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“It was Peugeot that brought us here!”: Trajectories of (Post) Yugoslav Workers in France through the Prism of Peugeot’s Recruitments, 1965 to the Present

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"It was Peugeot that brought us here!": Trajectories of (Post) Yugoslav Workers in France through the Prism of Peugeot's Recruitments, 1965 to the Present

The objective of this article is to analyze the consequences of the political, social, and economic ruptures of Yugoslavia and France on the trajectories of Yugoslavs recruited by the Peugeot company in France after the the 1965 Franco-Yugoslav bilateral agreement on the employment of temporary labor. Using a monographic approach to the case of the employment area of Sochaux, it is clear that (post-) Yugoslav workers went through periods of upheaval and even disillusionment after their arrival in France. This study mainly deals with a generation of men born in the 1940s and 1950s and recruited by Peugeot from 1965 onwards, but also includes other members of the family and the plurality of generations. The history of Yugoslav immigration to France has rarely been the subject of research, although studying it makes it possible to analyze relations between a western country and a communist country and the consequences of the breakup of a country for emigrants living abroad. To do so, this article relies on archival sources (files on foreigners kept in the archives of prefectures, archives of associations, and the Peugeot company's archives) and on interviews with former workers.

KEYWORDS:
Yugoslavia, France, emigration, immigration, labor, workers, working class

Sochaux is a former village in the east of France that developed around the Peugeot family's factories in the Montbéliard area, also known as the "Pays de Montbéliard." I mention both the Pays de Montbéliard and the town of Sochaux because the working class population was spread throughout the Montbéliard agglomeration, while the factories and some of the Yugoslavs' homes were located in Sochaux. In 1978, the largest automobile production site in France was located in the town of Sochaux, and had up to 40,000 workers.[1] After World War II and by the 1960s, the need for manpower was growing and Peugeot was forced to recruit workers from other parts of France and abroad, and especially from Yugoslavia. A bilateral agreement signed between France and Yugoslavia on 25 January 1965 concerning the employment of Yugoslav workers in France was particularly favorable for the company, which recruited many Yugoslavs.

In France, however, little research has been carried out on Yugoslav workers,[2] even though there is a great deal of work on immigration from other countries during the 1960s and 1970s. More research has been done in other countries and includes work on Yugoslav emigration and *Gastarbeitern* by Ulf Brunnbauer, Carl-Ulrik Schierup, and Sara Bernard.[3] Despite an early agreement signed between Yugoslavia and France in 1965, there are much fewer Yugoslav immigrants in France than in Germany. This weak presence in France may reinforce a stronger feeling of being foreign and of a change of scenery. In addition, France had weaker historical ties with Yugoslavia than, for example, Germany or Austria. Moreover, there is no specific term in French that is equivalent to *Gasterbeiter* in German. Expressions such as "immigrant worker" or "foreign worker" are used, but they do not have the same evocative power of the term *Gastarbeiter*, which expressed a reality of work in German-speaking countries so pervasive in Yugoslavia that it was even reappropriated in Yugoslav languages as *gastarbajter*. Nevertheless, in France expressions such as "temporary workers" refer more to "guests."

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1 Stéphane Beaud and Michel Pialoux, *Retour sur la condition ouvrière: enquête aux usines Peugeot de Sochaux-Montbéliard* [A look back at working class: investigation at Peugeot's Sochaux-Montbéliard factories] (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), 41.

2 However, see in particular Mirjana Morokvašić, "Les Yougoslaves en France" [Yugoslavs in France], in *De l'unification à l'éclatement. L'espace yougoslave, un siècle d'histoire* [From unification to breakup. The Yugoslav space, a century of history], ed. Laurent Gervereau and Yves Tomic (Nanterre: Musée d'histoire contemporaine - BDIC, 1998), 170-71; Mirjana Morokvašić, "Des migrants 'temporaires': les Yougoslaves" ['Temporary' migrants: the Yugoslavs], *Sociologie du travail*, no. 3, (1972): 260-77; Ivo Baučić, Mladen Ante Friganović and Mirjana Morokvašić, *Iz Jugoslavije na rad u Francusku* [From Yugoslavia to work in France] (Zagreb: Institut za geografiju Sveučilišta, 1972); Jadranka Čačić-Kumpes and Josip Kumpes, "Approche socio-historique des migrations yougoslaves en France" [Socio-historical approach to Yugoslav migration in France], *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1990): 65-84; Sanja Bošković, "L'émigration yougoslave à Paris: entre intégration et exclusions" [Yugoslav emigration to Paris: between integration and exclusion], *Les Cahiers du MIMMOC* 1 (2006) https://doi.org/10.4000/mimmoc.167.

3 Ulf Brunnbauer, *Transnational societies, transterritorial politics: migrations in the (post-) Yugoslav region, 19th - 21st century* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009); Carl-Ulrik Schierup, *Migration, socialism and the international division of labour: the Yugoslavian experience* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1990); Sara Bernard, *Deutsch Marks in the Head, Shovel in the Hands and Yugoslavia in the Heart: The Gastarbeiter Return to Yugoslavia (1965-1991)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2019).

Indeed, as in Germany, employment contracts were often of short duration to meet the labor needs of industries.

Unlike most of the existing work on Yugoslav immigration, mine focuses on a slightly later period of time, the second half of the 1960s and the 1970s, which is often considered to be a second phase of Yugoslav emigration that was made up of more Serbs and occurred after the wave of the 1950s and 1960s, in which emigrants were mainly Croats. In addition, my analysis is essentially based on the case of Peugeot, and uses a monographic approach that considers local, national, and transnational issues. In other words, I focus on the trajectories of (post-)Yugoslav workers hired by Peugeot according to a "bottom-up" story that takes into account their daily life, both inside and outside the factory.

The existences of the (post-) Yugoslav immigrants with whom I conduct my research have been caught in elements of rupture in France and Yugoslavia, from 1965 to the present day. How did these existences intersect with the events lived in these two countries? How were the events of rupture or continuity in Yugoslavia experienced from abroad? The Yugoslav immigrants I am interested in are part of the working classes and had life trajectories subject to economic and social uncertainties. However, their individual trajectories show very different personal choices over the course of their lives.

First, I will discuss the methods I used in this study before analyzing the respective positions of the French and Yugoslav states on immigration in the 1960s. Then, I will look more specifically at the trajectories of (post) Yugoslav workers, which were marked not only by major breaks such as a departure from Yugoslavia for a "Western" country but also by forms of continuity.

Methods and Sources

First of all, I researched sources from company and government archives and also conducted interviews. Consultation of post-1970s archives often requires a request for exemption because of the time limits for disclosure.[4] The Groupe PSA (created from the merger of Peugeot SA and Citroën SA in 1976) company archives, which are kept near Sochaux, are often recent acquisitions, and it is thus difficult to have a precise understanding of them.[5] However, it is possible to consult personnel registration files and the minutes from works council meetings, which provide information on the operation of the company and the working conditions of employees, particularly immigrants. In addition, reading the staff diary provides information on company policy, and it includes sections on holidays or safety instructions for the factories. A new foreign-language section for immigrant workers appeared in 1972. The first edition of this section was intended

4 In this article, all first and last names of people mentioned in interview extracts or references to archival records have been changed to preserve their anonymity.

5 The Terre Blanche Archives were inaugurated in 2010 by PSA Peugeot Citroën on the site of a former tooling plant. The archives of the Peugeot Endowment Fund for the Memory of Industrial History are managed by the association l'Aventure Peugeot Citroën DS (https://patrimoine-archives.psa-peugeot-citroen.com/articles/historique-du-site/).

for Yugoslav workers, and it included Serbo-Croatian translations of film titles and a special issue for Yugoslav workers devoted to an evening of folk dances. At the Departmental Archives, it is also possible to consult individual files created when applications for residence permits were filed. It is also possible to consult the police archives and the archives of associations.

Consultation of these collections allows, in particular, for quantitative analyses. From Peugeot's personnel registration registers, it is possible to find out the number of people hired per year and to conduct analyses based on information about each worker at the time they were hired, including nationality, housing, age, family situation, and their previous employer or occupation. Analysis of these data allows for observations of, for example, whether there were differences between nationalities or whether the profile of Yugoslavs was homogeneous. Moreover, the consultation of approximately 600 foreigners' files at the Departmental Archives makes it possible to follow the trajectories of workers from the moment they applied for a visa. Indeed, the files of foreigners are a very rich source of information composed of, among other things, investigations of morality, identity documents, etc., which were used for identifying foreigners. In some cases, the same people can be found in other archival sources kept elsewhere.

The interviews I carried out were conducted with former Yugoslav workers (and sometimes with their children) and former workers of other nationalities. In some cases these took form of collective interviews. They were semi-directive interviews that often took the form of life stories. I am aware that memory is selective, and there may be a desire to underline or conceal certain facts,[6] so it is not so much the exact content of these testimonies that interests me as does the repetition of the same anecdotes or descriptions such as, for example, having passed through Lyon when arriving in France. During the interviews, certain things could be difficult to talk about, such as working conditions in the factory, and they sometimes led to silence. It is interesting to note that these life stories often begin with Peugeot's recruitments. The company is omnipresent in these accounts, and it is difficult to get information about their lives before being hired by Peugeot and arriving in France. To date, I have carried out about ten interviews lasting between thirty minutes and two and a half hours. I also conducted observations in cafés or in Serbian language courses for children. These observations allowed me to have access to current elements that I would not find in a bibliography or in the archives because the context has changed since the 1970s. For example, in the Pays de Montbéliard, unemployment and precariousness have become more common in the region. For the children of ex-Yugoslavs born in France or who arrived in France during their childhood, one sometimes finds hope of finding work and a more promising future in ex-Yugoslavia, even if it is no longer the country their parents knew. I was only able to become aware of this by observing a father chatting with his daughter born in France and letting them them talk freely to each other.[7] Finally, my

6 See Pierre Bourdieu, "L'illusion biographique" [The biographical illusion], *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 62-63 (1986): 69-72.

7 Interview with Ratko and Zorana, and occasionally of their daughter, on March 3, 2018, 1h 27min, at their home.

own connection to this research is not insignificant because my grandfather was himself a worker of Yugoslav origin. He came from Pula, Croatia and went to the Parisian suburbs, and he worked at the Uljanik shipyard in Yugoslavia and then at Citroën in France.

My personal and family history is somehow linked to the one I am studying—hence the need to distance myself and follow a reflective approach. Thus, the people whose trajectories I study mainly come from Serbia and have traveled to another French region, the Grand Est, to work for another company, Peugeot. Nevertheless, this experience and sensitivity to the subject invites me to formulate hypotheses based on signicifcant moments experienced by my family, such as arriving in a new country, starting work in an automobile factory, and returning to Yugoslavia during vacations. Because I have a French name, I can play on identities and experience the difference in the interlocutors' viewpoints by choosing whether or not to reveal this family history. This family history sometimes resonates with other stories. Indeed, many people from the working classes have experienced common events in close contexts in Yugoslavia and when they arrived in France. In addition, there are elements in the archives about the common interests between the French and Yugoslav governments in the 1960s regarding Yugoslav emigration.

Encouraging the Use of Yugoslav Workers: France and Yugoslavia's Converging Interests in the 1960s

Before and during the 1960s, Yugoslav emigration was often considered politically motivated and in opposition to Tito's regime,[8] although it is difficult to distinguish clearly between political and economic emigration. At that time, Yugoslavs arriving in France frequently sought refugee status after crossing the Italian border, as illustrated by the case of several members of a family presented in the archives of the administrations as either Hungarian or Yugoslav refugees.[9] However, in the 1960s, France and Yugoslavia had converging interests in terms of their migration policies. French industries were looking for an abundant labor force, while Yugoslavia was faced with a persistently high rate of unemployment. For Yugoslavia, sending unskilled workers abroad made it possible to combat high unemployment, while hoping that the emigrants would return qualified and with the benefit of their professional experience acquired in the "West." Similarly to Moroccans, Portuguese, or Turks, the immigration of most Yugoslavs to Sochaux was closely supervised by the National Immigration Office (ONI), a French state agency created in 1945. The ONI was responsible for bringing contingents of fifty or one hundred people at a time to France, depending on the company's requests. The men recruited in this framework were young, often single, and had just finished their military service. They were regarded as temporary workers and performed difficult work as specialized workers (OS) in bodywork, stamping, or foundry workshops. As a result of these recruitments, Yugoslavs were very numerous in the Montbéliard region. In 1976, foreign workers at Peugeot accounted for 17.1% of the workforce, and Yugoslavs

8 Bošković, "L'émigration yougoslave à Paris."

9 One family in particular can be found in several archival sources. See OFPRA Archives, Departmental Archives of the Territoire de Belfort, Departmental Archives of the Doubs.

were the most common nationality among them (28.2%), followed by Turks (19.6%), Algerians (18.3%), Moroccans (11.8%) and Portuguese (11.4%).[10] The number of Yugoslavs recruited by Peugeot peaked in 1972 with 2792 of the total 6512 workers recruited in 1972. France was the first country to sign a bilateral agreement with Yugoslavia, even before Austria and Sweden in 1966 and West Germany in 1968.

These transnational migrations thus went beyond the partition of the European space into two blocs during the Cold War. The Yugoslav model was original and was often perceived as more open than that of the USSR, even though emigration was prohibited until the 1960s. Moreover, the 1960s were marked by attempts to open up the economy to the West.[11] For young Yugoslavs wishing to go abroad, their imaginations could be turned toward so-called consumer societies. But by emigrating to Western countries, there was also the risk of no longer being considered "good socialists." Thus, the presence of Yugoslav immigrants abroad could be seen as a laboratory for studying the permanence of Yugoslav political ideas abroad.

However, as with the so-called political emigration of the 1950s and 1960s, the emigration of young Yugoslavs in the late 1960s and 1970s was not merely economic, although many young men wanted to find work to improve their personal living conditions, as was the case with Radoslav:

> *J.R.*: Was your family willing to let you go?
>
> *Radoslav*: Oh well listen, I didn't ask their opinion! (…) I got the job at Peugeot, so you have to hold on. You mustn't let go, eh? (*Laughing.*) So there you go. That's my story. But there were a lot of people who were in a better situation, so they left, they left Peugeot. But that's how it was.
>
> *J.R.*: Could you have gone to a country other than France? Did you choose France or…?
>
> *Radoslav*: Well, I chose…I didn't really have a choice. I wanted to start working and then that was it. Once…once you get the job, then you have to keep it.
>
> (…)
>
> Radoslav's neighbor: And you in your idea, when you came, did you think that you would stay a few years and go back home right away or?
>
> Radoslav: Nah, I came with one hundred francs [former French currency] in my pocket. One hundred francs may not have been much, but it was still something. Then the train cost three hundred francs, from here to Belgrade and back, it cost three hundred francs. Then it was a third of the trip. And then I didn't think, I don't know, you can't plan something that isn't…I don't know, when you go into the unknown, you can't know the result.[12]

While one could think of immigration as motivated by individual choices in Radoslav's case, Radoslav insists to the contrary there was

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10 Departmental Archives of the Doubs,1569W308: Housing for immigrants.

11 Frank Georgi, *L'autogestion en chantier: les gauches françaises et le "modèle" yougoslave, 1948-1981* [Self-management in the making: French left-wingers and the Yugoslav "model", 1948-1981] (Nancy: Arbre bleu éditions, 2018), 210.

12 Interview with Radoslav and Weronika, and occasionally of their neighbor, on April 24, 2018, 2h 37min, at their home.

an absence of choice, because his trajectory was linked to structural mechanisms. However, despite these individual departures that might appear to be motivated by personal reasons, most Yugoslav workers continued to send money to their families remaining in Yugoslavia, as was the case with Milan Stamenković. He arrived in France in 1966 after being recruited by the ONI "on behalf of the Peugeot factories in Sochaux," as I learned from his personal file kept in the archives.[13] However, at the age of 23, he tried to commit suicide because, during the major strikes at the factory in 1968, he had no more money to send to his family in Yugoslavia. In a report from the preliminary investigation by the National Gendarmerie, the transcript includes what he told the gendarmes: "I came to France with the intention of working so that I could send some money to my parents and my fiancée. At present, being broke and unable to work because of the strike, I became discouraged thinking of my poor parents. I couldn't see the outcome of this situation, so I wanted to commit suicide by stabbing myself in the heart." The loneliness could be very heavy and the chances of bouncing back after a failure could be slim. Lack of work was then seen as a major failure involving his position and his relationship with his family.

When they arrived in France, Yugoslav immigrants experienced elements not only of rupture but also of continuity with Yugoslavia.

"Going into the Unknown": Ruptures and Continuities in the Trajectories of (Post-) Yugoslav Workers in France

The first element of rupture was the will to leave Yugoslavia, sometimes no matter what the country of destination was, followed by arrival in France. Initially, grouping workers by nationality in Peugeot hotels, language differences, and competitive relationships with workers of other nationalities in the factory could contribute to difficulties in creating links and mutual misunderstanding between people of different nationalities, despite a common consciousness of belonging to the working class. Moreover, the temporary nature of these migrations and the desire to return to Yugoslavia could quickly lead to limited involvement in trade unions and difficulties in imagining the future in the long term. However, when some workers perceived immigration to France as something more long-lasting, the ties were often closer with French people and the choice to naturalize could be explained by various reasons. Even if, at the beginning, some people did not want to stay in France permanently, they had to adapt to this new country, even if certain habits could no longer exist, as a former worker indicates in this interview extract:

> Ratko: In our country, when you live with people, you get out of work at one or two o'clock [in the afternoon]. Until ten o'clock at night, the streets are always full, to walk around, to chat. People who come to France, they think it's dead here. You go out, you don't see anyone. Over there, the neighbors, five or six neighbors around, every morning they come over for coffee, they come to your house, you go to their house. You come from work, you go upstairs, you go past the neighbors: "Come over for coffee." You stay and

13 Departmental Archives of the Territoire de Belfort, 14W289: applications for residence permits.

> chat and then you go home. But here it's a different story. You get out of work, you go straight home.[14]

The gap between illusions and reality could give way to strong disappointment and, starting in the early 1970s, led to returns to Yugoslavia. In fact, after the end of a work contract, some workers found themselves without any prospects. For example, a former specialized worker at Peugeot, who had arrived in France in 1972 through the ONI, had lost his job and his home after his contract with Peugeot was not renewed.[15] He then traveled to several towns with other men in the same situation and was sentenced to two months in prison for theft and receiving stolen goods. He finally received a warning from the Prefect of the Territory of Belfort concerning possible expulsion from French territory. After living under the supervision of the private company Peugeot, their connection with the state and institutions was through police, the judiciary, and places of incarceration. There are several cases of former Peugeot workers who became homeless after their contracts were not renewed, while experience in France has resulted in a decline in their social status. In other cases, strong professional mobility can be observed, as well as sometimes opportunities for social advancement by becoming a team leader by the end of one's career. However, there are more opportunities for social advancement for the worker's children, and in particular for the workers' daughters who have had an extensive.

Moreover, a distance appeared in France from what was happening in Yugoslavia, even if the telephone or television made it possible to keep up to date.[16] To counter this disruptive effect, some people became more involved in what was happening in Yugoslavia and commented more often on current events happening there. However, despite the rupture that came with arriving in France, elements of continuity with life in Yugoslavia still existed. The Yugoslavs recruited by Peugeot had arrived in France in the 1960s and 1970s when they were in their twenties. Throughout their lives, they had had a double experience of Yugoslavia and France. Once they arrived in France, what they had experienced in Yugoslavia, and in particular their experience of politics, continued to influence their behavior and thus constituted a form of continuity. In the context of the post-Schism between Tito and Stalin, some of them even retained a fear of being watched in France and maintained a desire not to be noticed and kept a low profile. Moreover, they also feared losing their jobs and being forced to return to Yugoslavia if they showed too much interest in politics. In the Peugeot plants, the general intelligence services tracked the political activities of left-wing groups, and especially trade unions.[17] The

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14 Interview with Ratko and Zorana, and occasionally of their daughter, on March 3, 2018, 1h 27min, at their home.

15 Departmental Archives of the Territoire de Belfort, 14W221: applications for residence permits.

16 Now mobile phone apps such as WhatsApp can be used, while some cable TV companies broadcast Serbian channels.

17 In a memorandum dated October 7, 1970 on "the social situation at Automobiles Peugeot", written by the Police Commissioner to the Head of the General Intelligence Service, there were successively observations on the "situation of immigrant workers" and on "leftists". Departmental Archives of the Doubs, 1569W338: Peugeot, 1970-1972.

employers' union of the French Labor Confederation (CFT) thus maintained pressure on the other unions and brought immigrant workers closer together. However, this right-wing union was perceived as being composed of "spies."

Moreover, the Yugoslav government feared that immigrants in the West would break with communist ideas. It sought to maintain its influence by, for example, intervening in clubs that organized folk dances. The Serbo-Croat school, whose teachers were paid by the Yugoslav government, was another way of maintaining influence over the emigrants.[18] Thus, Yugoslav immigrants could feel doubly under surveillance by the French and Peugeot general intelligence services and also by the Yugoslav government, which intervened from a distance. This resulted in little involvement in political organizations, and some of them were not allowed to stay in France permanently. In the sources I consulted, the French left-wing trade unions that tried to approach Yugoslav workers lamented that these multiple attempts were often in vain. For example, in the archives of the French trade union of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), there is a mention of the secretary of the Republican Committee of the Federation of Metal Production and Processing Workers of the Socialist Republic of Croatia who spent time in France, particularly in Sochaux. He lamented the "weak unionization of Yugoslav workers."[19]

Continuity with Yugoslavia could also be seen in the social groups that included Yugoslavs. There was a Franco-Yugoslav association in the Montbéliard region and amateur football teams, and several well-known Yugoslav players joined Sochaux's professional club, including Zvonko Ivezić and Meša Baždarević, who also served as models.[20] Some events, such as a week of Yugoslav cinema, were organized by Peugeot or by associations.[21] In addition, starting in mid-1970s and 1980s, the French government developed a policy of maintaining cultural links with immigrants' countries of origin when immigrant families settled in France.[22]

18 Serbo-Croatian was taught as part of the Teaching of Languages and Cultures of Origin (ELCO), a program established in 1977 with the aim of teaching immigrant parents' languages to their children, particularly in cases where families would return to the country of origin with the voluntary return assistance scheme set up the same year. Eight countries were included by the ELCO: Algeria, Yugoslavia, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Turkey. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian instruction was replaced by separate Serbian and Croatian classes.

19 CFDT Archives, 1B301: Meetings of the Federal Working Group "Migrant Workers": preparatory notes, handwritten notes, minutes, study sessions, leaflets 1973-1982.

20 Peugeot's staff newspaper had devoted several articles to Yugoslav football players including Zvonko Ivezić. In an article dated March 4, 1977 and entitled "All about Ivezić", to the question "Do you know JIP and the prognosis page?" Ivezić replied: "I know him, and I like him: this is the only newspaper with Yugoslav news," while an autographed photograph in Serbo-Croatian, with the message: "pozdrav čitaocima JIP," illustrated the article. JIP, no. 125, (Friday, March 4, 1977).

21 Departmental Archives of the Doubs, 1569W308: Housing for immigrants.

22 See Angéline Escafré-Dublet, *Culture et immigration: de la question sociale à l'enjeu politique, 1958-2007* [Culture and immigration: from social to political issues, 1958-2007] (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014).

Women's Trajectories Marked by Men's Employment in France

It is difficult to find the trajectories of women because they are much less present in the archives, and thus it is necessary to ask specifically about their trajectories. Because they came to France mostly in the 1970s with their husbands, it is difficult to know about their lives before arriving in France. Women in general were in the minority within the Peugeot company, as work in the factory was perceived as requiring physical strength reserved for men. Thus, in 1977, they represented only 12% of the staff hired.[23] For foreign women, the rate was even lower. In 1972, for example, no Yugoslav women were hired at all.

In general, Yugoslav women worked more than other immigrant women from other countries, and the employment rate for women in Yugoslavia was relatively high.[24] In the 1970s, some women whose husbands worked for Peugeot were employed in other companies. In the foreigner files of kept in the Departmental Archives, there are cases of women who alternated between periods when they worked and periods when they unemployed. For example, Anka Jovanović, whose husband was a skilled worker (OS) at Peugeot, worked as a cleaner. Another Yugoslav woman was alternately employed as a laundry worker, cleaner, and housekeeper.[25] But in the foreigner files compiled by the prefecture, women were judged more on their morality. In the "miscellaneous information" in the foreigner files at the General Directorate of National Security, indications concerning conduct and morality for women are often noted as "dubious." Regarding a woman who had fled her apartment and left her children alone after receiving death threats and being assaulted and by a man who was harassing her, the gendarmerie noted in a preliminary investigation report: "According to the neighbors, this lady receives visits from time to time from fellow countrymen and women. Although she is under special surveillance on our part, we have not yet been able to establish whether her dwelling is a place of debauchery" or that, "according to rumors," she was friends with "women of promiscuous morals."[26] Rumors occupied a central place in controlling the lives of women, who were constantly judged on their morality.

In addition, beyond the rupture of immigration and work in French factories, Yugoslav workers also experienced internal ruptures in France and in Yugoslavia from a distance.

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23 The Terre Blanche Archives, DOS2012ECR-05116: Sochaux's website – Hired staff: listing, 1978-1979.

24 Chiara Bonfiglioli recalls that "the emancipation of women was one of the objectives of the new socialist order," even if, in reality, gender inequalities remained. Chiara Bonfiglioli, "'Bourgeoises' puis 'traîtres à la nation'. Dissidences féministes vis-à-vis du pouvoir étatique, avant et après la partition de la Fédération yougoslave" ['Bourgeois' then 'traitors to the nation.' Feminist dissent from state power, before and after the partition of the Yugoslav Federation], *Tumultes*, 32-33, no. 1-2 (2009): 171.

25 Departmental Archives of the Territoire de Belfort, 14W278: applications for residence permits.

26 Departmental Archives of the Territoire de Belfort, 14W289: applications for residence permits.

Economic Crises in the 1970s as a Turning Point and the Breakup of Yugoslavia

In the 1970s, Peugeot strengthened its presence abroad by setting up vehicle and parts factories, particularly in Yugoslavia.[27] In France, the end of the 1970s was also a time when the Taylorist model in industry was being called into question and the possibilities of operating factories with fewer workers in order to reduce costs were being raised. At Peugeot, as at other companies, the management chose to reduce the number of workers in the factories, resort to hiring temporary workers en masse, and adopt the Japanese management model of Toyotism.[28] These choices were quickly followed by a period of gradual deindustrialization in the region, with closures of ancillary plants or drastic reductions in the number of employees.

Foreign workers were the most affected by the decrease in hiring. Their employment contracts were not renewed and they were hired far less frequently,[29] and the Sochaux site saw its workforce shrink. Returning to their countries of origin was then encouraged both by the French government and by the companies themselves by offering bonuses. The Yugoslavs, some of whom had always seen their emigration as temporary, were particularly concerned. However, for those who chose to return to Yugoslavia, the offers of training and jobs that arrived on the spot were insufficient, despite what was provided for in the bilateral agreement of 1965 or in the Arger-Knežević arrangement signed with France on December 13 and 14, 1977, which concerned the training of Yugoslavs with a view to their return.[30] However, the economic situation had not really improved in Yugoslavia since the 1960s, and disappointment was often very strong among the former Peugeot workers who had returned to Yugoslavia and taken their families with them. This disappointment was recounted to me by their friends and relatives who had remained in France.

Then, a second moment of rupture appeared with the breakup of Yugoslavia. For the Yugoslav immigrants living in France, the events aroused strong emotions despite the geographical distance. The breakup of the country was seen from the outside, without direct knowledge of what was

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27 Peugeot personnel visited several Yugoslav factories, including factories in Croatia in 1970, and noted in their report: "Croatia has so far had no automobile industry." A mission was carried out in Yugoslavia in 1971. In March 1971, a Yugoslav mission from Novi Sad, composed of directors of several companies, including Utva from Pančevo and Pobeda from Novi Sad, visited Peugeot's factories in Sochaux and Mulhouse. Peugeot executives saw this as an opportunity to be seized and noted, "We attach great importance to the visit of this mission, which should enable us to envisage the assembly of our vehicles in Yugoslavia, as well as the possible production of hundreds of parts in this country." In association with, among others, the marketing company Tehnoservis and the UPIM company, Peugeot had launched projects to build assembly plants and manufacture shock absorbers in Priština in 1979. In 1981, all these projects were seen as "doomed to failure," in particular because of Yugoslav "federalism" and its "conception difficult to grasp in a country like France." The Terre Blanche Archives, DOS 2017 ECR-00793 and DOS 2014ECR-00056.

28 Beaud and Pialoux, *Retour sur la condition ouvrière* [A look back at working class], 29.

29 Thus, we can read in the minutes of the works council dated December 4, 1973, "because of the current economic conditions the President announces that the contracts of 259 Yugoslavs (ONI) will not be renewed." The Terre Blanche Archives, DOS 2013 ECR-00933.

30 National Archives, 19930417/13: Office of Return and Reintegration (Directorate of Population and Migration) (1981-2007). DPM 466: Yugoslavia, 1981-1986.

happening on the spot, which could cause further anxiety. Zorana, who is of Serbian origin and has maintained very strong friendships with people from the other former Yugoslav republics, evokes this period in the following way:

> So we lived together. I had Catholics [coming to visit me], I had [them coming over and] all that. So we didn't have any big problems because, as I said, when someone [Serbs in France] spoke or criticized the Catholics or…well, the Croats or the Muslims, I said "Stop! They lost family like the others. For you, it's easy…" It was easy, when you have a full table: eating, drinking, and criticizing. As I said, "If you are so patriotic, then go ahead [to war]!"[31]

Some became involved in humanitarian aid associations,[32] others had a critical view, and yet others were more outspoken about the conflict, as if to show their legitimacy when they were not in Yugoslavia. Some people stopped seeing each other because they did not share the same point of view. However, these changes were gradual and did not happen overnight.[33] In Sochaux, the Franco-Yugoslav Association became the Franco-Serbian Association and Serbo-Croatian classes were replaced by Serbian classes. But for the former French workers I met, Yugoslavs were still considered Yugoslavs, and some of them told me, "I don't know the difference between a Serb or a Croat."

The breakup of the country is also perceptible in the current hesitations between the words "Yugoslav," "Balkan," or the names of the new Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian states. In Sochaux, there is a grocery store called Balkan, whose name evokes a vast geographical area beyond the negative connotations of this term identified by Maria Todorova[34] in order to attract a diverse clientele originating from this region in the broadest sense. However, the evenings organized by Serbian associations make direct reference to Serbia since they are aimed at a smaller audience of people of Serbian origin. When I mention the word "Yugoslavia" with respondents to refer to the period before the 1990s, the reactions are sometimes immediate. For example, when I met two truck drivers working in Switzerland and living in Sochaux, one of them told me, "This is the former Yugoslavia. There is no Yugoslavia now." But the second one referred more to Yugoslavia with a touch of nostalgia. He then asked me if I knew the history of Yugoslavia, and told me that Tito was "a great man, very intelligent, who knew how to bring people of all nationalities together."[35] While these exchanges are not sufficient to

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31 Interview of Ratko and Zorana, and occasionally of their daughter, on March 3, 2018, 1h 27min, at their home.

32 This is notably the case of the association Solidarity Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was established on 10 July 1992 and chaired by the Sochaux footballer Meša Baždarević.

33 On this subject, Cyril Blondel, Guillaume Javourez, and Marie van Effenterre wrote, "If the conflicts and the collapse of the socialist regime and the confederal organisation are brutal mutations, these phenomena are nonetheless discontinuous in space-time, becoming irreparably but irregularly post-Yugoslav, that is to say, at the same time more really, but still a little, Yugoslav." Cyril Blondel, Guillaume Javourez, and Marie van Effenterre, "Avant Propos" [Foreword], *La Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest* 4, no. 46, (2016): 19.

34 Maria Todorova, *Imaginaire des Balkans* [Imagining the Balkans] (Paris: Éd. de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011).

35 Interview with two people of ex-Yugoslav origin, on December 21, 2017, about 20 minutes, in a café.

be representative, the use of terminology varies a great deal depending on context and the people who are speaking. Finally, in the context of the de-industrialization of the Montbéliard region, some workers' children born in France want to recreate links with their parents' country of origin or even hope to go there to find more opportunities there than in France, as illustrated by this exchange between the daughter of (post-) Yugoslav workers, who wants to live in Serbia, and her parents:

> Daughter: I have all the papers there [in Serbia]!
>
> Father: You're a foreigner!
>
> Daughter: No, no!
>
> Son-in-law: She's a foreigner to France, she's a foreigner to France!
>
> Father: She's a foreigner! Hey, foreigner in France, foreigner over there!
>
> Son-in-law: Yeah...
>
> Father: Foreign everything everywhere!
>
> Son-in-law: A foreigner there, no, she has a Serbian permit.
>
> Daughter [to her father]: No, I have everything.
>
> Father: But she's a foreigner anyway!
>
> Daughter: No, I have all the papers!
>
> Father: Yes, you do!
>
> Daughter: You're the foreigner there [in Serbia], I don't declare myself when I go there!
>
> Mother: Here are the kids, eh! Oh well, she's very attached to Serbia!
>
> The father: Well, she likes...if she could, she'd take the plane every day.
>
> The mother: You know they're talking, in three years' time, if it goes on like this, there will be so many other jobs that they'll have to go and look for people from elsewhere to go work.
>
> Daughter: Let them call me, I want to go!
>
> Mother: Well, then yes, we'll have to see. Then we'll see the vote tomorrow. But that's what we used to say, the advantage in these cases, now the Eastern countries [of Europe], they will advance more than the others. Well, here we are, after the kids, they'll come for vacation. They'll come for vacation, we'll go for vacation.[36]

Thus, the mother hopes and foresees an improvement in the economic situation in Serbia, still in comparison with the Montbéliard region. Indeed, the situation there is always seen through the prism of the situation in France and is therefore sometimes idealized. If the mother and daughter hope for such a reversal, the father recalls the fatalistic risk of always being considered a foreigner, whatever the country.

To conclude, the trajectories of (post-) Yugoslav workers in France from 1965 to the present day have been marked by forms of ruptures and

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36 Interview with Ratko and Zorana, and occasionally their daughter, on March 3, 2018, 1h 27min, at their home.

continuities linked to the political, economic, and social contexts of France and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav emigrants of the 1960s and 1970s often wanted to leave their country of destination in order to improve their living conditions. Thus, depending on the context of the 1960s, the question of choice arises. Subsequently, in lives framed by a paternalistic type of enterprise, the absence of work then becomes unimaginable. This also refers to the valorization of work in working-class cultures, while the Yugoslavs were referred to their "double condition of immigrant workers and OS [skilled worker]."[37]

Existences lived in France were sometimes the source of strong disappointment. While many Yugoslavs returned to Yugoslavia as early as the 1970s, some families remained in France. However, the break in their arrival in France was temporized by the links maintained with Yugoslavia, by upward careers over generations, and by sociability and daily life in France. The elements of rupture are linked to events that can be dated, as well as to upheavals experienced from within, such as arriving in France. The events in Yugoslavia were experienced from a distance and from another country, while deindustrialization in the Montbéliard region has left after-effects and has sometimes given hope to new generations of (re)departures to (post-) Yugoslavia. The breakup of Yugoslavia gave way to a break with the division of cultural places. But this rupture is ambivalent, as can be seen from the terminology and the ever-present hesitations around the words "Serbs," "Balkan," and even "Yugoslav."

Finally, since the 1990s, a new wave of (post-) Yugoslav immigration has been visible in the Montbéliard region, and it concerns different (post-) Yugoslav countries. Thus, even if the country no longer exists, the new states always have a history in common with permanent settlements that go back over time, such as being in a post-socialist society, and followed by intense privatizations and marked by few job offers or prospects for young people.

37 Abdelmalek Sayad, *La double absence: des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré* [The double absence: from the emigrant's illusions to the immigrant's suffering] (Paris: Éditions Points, 2014), 289.

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9. The Terre Blanche Archives, DOS 2013 ECR-00933.

INTERVIEWS

1. Interview with Ratko and Zorana, and occasionally of their daughter, on March 3, 2018, 1h 27min, at their home.
2. Interview with Radoslav and Weronika, and occasionally of their neighbor, on April 24, 2018, 2h 37min, at their home.
3. Interview with two people of ex-Yugoslav origin, on December 21, 2017, about 20 minutes, in a café.

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