemburg in 1970. Yugoslavia also signed conventions on social insurance with these countries and with countries that recruited Yugoslav labour but did not sign a recruitment agreement with Yugoslavia, such as Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

<sup>26</sup> AJ, Savezni biro za poslove zaposljavanja (SBPZ), 467 F-11 26, O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije.

increasingly complicated landscape of labour emigration. Namely, these efforts coincided with the 1965 economic reform, which sought to modernise the Yugoslav economy and integrate it into the global market, but ultimately had limited success. The reform compelled enterprises to reduce production costs, thereby prompting widespread dismissals and creating a shortage of new employment opportunities. At the same time, Yugoslav society experienced a sharp rise in the economically active population as post-war baby boomers reached working age and placed additional pressure on the labour market. Parallel to this demographic shift, accelerated industrialisation and modernisation, initiated in the 1950s and intensified by the 1965 reform, generated a substantial movement of labour from rural to urban areas, seeking employment in industrial sectors with decreasing employment capacities. Simultaneously, the reform deepened Yugoslavia's integration into international economic markets, heightening the country's exposure to Western influences.<sup>27</sup> Taken together, these pressures accelerated outward labour migration and compelled the government to develop institutional tools and mechanisms capable of responding to these emerging challenges.

Coincidentally with institutionalisation of labour migration, the Yugoslav government embarked on utilisation of migrations' economic potentials. Internal reports filed from 1962 onwards clearly illustrate the Yugoslav government's perception of labour migrants as a valuable source of foreign currencies. For instance, comprehensive reports from the government's Committee for Foreign Economic Affairs and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs filed in November 1962 devoted considerable attention to remittances, various means of generating foreign currencies through external migrations, and to institutional regulation as a means of maximising and controlling migrants' financial savings and transfers.<sup>28</sup> The report from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs suggested also a policy for sending workers abroad and regulating the status of those who emigrated through unregulated means.<sup>29</sup> The suggestion contained 10 clauses, the first of which stipulated that those applying for work abroad must commit to paying Yugoslav taxes, sending foreign currencies through the Yugoslav National bank to support their families in Yugoslavia, and paying social and health insurance in foreign currencies if they apply for work in a country that did not sign a convention on social insurance with Yugoslavia. The report suggested

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<sup>27</sup> Carl-Ulrik Schierup, *Migration, socialism and the international division of labour: the Yugoslavian experience* (Aldershot 1990) 72-84.

<sup>28</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Status i mogući devizni priliv od naše radne snage u inostranstvu; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, Naši radnici u inostranstvu i razni aspekti ovog problema.

<sup>29</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Naši radnici u inostranstvu i razni aspekti ovog problema.

the same commitments for those already working abroad who wished to regulate their status. The government integrated the main principles of these clauses into the state's labour migration policy in 1963, thereby merging its quest for foreign currencies with its employment and social welfare policies and its aim to control and shape labour migration.

The Yugoslav government's persistent endeavour to extract foreign currencies from labour emigration was mainly attributed to its chronic and perpetual deficit in foreign currency and payment exchange.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, remittances increasingly functioned as a substitute for underfunded public welfare and local-level development, and for creating employment opportunities in Yugoslavia. Throughout the years following the implementation of labour migration policy, the Yugoslav government developed a web of social and economic mechanisms to direct labour migrants' and previous emigrants' remittances, consumption, and investments towards Yugoslavia. These mechanisms encompassed a range of more or less effective measures implemented in Yugoslavia and abroad, including motivating labour migrants to increase their consumption in Yugoslavia by offering discounts on certain products if purchased in foreign currencies; motivating them to place their savings in foreign currencies in Yugoslav banks, purchase shares in Yugoslav factories; and mobilizing their capital for the development of Yugoslavia's infrastructure, welfare facilities, and establishment of new factories.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, as early as March 1962, the Yugoslav government identified cooperation with Western countries on labour migration as an instrument of advancing Yugoslavia's broader economic and industrial engagement with the West. Due to Yugoslavia's officially neutral position in the Cold War political and economic division, the government initially considered labour migration to Austria as a means of facilitating broader economic cooperation between the two countries.<sup>32</sup> Namely, Austria was also neutral to both the Western and Eastern blocs and early interested in the Yugoslav workforce and the bilateral regulation of its recruitment. As the labour migration progressed, the Yugoslav government expanded this expectation to other Western countries, aiming to attract their

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<sup>30</sup> Ivan Obadić, 'A troubled relationship: Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community in détente', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 21:2 (2014), 329-348, 335-336.

<sup>31</sup> For an outline of these and similar measures see Ivanović, *Geburstag pišeš normalno*, 267-296.

<sup>32</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Izvod iz informacije o zapošljavanju jugoslovenskih državljana u inostranstvu.

investments in Yugoslavia and expand the operations of Yugoslav enterprises in the West.<sup>33</sup>

## Sweden as a political and economic partner

The analysed sources show that attracting Swedish capital to Yugoslavia and economic cooperation between the two countries was one of the Yugoslav government's main objectives for pursuing good bilateral relations with Sweden. Domestically, it aimed to purchase Swedish-produced electric locomotives, sell Yugoslav semi-finished products to Sweden, and ensure Sweden's cooperation and financial support in constructing a nuclear power plant in Yugoslavia.<sup>34</sup> After a destructive earthquake in the Republic of Macedonia in 1963, Sweden financed the construction of several apartment buildings and, together with Norway, the construction of a new hospital. The analysed sources suggest that the Yugoslav government anticipated further Swedish support for Yugoslavia's development and modernisation.

The Yugoslav government considered Sweden's support to Yugoslavia likewise important and useful internationally. Sweden's rather unique position as officially neutral towards both the Western and Eastern blocs and unburdened by the legacies of the Second World War made it suitable for deeper relations with socialist and authoritarian Yugoslavia. Moreover, Sweden's inclusive foreign policies promoted international solidarity and openness to cooperation across the Cold War-divided hemispheres.<sup>35</sup> The Swedish–Yugoslav relations and cooperation should, therefore, also be understood within a wider Scandinavian diplomatic and economic landscape, as Sweden's cooperation with Yugoslavia formed part of a broader wave of Scandinavian engagement with Eastern Europe and the global South. At the same time, Sweden was a capitalist country and a member of Western trade associations and financial institutions with which Yugoslavia sought stable relationships. As Aryo Makko points out, Sweden was economically, culturally, and ideologically part of the West.<sup>36</sup> As mentioned above, expanding cooperation with the West was one of the main objectives of the Yugoslav foreign economic and labour migration policy, making Sweden a suitable partner.

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<sup>33</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Zaključci saveznog izvršnog veća o nekim elementima politike zapošljavanja u inostranstvu.

<sup>34</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 46359; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 433266.

<sup>35</sup> Ulf Bjereld, 'Critic or mediator? Sweden in world politics, 1945–90', *Journal of Peace Research* 32:1 (1995) 23-35, 32-34.

<sup>36</sup> Aryo Makko, 'Sweden, Europe, and the Cold War: a reappraisal', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 14:2 (2012), 68–97, 76.

The correspondence between Yugoslav government departments demonstrates that officials regarded Sweden as occupying a significant position in Scandinavia, with sufficient influence and enough diplomatic weight to facilitate Yugoslavia's efforts to improve relations with other Scandinavian countries.<sup>37</sup> Yugoslavia arguably needed to enhance its position among Scandinavian countries to facilitate its trade within Europe and globally by becoming a signatory country of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Although trade with countries within the European Economic Community and the socialist Council for Mutual Economic Assistance constituted the largest share of Yugoslavia's foreign trade, its non-alignment, and thereby sensitive international position, required the Yugoslav government to diversify its foreign trade.<sup>38</sup> To this end, it pursued firmer economic cooperation on several fronts, from capitalist to socialist countries and from the Global North to the Global South and East. From 1951, Yugoslavia pursued accession to the GATT of which all Scandinavian countries were members, and from 1960, it sought association with the EFTA, of which Sweden, Denmark, and Norway were members and Finland was a close associate. The correspondence within the Yugoslav government shows that it perceived Sweden as influential in both associations and capable of fostering Yugoslavia's membership. The correspondence following the visit of the Swedish Minister of Industry and Trade Gunnar Lange to Yugoslavia in April 1965 clearly illustrates its strategic approach to Sweden. During the visit, the Swedish Minister invited the Yugoslav Secretary of Trade to visit Sweden. The Yugoslav Secretary of Trade and the government agreed that the invitation should be 'principally accepted and used at the most useful moment because of Sweden's position in the EFTA and GATT'.<sup>39</sup>

Yugoslavia's efforts to associate with the EFTA and accede to the GATT progressed slowly, encountering a range of economic, political, and ideological obstacles. Existing research suggests that these barriers were largely shaped by Cold War divisions, Yugoslavia's non-aligned status and classification as a socialist state, as well as by its relatively low level of economic and industrial development. Additionally, Yugoslavia's export-oriented agricultural sector was perceived as a potential threat to the agricultural export interests of certain EFTA member states, including the Scandinavian countries.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, in 1966,

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<sup>37</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 433266; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 872.

<sup>38</sup> Obadić, 'A Troubled Relationship', 332–334.

<sup>39</sup> All translations are by the author. AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 872.

<sup>40</sup> Mathew Broad, 'Deepening ties but unfulfilled hopes: the EFTA dimension of Western Europe's relations with Tito's Yugoslavia', *The International History Review* 44:3 (2022) 595-612, 597-599, 609; Francis

Yugoslavia became a signatory country of the GATT and simultaneously increased its cooperation with the EFTA. The analysed sources do not show whether Sweden facilitated Yugoslavia's integration into either association. Rather, the comprehensive economic reform implemented by Yugoslavia in 1965 was likely more decisive than lobbying EFTA and GATT members. As mentioned above, the reform contributed Yugoslavia's deeper integration into global markets through measures that further internationalised the Yugoslav economy. It further liberalised and decentralised Yugoslavia's economy, promoted market-oriented capitalist operations, facilitated imports, and private foreign investments, and implemented.

Nevertheless, correspondence between government departments shows that the Yugoslav government had solid reasons to expect Sweden's support within Scandinavia and among members of the EFTA and GATT. According to reports from the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs to the government, Sweden had successfully mediated President Tito's visit to Finland in 1964, and in 1965, two Swedish high-ranking officials promised full support to Yugoslavia's foreign relations.<sup>41</sup> In April 1965, Swedish Minister of Internal Affairs Rune Johansson visited Yugoslavia, and during the final meeting in the Swedish embassy, the Yugoslav delegation asked Johansson for Sweden's support in facilitating Tito's planned visit to Norway. According to the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs report, the Swedish minister 'promised Yugoslavia full support, wherever needed'.<sup>42</sup> In November 1965, the same secretary reported that during a visit to Yugoslavia, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Torsten Nilsson 'promised Yugoslavia full support in solving the issues with the EFTA'.<sup>43</sup>

## The recruitment agreement

According to the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Minister Johansson's visit in 1965 was not initially linked to the recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance or Yugoslavia's foreign affairs. The Yugoslav government invited Johansson to discuss possibilities for bilateral cooperation within the welfare system and public construction; accordingly, Johansson's

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McKenzie, 'GATT and the Cold War: Accession debates, institutional development, and the Western alliance, 1947–1959', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10:3 (2008) 78–109, 104.

<sup>41</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Boravak ministra unutrašnjih poslova Švedske G. Runea Johanssona i delegacije u Jugoslaviji od 22. do 28. III 1965.

<sup>42</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Boravak ministra unutrašnjih poslova Švedske G. Runea Johanssona i delegacije u Jugoslaviji od 22. do 28. III 1965.

<sup>43</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Correspondence Nr. 438626.

delegation was comprised of urban planners and construction experts.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, at the final meeting in the Swedish embassy, Yugoslav Secretary of Labour Risto Džunov suggested to Johansson a recruitment agreement between Yugoslavia and Sweden, in the same vein as the agreement Yugoslavia signed with France, and the ratification of a bilateral convention on social insurance. According to a report by Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Johansson was receptive to the initiative, noting that 'Swedish employers are very satisfied with workers from Yugoslavia', and suggested that a copy of the Yugoslav-French agreement be sent to his Ministry for assessment.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Johansson invited the Yugoslav secretary of health and social politics Dragutin Kosovac to visit Sweden and continue discussions. The Yugoslav government interpreted Johansson's invitation as a sign of Sweden's openness to formalising labour migration cooperation and - against the government's travelling schedule - appointed Kosovac to visit Johansson and continue discussions.<sup>46</sup>

Minister of Foreign Affairs Torsten Nilsson accompanied by a Swedish delegation visited Yugoslavia between 22 and 30 October 1965, six months after initial discussions of the recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance. The Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs described the meeting as 'a sign of increasing Swedish interest in cooperation with Yugoslavia and as a meeting aligned with our efforts to further develop bilateral relations with Scandinavian countries'.<sup>47</sup> The Yugoslav government expected to continue discussing the recruitment agreement and convention on social insurance, but it also aimed to discuss bilateral trade, the purchase of Swedish electrical locomotives, and Swedish financial input into constructing a nuclear power plant in Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup> Evidently, the Swedish delegation was mainly interested in the recruitment agreement. Namely, within the Swedish delegation was a representative of the Swedish public employment office who, according to the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, came to Belgrade only to discuss the agreement.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, according to a report by the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Minister Nilsson proposed to Yugoslavia's highest officials the establishment of a specialised office as an effective means of organising the

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<sup>44</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 42483; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Boravak ministra unutrašnjih poslova Švedske G. Runea Johanssona i delegacije u Jugoslaviji od 22. do 28. III 1965.

<sup>45</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 42483; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 415854.

<sup>46</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 415854.

<sup>47</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence, Nr. 438626.

<sup>48</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Correspondence Nr. 433266.

<sup>49</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Correspondence Nr. 440541.

recruitment and migration of Yugoslav workers to Sweden.<sup>50</sup> Nilsson met with Yugoslavia's Vice President, the President of the Federal Parliament, and several federal ministers. Their meeting also addressed broader European and global political issues, including the Vietnam War and the nuclear arms race, but even Yugoslavia's membership in the EFTA. Namely, the report states that it was on this meeting that Nilsson promised Yugoslavia Sweden's full support in resolving issues with the EFTA.<sup>51</sup> The report does not mention discussions on Swedish financial support for constructing a nuclear power plant in Yugoslavia, which was one of the governments objectives in these meetings, but notes that the Swedish delegation avoided discussing Yugoslavia's purchase of Swedish electric locomotives.

Aside from the abovementioned report, there is no further mention of a 'recruitment office' in the analysed sources. However, Denis Frank's study of Swedish sources reveals that the Swedish National Employment Board established an 'informational office' in Swedish embassy in Belgrade on 9 November 1965. Initially, the office provided potential labour migrants with information on employment opportunities in Sweden and Swedish immigration regulations.<sup>52</sup> Following the implementation of the Swedish-Yugoslav recruitment agreement, the office mediated between Swedish employers seeking workers in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau. The establishment of the office less than two weeks after Nilsson's visit to Yugoslavia suggests that Nilsson presented Yugoslav officials with more than a mere proposal, and that their meeting involved a more substantive discussion regarding the future of bilateral labour migration cooperation.

Yugoslavia and Sweden signed the recruitment agreement on 16 September 1966. The analysed sources indicate that negotiations were effortless and straightforward. Between 14 and 21 November 1965, the Yugoslav delegation, led by the Secretary of Health and Social Affairs Dragutin Kosovac, visited Sweden for preliminary discussions of the recruitment agreement and convention on social insurance.<sup>53</sup> After two negotiation meetings, in March and June 1966,

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<sup>50</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Correspondence Nr. 438626.

<sup>51</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Correspondence Nr. 438626.

<sup>52</sup> Frank, *Staten, företagen och arbetskraftsinvandringen*, 83, 123. Recent research shows that the Swedish National Employment Board's office in Belgrade even assisted the Norwegian Directorate of Labour in successfully recruiting nurses from Yugoslavia, suggesting that the office's activities occasionally extended beyond its primary mandate of mediating between Swedish employers and the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau recruitment to Sweden and could intersect even with wider Scandinavian labour-market actors. See Marina Durović-Andić, 'De jugoslaviske helsearbeiderne i Norge 1967–1990: En historie nedenfra', *Arbeiderhistorie* 38:1 (2024), 132–149, 137.

<sup>53</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Rešenje o putovanju jugoslovenske delegacije u Švedsku.

the Swedish and Yugoslav delegations agreed on the recruitment agreement's content. However, the question of the convention on social insurance was not addressed during the negotiations and, thus, remained open.<sup>54</sup>

The recruitment agreement regulated the fundamental procedures for the recruitment and transfer of Yugoslav workers to Sweden, delineated the roles and authority of the Swedish and Yugoslav employment authorities, and mandated that Sweden provide Yugoslav workers with the same labour rights as Swedish citizens.<sup>55</sup> Specifically, the agreed upon recruitment procedure stipulated that the Swedish National Labour Market Board, through its office in Belgrade, would provide the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau with employment offers from Swedish employers. The Yugoslav employment offices would then select workers according to the requirements of Swedish employers and organise their medical examinations. Thereafter, a joint Yugoslav-Swedish commission would verify whether the workers met the health and professional requirements and make the final decision on their recruitment. Although this institutional framework had considerable potential to constrain the actions of the Yugoslav state within its own territory, the underlying interest it served was rooted in Yugoslavia's priorities - to increase control over labour migration currents and oblige Western countries, in this case Sweden, to respect Yugoslavia's institutional frameworks.

Moreover, Yugoslav negotiators have successfully incorporated into the recruitment agreement clauses that supported the Yugoslav state's objectives of aligning workers' recruitments with the state's labour migration policy and economically utilising labour migration. For instance, the agreement stipulated that recruited workers could receive pre-departure training in Yugoslavia.<sup>56</sup> In that case, Sweden would cover the costs for teachers, teaching materials, lodging, and workers' nutrition during the training. The Yugoslav government integrated a clause on pre-departure training in most bilateral labour-recruitment agreements it signed with Western states.<sup>57</sup> It subsequently strived to establish pre-departure training paid by Western states and their employers as a regular platform for

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<sup>54</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Correspondence Nr. 430507.

<sup>55</sup> AJ, K-III-1328, Sporazum između Vlada Kraljevine Švedske i Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije o zapošljavanju jugoslavenskih radnika u Švedskoj.

<sup>56</sup> AJ, K-III-1328, Sporazum između Vlada Kraljevine Švedske i Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije o zapošljavanju jugoslavenskih radnika u Švedskoj.

<sup>57</sup> According to a report from the Federal Employment Bureau, most recruitment agreements that Yugoslavia signed with Western countries included similar clauses. The only exception was the recruitment agreement with Austria. AJ, SBPZ, 467 F-11-31, Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslavenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama – analiza -.

training unskilled workers and sending them abroad.<sup>58</sup> As a result, recruitment agreements potentially enabled Yugoslavia to capitalise on workers' preparation for emigration and departure from Yugoslavia. The emphasis on pre-departure training also reflected concerns articulated in the abovementioned comprehensive report from June 1964, which argued that most labour migrants were employed in unskilled, menial, and physically demanding jobs and often returned to Yugoslavia with occupational injuries, thereby placing pressure on the Yugoslav health-care system.<sup>59</sup> The Yugoslav government anticipated that workers who received pre-departure training would, by contrast, be employed abroad as skilled workers and would thus be less prone to workplace injuries. It also expected that skilled workers would earn higher wages and remit greater amounts of foreign currencies to Yugoslavia.<sup>60</sup>

More tangibly and evidently, Yugoslav negotiators incorporated a clause in the recruitment agreement that obliged Sweden to allow Yugoslav workers to transfer their financial capital to Yugoslavia.<sup>61</sup> The clause is formulated so broadly that it obligated Sweden to enable all Yugoslav citizens employed in Sweden to transfer money to Yugoslavia, not only to those workers who were recruited through the framework of the recruitment agreement. According to a report by the Federal Employment Bureau from 1971, labour recruitment agreements with other countries also included such a clause. The Bureau underlined that the money transfer between Western signatory countries and Yugoslavia occurred without any limitations.<sup>62</sup> The Bureau's only concern was that the clauses stipulated that money transfers must comply with the regulations of Western countries, fearing that it could cause problems if those countries changed their regulations in a manner unfavourable for Yugoslav workers. As completely unrelated to labour recruitment and workers' rights and, thus, poorly integrated with the rest of the agreement, the clause stipulating the transfer of workers' money highlights the Yugoslav government's intention to utilise bilateral labour recruitment agreements to intensify the inflow of foreign currencies into Yugoslav banks.

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<sup>58</sup> Mato Bošnjak, 'Building the migration industry: socialist Yugoslavia's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training', *Labor History* (2025) 1–25.

<sup>59</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-780, Informacija u vezi problema sa zapošljavanjem naših građana u inostranstvu.

<sup>60</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini; AJ, SBPZ, 467, F-11-26, O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije; AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Informacija o zapošljavanju u zemlji i inostranstvu.

<sup>61</sup> AJ, K-III-1328, Sporazum između Vlada Kraljevine Švedske i Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije o zapošljavanju jugoslavenskih radnika u Švedskoj.

<sup>62</sup> AJ, SBPZ, 467, F-11-31, Sprovođenje međudržavnih sporazuma o regulisanju zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih radnika u pojedinim zemljama - analiza -.

Following the ratification of the recruitment agreement and the establishment of migration corridors, migration from Yugoslavia to Sweden grew rapidly, peaking at the turn of the decade, when, according to Ivo Baučić, Sweden hosted approximately 22 500 Yugoslav labour migrants.<sup>63</sup> However, as previously mentioned, Yugoslav labour migration was largely driven beyond institutional frameworks, and labour migration to Sweden was no exception. According to data from the Federal Employment Bureau, until 1973, when Western countries restricted labour recruitments abroad due to the oil shock and subsequent economic downturn, Yugoslav employment offices mediated employment in Sweden for 3,670 individuals.<sup>64</sup>

### Convention on social insurance

As discussed above, since the early 1960s, the Yugoslav government had developed various mechanisms to capitalise on the financial aspects of labour emigration. However, most mechanisms were either unreliable, inconsistent, or in need of constant ingenuity and manoeuvring from Yugoslav banks, governmental bodies, and the propaganda apparatus. By contrast, conventions on social insurance had the potential to generate foreign currencies for Yugoslav banks consistently and without significant effort from the Yugoslav side. Namely, as envisioned by the Yugoslav government, conventions would oblige signatory countries to pay social welfare on a regular basis and for an extended period to Yugoslav migrant workers and their dependants in Yugoslavia, even upon workers' temporary or permanent return to Yugoslavia. Yugoslav banks would receive these payments in foreign currencies and disburse them to insured individuals in Yugoslav dinars. Therefore, as the Yugoslav government's report from 1969 shows, the government regarded conventions on social insurance as one of the most important sources of foreign currencies.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, unlike recruitment agreements, which were limited to regulating labour recruitment and employment abroad, conventions applied to all employed and previously employed citizens and their dependants, regardless of their migration passage. Conventions also addressed a broader range of issues, such as social welfare, pensions, and healthcare insurance, thereby extending state responsibilities beyond mere recruitment and employment conditions.

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<sup>63</sup> Ivo Baučić, 'Osnovna strukturna obilježja jugoslavenskih radnika u inozemstvu', *Acta Geographica Croatica* 12:1 (1973) 35–88, 38

<sup>64</sup> AJ, PS-III 271, Pregled o zapošljavanju u inostranstvu. 1973.

<sup>65</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini.

The Yugoslav government proposed a convention on social insurance to Sweden as early as 1963, but according to the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Sweden was uninterested due to the relatively small immigration rate from Yugoslavia.<sup>66</sup> This attitude was not unique to Sweden, and the Yugoslav government was early informed that labour-receiving countries were reluctant to burden their welfare systems with bilateral conventions.<sup>67</sup> Because immigration from the West to Yugoslavia was comparably negligible, these conventions primarily benefited Yugoslav citizens abroad and, by extension, favoured Yugoslavia's financial interests and welfare system. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the analysed sources indicate the Swedish government's indifference towards the convention. As previously mentioned, the Yugoslav government submitted the convention's initial draft along with the recruitment agreement's draft in November 1965. The Swedish government almost entirely rejected the convention's draft and responded with its own version nearly two years later, in early October 1967. Shortly thereafter, Swedish Minister of Social Affairs Sven Aspling visited Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government intended to discuss the convention during this meeting, but the Swedish delegation avoided the discussion and requested written objections to the Swedish draft.<sup>68</sup> According to the Yugoslav Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Yugoslavia submitted written objections, largely rejecting the Swedish draft, but never received an official response from the Swedish side.<sup>69</sup> Instead, negotiations resumed in Sweden between 24 and 29 April 1968.<sup>70</sup> On 5 June 1968, the two countries finally signed the convention, which was primarily based on the Swedish draft.

Most discrepancies between the Swedish and Yugoslav drafts arose from the Yugoslav government's attempt to make the convention lucrative for Yugoslavia and aligned with the state's policy as well as prevailing patterns and trends in labour migration. For instance, the Yugoslav draft stipulated that the signatory country providing employment would pay for the social and health insurance of workers' dependents, regardless of their country of residence.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, the

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<sup>66</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ.

<sup>67</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-e, 16, Naši radnici u inostranstvu i razni aspekti ovog problema.

<sup>68</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Prijedlog za zaključenje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između SFRJ i Švedske.

<sup>69</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Primedbe na Švedski preliminarni nacrt jugoslovensko-švedske konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

<sup>70</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Correspondence Nr. 413121; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Izvještaj o pregovorima vođenim između jugoslovenske i švedske delegacije radi zaključenja konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

<sup>71</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Izvještaj o pregovorima vođenim između jugoslovenske i švedske delegacije radi zaključenja konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

draft required signatory countries to pay child allowances irrespective of the children's country of residence. Furthermore, prior to final negotiations, the Yugoslav government instructed its negotiators to minimise the number of working years required to qualify for a pension.<sup>72</sup> These clauses and the government's instruction reflected both Yugoslavia's labour emigration policy of temporary labour emigration and the general perception among Yugoslav labour migrants that their emigration was indeed temporary, which convinced many to leave their children and spouses in Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, the Yugoslav draft stipulated that health insurance is also provided for workers and their dependents who temporarily return to their country of origin.<sup>73</sup> This clause was aligned with the trends and patterns of Yugoslav labour migrants' movement from and to Yugoslavia, as labour migrants and their dependents regularly returned to Yugoslavia during holidays or migrated circularly. Meanwhile, the Yugoslav government was less willing to cover health treatment costs for their eventual sickness and injuries on Yugoslav soil. Similarly, it sought to avoid costs for the health treatment and hospitalisation of Swedish tourists during their visits to Yugoslavia and instructed its negotiators to embed such a clause in the convention.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the Yugoslav draft prescribed that citizens of signatory countries with professional injuries could return to their country of origin and receive hospitalisation and health treatment at the expense of the country that provided employment. In cases of permanent professional injury or death, the Yugoslav draft stipulated that family members would receive compensation and the worker's pension, regardless of their country of residence. According to the report from the Yugoslav Federal Council of Labour, Swedish negotiators rejected the Yugoslav draft because they opposed the provision of social and health insurance benefits to individuals residing in Yugoslavia.<sup>75</sup>

The Yugoslav government's push for specific and lucrative provisions in the convention was underpinned by detailed financial forecasts about foreign currency inflows. The Yugoslav Secretary of Labour calculated an estimate based on the approximately 15,000 Yugoslav citizens working in Sweden in early 1968.

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<sup>72</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ.

<sup>73</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ; AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Izvještaj o pregovorima vođenim između jugoslovenske i švedske delegacije radi zaključenja konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

<sup>74</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Informacija u vezi sa pregovorima za sklapanje konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju između kraljevine Švedske i SFRJ.

<sup>75</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Izvještaj o pregovorima vođenim između jugoslovenske i švedske delegacije radi zaključenja konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

In a document titled 'The Financial Aspect Expected from the Conclusion of the Social Convention between Yugoslavia and Sweden', the Ministry reported to the government that the Yugoslav version of the convention would annually channel foreign currencies equivalent to approximately 19 million Yugoslav dinars to Yugoslav banks.<sup>76</sup> More precisely, the Secretary reported that foreign currencies equivalent to 8 million dinars would be transferred to Yugoslav banks for the social and health insurance payments of approximately 10,000 labour migrants' family members living in Yugoslavia; in addition, foreign currencies equivalent to 11 million dinars would be allocated for child allowances for approximately 5,000 labour migrants' children still residing in Yugoslavia. The largest inflow of foreign currencies would be generated by workers' pensions. However, as the report concluded, Yugoslav workers in Sweden were predominantly young, so Yugoslavia could not expect an immediate profit from this source.

Under similar principles of maximising long-term financial gains, the Yugoslav government pursued conventions with other countries or sought to redefine conventions signed before the implementation of the labour emigration policy in 1963.<sup>77</sup> For instance, the report from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs regarding the revision of the convention with France states that negotiations involved social insurance for migrant workers' dependants in Yugoslavia, including payment of child allowance and even a monthly allowance to male migrant workers' wives living in Yugoslavia.<sup>78</sup>

The provision of child allowances for the children of migrant workers residing in Yugoslavia was among the Yugoslav government's primary concerns. While discussing the inconsistent implementation of workers' recruitments by municipal employment offices, the government specifically emphasised issues related to child allowance. Citing France as an example - which accepted to pay child allowance to children of Yugoslav workers residing in Yugoslavia - the government urged Yugoslav employment authorities to adhere more rigorously to interstate administrative procedures. It noted that 'only 900 of potentially 19 000 workers receives child allowance' calculating that 'approximately 1,5 million French francs monthly is not withdrawn from France'.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the government highlighted the West German-Yugoslav convention on social

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<sup>76</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-631, Finansijski aspekt koji bi se mogao očekivati sklapanjem konvencije o socijalnm osiguranju između SFRJ i Švedske.

<sup>77</sup> AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Correspondence Nr. 433898; AJ, SIV, 130, F-780, Zaposlenost, zapošljavanje i aktivnost službe za zapošljavanje u 1965. godini.

<sup>78</sup> AJ, SIV, 130 F-631, Correspondence Nr. 433898.

<sup>79</sup> AJ, SBPZ, 467 F-11-26, O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima spoljne migracije.

insurance as one of the most significant sources of foreign currency for Yugoslavia as West Germany also agreed to pay child allowance for migrant workers' children residing in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government calculated that Yugoslav workers would annually receive 'approximately 30 million West German marks for child allowance alone, which would be partly and regularly transferred into Yugoslav banks following the ratification of the convention by West Germany'.<sup>80</sup>

Child allowances and health insurance of workers' dependants residing in Yugoslavia were the principal reasons why the Yugoslav government did not consider the convention with Sweden to be a concluded matter. According to the Federal Committee for Labour and Employment, the Yugoslav government proposed to the Swedish authorities in 1973 that negotiations be renewed; however, it was not until September 1975 that Swedish and Yugoslav negotiators met again.<sup>81</sup> In a report on negotiations, the Committee emphasised that the Swedish-Yugoslav convention was the most unfavourable for Yugoslavia; further, it highlighted the Yugoslav delegation's efforts to persuade their Swedish counterparts to modify the convention to require Sweden to cover child allowance for Yugoslav workers' children and health insurance for all their dependants living in Yugoslavia.<sup>82</sup> According to the report, Yugoslav negotiators were unable to persuade their Swedish counterparts who, as in previous negotiations, refused the provision of social and health insurance to individuals residing in Yugoslavia.

## Conclusion

Studies on states' involvement in international labour migrations have predominantly focused on the agencies of labour-receiving states and the socioeconomic forces within those states that induced, drove, and shaped labour migrations. This focus is particularly characteristic of studies on labour migrations to developed countries during the immediate post-Second World War decades because a broader access to data and archival sources in those countries enabled scholars to embark early on studying the structural forces that attracted labour immigration. In contrast, this article has focused on the agency of socialist Yugoslavia, one of the main labour-sending countries during the post-Second

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<sup>80</sup> AJ, APR, III-A-1-c, 16, Informacija o kretanju zaposlenosti u 1969. godini.

<sup>81</sup> AJ, Savezna konferencija socijalističkog radnog naroda Jugoslavije (SKSRNJ), 142, I-698, Izvještaj o pregovorima delegacija SFRJ i Kraljevine Švedske o izmenama i dopunama Konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

<sup>82</sup> AJ, SKSRNJ, 142, I-698, Izvještaj o pregovorima delegacija SFRJ i Kraljevine Švedske o izmenama i dopunama Konvencije o socijalnom osiguranju.

World War decades. Drawing on sources produced by Yugoslavia's highest-ranking governmental bodies, the article has examined Yugoslavia's principal motivations surrounding its efforts to regulate labour migration to Sweden through the labour recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance.

Previous research on the institutional frameworks of Yugoslav labour migration has focused primarily on labour migration to West Germany, West German-Yugoslav relations, and the related political, economic, and ideological issues. The regulation of Yugoslav labour migration to other Western countries has been addressed only in general terms, leaving the impression that these processes were not burdened by the state's diverse interests and foreign policies but were exclusively conditioned by the conditions in the Yugoslav and Western labour markets. Similarly, research on Yugoslav labour migration to Sweden has overlooked Sweden's and Yugoslavia's bilateral relations during the 1960s and Yugoslavia's agency in the construction of the framework regulating labour migration to Sweden and migrant workers' social and working rights. Consequently, such oversight implied that Swedish employment authorities, employers, and trade unions played an exclusive role in these processes. In contrast, this article has shown that the Yugoslav government played a constitutive role in the institutionalisation of Yugoslav labour migration to Sweden. The government's efforts to institutionalise labour migration to Sweden coincided with its wider diplomatic strategy in which Sweden served as an important avenue for advancing Yugoslavia's foreign economic objectives, including its aspirations for improved relations with other Scandinavian countries and closer ties with the EFTA and GATT. This strategic approach aligns with Keohane's and Young's view that, despite multifaceted constraints international institutions impose on the states, such institutions are not neutral arenas but mechanisms that shape state's expectations and enable them to advance their specific interests.<sup>83</sup>

Recent research has demonstrated that the integration of labour migration into broader economic and geopolitical strategies was a common practice among Western countries during the most intense decades of the Cold War. The findings presented in this article highlight the Yugoslav government's pragmatic approach to navigating contemporary geopolitical complexities, and show that even for labour-sending states, regulating labour migration was not merely an administrative instrument but processes embedded within broader political and

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<sup>83</sup> Keohane, *International institutions and state power*, 5–7; Young, 'International regimes', 119-121.

economic strategies. Moreover, the Yugoslav government's pursuit of bilaterally institutionalised labour migration with Sweden was driven as much by domestic policy priorities as by broader geopolitical considerations, illustrating the interplay between domestic institutional structures and international institutional engagement emphasised by Keohane.<sup>84</sup> Namely, the Yugoslav government aimed to profit from the bilateral regulation of labour migration to Sweden by crafting the recruitment agreement and the convention on social insurance into platforms for a steady and continuous inflow of foreign currencies and for safeguarding domestic social welfare and healthcare systems. Although this attempt was of limited success, it highlights the Yugoslav government's effort to align the institutional framework governing labour migration with the state's economic and financial policies.

However, the Yugoslav government's approach should not be interpreted as a relinquishment of labour migrants for the sake of enhanced international trade and state finances. By pursuing bilateral recruitment agreements with Western countries, the Yugoslav government fostered a regulated and institutionally supported migration passage, thereby minimising potential harm to and exploitation of workers. Furthermore, recruitment agreements and the conventions on social insurance guaranteed Yugoslav labour migrants equal treatment by western employers and authorities and created platforms for the Yugoslav state to safeguard labour migrants' social and professional standing.

Further research could show whether, and to what extent, the Yugoslav government understood the bilateral regulation of labour migration to countries other than West Germany as an instrument of foreign policy and a means of positioning itself within the global economy. It could further examine how the successful regulation of Yugoslav labour migration to Sweden shaped Yugoslavia's state agency in managing labour migration to other Scandinavian labour-receiving countries, particularly Norway and Denmark, and how it intersected with Yugoslavia's broader efforts to conclude labour recruitment agreements and conventions on social insurance with other labour-receiving states.

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<sup>84</sup> Keohane, *International institutions and state power*, 5–7.



III



# Building the migration industry: socialist Yugoslavia's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores labour migrants' pre-departure training in socialist Yugoslavia, commenced by the Yugoslav government to further structure and control labour emigration and aligns it with the state's objectives and labour migration policy. Informed by the theory of institutional change, the article utilises primary archival sources produced by Yugoslavia's key stakeholders in labour emigration. It elucidates the Yugoslav government's and broader establishment's attitudes towards pre-departure training, their objectives in implementing pre-departure training, and their efforts to expand and institutionalise it as a regular platform for sending workers abroad. The article argues that the Yugoslav government and broader establishment aimed to establish pre-departure training as a regular platform for sending workers abroad and thus increase the state's profit and control over labour emigration. Furthermore, the article argues that pre-departure training remained limited in scope due to Yugoslavia's reluctance to invest the resources necessary for its organisational development and institutionalisation.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## Introduction

The state's support for labour emigration from socialist Yugoslavia to Western capitalist countries from the 1960s onwards was one of the principal challenges for the Yugoslav communist establishment.<sup>1</sup> The ideological controversy of socialist workers' employment in capitalist countries and labour emigration's rapid galvanisation into a mass movement of workers and their families demanded multiple political manoeuvres, social engineering, and resourceful discourse from the Yugoslav establishment. Like other labour-sending countries, Yugoslavia supported temporary labour emigration primarily to export an unqualified and unemployable workforce and economically capitalise through their remittances and eventual return as qualified and experienced workers in modern production means (Rass, 2012; Steinert, 2014). In a constant effort to achieve these goals and prevent the emigration of a qualified workforce, the Yugoslav establishment designed

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and successively expanded a bulk of institutional, economic, and social mechanisms which operated both domestically and beyond national borders (Baković, 2014, 2015, Bošnjak, *in press*; Ivanović, 2012). Since the late 1960s, in light of further galvanised labour emigration and emerging imbalances in the Yugoslav labour market, the modifications and expansion of these mechanisms increasingly served to further mitigate the emigration of a qualified and highly qualified workforce and to organise the return migration of these groups to Yugoslavia (Bernard, 2019).

Studies have demonstrated Yugoslavia's efforts to control and shape labour migrations from above through migration policies, legal frameworks, and bilateral cooperation with Western labour-receiving countries, demonstrating the evolution of these mechanisms, their ambiguities, and frequent failures to fully serve Yugoslavia's interests (Brunnbauer, 2009; Ivanović, 2012; Novinščak, 2009). Yugoslavia's efforts to influence its citizens abroad have garnered significant scholarly attention, demonstrating its exceptional ability to occupy labour migrants' and their dependants' social and cultural spaces and foster their sense of belonging to Yugoslavia (Baković, 2014, 2015; Ivanović, 2012; LeNormand, 2015; Zimmerman, 1987). Additionally, these efforts guided migrants' economic capital to Yugoslavia through various policies, projects, and state initiatives, operating both abroad and in Yugoslavia (Ivanović, 2012). Yugoslavia's strategies in facilitating selective labour emigration and practices in recruiting and dispatching labour migrants have only recently received scholarly attention. Recent research shows Yugoslavia's employment authorities' adherence to the state's labour migration policy as well as their often limited success in meeting the policy's overarching aims due to persistent failings in institutional and organisational frameworks regulating labour emigration (Bošnjak, *in press*).

This article contributes by examining Yugoslavia's approach to labour migrants' pre-departure training, which was one of the mechanisms advanced by the Yugoslav establishment to control, manage, and shape labour emigration. Pre-departure training was implemented in Yugoslavia between 1966 and 1973 with financial contributions from Western employers and employment authorities under institutional and organisational frameworks of labour recruitment agreements that Yugoslavia signed with several Western labour-receiving countries. The ambition behind pre-departure training and efforts to expand it was primarily driven by the Yugoslav government, the Federal Employment Bureau, and the Alliance of Workers' Unions, with the endorsement of the president's office, while the training's practical organisation was managed by the Federal Employment Bureau in collaboration with municipal employment offices. This article draws upon archived sources produced by these principal stakeholders. It elucidates their vision, ambitions, and objectives regarding pre-departure training and efforts to expand it, and relates those aspects with the Yugoslav state's labour migration policy and management.

This article is informed by institutional theory which aims to explain how institutions are constructed, perpetuated, and changed and how they impact social behaviour, political and economic exchanges, and organizational practices. The analysis in this article primarily utilises conceptual explanations of institutional construction and change, processes induced by states and organisations to increase their capacities or adapt to evolving economic, political, and social conditions (DiMaggio, 1988; North, 1990). Drawing on this theoretical framework, the article advances two arguments. First, the Yugoslav establishment designed, organised and aimed to expand pre-departure training

as a regular platform for sending workers abroad and to coincidentally facilitate its overarching objective of profiting from labour emigration. The notion of profit in this context encompasses immediate financial gains as well as broader economic benefits achieved through reduced unemployment, brain drain, and pressure on the country's welfare system; the increased inflow of remittances; and the enhanced capacity of migrant workers to contribute to Yugoslavia's economy and development. Second, the principal reason for pre-departure training's limited success was the Yugoslav establishment's reluctance to invest the necessary financial resources for its organisational evolution.

Pre-departure training was not a novel approach for selecting eligible individuals and crafting them into suitable labour migrants. According to Harzig (2003) Canada relied on short pre-departure training during the interwar period to recruit and train women from Great Britain for domestic work. It continued to do so during the immediate post-Second World War decades, under the framework of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), an organisation of capitalist countries that mediated migration of European women and men to countries less affected by the war. ICEM's operations also included various pre-departure training programmes, which followed a similar pattern across European countries included in the program (Parsanoglou, 2015). These trainings were essentially designed to benefit both migrants and their host societies by facilitating migrants' integration and aligning their professional skills with the labour market demands of destination countries. According to Limnios-Sekeris (2015), male migrants who migrated to Australia from Greece, Italy, Germany and Spain during the 1950s received pre-departure language courses in English and orientation courses tailored to life and work in Australia. Similarly, Tourgeli and Venturas (2015) show that male migrants heading to Latin America initially received basic vocational and language training, which ICEM gradually expanded to include orientation courses and supplementary language courses in the receiving countries. Studies suggest that female migrants were subject to stringent selection procedures and comprehensive pre-departure training. Women recruited for gender-typical occupations in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand during the 1950s were often required to be unmarried and childless, and their training extended beyond technical preparation. As Limnios-Sekeris (2015) and Papadopoulos and Tourgeli (2023) observe, ICEM's programmes targeting Greek women typically involved pre-departure training in domestic work and the English language, but also extended beyond occupational preparation to include courses on personal hygiene and the social norms of the destination country.

ICEM's operations in Europe have been largely rendered obsolete since the late 1950s by Western Europe's rapid economy, increasing labour migrations from European southern and southeastern periphery to its western industrialised countries and the establishment of bilateral recruitment agreements between labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. These agreements included varying degrees of effective cooperation between the employment authorities of labour-sending and labour-receiving states in selecting physically and professionally eligible labour migrants, transporting them to destination countries and assuring their working and social rights (Rass, 2012). However, pre-departure training and other forms of preparation of labour migrants for work and life in western countries appear to be absent from research on post-Second World War labour migrations.

In recent decades, pre-departure training flourishes in developing countries in Southeast Asia where a cohesion of states' and private interests has shaped the region in one of the world's capitals of industrialised labour migration (Goh et al., 2017; Rodriguez & Schwenken, 2013). Labour-sending and receiving states actively support and regulate pre-departure training through favourable policies, bilateral agreements, and partnerships between public and private organisations (Lan, 2018; Rodriguez & Schwenken, 2013; Yeates, 2009). Trainings are implemented mainly by private recruitment agencies which established themselves as an unavoidable link in migration chains between labour sending and receiving countries (Goh et al., 2017; Liang, 2011; Rodriguez & Schwenken, 2013). Participants in trainings are typically women aspiring to work in feminised occupations in more economically advanced Asian countries or economically advanced Commonwealth and western countries. Drawing on the cases of India and the Philippines, Rodriguez and Schwenken (2013) argue that pre-departure training programmes are primarily designed to produce workers who are employable abroad, compliant, and capable of withstanding challenging working conditions. Rudnycky (2004) highlights how Indonesian women are systematically transformed into skilled and docile, and thus suitable, domestic workers through training and rigorous screening, selection, and continuous evaluation. Liang (2011) argues that recruitment and training techniques are designed and employed to transform Indonesian women into ideal maids, who are not only technically competent but also disciplined, submissive, and docile.

Labour-sending and receiving states are involved in these processes to varying degrees. Lan (2018) shows that the Japanese government actively monitors selection process and pre-departure training of care workers in Indonesia and the Philippines, mandating curricula that include cultural and social competencies for caregiving work with Japanese elders. Rudnycky (2004) and Liang (2011) show that the Indonesian state, together with the states recruiting Indonesian female domestic workers, maintains control and influence over the migration process by enforcing strict medical examinations and mandating basic pre-departure training in domestic skills. According to Handapangoda (2023), the Sri Lankan state has engaged proactively through the implementation of comprehensive pre-departure training and examinations to ensure that female migrants possess the requisite skills for domestic work in economically advanced Arab countries. Furthermore, states have increased their engagement on domestic and international macro-levels. Yeates (2009) have demonstrated the pivotal role of several Asian labour-sending states in shaping emigration flows through collaboration between public and private organisations and reforms in education that promote the emigration of care workers. Rodriguez (2008) suggests that the Philippine state developed a particularly advanced model of care workers' export by employing a sophisticated transnational apparatus to systematically monitor global labour market trends, adapt its education and migration policies accordingly, and actively promote Filipino labour abroad.

This article contributes by elucidating the state's early efforts to develop an industrialised labour migration through the implementation of pre-departure training. It shows the Yugoslav establishment's attempt to transform Yugoslavia into a prototype of 'labour brokerage state' – a state that plays a critical role in selecting, producing, distributing, regulating, and ensuring the quality of exported labour, as Rodriguez (2008) has defined the modern day Philippines. However, unlike previous studies that show states' reliance on private and non-state actors,

this article shows the labour-sending state's effort to solely implement pre-departure training, albeit with financial contribution from its foreign partners. Furthermore, similarly to previous studies, this article indicates the gendered nature of pre-departure training and the jobs for which they prepared migrant workers, but in contrast to most studies, the sources analysed for this article suggest that, in the case of Yugoslavia, it was predominantly men who underwent pre-departure training for male-typical jobs.

This article draws on archived written sources retrieved from several collections in the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.<sup>2</sup> The sources are composed of internal reports and correspondences, policy proposals and policy documents issued by governmental bodies and the office of the president and internal reports and correspondences issued by the Federal Employment Bureau, municipal employment offices, and the Alliance of Workers' Unions.<sup>3</sup> These sources exhibit a common limitation: they present a fragmented perspective on the organisational structure and practical implementation of pre-departure training. Furthermore, they fail to offer a statistical overview of the participants involved in pre-departure training, the educational qualifications they received and the employers who recruited them. Consequently, this article offers only a limited overview of implemented pre-departure trainings. Nevertheless, when combined and meticulously analysed, the sources examined in this article provide a coherent account of the Yugoslav establishment's aims and objectives regarding pre-departure training, and the corresponding initiatives undertaken to realise these aims.

By drawing on sources produced by the highest-ranking governing bodies of the Yugoslav state and key actors within the apparatus governing labour emigration, this article contributes to scholarly efforts to elucidate the involvement and impact of states on post-Second World War labour migrations (Bernard, 2023; Natter, 2014; Novinščak, 2009; Rass, 2012) and expands our understanding of the integration of labour migrations into the employment and economic policies of labour-sending states.

## **Theoretical framework – institutions and institutional change**

Institutional theory seeks to explain how culture, norms, rules, and structures are institutionalised, perpetuated, and changed and how institutions shape social behaviour, political and economic interactions, and organizational practices. Scholars generally agree that institutions are composed of regulative, normative, or cultural-cognitive elements, rules, and constraints. They can emerge from below as common norms or practices and, over time, become institutionalised, or they can be deliberately devised and codified for specific purposes (Keohane, 1989; North, 1990; Scott, 2014). North (1990) highlights the constraining effect of institutions, noting that they encompass norms and rules delineating what is permitted and prohibited. Thereby, institutions structure human interactions, define and limit the set of available choices, and reduce uncertainty. Scott (2014) points out that institutions provide stability and meaning to social life and not only constrain and prohibit but also support and empower actors by providing stimulus, guidelines, and resources for action. These actors include states, organisations, groups, and individuals (North, 1990; Scott, 2014). However, Scott (2014) points out that states hold a privileged position due to their allocated power to exercise authority through legitimate coercion.

Despite their foundational role in maintaining stability, institutions are frequently changed, either gradually or through sudden, transformative shifts. As Scott (2014) argues, the state maintains a key role in initial and further institution building through the construction of new or modifications of existing institutions. However, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) point out that non-state actors actively influence these processes, making them rife with disparate interests, ambiguity, and conflict. According to Suchman (1995), regardless of the actors' affiliation, the impetus for institutional constructions and modifications emerges from the development, recognition, and naming of a recurrent problem to which the existing institutional framework does not provide a satisfactory repertoire of responses. North (1990) argues that actors addressing such problems perceive that they can do better by altering the existing institutional framework at some margin and to increase their chances for success, they gather information and develop the necessary knowledge about the problem.

An influential concept in explaining institutional change is 'institutional entrepreneurship' introduced by DiMaggio (1988) to encompass the intentional and strategic activities of state and non-state actors that lead to the establishment of new forms of institutions. DiMaggio (1988) argues that new forms of institutions arise when organised actors (institutional entrepreneurs) leverage resources to construct new institutions because they perceive them as opportunities to realise their own interests. The concept was further developed by scholars studying various forms of institutional constructions and changes. According to Scott (2014), institutional entrepreneurship is an endeavour of multiple actors and includes the mobilisation of new technologies, the development of new organizational structures, the establishment of supply networks and markets, and the attainment of cognitive, normative, and regulative legitimacy. Fligstein (2001) emphasises that such actors must possess and employ the social skills necessary to persuade others to engage in or support institutional constructions or modifications. Battilana et al. (2009) define as institutional entrepreneurs those actors who actively participate in institutional change they initiate, leverage resources necessary for institutional change to occur, and succeed in creating a change that is divergent from the existing institutional framework. However, as Emmenegger (2021) elaborated, their enterprise is socially embedded and inherently conditioned by the opportunities and constraints of the existing institutional framework.

In the case of socialist Yugoslavia, it is challenging to identify a single or a distinct group of actors inducing and implementing institutional changes to realise their particular interests. Namely, Yugoslavia was a one-party state with a governing structure that, at least officially, but also according to the sources analysed for this article, followed the same policy and shared the same visions and aims. However, such an endeavour is not the aim of this article. The article utilises the theory of institutional change to examine Yugoslavia's efforts to align labour emigration with the state's interests and objectives through institutional modifications aimed at designing a firm institutional framework, recognised by other stakeholders as principal and the most legitimate set of regulations and norms of Yugoslav labour emigration. Furthermore, the theory is employed to analyse and contextualise the Yugoslav establishment's continuous learning about trends and patterns within labour emigration and its responses to developments it classified as detrimental for the Yugoslav state.

Therefore, this article considers the Yugoslav government, with its departments, bodies and affiliated organisations, as the principal architect of modifications within the institutional framework for labour emigration. The most prominent of these institutions, and the most significant for this article, were the state's labour migration policy and labour recruitment agreements that Yugoslavia signed with Western countries. These institutions facilitated Yugoslavia's project of galvanising a selective labour emigration and, at least on paper, guaranteed its acceptance by the actors involved in labour emigration. However, they also constrained it by establishing rules and regulations under which the Yugoslav state was obliged to operate. Furthermore, they stimulated and empowered actors unaffiliated with the Yugoslav state, such as foreign recruiters of Yugoslav labour, whose agency was often beyond Yugoslavia's jurisdiction and control.

Battilana et al. (2009) point out that the process of institutional change is often dependent on the actions and reactions of multiple actors with various interests and resources who can induce institutional change intentionally and strategically, or unintentionally, by simply breaking with institutionalised practices. North (1990) compares institutions to a competitive team sport, where a set of formal and informal rules and enforcement mechanisms define how the game is played. Teams vary in their skills and knowledge of the game, and they exhibit different attitudes towards the rules. Whether compliance with the rules, their violation, or a combination of both is most advantageous depends on the effectiveness of monitoring and enforcement (North, 1990).

The most prominent 'teams' involved in Yugoslav labour emigration, unaffiliated with the Yugoslav state, were foreign employment authorities and employers that recruited Yugoslav labour. Their interests in labour recruitment in Yugoslavia often conflicted with those of the Yugoslav establishment, as they used labour migrations to support their own economic goals. The Yugoslav government established or modified various organisations to enforce the regulatory and normative elements of the institutional framework governing labour emigration and enhance its effectiveness. Among these, the Federal Employment Bureau played a pivotal role, as it participated in the creation of bilateral labour recruitment agreements, facilitated and monitored their implementation, and advocated for their modifications. Alongside municipal and republican employment authorities, the Bureau also acted as a guardian of the institutional framework of labour emigration, upholding Yugoslavia's principles and objectives embedded within it and the state-prescribed practices for its implementation. However, foreign recruiters of Yugoslav labour have persistently challenged or disregarded Yugoslavia's institutional and organisational frameworks governing labour emigration, thereby prompting its change indirectly and unintentionally. Thus, this article employs the theory of institutional change to examine and contextualise two aspects that prominently characterise the analysed sources: the Yugoslav establishment's reasoning regarding failures of the institutional and organisational frameworks governing labour emigration, and its perception of the continual need to modify the framework, enhance its effectiveness, and align it with the interests of the Yugoslav state.

### **Yugoslavia's labour migration governance**

Ulf Brunnbauer (2016) has demonstrated how formative institutional entrepreneurship has characterised Yugoslavia's migration governance in the late 1950s and early 1960s as

it gradually transitioned to a state with a rather liberal border regime, positive attitudes towards migrants deemed non-threatening to socialist Yugoslavia, and emerging objectives to shape and economically utilise cross-border movements. As mentioned in the article's introduction, the Yugoslav establishment gradually designed and expanded a web of institutions and organisations to control and shape labour migrations and maintain its presence and influence among labour migrants and their dependants. This section outlines only the institutional mechanisms and organisational networks employed in Yugoslavia that are relevant for the article's further reading and shows the principal forces motivating the Yugoslav establishment for their constructions and modifications.

Keen to manage and shape the rising trend of outward labour emigration, the Yugoslav government issued in October 1963 an official 'Instruction' (hereafter 'labour migration policy') to stakeholders involved in regulated labour emigration (Federal Secretariat for Labour, 1963). It assigned municipal employment offices the responsibility of sending workers abroad under the guidance and coordination of Republican and Federal migration commissions and employment authorities. This framework was supposed to assure that labour emigration primarily occurs under the state's control and in accordance with its aim to channel towards Western labour markets its unemployed, unqualified, and qualified labour surplus, primarily from the country's least developed parts (Federal Secretariat for Labour, 1964). Moreover, through institutional support of workers' emigration, the government aimed to secure that labour migrants' social welfare is paid either by them or their employers. However, lacking a historical precedent in Yugoslavia, this framework was inevitably a work in progress and thereby subject to subsequent modifications.

North (1990) points out that actors operating within an institutional framework learn by doing, through repeated interactions which enable them to acquire coordination skills and develop effective routines. Accordingly, during the initial months of implementing institutionalised labour emigration, the Yugoslav establishment continued to learn about labour emigration's patterns and trends through reports from the field drafted by various actors, such as local and republican employment and political authorities and the Alliance of Workers' Unions.<sup>4</sup> In June 1964, the Federal Secretariat for Labour, the Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs, the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, and the Central Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions (1964) filed a comprehensive report on negative trends in labour emigration and its growing misalignment with the state's policy. According to the report, due to insufficient capacity and inadequately trained personnel, municipal offices struggled to implement labour emigration accordingly which contributed to irregular and loosely regulated emigration and the proliferation of private recruiting across the country. Consequently, the report argued that 40% of workers emigrated as qualified or highly qualified, often directly from their workplaces in Yugoslavia, where they worked as experts in their fields.

Furthermore, the same report argued that Yugoslav labour migrants massively worked illegally and that even those workers who emigrated through regulated channels often faced breaches of their work contracts and agreements between Yugoslav employment offices and foreign employers. In both instances, it has contributed to their professional exploitation and relegation to the lowest-ranking positions, often in the most physically demanding sectors. Consequently, many workers returned to Yugoslavia with workplace injuries, demanding health insurance and thus burdening the Yugoslav health system, as

the Yugoslav authorities were unable to compel foreign employers to cover the costs of their treatment.

To what extent the claims presented in the report were accurate or not are beyond this article's scope. What matters here is that the Yugoslav government embraced the report and embarked on labour emigrations' further institutionalisation on national and international levels (Federal Executive Council, 1964). Starting in 1965, Yugoslavia gradually signed recruitment agreements with most Western labour-receiving countries hosting Yugoslav workers.<sup>5</sup> Recruitment agreements specified recruitment processes and the treatment of Yugoslav workers by their future employers and host countries from legal and practical perspectives. Furthermore, with most countries hosting Yugoslav workers, Yugoslavia signed new or modified existing conventions on social insurance which regulated workers' and their dependants' social and health insurance during their stay abroad and upon return to Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav establishment expanded the organisational structure of labour emigration by establishing a Federal Employment Bureau in 1965. The Bureau's primary duties included pursuing bilateral recruitment agreements with Western countries and overseeing their implementation, and mediating between foreign employment authorities and employment authorities in Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces (Federal Employment Bureau, 1966b). The Bureau was also responsible for creating and managing platforms for labour migrants' preparation for work abroad, including the implementation of pre-departure training. In other words, the Bureau was what North (1990) calls a 'purposive organisation', designed to maximise the aims of its creator, in this case, the Yugoslav establishment's aims with labour emigration. Additionally, the government enforced the structuring of knowledge production about labour emigration through the monthly production of statistical data in Yugoslavia, the collection of statistical data from countries hosting Yugoslav workers, and the examination of labour emigration's patterns and trends in Yugoslavia and abroad (General Secretariat of the President, 1965).<sup>6</sup>

Institutional modifications often occur in light of shifting social, political, and market conditions, processes that force institutions to address new economic and political imperatives and adapt to influences and changes in the environments in which they operate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Thelen, 2004). Accordingly, with the measures outlined above, the Yugoslav establishment was not only addressing shortages in the framework regulating labour emigration and strengthening its operational position but also preparing for changes in the Yugoslav economy and society and within the increasingly complicated landscape of labour emigration. Namely, these measures coincided with the comprehensive, but largely unsuccessful, economic reform which Yugoslavia implemented in 1965 to modernise the economy and align it with the world market. Along with the increase of an economically active population, the reform's outcome led to rising unemployment; Yugoslavia's further integration into the international exchange of goods, labour, and socioeconomic trends; and accelerated labour emigration (Schierup, 1990; Zimmerman, 1987).

Despite a growing web of institutional mechanisms, the Yugoslav establishment exerted only partial control over workers' recruitment and cross-border movements, and at least half of the labour migrant population continued to emigrate through unregulated channels (Baučić, 1973; Federal Executive Council, 1969a). These channels

often adapted more quickly to changing conditions than Yugoslavia's institutional and organisational frameworks, contributing to increasing discrepancies between Yugoslavia's labour migration policy and the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of migrating workers. As illustrated in Table 1, the 1971 population census revealed notable disparities, indicating that labour migrants were, on average, more highly educated than the general population in Yugoslavia. Approximately 22% of the labour migrants held vocational qualifications or higher educational credentials, compared to 16% within the broader Yugoslav population (Baučić, 1973). Furthermore, as illustrated in Table 2, labour migrants employed through Yugoslav employment offices possessed similar levels of educational attainment, suggesting that the institutional and organisational frameworks governing Yugoslav labour migration exercised limited control over the selection and deployment of migrant workers.

In response, the Yugoslav establishment once again embarked on institutional modifications to enhance labour emigration control mechanisms. In 1972, it refined the labour migration policy by prohibiting the recruitment of qualified and highly qualified workers from areas experiencing shortages of such labour (Bernard, 2019). The following year, Yugoslavia enacted a law on employment abroad which legally supported the policy's refinements (Federal Committee for Labour and Employment, 1975).

**Table 1.** Yugoslav workers abroad in 1971 according to gender and educational attainment.

Educational level	Share of all workers(%)*	Share of male workers out of total number of male workers (%)**	Share of female workers out of total number of female workers(%)***
Higher education	1.5	1.60	1.4
Upper-secondary education	4.2	3.3	6.1
Qualified and highly qualified workers	16.6	20.5	7.8
Unqualified	76.0	73.3	82.4
Unknown	1.7	1.3	2.3

\*Of 671 000, the total number of workers.

\*\*Of 460 000, the total number of male workers.

\*\*\*Of 211 000, the total number of female workers.

Source: Baučić (1973). Osnovna strukturna obilježja jugoslavenskih radnika u inozemstvu. *Acta Geographica Croatica*, 12(1).

**Table 2.** Yugoslav workers abroad in 1971, in countries employing the largest numbers of workers placed through Yugoslavia's employment offices.

Country	Total number of workers	Upper secondary and higher education (%)	Qualified and highly qualified workers (%)	Semi-qualified workers (%)	Unqualified workers (%)
Austria	47378	1.6	14.0	13.9	70.5
Australia	1607	1.7	20.1	8.2	69.1
France	22712	0.8	15.7	9.0	74.5
Netherlands	6419	3.4	11.1	10.3	75.3
Sweden	3229	6.3	41.2	13.5	39.1
Switzerland	10599	3.7	16.8	12.1	67.5
West Germany	319450	1.3	21.7	13.2	63.8
Total*	411 394	3.1	20.3	13.0	65.3

\*The sum of all countries listed in the table.

Source: Federal Employment Bureau, *Overview of employment abroad 1971*, Federal Employment Bureau (PS-III 271), Archives of Yugoslavia.

North (1990) points out that changes to an institutional framework typically involve marginal adjustments to the complexity of rules, norms, and enforcement mechanisms. Accordingly, the core principles of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy remained unchanged in 1972, with the state continuing to support the emigration of unqualified workers and surplus qualified labour, particularly from the least developed areas of the country. While summarising the refinements of the labour migration policy, Yugoslavia's presidency underlined that employment abroad needs to serve Yugoslavia's interests and that

Yugoslavia needs to achieve a circular migration, managed in such a way that qualified workers, needed by the Yugoslav economy, return from working abroad, while unqualified workers from the labour reserve are sent to work abroad after receiving prior vocational training with financial and other support from (Yugoslavia's) foreign partners (Presidency of the SFRY, 1972, p. 2).<sup>7</sup>

### **Pre-departure training – an overview**

Most recruitment agreements that Yugoslavia signed with Western countries included a clause in pre-departure training. However, the clause was optional, stipulating that recruited workers could receive pre-departure training. As such, it lacked regulatory power and did not delegate authority to either signatory party to enforce it, and by classifying pre-departure training only as possible, it served only a normative function (Scott, 2014). According to the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau (1971a), only the recruitment agreement with Austria lacked such a clause. The agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to as 'West Germany') stipulated that employers could arrange pre-departure training with the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau and cover the associated costs. However, in practice, the West German Federal Employment Agency retained the right to approve pre-departure training (Federal Employment Bureau, 1969). Other recruitment agreements stipulated that the employment authorities of labour-receiving countries could arrange pre-departure training with the Bureau and bear the related expenses.

As early as April 1966, the Federal Employment Bureau began implementing pre-departure training when the Swedish Employment Board paid for the training of qualified female nurses (Federal Employment Bureau, 1966a). According to the Federal Employment Bureau (1971a), cooperation with the Swedish Employment Board continued as late as 1970 and included approximately 300 workers who received pre-departure training in the form of short Swedish language courses and vocational training for jobs in restaurants, the metal industry, and nursing. In 1967, the Federal Employment Bureau began implementing pre-departure training in cooperation with the French National Employment Agency (Federal Council for Labour, 1971; Federal Employment Bureau, 1971a). The Agency initially financed vocational training for French construction companies, but the cooperation was later expanded with training for jobs in the automotive industry. Analysed sources show approximately 3,000 labour migrants received pre-departure training under the framework of the French – Yugoslav labour recruitment agreement. In 1968, the Bureau and West German employers began cooperating on pre-departure training, with the West German Federal Employment Agency joining their cooperation in 1971. Analysed sources show that West German employers and the

Federal Employment Agency funded training for approximately 5,000 workers. The training included only vocational education for jobs in the metal industry (Federal Council for Labour, 1971; Federal Employment Bureau, 1971a).

Sources suggest that in most cases workers received only vocational training, while in some cases, the training included basic education in theoretical subjects and elementary courses in the language of the workers' destination country. The training was occasionally implemented in cooperation with educators from the destination countries and aligned with these countries' national curricula. They usually lasted between 4 and 6 months and provided unqualified workers with a semi-qualification.

In summary, the analysed sources show that foreign employers and employment authorities financed the training of approximately 10,000 Yugoslav labour migrants, which was approximately 1.5% of those recruited through Yugoslav employment offices between 1965 and 1973.<sup>8</sup> The majority of workers participated in training for jobs in the West German metal and automotive industries and the French automotive and construction industries. As mentioned in the article's introduction, the analysed sources lack a statistical overview of implemented pre-departure trainings, including the gender distribution of workers participating in pre-departure training. However, considering the concurrent (and largely still present) gender-based occupational division and the masculine character of vocational jobs within the construction and automotive industry, it was mostly male workers who participated in pre-departure training.

The Federal Employment Bureau and municipal employment offices also implemented pre-departure training on their own. However, sources suggest that the workers paid for most of these pre-departure trainings themselves (Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions of Yugoslavia, 1971a; Employment Office Vranje, 1971). Occasionally, the Bureau and municipal employment offices managed to 'sell' ongoing vocational education and training to foreign employers. For example, a report from a Serbian municipal employment office mentions that, in 1969 and 1970, its educational centres implemented pre-departure training for occupations in the metal industry for 630 workers, which workers paid entirely themselves (Employment Office Vranje, 1971). In 1971, the office managed to 'sell' the training of 50 metal workers to a West German factory, which even provided teachers to teach them German as well as some theoretical subjects. Similarly, the Federal Employment Bureau (1969) reported in 1969 that a West German metal processing factory recruited 35 workers who underwent a program for metal workers that the Bureau implemented in Belgrade. According to the report, the factory was willing to recruit and pay for the training of all workers who finished a program for metal workers in Belgrade that the Bureau had implemented in the previous 18 months. Moreover, the report emphasised that cooperation with West German employers would be more fruitful if the West German Federal Employment Agency approved their agreements, pointing out the Bureau's agreement with an engine manufacturer, which was not realised for that reason.

### **For the benefit of migrant workers and the Yugoslav state**

In a comprehensive report in 1966, the Federal Employment Bureau (1966b) elaborated on pre-departure training and suggested its expansion and clearer conceptualisation. The Bureau argued that Western economies increasingly strive towards the

employment of qualified workers, and if Yugoslavia is to prevent further brain drains, compete with other labour-sending countries, and continue exporting unemployment, it needs to intensify vocational training of unqualified jobseekers for employment abroad. The Bureau identified the financing of pre-departure training as the main problem, pointing out that municipal employment offices lacked sufficient capacities and financial means. Additionally, it emphasised that financing of pre-departure training with public money is socially controversial because workers would be trained to work abroad and contribute to the development of their host countries.

Nevertheless, the Bureau suggested training future unqualified labour migrants, even if it meant investing public money, because it would benefit both the labour migrants and the Yugoslav state. It argued that unqualified jobseekers had minimal chances of finding work in Yugoslavia and that pre-departure training should be seen as a means of facilitating their employment abroad. Moreover, the Bureau noted that unqualified labour migrants more often experienced professional inequality and mainly occupied the most physically demanding jobs in Western labour markets, which often led to professional injuries and the return of injured migrants, thus burdening the Yugoslav health and social system. The Bureau anticipated that trained workers would avoid such jobs and potential injuries. Moreover, training would help them retain their jobs abroad during recessions, while as better-paid workers, they would remit more money to Yugoslavia. Therefore, the Bureau suggested that employment offices should immediately begin with pre-departure training, even if it meant employing its own financial means, and underlined that 'the financial input could be expected from foreign employers because pre-departure training is also in their interest' (Federal Employment Bureau, 1966b, p. 94). How and why it was in their interest, the Bureau did not elaborate.

A similar approach, which would benefit both the Yugoslav state and labour migrants, suggested the government's Committee for External Migration Affairs (1969) in its report from 1969. Like the Federal Employment Bureau, the Committee suggested a broader implementation of pre-departure training financed by foreign employers, since training would facilitate the employment abroad of unqualified workers from undeveloped parts of Yugoslavia, increase their chances for better working conditions abroad, and, consequently, increase the inflow of workers' remittances.

On the other hand, the Alliance of Worker's Unions, as an organisation with the purpose of promoting workers' interests, focused only on workers' benefits. It emphasised that migrant workers' pre-departure training is crucial for well-being abroad, arguing that a qualified worker has more social security, finds employment more easily, adapts better to a new environment, is more productive, and usually remains employed during economic transitions and crises (Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions, 1971a).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the Alliance anticipated that, in the future, Western labour markets, especially the West German, will demand larger number of skilled workers from Yugoslavia and a lower number of unskilled workers. According to the Alliance, that shift prompted an immediate expansion of pre-departure training in Yugoslavia in order to facilitate unqualified workers' employment in the West. The Alliance perceived Yugoslavia as a fruitful ground for the implementation of pre-departure training, arguing that the majority of unskilled workers seeking employment in Yugoslavia possessed elementary education, which allowed for their inclusion in vocational training, and that the country had both the

infrastructure and the knowledge for the successful implementation of pre-departure training.

The Alliance of Workers' Unions' report from 1971 suggests that Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces shared the Alliance's and the federal government's vision of labour migrants' pre-departure training (Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions of Yugoslavia, 1971b). The report outlines the Alliance's initiative to align Yugoslav republics' and autonomous provinces' policies and strategies regarding labour migrants' education into one common strategic approach. According to the report, representatives of the Yugoslav republics, autonomous provinces, and federal bodies have jointly agreed 'that it is essential that workers whose employment abroad is inevitable receive pre-departure training and that foreign recruiters bear the expenses for their training' (Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions, 1971b, p. 2).

It is important to note that pre-departure training was not the only platform for unqualified workers' education in Yugoslavia. Namely, since its establishment, socialist Yugoslavia implemented progressive educational policies and the intensive countrywide education of employed and unemployed individuals (Bacevic, 2014). Also, the Yugoslav establishment supported organisations that implemented labour migrants' education in their host countries and advocated to Western countries to financially support such education and facilitate its expansion (Council of the Alliance of Workers' Unions of Yugoslavia, 1971a; Ivanović, 2012).

### **For the benefit of the Yugoslav state**

In 1969, the Yugoslav government acknowledged that mechanisms established by recruitment agreements were still not operating successfully, enabling foreign employers to recruit through irregular means and according to their interests (Federal Executive Council, 1969c). Among other reasons, the government emphasised that institutional inconsistencies and irregularities in sending labour migrants still persisted and were widespread, perpetuating employment authorities' weak control over labour migration. Particularly alarming for the Yugoslav establishment was West Germany's proposal from 1969 for the temporary suspension of the labour recruitment agreement and the implementation of workers' recruitments through employers' direct contacts with municipal offices and through social networks. In a brief report and instruction to the Federal Council for Labour and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Yugoslav government argued that West Germany justified the proposal with the slowness and inefficiency of the recruiting mechanisms established by the agreement (Federal Executive Council, 1969b). The government instructed the Secretary and the Council to inform West Germany that Yugoslavia was willing to send qualified labour surplus and unqualified workers to West Germany and that 'West Germany should participate more in workers' pre-departure training in Yugoslavia as a means of acquiring a qualified workforce and fostering a long-term cooperation between the two countries' (Federal Executive Council, 1969b, p. 6).

Unsurprisingly, the recruitment agreement was not abolished. As Powell and DiMaggio (1991) emphasised, even the most imperfect institutions tend to survive and be maintained because the investments made in their creation make them costly to abandon. The West German – Yugoslav labour recruitment agreement was charged with symbolic and

political significance, embedded in the Cold War's political and ideological divisions, as Yugoslavia was the only socialist country with which West Germany signed a labour recruitment agreement and the only one that officially recognised East Germany. Consequently, it took Yugoslav and West German negotiators several years of extensive diplomacy and several compromises to achieve the agreement (Shonick, 2009). Furthermore, during the late 1960s, Yugoslavia was one of the principal labour source countries for West German employers, and for Yugoslavia, West Germany was a primary destination for labour export. Therefore, it was in the interest of both countries to find solutions for continued cooperation.

One of the solutions from the Yugoslav establishment's perspective was the expansion of pre-departure training. As the subsequent section will demonstrate, the analysed sources suggest that persuading West Germany to engage more extensively in pre-departure training in Yugoslavia became a primary objective of the Yugoslav establishment's endeavour to establish pre-departure training as a sustainable platform for sending workers abroad. Besides being the primary destination for the Yugoslav labour migrants, the Yugoslav establishment's focus on West Germany can be attributed to its increasing identification of West Germany as a major threat to brain drain from Yugoslavia and its growing awareness of the shortcomings in the labour recruitment agreement between the two countries (Federal Executive Council, 1969b). For instance, the Yugoslav establishment was informed that West German employers extensively used West Germany's visa system favourable to immigration of skilled workers. Namely, since the earliest years of post-war labour migrations, West German embassies and consulates have issued visas to labour migrants who had secured employment and residence in West Germany (Steinert, 2014). According to the Yugoslav Federal Council for Labour (1970b) only in 1969 West German employers had recruited approximately 50,000 workers from Yugoslavia through such means. Furthermore, the labour recruitment agreement allowed West German employers to recruit Yugoslav workers through nominative applications, with the specific names of workers, which employers sent directly to municipal employment offices. Essentially, it was a regular means of recruiting through networks and bypassing the control of Republican and Federal employment authorities. According to the Federal Employment Bureau (1971b) as much as 70% of West German requests for Yugoslav workers were submitted as nominative applications. This high proportion not only undermined the Yugoslav policy of sending abroad an unqualified workforce from underdeveloped areas, but it also reduced West German employers' need to foster broader cooperation with the Federal Employment Bureau, including labour migrants' pre-departure training.

According to North (1990), the larger the percentage of society's resources influenced by an institutional framework, the more assets will be devoted to organisations adopting defensive and offensive strategies to protect those resources. As demonstrated above, the resources identified by the Yugoslav establishment as threatened by labour emigration were Yugoslavia's qualified and highly qualified workforces. However, the Yugoslav establishment was not inclined to invest resources in pre-departure training, a platform that could have served both as an offensive and defensive mechanism of its labour migration policy. The analysed sources repeatedly illustrate the Yugoslav establishment's stance on financing pre-departure training and its willingness to allocate resources solely to retain a qualified workforce within the country. For instance, in June 1970, the Federal

Council for Labour (1970a) emphasised that there was a sufficient number of unemployed and unqualified jobseekers, as well as underemployed and unqualified individuals in rural areas, who could take jobs abroad, but this supply did not align with the demands of foreign employers who required a high proportion of qualified workers. The Council highlighted pre-departure training as an effective means of facilitating employment abroad among the unqualified labour surplus. However, it also concluded that widespread unregulated recruiting discouraged foreign employers from investing in the pre-departure training of unqualified workers in Yugoslavia, as it enabled them to recruit the desired workforce. Lacking any solution, the Council instructed all stakeholders to consistently adhere to the existing labour migration policy and its recruiting principles and thus primarily send abroad unqualified jobseekers and workers labelled as labour surplus. The Council emphasised that, to increase their chances of employment abroad,

it is essential to ensure that as many as possible receive basic training in both existing and new capacities for vocational education, with the financial support of foreign employers and employment authorities. Priority should be given to undeveloped areas, where employment issues are most pronounced (Federal Council for Labour, 1970a, p. 5).

In July of the same year, the Secretariat of the President (1970a) issued an instruction that essentially repeated the same principles. In November 1970, as the following quote demonstrates, the Yugoslav government emphasised the same principle while outlining employment strategies for the state's upcoming economic plan:

To increase employment in the country (...) guide unqualified labour towards employment abroad and previously train them in the country. For qualified, especially highly skilled and academic professionals, create more favourable conditions for advancement, earnings, and appropriate social treatment in order to retain them in the country. (Secretariat of the President, 1970b, p. 2)

### **The attempt to industrialise pre-departure training**

Fligstein (2001) points out that actors defending existing or negotiating new institutional arrangements must motivate others with different or conflicting interests to cooperate. To do so, they employ social skills, use resources skilfully and strategically, and embrace others' perspectives to create meanings that appeal to others with different or conflicting interests, thus inspiring them to cooperate and pursue the same objectives. As demonstrated above, from the Yugoslav establishment's perspective, the increasing interest of Western employers was to recruit skilled labour from Yugoslavia. Conversely, the Yugoslav establishment's aim was to strategically and under state control employ abroad mainly unskilled labour surplus, profit from their emigration, and increase the profit by implementing labour migrants' pre-departure training. Reports from the meetings with Austrian and West German employment authorities illustrate the Yugoslav establishment's strategic and decisive approach to convince its foreign partners in the mutual benefits of pre-departure training in Yugoslavia.

Austria was the second-largest importer of Yugoslav labour. However, as mentioned, the Austrian – Yugoslav labour recruitment agreement was the only one that did not include a clause in pre-departure training. As early as January 1970, the Yugoslav establishment embarked to change this. The president of the Federal Employment Bureau and

representatives of the Yugoslav Embassy in Wien met the Austrian Minister of Social Affairs and the president of the Federal Chamber of Commerce (State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, 1970). According to the meeting report, among other labour migration-related issues, the meeting discussed the possibility of Austrian financial contributions to pre-departure training in less developed parts of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav delegacy informed the Austrians that Yugoslavia was willing to continue to supply the Austrian labour market with Yugoslav labour surplus. It argued to the Austrians that the Austrian labour market increasingly sought qualified workers, which Yugoslavia could not provide and suggested pre-departure training in Yugoslavia as a means of acquiring them. According to the same report, Austrians had no objections to recruiting exclusively unskilled workers in Yugoslavia and were positive towards financing their pre-departure training. However, the Austrian delegation could not provide a concrete answer immediately, pointing out that Austrian regulations did not foresee such bilateral cooperation.

The same report suggests that the Yugoslav delegation engaged in shadow diplomacy. Namely, in the concluding remarks, the report stated that after the meeting, the Yugoslav embassy in Vienna received unofficial but reliable information from the president of the Austrian Labour immigration office that Austrian interest in pre-departure training was greater than presented at the meeting and that Austrians 'are ready to pay large sums for pre-departure training, and therefore the Federal Employment Bureau must act promptly to reach an agreement' (State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, 1970, p. 2). Later sources do not mention any cooperation with Austria regarding pre-departure training, suggesting the Yugoslav establishment's failure to persuade Austrians to modify the labour recruitment agreement.

The Yugoslav establishment employed a similar strategy with West Germany as it did with Austria, combining diplomacy with negotiations. In January 1971, a West German delegation led by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs visited Yugoslavia and met with several of Yugoslavia's highest officials. According to a report from the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs (1971), the discussion of Yugoslav labour emigration to West Germany dominated the meetings. The meeting between the West German delegation and the delegation headed by the Yugoslav President of the Council of Labour focused on practical issues of labour recruitment, primarily the overuse of nominative requests by West German employers and the pre-departure training of unqualified Yugoslav workers. The report characterised this meeting as successful for Yugoslavia, as the West German delegation 'has promised to inform (West German) employers that it is necessary to train (Yugoslav) workers before employment' (State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, 1971, p. 2). Additionally, the West German delegation emphasised their willingness to comprehensively examine the issue of nominative requests and to find solutions at the forthcoming meeting between the West German Council of Labour and the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau.

Representatives of the West German Federal Council for Labour and the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau convened in March 1971 in West Germany (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971b). According to the meeting report, the discussions addressed several issues in Yugoslav labour migration to West Germany, including the overuse of nominative requests by West German employers. However, the report indicates that Yugoslav negotiators prioritised discussions on pre-departure training. They insisted on greater participation from West German employers in financing pre-

departure training, emphasising their insignificant engagement and funding. They emphasised to their West German counterparts that Yugoslavia was interested in sending additional 60,000 to 80,000 unskilled workers to West Germany and demanded that at least 10% of all Yugoslav workers annually recruited by West German employers receive pre-departure training. According to the report, the West German delegacy was positive towards these demands, and both parties agreed 'that it is in their mutual interest that the pre-departure training of Yugoslav workers becomes a pillar of future cooperation on labour migration between West Germany and Yugoslavia' (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971b, p. 5). The West German Council of Labour has even agreed to allocate 200,000 West German marks for vocational training of workers recruited for the West German metal industry in the forthcoming period.

According to the same report, the Yugoslav delegation requested that West Germany finance equipment for educational centres where pre-departure training was implemented, but the West German Council of Labour entirely rejected this request. Moreover, the Yugoslav delegation attempted to persuade West Germans to expand pre-departure training to include workers recruited for other industries and branches, mentioning the construction and hospitality industries in particular. However, this question remained open, as the Yugoslav delegation could not provide the West Germans with a clear educational and organisational framework for pre-departure training for these occupations.

Negotiations continued in September 1971 in Yugoslavia over meetings between the Yugoslav Council of Republican Employment Offices, representatives of the Federal Employment Bureau, and the delegacy of the West German Federal Employment Agency (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971c).<sup>10</sup> The report on their meetings suggests that pre-departure training occupied a central position in the meetings, with the Yugoslav delegation emphasising to its West German counterparts that 'intensified pre-departure training should be the foundation of future labour migration cooperation between Yugoslavia and West Germany' (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971c, p. 2). According to the report, the West German delegation visited municipal educational centres that conducted pre-departure training for West German employers and attended an official selection of workers at one of the municipal offices implementing pre-departure training. The meetings also discussed the expansion of pre-departure training to occupations in other labour market branches than the metal industry. However, Yugoslav negotiators were unable to gain West Germans' support at these meetings. The report states that the West German delegation avoided a detailed discussion of the subject, arguing that such a decision was beyond its jurisdiction and had to be made at the state level in West Germany. Nevertheless, the report suggests that the Yugoslav delegation was satisfied with the meetings, as it highlighted in the concluding remarks that the West German delegation had received 'positive impressions about further recruiting of Yugoslav workers and intensifying their pre-departure training in Yugoslavia (...) which it will surely convey to West German employers and responsible authorities' (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971c, p. 4).

Despite these indications of the positive development of further cooperation on pre-departure training between Yugoslavia and West Germany, the cooperation was short-lived. Beginning in 1973, West Germany and other labour-receiving countries, motivated

by the oil shock, economic downturn, and a reduced need for immigrant labour, terminated or restricted further labour recruitment from Yugoslavia and other countries outside of the European Economic Community (Jurgens, 2010). Consequently, these events brought an end to the cooperation between western employers and employment authorities and the Yugoslav Federal Employment Bureau on pre-departure training.

However, from the outset of its implementation, the success of the pre-departure training was undermined by the Yugoslav establishment's insistence on the implementation of pre-departure training by municipal employment offices in underdeveloped areas without providing them with all the necessary support. Namely, in such areas, even adult educational centres were poorly developed. Letters from two local employment offices designated to implement pre-departure training for workers recruited by West German employers illustrate this condition. An employment office from the Republic of Macedonia, which described itself as modern, pleaded with the Federal Employment Bureau for financial contributions to purchase 21 machines necessary for the implementation of pre-departure training according to modern educational and vocational training standards (Employment Office Štip, 1971). An employment office from the southern parts of the Republic of Serbia pleaded with the Bureau for financial contributions to purchase educational equipment, listing 64 machines that needed to be bought immediately to implement pre-departure training according to modern educational and vocational training standards (Employment Office Vranje, 1971). This employment office highlighted its position in one of the least developed parts of Yugoslavia, with only 10% of the population gainfully employed, and emphasised that the possibility of financing the modernisation of its educational facilities from local taxes did not exist.

Both municipal offices sent their letters to the Federal Employment Bureau in February 1971, approximately 1 month before the Bureau's meeting with the West German Federal Council for Labour described above. As the report from the meeting shows, the Bureau requested that West Germany finances the purchase of equipment for practical teaching in educational centres implementing pre-departure training for West German employers (Federal Employment Bureau, 1971b).

## Conclusion

This article has explored the Yugoslav establishment's agenda for labour migrants' pre-departure training and attempts to expand and establish it as a durable platform for sending workers abroad and profiting from their migration. Through an analysis of primary archived sources, the article has shown that the Yugoslav establishment embedded pre-departure training into the overarching aim of Yugoslavia's labour migration policy, which primarily involved sending abroad unemployed unqualified workers from less developed parts of the country where employment prospects were limited. Although labour migrants' benefits are also sporadically discussed in the analysed sources, the Yugoslav state's interests and benefits dominate reports and correspondences produced by Yugoslavia's key stakeholders in labour emigration.

While studies on post-Second World War labour migrations agree that Yugoslavia and other labour-sending countries aimed to profit from labour migration by exporting unemployment and capitalising on labour migrants' remittances, their concrete practices in achieving these aims remain under-researched. This article has demonstrated that the

Yugoslav establishment envisioned and implemented pre-departure training as an additional measure within its broader efforts to regulate and structure labour emigration and align its currents with the socioeconomic conditions of the country. Furthermore, the establishment perceived labour migrants' pre-departure training as multifacetedly beneficial for Yugoslavia's economy, finances, labour market, and welfare system. Consequently, pre-departure training constituted part of the frequent institutional constructions and modifications employed by the Yugoslav establishment to rectify inconsistencies within the institutional and organisational frameworks regulating labour emigration, with the aim of establishing it as a legitimate and primary platform for sending workers abroad.

Most of these efforts included continuous cooperation with Western labour receiving countries under the frameworks of recruitment agreements of which pre-departure trainings constituted integral part. However, as an optional clause, pre-departure training was insufficiently institutionalised and served only a normative function. Its implementation essentially depended on the will of Western countries, and employers in the case of West Germany, and was further conditioned by opportunities and constraints within their domestic institutional frameworks.

As studies on labour emigration from Southeast Asia indicate, labour-sending states invest considerable resources in gathering information about demands in the global labour market and support the development of educational programmes and the implementation of pre-departure training to respond to those demands. Similarly, Yugoslavia employed knowledge gathering, diplomacy, and negotiations to establish pre-departure training as a firmly institutionalised and legitimate platform for sending workers abroad. However, as this article has demonstrated, the Yugoslav establishment refrained from investing its own resources in the institutional and organisational developments of pre-departure training. The predominant argument was that Western employers and employment authorities should bear the costs of implementing pre-departure training. The establishment persisted in this principle despite being continuously informed that Western employers were able to bypass the framework regulating labour emigration or adjust their recruiting practices serving their interests. This approach significantly contributed to the meagre success of pre-departure training, as evidenced by the comparatively insignificant number of labour migrants who received pre-departure training compared to the number of workers recruited through the institutional and organisational framework governing labour emigration.

## Notes

1. By 'Yugoslav establishment', this article refers to the high-ranking political bodies and organisations that governed Yugoslavia. Specifically, it refers to the high-ranking federal and republican political bodies and organisations that governed labour migration and related social, political, and economic domains, including the Alliance of Workers' Unions, the central body of Yugoslav workers' unions.
2. The sources retrieved from the Croatian State Archives are produced by federal governmental bodies and the federal division of the Alliance of Workers' Unions and thereby illustrate the Yugoslav communist establishment's intentions and ambitions pertinent to the whole of Yugoslavia.

3. The Alliance of Workers' Unions, along with its subsidiaries in the Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces, played a significant role in Yugoslav labour emigration. Since Yugoslavia designated labour migrants as 'Yugoslav' (and even 'Our') workers on temporary work abroad and asserted jurisdiction over them and responsibility for them, the Alliance of Workers' Unions adopted the same approach. It took responsibility for safeguarding labour migrants' social and working rights and living conditions and actively advocated for their improvement.
4. See, for example, reports from the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic (1964, June 29). *On some issues of employment of labour force abroad* ;(III/A/e/16) [Archival document]. Archives of the President of the Republic, Archives of Yugoslavia; General Secretariat of the President of the Republic (1964, November 4). *Problems of contemporary economic migration* ;(III/A/1/e/16) [Archival document]. Archives of the President of the Republic, Archives of Yugoslavia.
5. Yugoslavia signed labour recruitment agreements with France in 1965; Austria and Sweden in 1966; West Germany in 1968; and Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand in 1970.
6. For examples of the Yugoslav establishment's learning about labour migrants see reports: General Secretariat of the President of the Republic (1966, September 4). *Conversations with workers who are working abroad* ;(III/A/1/e/16) [Archival document]. Archives of the President of the Republic, Archives of Yugoslavia; Institute for Migration and Ethnicities & Privredna banka Zagreb (1967). *SFRY and European labour migrations* ;(F/1610/11) [Archival document]. Institute for Migration and Ethnicities, Croatian State Archives.
7. All translations of quoted sources are by the author. See also the summary of the new employment policy reported by the Federal Council for Labour (1971). *Summary of 'Some Elements of Employment Policy Abroad'*, Republican Secretariat for Labour (1609/307), Croatian State Archives.
8. Counted on the basis of Federal Employment Bureau's statistical overview over employment abroad implemented through municipal employment offices. See: Federal Employment Bureau (1974). *Overview of employment abroad* ;(PS-III/271) [Archival document]. Archives of Yugoslavia. However, not all workers recruited through employment offices were recruited through frameworks of bilateral recruitment agreements, as Yugoslav employment offices mediated workers' employments also to countries that did not sign recruitment agreement with Yugoslavia.
9. See also the report on conclusions of the Central Council of the Alliance of Workers unions from 1966 in: Federal Employment Bureau (1966). *Bulletin 3/1966* ;(K/III/1327) [Unpublished manuscript]. Archives of Yugoslavia.
10. According to the meeting's report, the host of the West German delegation was the Yugoslav Council of Republican Employment Offices. This fact further indicates that Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces officially shared the vision and aims regarding pre-departure training for labour migrants which operated on the federal level.

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IV



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

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### 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)<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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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This thesis examines Yugoslavia's institutional-organisational framework for the governance of labour migration during the 1960s and 1970s. It investigates and analyses the priorities, problem formulations, and strategic objectives that shaped the framework's construction and subsequent development, and reconstructs and situates the attitudes, strategies, and practices of Yugoslav state authorities in regulating labour migration. The thesis' overarching argument is that Yugoslav state authorities deliberately designed, implemented, and continuously reconfigured the institutional-organisational framework for the governance of labour migration in order to strengthen state capacity to manage and shape labour migration, harness its economic potential, and influence its outcomes in line with the state's strategic interests.

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