

LINKS IN THE CHAIN:

**Department Stores, Modernization of Retail, and the Transformations of
the Urban Environment in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1950-1975**

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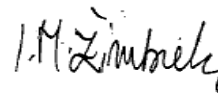
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the development of department stores in Socialist Yugoslavia from the 1950s to the mid-1970s in order to ask what department stores as retail spaces and urban institutions can tell us about the experts and professionals involved in their operations, the urban and social environments they occupied, the socio-economic and political system they emerged in and transformed, and the global setting Yugoslavia was embedded in during the Cold War. The thesis puts to the forefront the discourses and activities of experts and professionals in four groups—retail and trade, architecture and urban planning, urban administration, and home economics—who imagined, planned and constructed Yugoslav department stores from 1950 to 1975. The main case studies in the thesis are RK Beograd and Na-Ma, two largest Yugoslav department store chains, and their activities in Belgrade and Zagreb, the capital cities they were based in, and in Kumrovec and Svetozarevo, two rural and industrial locations where the chains expanded. Comparatively, the thesis also analyzes department stores in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo and Mostar, where the modernization of retail took a different turn, powered by regional retail enterprises.

This thesis consists of four chapters, which cover the main regimes in the development of department stores and modernization of urban retail in Yugoslavia from 1950 to 1975. The first two chapters focus in detail on the development of the Yugoslav retail sector in the 1950s and early 1960s, the initial production of knowledge on modern retail by retail experts, retailers, architects, urban planners, urban administrators, and home economists, and the first appearance of modern retail spaces such as supermarkets and self-service department stores. The third and fourth chapter analyze the expansion of self-service department stores in capital cities Zagreb and Belgrade in the 1960s, and in other urban and rural centers in the 1970s, by mapping

transformations in architectural construction, retailing technologies, professionalization of the workforce, engagement with the self-management system, transnational exchanges of experts and professionals, and modernizing and emancipatory social agendas.

The thesis shows, first, that from 1950 to 1975 Yugoslav retail transformed from a centralized and administrative into decentralized and independent sector, whose modernization began in the late 1950s, blossomed during the 1960s, and further expanded and diversified in the early 1970s. By occupying the physical, social, and mental spaces of the Yugoslav state, department stores were from the 1960s institutionalized as ubiquitous and most tangible features of Yugoslav retailing and consumer culture. Second, the thesis illustrates that the growth of cities in Yugoslavia in the period from the early 1960s was significantly impacted by the construction of department stores, and that retail was significantly incorporated into Yugoslav urban environments. Third, the thesis demonstrates that retail modernization was embedded in the self-management system as an administrative framework, which defined the interactions between experts and professionals, the main location for retail modernization, as well as the popular participation of Yugoslav citizens as consumers. This thesis establishes that modernization of retail and the transformations of urban environments in Yugoslavia were closely intertwined and mutually formative processes, in which a major role was played by various experts and professionals engaged in national, federal and transnational exchanges, with the aim to contribute to the development of Yugoslav self-managed socialism.

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Growing up in Trnsko, a neighborhood in New Zagreb, I have always wondered how come such a place far from the city center, where nothing ever happened, had such a wonderful department store right in the middle of it. Over the years, the urge to answer this question transformed from a child's wonder into a long process of thinking, reading, and writing about Yugoslav department stores. The result of this process is this PhD dissertation, which would have been impossible to complete without the generous intellectual, emotional, and financial support from numerous people, mentors, colleagues, and friends, to whom I am immensely grateful.

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Department store Na-Ma, New Zagreb, sometime in the 1990s.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFŽ - Antifašistička fronta žena (the Antifascist Women's Front)

FAO – United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

ICA – International Cooperation Administration

KDAŽJ - Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena (the Conference for the Social Activity of Yugoslav Women)

MOSU - Mezhdunarodnaya organizatsiya sotsialisticheskikh univermagov (the International Organization of Socialist Department Stores)

NAFC – the National Association of Food Chains

NOB – Narodno-oslobodilačka borba (the National Liberation Struggle)

OOUR - Osnovna organizacija udruženog rada (the Basic Organization of Associated Labor)

PURKJ - Poslovno udruženje robnih kuća Jugoslavije (the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores)

SIV – Savezno izvršno vijeće (the Federal Executive Council)

SKGOJ - Stalna konferencija gradova i opština Jugoslavija (the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia)

SKJ – Savez komunista Jugoslavije (the League of Communists of Yugoslavia)

SOUR - Složena organizacija udruženog rada (the Complex Organization of Associated Labor)

SSRNJ - Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije (the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia)

SŽDJ - Savez ženskih društava Jugoslavije (the League of Women's Organizations of Yugoslavia)

INTRODUCTION

In October 2023, the Croatian media announced that Na-Ma was closing its doors. Na-Ma, short for Narodni magazin (National/People's Department Store), was the biggest department store chain in the Croatian capital Zagreb, established in 1945 by the Yugoslav government. That Na-Ma was forced to sell its two remaining locations was hardly a surprise considering the chain was in bankruptcy since 2001, but the news nevertheless caused an uproar in the media and the public. The residents of the capital city were particularly hurt, lamenting the loss of what many consider the symbol of "the old Zagreb." Articles in daily newspapers, lifestyle magazines, and architecture blogs described the history of Na-Ma as a consumer mecca where the residents of Zagreb could buy anything, as the popular local expression goes, "from the needle to the locomotive." Accompanied by colorful photographs of the store from the 1970s, these articles, whose online posts came with numerous opinionated comments from the readers, expressed a mixture of resentment and sadness over the disappearance of a location that was ingrained in the everyday life of the city. A feeling of nostalgia either for the socialist period or simply "the good old days" was coupled with anger towards the privatization processes of the 1990s and the subsequent bad management of institutions and heritage many came to perceive as common good.

As I write these lines, the future of Na-Ma is still uncertain. Although the city government in the meantime put the chain's two department stores under heritage protection, mandating their future owners to retain their function as retail spaces, the stores still have to be sold by the end of 2024. While the buildings have, at least for now, escaped destruction or repurposing into hotels or office space, the Na-Ma chain will inevitably cease to exist. The death of Na-Ma, while embedded in the history of the destruction caused by the privatization

of Yugoslav enterprises in the 1990s, also forms a part of the global story of the death of department stores, which have been in the decline since the early 2000s.¹

In order to understand the death of department stores, however, we first need to understand their lives. What many of the articles and comments on the closure of Na-Ma revealed was that the lively and heartfelt memories of consumers were not necessarily complemented by a clear understanding of what made Na-Ma such an important retail space and urban institution. Besides a handful of facts and some old photographs, there was very little information in the news coverage not only on how Na-Ma became a modern department store chain, but how it successfully sustained itself in this position for decades, in systems—both socialist and post-socialist—that were not inherently hospitable to its existence. Historical scholarship likewise has not added much more to public discourse on department stores. The histories of consumption and consumerism in Yugoslavia, and under socialism more broadly, have mostly analyzed the perspective of users, their practices, desires, items and cultural representations. Historian Igor Duda described his pioneering study of the Croatian consumer culture in the 1970s and 1980s as “the history of what citizens and consumers saw and received from the stage of history and much less as the history of what happened behind curtains and in small halls, where the show of representing consumer culture was prepared.”²

The aim of this thesis is precisely to look behind these closed doors by exploring the history of department stores in Socialist Yugoslavia from the 1950s to the 1970s. Instead of approaching department stores primarily as stages for consumption, in this thesis I try to understand what department stores as retail spaces and urban institutions can tell us about the activities of their managers and experts, the development of their urban locations, and the socio-

¹ Vicki Howard, *From Main Street to Mall: the Rise and Fall of the American Department Store* (Philadelphia: the University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 6; Rosemary Hill, “The Death of the Department Store,” *London Review of Books* 46, 18, September 26, 2024, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n18/rosemary-hill/at-the-musee-des-arts-decoratifs>

² Igor Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje: Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2010), 15.

economic and cultural aspirations of the system in which they emerged. In other words, what department stores show not just about consumption and consumerism, but about Yugoslav experts and professionals, towns and cities, socio-economic and political changes, and finally about Yugoslav self-managed socialism itself. The thesis is titled “links in the chain” in order to emphasize the “individuals, institutions, technologies, forms of knowledge, and forms of capital” that the study of department stores as important junctions in the commodity chain can illuminate.³

In order to answer these research questions, I analyze discourses and activities of Yugoslav experts and professionals in four areas: retail and trade, architecture and urban planning, urban administration, and home economics. These experts imagined, planned, and built department stores in various Yugoslav urban centers in the period from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s. They were qualified individuals whose institutions required administrative and policy-making activities, who employed specialized, professional language, and were active on national and transnational levels.⁴ While experts were based at research and educational institutions, other professionals, such as retailers, architects, urban planners, and technologists were employed in department store chains, retail enterprises, urban planning institutes and architecture offices.⁵ Very often, as the thesis shows, a single individual held multiple positions, thereby blurring the line between professional employment and expertise.

The analysis of several groups of experts and professionals highlights the variety of actors in a socialist state, their converging and diverging interests as well as moments of

³ Shane Hamilton, “Analyzing Commodity Chains: Linkages or Restraints?” in *Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart*, ed. Warren Belasco, Roger Horowitz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 17.

⁴ Bogdan C. Iacob, Corina C. Doboș, Raluca Grosescu, Viviana Iacob, and Vlad Pașca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective. East European Circulation of Knowledge during the Cold War (1950s-1980s): Introduction to the Thematic Issue,” *East Central Europe* 45 (2018): 147.

⁵ By technologists I understand “professionals with technical expertise” who worked in department store chains and retail enterprises, primarily in technological development of retail. Technologist should not be confused with “technocrat”, which was a pejorative moniker used by Yugoslav politicians to devalue and oust any professional and politician perceived as working against Yugoslav self-managed socialism. For this distinction, see Eden Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende’s Chile* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), 7.

communication and conflict, which defined the planning and construction of modern retail spaces in Yugoslavia. The experts and professionals' activities also went beyond their primary economic or social function into becoming a significant contribution to Yugoslav self-managed socialism.⁶ Many experts and professionals connected to the retail sector, especially in positions of leadership, were politically active in chambers of commerce, economic councils and other governing bodies on local, republic and federal levels. By not defining the socialist state as a monolith entity, but rather as a sum of institutions and actors with similar as well as differing ideas and interests, I perceive Yugoslav experts and professionals as located between the top-down influence of the government and the bottom-up activities of the broader population.⁷

The main case studies in the thesis are Yugoslavia's two largest universal department store chains, Na-Ma from Zagreb and Robne kuće Beograd (henceforth RK Beograd) from Belgrade. Na-Ma was established in the early 1950s, when the centralized department store chain Narodni magazin—established in 1945 by the Yugoslav government in a handful of Yugoslav cities and towns—was transformed into several independent retail enterprises. RK Beograd was established in 1966 through the merger of several minor chains in Belgrade, which was a common phenomenon after the economic reform in 1965. For comparative purposes, I also explore a handful of other retail enterprises, primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I use the term retail enterprise to describe business organizations whose areas of interest encompassed several economic activities such as retail, wholesale, import-export, and foreign trade. Department store chains were also retail enterprises but specialized in a particular retail space, which could either sell all kinds of goods (universal department stores) or only one category (specialized department stores, for example, for furniture or textile and clothing).

⁶ Beth Greene, "Selling Market Socialism: Hungary in the 1960s," *Slavic Review* 73, 1 (2014): 132.

⁷ Krisztina Fehérváry, "Goods and States: the Political Logic of State-Socialist Material Culture," *Cambridge Studies in Society and History* 15, 2 (2009): 428.

While exploring the business history of RK Beograd and Na-Ma as retail enterprises, I also approach them as a springboard to analyze the relationship between their development, the expert and professional groups invested in it, and their urban environments. In urban sociology, the urban environment is defined as a constellation of specific features of cities defined by their physical and social environments and urban resource infrastructure. While the physical environment refers to the built environment and its ecology, the social environment is a collection of norms and values shared by social groups in urban space. Urban resource infrastructure is then the publicly built and managed physical and social support system for the residents.⁸ I use the term urban environment because it highlights the interconnection between the physical and social conditions that shape urban spaces and how people experience them.⁹ This thesis primarily deals with urban retail, with the understanding that the urban environment is not simply a background for historical processes but actively shapes them.

The case-studies in the thesis cover different categories of urban centers in Yugoslavia: Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo as capital cities, Svetozarevo (today Jagodina) and Mostar as regional centers, and the village of Kumrovec, which provides a brief venture into the issue of rural retail. While all locations were headquarters of department store chains, regional retail enterprises, or simply important department stores, the selection of case-studies from three Yugoslav republics—Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina—was a deliberate choice aiming to overcome the “methodological nationalism” in Yugoslav studies.¹⁰ The three republics had shared borders and linguistic intelligibility, but were also distinguished by differences in their respective economic, social, and cultural contexts. This thesis demonstrates

⁸ Danielle C. Ompad, Sandro Galea, David Vlahov, “Urbanicity, Urbanization, and the Urban Environment,” in *Macrosocial Determinants of Population Health*, ed. Sandro Galea (New York: Springer Verlag, 2007), 59-64.

⁹ Gilles Senécal, “Urban Environment: Mapping a Concept,” *Environnement Urbain / Urban Environment* 1 (2007): 4.

¹⁰ Ljubica Spaskovska, *The Last Yugoslav Generation: The Rethinking of Youth Politics and Cultures in Late Socialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 4. For more on methodological nationalism in Yugoslav studies, see Cyril Blondel, “Epistemological, decolonial, and critical reflections in constructing research in former Yugoslavia,” in *Over Researched Places: Towards a Critical and Reflexive Approach*, ed. Cat Button, Gerald Taylor Aiken (London & New York: Routledge, 2022), 39-42.

that the adoption of the pan-Yugoslav perspective is crucial for shedding light on the similarities and differences as well as equalities and inequalities in the Yugoslav federation, while countering the imbalances in historical scholarship, which prioritized some and neglected other republics.

The pan-Yugoslav perspective is also one of the research scales used in the thesis, whose polycentric analysis moves between the local, the national, the federal, and the transnational.¹¹ The local scale deals with the level of cities and towns, the national with the level of republics, and the federal with agendas on the common Yugoslav level. The transnational scale analyzes “the movement of ideas, peoples, and institutions as well as processes across state and national borders”, which the thesis shows were essential for many activities taking place in Yugoslavia.¹² This polycentric analysis is necessary in order to grasp the complexities of Yugoslavia as a state formation. As a federation of six republics and (from 1974) two autonomous provinces, Yugoslavia’s population was nationally, ethnically and religiously diverse, and lived in regions with very different historical backgrounds and socio-economic conditions. From 1950, the political, economic and social backbone of Yugoslavia was the self-management system, whose main feature was the decentralization of governing functions and property management. The self-management system, however, was not a static formation, but underwent several theoretical and practical transformations with its expansion from the workers’ to social self-management in 1953, the 1963 Constitution, the liberalization of the economic system in 1965, the 1974 Constitution and the laws on associated labor in 1976.

The issues of space and scale are crucial for the thesis, whose main theoretical foundation is, in the words of theorist Henri Lefebvre, understanding space not as “an empty

¹¹ Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris, Jacques Revel, “Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History,” *The International History Review* 33, 4 (2011): 576.

¹² Struck, Ferris, Revel, “Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History,” 575.

zone, a container indifferent to its content”, but an element in social reproduction.¹³ I understand space not as a neutral, static concept, but a dynamic and productive one, which, in Lefebvrian terms, “links the mental and the cultural, the social and the historical.”¹⁴ While social space is a hierarchical organization of institutions, conventions, and laws based on minimal consensus, mental space is an arena of representations.¹⁵ To conceptualize space as a dynamic “cluster of relationships” helps map the connections between spaces, societies and states, in turn highlighting how every social institution can be understood in spatial terms.¹⁶ Rather than exhaustively build on Lefebvre’s theoretical apparatus, I base the theoretical framework of the thesis on his three main points: that space is a process of social reproduction, which is characterized by the multiplicity of social practices, and which is ultimately political.¹⁷

The central theoretical proposition of the thesis is that retail has to be understood as a highly spatialized economic, social and cultural activity. Focusing on the spatial dimension of retail is crucial for grasping the relationship between retail as a profession and expertise, the physical construction of old and new urban environments, and the social planning and governing of life in urban areas under Yugoslav self-managed socialism. Based on these concepts, I make two central arguments in the thesis. The first is that from the late 1950s Yugoslav experts and professionals employed in department store chains, expert institutions, and governing bodies powered the modernization of Yugoslav retail, which was based on the expansion of urban retail networks with self-service department stores. The self-service system, introduced to Yugoslavia in the mid-1950s, was a major novelty that changed practices of selling and shopping, packaging and advertising, technology and refurbishing, and architectural

¹³ Henri Lefebvre, “Preface to the new edition: the Production of Space,” in *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings*, ed. Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas, Eleonore Kofman (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 236.

¹⁴ Lefebvre, “Preface to the new edition: the Production of Space,” 232-235.

¹⁵ Henri Lefebvre, “Space and the State,” in *State/Space: A Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, and Gordon MacLeod (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 84-85.

¹⁶ Lefebvre, “Preface to the new edition: the Production of Space,” 234.

¹⁷ Łukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), ix.

and urban design. From the early 1960s, self-service department stores started to emerge in centers of cities, towns and neighborhoods, furnished with imported and locally produced equipment for storing, refrigerating and air-conditioning, as well as escalators, elevators, and in time even mainframe computers. These department stores offered prepackaged food and non-food items, with clearly indicated measures and prices, and services like tailor shops, beauty and hair-dressing salons, furniture showrooms, and restaurants. They were designed by architects and urban planners increasingly well-versed in the design of retail spaces and placed on selected locations aiming to produce livable urban environments. The chains also professionalized the Yugoslav workforce, improved its labor qualifications, working conditions and welfare provisions.

Through these activities Yugoslav experts and professionals introduced retail into various spatial forms and scalar hierarchies of the Yugoslav state, from physical spaces (centers of cities, towns, and neighborhoods) to social spaces (everyday urban life, class and gender relations, the urbanization of rural population) to mental spaces (media, cultural representations, and symbolic imaginaries). In this way by the late 1960s, department stores became institutionalized as the most ubiquitous, tangible features of Yugoslav retail and consumption, and a regular occurrence in the everyday life of Yugoslav citizens in large urban areas. From the early 1970s, this institutionalization process more intensely spread from the capitals into other towns and the countryside, enriched with new retailing methods, technology, and architectural design. Institutionalization, as defined by sociologist Martina Löw, refers to the repetitive character of spatial construction, which produces an impression of generalizability that allows spaces to be perceived and experienced as objective regardless of their embeddedness in specific contexts and power relations, which is exactly what this thesis aims to uncover.¹⁸

¹⁸ Martina Löw, *The Sociology of Space: Materiality, Social Structures, and Action* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 134-138.

Secondly, I argue that the modernization of Yugoslav retail and institutionalization of department stores were not homogenous processes, but rather a result of heterogenous and hybrid knowledge production and implementation put forward by experts and professionals connected to the retail sector. In the decentralized system of Yugoslav self-management, this knowledge production and implementation took place in the negotiation between federal, national, and local agendas, not always with the same outcome. In addition to its heterogeneity, the discourses and activities of experts were hybrid in the sense that transnational exchanges and acquisition of knowledge and technology played a crucial role in their development. From the introduction of the self-service system, which was brought by US businesspeople in the mid-1950s, to business know-how, equipment, technology, architectural design and urban planning of retail spaces, transnational activities of Yugoslav experts and professionals played a key role in the modernization of the retail sector in Yugoslavia. Rather than just copying foreign practices, I show that Yugoslav experts and professionals critically reflected on and consciously implemented practices they saw in countries like West Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden. While their relationships with Western enterprises and research institutions were based on the acquisition of know-how and technology, Yugoslav retailers were also active in sharing their knowledge and experience and exchanging consumer goods with department store chains in European state-socialist countries. Originally arranged between enterprises, institutions and individuals, these transnational activities were from the late 1960s also conducted on a more formal, international level—defined as the promotion of economic and social cooperation between nations—through the International Organization of Socialist Department Stores (*Mezhdunarodnaya organizatsiya sotsialisticheskikh univermagov*, MOSU).¹⁹

¹⁹ For this distinction, see Catherine Krull, “Introduction: Cuba in a Global Context,” in *Cuba in a Global Context: International Relations, Internationalism, and Transnationalism*, ed. Catherine Krull (Miami: University Press of Florida, 2014), 1.

Tools of Modernization: Department Stores in “the East and West”

As an urban history of modern retail in Socialist Yugoslavia with a strong gender and transnational focus, this thesis draws upon a range of sub-disciplines in historical research, from business history, history of retail and consumption, to architecture and urban planning history, and history of expertise and science. This interdisciplinarity, as historians Jon Stobart and Vicki Howard recently noted, has always been a strength of retail history, which needs to include perspectives and methods from various disciplines in humanities and social sciences in order to grasp “the centrality of retailing to many aspects of human experience.”²⁰ A similar conviction was shared already by Yugoslav retailers, who in the mid-1960s described retail as the “mirror of the whole city (...) the level of culture, economic development and behavior of a certain area.”²¹ The issue of development and the role of retail in modernization are some of the central topics in retail history.²² Although scholars have challenged the idea that retail is historically defined only by revolutionary changes, there is still a large interest in studying transformative practices and formats. For understanding the role of retail in economic and social modernization department stores have been particularly important as institutions embedded in the evolving patterns of retail, consumption, labor, and leisure in urban centers.²³ While older scholarship was mostly interested in studying the internal business operations of department stores and their impact on the development of retail, studies emerging after historian Michael B. Miller’s

²⁰ Jon Stobart, Vicki Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” in *The Routledge Companion to the History of Retailing*, ed. Jon Stobart, Vicki Howard (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 2.

²¹ “Zagrebački Velesajam,” *Na-Ma* 9, 1965. See Ivana Mihaela Žimbek, “Mirrors of the city: department stores, urban space and the politics of retail in socialist Yugoslavia” (master’s thesis, CEU, 2018), 36.

²² Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” 4.

²³ Paul Glennie, “Consumption, Consumerism, and Urban Form,” *Urban Studies* 35, 5-6 (1998): 933.

seminal work on the Parisian Bon Marché in the early 1980s have broadened the focus to the relationship between department stores and their cultural, economic, and social environments.²⁴

For a long time hailed as revolutionary spaces for modern retail, department stores in fact continued older retailing practices whilst offering innovations in size, range of goods and services, architectural design, entertainment, and accessibility.²⁵ The everyday distribution of goods and services that took place in department stores, however, should not be understood as universal activities, but a “product of diverse historical contexts, trends, and relationships.”²⁶ By approaching department stores as “social as well as economic institutions”, this thesis aims to contextualize retail activities in Yugoslavia and uncover their impact on the economy and society.²⁷ In this sense, I subscribe to the argument made by Stobart and Howard that retail spaces and places, more than simply shopping or consumer behavior, exert tremendous social and cultural power.²⁸ In the words of Michael B. Miller, “more than a wondrous element of the culture it was designed to serve (and profit from), the department store was a commitment to certain paths that culture was coming to follow.”²⁹

For this reason, this thesis builds on scholarship interested in department stores as tools of modernization that can help us explore broader socio-economic contexts. Unlike the large body of work that focuses on department stores in Western Europe and North America, this thesis is novel in analyzing their role in the context of Yugoslav self-managed socialism.³⁰ The

²⁴ Geoffrey Crossick, Serge Jaumain, “The world of the department store: distribution, culture and social change,” in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick, Serge Jaumain (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), 17.

²⁵ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Small Shops and Department Stores,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 271.

²⁶ Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” 8.

²⁷ Howard, *From Main Street to Mall*, 6.

²⁸ Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” 9.

²⁹ Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3-4.

³⁰ In the late 1990s, historians Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain pointed out that histories of department stores were confined to national borders, dealing predominantly with four locations: US, UK, Germany and Paris. Although in the meantime more studies have appeared on department stores in other contexts, like Canada, Spain, and East Asia, there is still a lack of nationally and transnationally diverse perspectives. See Crossick, Serge Jaumain, “The world of the department store,” 18. For studies outside the four locations, see Kerrie L. Mcperson (ed.), *Asian Department Stores* (London: Routledge, 1998); Cecilia Fredriksson, “The Making of a Swedish

contribution lies both in switching the geographical focus to East-Central and Southeastern Europe and the political and socio-economic focus to socialism in the second half of the twentieth century. More than just an addition to the history of department stores in the Western world, by demonstrating the proliferation of department stores in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, this thesis also challenges the existing periodization according to which department stores reached their zenith in the early 20th century.³¹

The issue of retail in state-socialist Europe has previously been discussed in historical scholarship on consumption. Consumption, which historians Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger argued is a more value-neutral term than consumerism, refers to “a plethora of phenomena connected to the appraisal, distribution, and even production of goods and services—whether ingested (literally consumed), used, or experienced.”³² Bren and Neuburger’s edited volume on the history of consumption in European state-socialist countries was one of the formative studies of this phenomenon, which was for decades trapped in the interpretative paradigm of “shortages.”³³ Part of the Cold War interpretative approach that negatively overgeneralized socio-economic and cultural phenomena in the Soviet Union and European state-socialist regimes, the scholarly insistence on the prism of shortage described consumption under state-socialism as imposed, scarce, dissatisfying, and failed.³⁴ In contrast, I follow the proposal made by historian Julie Hessler in her study on Soviet trade, that shortage should primarily be

Department Store Culture,” in *The Shopping Experience*, ed. Pasi Falk, Colin Campbell (London: Sage, 1997); Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Alejandro J. Gómez del Moral, *Buying into Change: Mass Consumption, Dictatorship, and Democratization in Franco's Spain, 1939–1982* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021).

³¹ Sarah Elvins, “History of the Department Store,” in *The Routledge Companion to the History of Retailing*, ed. Jon Stobart, Vicki Howard (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 147.

³² Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger, “Introduction,” in *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, ed. Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

³³ The concept of shortage comes from the work of the Hungarian economist János Kornai. See János Kornai, *Growth, Shortage, and Efficiency: A Macrodynamic Model of the Socialist Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

³⁴ Paul Betts, “The Politics of Plenty: Consumerism in Communist Societies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen A. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 425; Marjorie L. Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” in *The Routledge Companion to the History of Retailing*, ed. Jon Stobart, Vicki Howard (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 396.

understood as a historical phenomenon rather than an explanatory mechanism.³⁵ State-socialist retail and consumption, therefore, need to be analyzed in their own right, but sensitive to the similarities and differences between countries that formed the European side of the Eastern Bloc.³⁶

Since the 2000s, a growing body of literature has mapped the different manifestations, practices and spaces of consumption in European state-socialist countries. This change has taken place thanks to the opening of the archives in the 1990s and the new approaches in social and cultural history centered on subjectivities and socio-cultural practices, which have developed as a criticism of the older interpretations of the Cold War period.³⁷ Instead of assuming that consumer cultures are inherently capitalist, these new studies argued that retail and consumption are “foundational, rather than incidental to, the establishment and consolidation of socialist power.”³⁸ Consequently “any attempt to understand Eastern European communism [is] incomplete without a consideration of the social, political, and cultural roles played by retailers and consumers.”³⁹

Before the First World War, the development of retail in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe echoed what was happening in Western Europe and North America. Infused with local customs and practices, albeit on a smaller scale, cities in these regions had

³⁵ Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10.

³⁶ Bren, Neuburger, “Introduction,” 7.

³⁷ See Amy E. Randall, *The Soviet Dream of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand: The Politics of Consumerism in East Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Natalya Chernyshova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era* (London: Routledge, 2015); Elena Bogdanova, Timo Vihavainen (ed.), *Communism and Consumerism: The Soviet Alternative to the Affluent Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Cristofer Scarboro, Diana Mincyte, Zsuzsa Gille (ed.), *The Socialist Good Life: Desire, Development, and Standards of Living in Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020); Tibor Valuch, *Everyday Life Under Communism and After: Lifestyle and Consumption in Hungary, 1945-2000* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2021); Magdalena Eriksroed-Burger, Heidi Hein-Kircher, Julia Malitska (ed.), *Consumption and Advertising in Eastern Europe and Russia in the Twentieth Century* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). For an additional overview, see Alexander Vari, “Satisfying Material Desires: The Politics and Experience of Consumerism in the Eastern Bloc,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, 1 (2014): 135-143

³⁸ Marjorie L. Hilton, “Perspectives on Eastern European Retailing and Consumption,” *History of Retailing and Consumption* 4, 2 (2018): 112.

³⁹ Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” 397.

their own *grands magasins* and arcades (which in Southeastern Europe locally originated from the Ottoman *bezistan*, a type of covered bazar). In the lands that would later become Socialist Yugoslavia, department stores first appeared in capital cities in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Kastner & Öhler department store in Zagreb belonged to the first Austro-Hungarian chain established in the late 19th century by two Czech businessmen.⁴⁰ In the early 20th century, Ljubljana's Urbančeva Hiša (Urbanc House) was established by the local industrialist Felix Urbanc, and Robni magazin (Department Store) in Belgrade by the Jewish banker Bencion Buli; both were built in the art nouveau style.⁴¹

The destruction of the First and Second World Wars paused the development of department stores, which continued in a new way with the establishment of the Soviet Union and European state-socialist regimes.⁴² After the first postwar years of austerity, rationing, and industrialization, from the late 1950s these regimes increasingly sought to improve retail and consumption through the import, production and distribution of consumer goods and services, which were mostly oversaw by state department store and supermarket chains as well as cooperatives.⁴³ Political and economic reformism and emphasis on profit-making intensified the growth of the retail sector from the mid-1960s, and diversified the stores, goods and services on offer, a process that lasted until the late 1970s, after which years of decline ended in the collapse of the 1990s.⁴⁴

Under these broad strokes, as historian Marjorie L. Hilton emphasized, “some countries expanded and diversified their retail economies more fully than others.”⁴⁵ Among them, Yugoslavia was certainly the leader in the creation of a vibrant consumer culture, as numerous

⁴⁰ Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” 397-398.

⁴¹ “Nekoč Urbančeva palača... danes Galerija Emporium,” accessed October 10, 2024 https://www.galerijaemporium.si/v_modi_od_leta_1903.php; Čedomila Marinković, “A Walk Through Jewish Interwar Belgrade,” Ester.rs, accessed October 10, 2024 <https://ester.rs/jevreji-u-beogradu/>

⁴² For a more detailed overview, see Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” 399-405.

⁴³ Greene, “Selling Market Socialism,” 108.

⁴⁴ Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” 405-409.

⁴⁵ Hilton, “Retailing in Russia and Eastern Europe,” 407.

works on the history of consumption, tourism, and popular culture in Yugoslavia attest.⁴⁶ The regime's split with the Soviet Union in 1948 marked the beginning of what historian Patrick Hyder Patterson called the "Yugoslav dream", a particular and specifically Yugoslav model of consumption, which emerged from the political and socio-economic characteristics of the Yugoslav "third way" while simultaneously legitimizing them.⁴⁷ Development of light industry, production and import of consumer goods, focus on personal consumption and the living standard, emphasis on profit-making after the 1965 economic reform, and the Yugoslav government's openness to foreign influences and experimentation stood behind the specificity of consumption in Socialist Yugoslavia.⁴⁸ As Patterson noted, "Yugoslav consumerism and mass culture that embodied it were the products of a complicated back-and-forth between party-state representatives, businesspeople and enterprise leaders, and ordinary members of the consumer public, all of them deeply involved in the continual cycle of buying and selling."⁴⁹

While many authors, as I mentioned earlier, analyzed the multi-faceted aspects of the Yugoslav consumer culture by focusing on the goods, images and consumers, much less has been said about the professionals and institutions that stood behind its development. Even when approached from the angle of business history, whose venturing "eastward", as historians

⁴⁶ See Hannes Grandits, Karin Taylor (ed.), *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)* (Budapest, CEU Press, 2010); Breda Luthar, Maruša Pušnik (ed.), *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2011); Igor Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem: O povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2014); Branislav Dimitrijević, *Potrošeni socijalizam: kultura, konzumerizam, i društvena imaginacija u Jugoslaviji (1950-1974)* (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2016); Ildiko Erdei, "Consumer Culture from Socialist Yugoslavia to Post-socialist Serbia: Movements and Moments," in *Approaching Consumer Culture: Global Flows and Local Contexts*, ed. Evgenia Krasteva-Blagoeva (Cham: Springer, 2018); Polona Sitar, "Workers becoming tourists and consumers: social history of tourism in socialist Slovenia and Yugoslavia," *Journal of Tourism History* 12, 3 (2020): 254-274.

⁴⁷ Patrick Hyder Patterson, *Bought & Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), xvi.

⁴⁸ Several studies have dealt with foreign influences on Yugoslav everyday life and culture. For Americanization, see Radina Vučetić, *Coca-cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2018). For Mediterraneanization, see Anita Buhin, *Yugoslav Socialism Flavored with Sea, Flavored With Salt: Mediterraneanization of Yugoslav Popular Culture in the 1950s and 1960s under Italian Influence* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2022). For my critique of the Americanization approach, see chapter 1.

⁴⁹ Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 4.

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica and Saša Vejzagić recently argued, has in any case been slow, the interest in studying Yugoslav retail is very small in comparison to the industrial sector.⁵⁰

The exception is Patterson's work on advertising and marketing in Yugoslavia, and retail in grocery and department stores in East Central Europe.⁵¹ To the often posed question whether there was a distinctively socialist consumer culture, Patterson's answer is no.⁵² Rather, consumer cultures that developed in countries like Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and GDR, were hybrid; they stemmed from various sources and grew in their own way within their particular socialist political and socio-economic systems. A major element in this hybridity was the transnational character of business practices and ideas, which were directly imported from the West through professional literature and exchanges, international conferences, and trade fairs.⁵³ Both arguments are essential for this thesis, which offers for the first time a detailed account of the professionals and experts who powered the development of department stores, retail, and conversely, consumption in Yugoslavia. Although the relationship between department stores and their urban and socio-economic environments stands at the forefront, the thesis also explores the business history of Yugoslavia largest retail enterprises.

State-Socialist Cities Beyond Failure-Centrism

In the constellation of relationships between department stores and their economic, social and cultural contexts, a pertinent issue and another major topic in retail history is the relation

⁵⁰ Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, Saša Vejzagić, "Business History Goes East: An Introduction," *Business History* 65, 7 (2023): 1119.

⁵¹ See Patrick Hyder Patterson, "Truth Half Told: Finding the Perfect Pitch for Advertising and Marketing in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1950–1991," *Enterprise & Society* 4, 2 (2003): 179–225; Patrick Hyder Patterson, "Risky Business: What Was Really Being Sold in the Department Stores of Socialist Eastern Europe?" in *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, ed. Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116–139; Patrick Hyder Patterson, "The Prague Spring and the Big Chill: the marketing moment in communist Czechoslovakia," *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 8, 1 (2016): 120–140.

⁵² Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 4.

⁵³ Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 4.

between department stores and the city.⁵⁴ As large institutions that emerged and spread in urban areas, department stores are some of the most obvious phenomena to provide insight into the growth and changes in urban space, innovations in architectural design and construction technology, and space “at a finer scale” of store interiors and storefronts.⁵⁵ Scholarship that forms what historian Lizabeth Cohen calls the urban history of consumption is abundant.⁵⁶ Although again primarily focused on the Western world, these studies show that department stores drove urban growth in the late 19th and early 20th century, particularly by supporting the development of city centers and downtown areas. After the Second World War, department stores also took part in the demise of the downtown, as major players in suburban expansion, powered by the rise in automobility.⁵⁷

Unlike the enterprises and professionals, state-socialist department stores were more frequently analyzed in architectural histories, artistic research, and popular writing, although they are often approached vis-à-vis socialist-modernist aesthetics, oeuvres of individual architects, and contemporary status of state-socialist heritage.⁵⁸ These studies are, moreover, frequently focused on representative buildings of large department stores or those designed by celebrated architects, which, as I show in the thesis, were in the Yugoslav case only a handful

⁵⁴ Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” 5-6.

⁵⁵ Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing,” 6.

⁵⁶ Lizabeth Cohen, “Is There and Urban History of Consumption?” *Journal of Urban History* 29, 2 (2003): 105.

⁵⁷ Howard, *From Main Street to Mall*, 3. See also, Kathleen James, “From Messel to Mendelsohn: German department store architecture in defense of urban and economic change,” in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick, Serge Jaumain (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), 343-375; Jan Whitaker, *Department Store: History, Design, Display* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011); Louisa Iarocci, *The Urban Department Store in America, 1850-1930* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Emily M. Orr, *Designing the Department Store: Display and Retail at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

⁵⁸ Just for Yugoslavia, see Iva R. Marković, Mladen G. Pešić, “Architectural Representation of the Socialist Consumer Society: Department Store Belgrade in the Self-Governing Socialism,” *Architecture & Education Journal* 8-9 (2013): 265-279; Alen Žunić, Zlatko Karač, “Robne kuće i opskrbni centri Aleksandra Dragomanovića,” *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam* 23, 2 (2015): 276-303; Nataša Bodrožić, Lidija Butković Mićin, Saša Šimpraga (ed.), *Pejzaži potrošačke kulture u Socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb & Eindhoven: Slobodne veze, Onomatopee, 2018); Ana Zorić, Aleksandra Đorđević, “Robne kuće Beograd i konzumerizam u Jugoslaviji 1960ih,” in *Na međi umetnosti i inženjerstva: Studije o posleratnoj arhitekturi u Beogradu i Srbiji*, ed. Luka Skansi (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2021), 268-291. See also Donald Niebyl, “17 Examples of the Stunning Architectural Modernism of Yugoslav Department Stores,” *Spomenik Database*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.spomenikdatabase.org/post/17-examples-of-the-stunning-architectural-modernism-of-yugoslav-department-stores>.

from the hundreds of department store projects. Most of Yugoslav department stores were rather what architecture historians Vladimir Kulić and Maroje Mrduljaš called “the architecture of everyday life”, utilitarian buildings whose ubiquity made them invisible to the eye.⁵⁹ Uncovering this invisible architecture is precisely one of the aims of the thesis, which maps the diversity of department stores as architectural types and built forms as well as their interaction with the urban and socio-economic environments in Yugoslavia.

Architecture and urban space in the Soviet Union and European state-socialist countries were, similarly to consumption, for decades analyzed in historiography through a perspective that anthropologist Michał Murawski called “failure-centrism.”⁶⁰ A failure-centric approach overgeneralized diverse architectural and urban spaces in state-socialist landscapes as being uniformly unsuccessful in their aesthetics, purpose, or legacy. As architecture historians Daria Bocharnikova and Steven E. Harris wrote,

(...) the history of the socialist city remains all too often a story of failed utopian visions from the 1920s, followed by the bizarre socialist realist monumentalism of Stalinism, and ending in an undifferentiated collection of drab and gray concrete mass housing. The inhabitants of the socialist city lived in this final petrified stasis only to be awakened after 1989/1991 to the forces of neoliberalism and late capitalism, and the concomitant cultural manifestations of postmodernism.⁶¹

In order to go beyond this failure-centric perspective, I follow the guidance of a growing body of scholarship that tries to understand the specificities of socialist cities and their role in shaping state-socialist regimes.⁶² Rather than just focusing on architectural histories, this thesis

⁵⁹ Maroje Mrduljaš, Vladimir Kulić, *Modernism in-between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Berlin: Jovis, 2012), 167-169.

⁶⁰ Michał Murawski, “Actually-Existing Success: Economics, Aesthetics, and the Specificity of (Still-)Socialist Urbanism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, 4 (2018): 908-909.

⁶¹ Daria Bocharnikova, Steven E. Harris, “Second World Urbanity: Infrastructures of Utopia and Really Existing Socialism,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, 1 (2017): 2-3.

⁶² See David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002); Kimberly E. Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2011); Kimberly E. Zarecor, “What Was So Socialist about the Socialist City? Second World Urbanity in Europe,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, 1 (2015): 95-117; Ákos Moravánszky, Karl Kegler (ed.), *Re-Scaling the Environment: East West Central—Re-Building Europe, 1950–*

builds on more interdisciplinary approaches aiming to understand the various dimensions of architecture and urban space in the European state-socialist context together with the actors that invested, designed, built and used them.⁶³ A central consideration is therefore placed on the interaction between different actors engaged in the planning and construction of architectural and urban projects under state-socialism. As historian Brigitte Le Normand illustrated in her study of New Belgrade, urban planning projects in Yugoslavia were a result of the interaction between architects and urban planners as well as political actors, housing management and investors, whose operational framework was defined by specific economic and housing policies as well as financial and informational resources.⁶⁴

By focusing on architects and urban planners as well as other experts and professionals who were involved in the planning and construction of Yugoslav department stores, this thesis follows architecture historian Ákos Moravánsky's proposal that in order to lend visibility to the state-socialist architectural discourse, and go beyond the blind spots in its histories, it is important to "give voice to protagonists and witnesses."⁶⁵ In order to do this, I pay attention not only to urban forms but also to urban practices, which architecture historian Eve Blau, following Lefebvre, defines as "the authored production of material structures and physical spaces, and

1990. Vol. 2. *East-West Central* (Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2016); Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange (ed.), *Re-Framing Identities, Architecture's Turn to History, 1970–1990*. Vol. 3. *East-West Central* (Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2016); Vladimir Kulić (ed.), *Second World Postmodernisms: Architecture and Society under Late Socialism*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Łukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); Christina Crawford, *Spatial Revolution: Architecture and Planning in the Early Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022); ed. Jasna Mariotti, Kadri Leetmaa (ed.), *Urban Planning During Socialism: Views from the Periphery* (London: Routledge, 2024). For Yugoslavia, see Vladimir Kulić, Martino Stierli (ed.), *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia, 1948-1980* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018); Lea Horvat, *Harte Währung Beton: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Massenwohnungsbaus im sozialistischen Jugoslawien und seinen Nachfolgestaaten* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2014).

⁶³ See anthropological studies, such as Krisztina Fehérváry, *Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Michał Murawski, *The Palace Complex: A Stalinist Skyscraper, Capitalist Warsaw, and a City Transfixed* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

⁶⁴ Brigitte Le Normand, *Designing Tito's Capital: Urban Planning, Modernism, and Socialism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 103.

⁶⁵ Ákos Moravánsky, "Foreword: East West Central: Re-Building Europe," in *Re-Humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950-1970*, Vol. 1. *East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánsky, Judith Hopfengärtner (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 10.

the production and instrumentation of forms of knowledge.”⁶⁶ This approach conceptualizes built forms and urban space as another type of product of knowledge and theories, which “are manufactured in material spaces where they can be worked out, refined, and given more definite form.”⁶⁷ In this understanding, products of knowledge are also artifacts, whose fabrication, as political theorist Begüm Adalet emphasized, requires “material networks that they can inhabit and transverse.”⁶⁸

The materialization of the state, therefore, should not be seen as a unified and coherent process, but a “fluid and variable” construction.⁶⁹ The fluidity of this process, however, is not synonymous to accidentality or improvisation. Quite the opposite; as Murawski noted, the urbanization of socialist societies, and the ensuing construction of socialist urbanity, were highly conscious processes, whose results are some of the most tangible achievements of state-socialist regimes.⁷⁰ In Murawski’s words, “the city—its architecture, infrastructure, and social life—constitute the key site of making and unmaking socialism.”⁷¹ The basis of this construction, as this thesis also attests, were political and economic imperatives to transform capitalism into socialism, and to create the physical, institutional and intellectual superstructures to consolidate this transformation.⁷²

⁶⁶ Eve Blau, “Modernizing Zagreb: The Freedom of the Periphery,” in *Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe, 1890-1940*, ed. Jan C Behrends, Martin Kohlrausch (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014), 295.

⁶⁷ Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 4.

⁶⁸ Adalet, *Hotels and Highways*: 4.

⁶⁹ Virág Molnár, *Building the State: Architecture, Politics and State Formation in Post-war Central Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), 10-12.

⁷⁰ Michał Murawski, “Marxist Morphologies: A materialist critique of brute materialities, flat infrastructures, fuzzy property, and complexified cities,” *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 82 (2018): 19.

⁷¹ Murawski, “Marxist Morphologies,” 19.

⁷² Murawski, “Actually-Existing Success,” 919-920.

Experts and Professionals, at Home: Navigating the Social Self-Management System

In order to grasp the diversity of actors and institutions involved in the imagining, planning and construction of department stores in Yugoslav towns and cities, this thesis centers the processes of knowledge production and implementation conducted by Yugoslav retail experts and retailers, architects and urban planners, urban administrators, and home economists on the national, federal and international levels. The focus on experts and professionals is fortified by a growing body of scholarship demonstrating the centrality of expertise and planning in the twentieth century, particularly after 1945.⁷³ While planning is difficult to universally define, an important feature of planning thought during the Cold War was a shared belief in the absolute necessity of planning for modernization, understood throughout the thesis as socio-economic and technological development.⁷⁴

Although most of the literature focuses on the role of Western experts, from the 2000s more and more scholars have dealt with the issue of state-socialist expertise, to which this thesis also contributes.⁷⁵ Scholarship on state-socialist experts makes two important points for the thesis. The first relates to the commonalities and the specificities of state-socialist experts vis-à-vis their non-socialist counterparts, and the second to the transnational encounters and exchanges between the experts as essential to their work. As I wrote previously, following a definition proposed by historians Bogdan C. Iacob, Corina C. Doboș, Raluca Grosescu, Viviana Iacob and Vlad Pașca, state-socialist experts were qualified individuals employed in institutions and professional bodies responsible for administration and policymaking in specific fields, who

⁷³ Iacob, Doboș, Grosescu, Iacob, Pașca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 146; Michael Christian, Sandrine Kott, Ondřej Matějka, “Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction,” in *Planning in Cold War Europe: Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-197s)*, ed. Michael Christian, Sandrine Kott, Ondřej Matějka (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2018), 2. See also, Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 16.

⁷⁴ Christian, Kott, Matějka, “Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction,” 4.

⁷⁵ Iacob, Doboș, Grosescu, Iacob, Pașca, 148. See also, *Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe. The Internationalization of Knowledge and the Transformation of Nation States since World War I*, ed. Martin Kohlrausch, Katrin Steffen, Stefan Wiederkehr (Osnabrück, Fibre Verlag, 2010); Reka Krizmanics, Vedran Duančić, “Eager to (let) know: knowledge production and dissemination in state socialist Eastern Europe,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 30, 2 (2023), 143–156.

employed specialized language, and participated in national and transnational exchange.⁷⁶ These experts were, moreover, often highly positioned party members as well as members of international organizations. As the authors noted, “socialist experts (...) [were] formally agents of planned, ideologically conditioned knowledge inextricably tied to a project of societal change delineated by a particular form of party-state.”⁷⁷ Although I disagree that ideologically conditioned knowledge was, especially during the Cold War, only characteristic for state-socialist experts, this thesis demonstrates that Yugoslav experts indeed saw their activities as part and parcel of the political and socio-economic transformation of Yugoslavia. While it is difficult to characterize Socialist Yugoslavia as a party-state in the same way as the Soviet Union or other European state-socialist regimes, the self-management system, as central and specific to Yugoslav socialism, was crucial for the activities and discourses of Yugoslav experts.

The self-management system set both the framework for expert activities and, as I show in the thesis, was in the case of retail also an object of study that the experts wanted to improve. Introduced in 1950 with the Law on Management of State Economic Associations by Work Collectives, the self-management system gave the control over enterprises to the workers. With the constitutional amendments in 1953, the self-management system further expanded from the workers’ to social self-management, which referred to the organs of Yugoslav citizens and organizations in communes (*komuna*).⁷⁸ Defined as the “basic cell[s] of self-management of citizens in common affairs”, communes received a substantial increase of their powers, which included taxation and participation in the affairs of enterprises on their territory.⁷⁹ The sub-unit

⁷⁶ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 147.

⁷⁷ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 148.

⁷⁸ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 251-253; John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 76. For some terms I provide the original expressions in Serbo-Croatian, while recognizing that they were different in other languages of Yugoslavia. All translations are mine, unless stated otherwise.

⁷⁹ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia’s Way: The Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia* (New York: All Nations press, 1958), 168-176; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 77.

of the commune was the housing community (*stambena zajednica*), which was a socio-economic unit in charge of a particular neighborhood. The 1963 Constitution transformed the commune into the county (*općina*) and the housing community into the local community (*mjesna zajednica*), which was made mandatory in the 1974 Constitution. Local communities were more consolidated and had more powers than housing communities but were similarly smaller units of the commune and not identical to the neighborhood (*stambeno naselje*) as an exclusively urban unit.⁸⁰ Local communities represented a counterpart to the workers' council, in the sense that, as Igor Duda wrote, Yugoslav citizens in the role of workers took part in workers' self-management at their workplaces, while in their places of residence they assumed the role of consumers of goods and services, who could decide on the redistribution of income for the satisfaction of common needs and interests.⁸¹ In this sense, Yugoslav citizens as self-managers had a dual role, as producers and as consumers, and in both of these roles they could theoretically participate in governance on the local level.

The self-management system regulated economic and state institutions, with the central aim to coordinate "socialist society through popular participation."⁸² This made the decentralization that began in 1950 not just an economic, but also a social and administrative process, which transferred enterprises and state institutions from the federal to the republic level and all the way down to the enterprise and the housing/local community.⁸³ After the economic reform in 1965 and the political crisis in the early 1970s, the Yugoslav government overhauled the self-management system with the 1974 Constitution. As I explain in detail in chapter 4, in order to remedy the supposed obstruction of self-management posed by the growing

⁸⁰ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia's Way*, 168-176; Igor Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu: mjesna zajednica i svakodnevica društvenog samoupravljanja u Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2023), 9-10.

⁸¹ Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, 10.

⁸² Goran Musić, *Making and Breaking the Yugoslav Working Class: The Story of Two Self-Managed Factories* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2021), 1.

⁸³ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 252; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 77.

“bureaucracy”, the government introduced the Law on Associated Labor in 1976, which transformed entire enterprises into self-managing councils. Rather than taken literally, “bureaucracy” should be seen as a “floating signifier” used by the Yugoslav government to denote any kind of subversive activity supporting etatism, nationalism, or liberalism, usually by the so-called “technocratic elites.”⁸⁴

While scholarship has extensively focused on workers’ self-management—often synonymizing it with the entire self-management system—much less work was dedicated to social self-management.⁸⁵ As historian John B. Allcock stated, although the interdependence of enterprises and communes was often underestimated, the characteristics and socio-economic consequences of the system can only be understood when viewed together.⁸⁶ Although the workers’ self-management system existed in department stores and retail enterprises, this thesis is much less interested in analyzing it since the research focus goes beyond an exhaustive exploration of the enterprises’ internal operations. Rather, by concentrating on expertise and professionalism, this thesis illustrates the social self-management system as a complex political, socio-economic and administrative framework that defined the activities and interactions between experts and professionals employed at various enterprises and institutions. As this thesis shows, particularly in the case of decision-making and finances, the social self-management system could both improve and hinder planning and implementation.

In addition to highlighting the self-management system as an operational framework, I also suggest that through retail various Yugoslav experts and professionals conceptualized and aimed to improve social self-management. This happened on several levels. Firstly, when in

⁸⁴ Marko Grdešić, “Serbia’s Anti-bureaucratic Revolution as Manipulation? A Cultural Alternative to the Elite-Centric Approach,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58, 3 (2016): 774–803; Rujana Rebernjak, “From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration: Designing the Bureaucracy of Self-Management in Postwar Yugoslavia,” *Grey Room* 86 (2022): 55.

⁸⁵ A notable exception is Igor Duda’s recently finished project on “microsocialism” in Yugoslavia. See Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, and Igor Duda (ed.), *Mikrosocijalizam. Mikrostrukture jugoslavenskoga socijalizma u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih*, (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2023).

⁸⁶ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 252; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 78.

the decentralization processes in the early 1950s the Yugoslav government transferred enterprises from the federation to lower governing levels, retail became one of the main economic activities in the communes. Retail experts and urban administrators expected communes to significantly invest into the modernization and expansion of retail networks in their territories, in order to improve the supply of the residents with consumer goods and consequently their living standard. Communes were in turn also interested in supporting strong local retail enterprises because they could through income tax significantly improve the communes' financial standing. Secondly, the social and economic relevance of retail for the social self-management system required an additional level of popular participation, which led to the establishment of the system of consumer councils, which were self-governing bodies of citizens engaged in improving retail and supply in their territories.⁸⁷

Finally, as I argue in chapter 2, in the first phase of the social self-management system, which lasted roughly until the 1963 Constitution and the economic reform in 1965, Yugoslav women's organizations, home economists, the mass organization the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije*, SSRNJ) and urban administrators conceptualized communes as extensions of family structures, in which household work could be socialized through welfare institutions and services.⁸⁸ The main motor behind this conceptualization were women's organizations, the League of Women's Associations of Yugoslavia (*Savez ženskih društava Jugoslavije*, SŽDJ) and the Conference for the Social Activity of Women of Yugoslavia (*Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena*, KDAŽJ), who in the mid-1950s established Centers for Home Economics, which were interdisciplinary hubs dedicated to the modernization of household work and reproductive labor. From the early 1950s to the late 1960s, home economists were actively engaged in the

⁸⁷ Kardelj, Edvard. "Neki problem tržišta i organizacije unutrašnje trgovine." *Nova trgovina* 1, 1956.

"For a detailed account of consumer councils in Socialist Yugoslavia, see chapter 2.

⁸⁸ Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, 7-8.

modernization of retail within communes because they believed it played an important role in the overall modernization of household work, with the end-goal of improving the social status and living standard of Yugoslav women.

Although home economists, who were mostly women, engaged in the modernization of retail only for a limited period, the focus on them and women's organizations plays an important part in mapping not just the professional and intellectual heterogeneity of expert voices, but also the gendered dimensions of expertise. By encompassing the diversity of expert voices, this thesis challenges universal definitions of expertise, in which highlighting gender inequalities plays a prominent part.⁸⁹ In order to go beyond the dominant dichotomy of male experts and managers and female workers in retail, this thesis sheds light on the important but neglected role of Yugoslav women as experts in modernization of retail that took place within the women's organizations' agenda to improve the everyday life of women and families in the Yugoslav society. In addition, the focus on conceptualizing the possibilities of social self-management rather than just existing socio-economic and political mechanisms illustrates another aspect of planning, which I see as belonging to the realm of socialist imaginations. These imaginations can be defined as "the multifarious ways in which ideas, stories, images, and practices have conveyed socialism's potential to change the world for the better."⁹⁰

Finally, the social self-management system also infused local government with a particular flavor. Since social self-management was both an operational framework and an object of study, urban administrators managed cities and communes as well as produced and exchanged knowledge on the best (self-)management practices. In this sense, urban administrators represented a particular expert group because, although their disciplinary

⁸⁹ Maureen McNeil, "Gender, Expertise, Feminism," in *Exploring Expertise: Issues and Perspectives*, et. Robin Williams, Wendy Faulkner, James Fleck (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 57.

⁹⁰ Stefan Arvidson, Jakub Beneš, Anja Kirsch, "Introduction: Socialist Imaginations," in *Socialist Imaginations: Utopias, Myths and the Masses*, ed. Stefan Arvidson, Jakub Beneš, Anja Kirsch (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 1.

backgrounds were different, they were commonly interested in the administration of Yugoslav cities. Due to the central position of cities and urban environments in this thesis, urban administrators are the fourth group of experts under scrutiny. The analysis is in this case mainly applied to the activities and knowledge production of an expert body in the field called the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia (*Stalna konferencija gradova i opština Jugoslavije*, SKGOJ). Established in April 1953 as a voluntary, advisory organization, SKGOJ, as the Zagreb's mayor at the time Većeslav Holjevac wrote, brought together experts, professionals and politicians from various fields interested in the cultural, economic, urban, communal, social, and hygienic development of cities, as well as in the improvement of the administration and governance of Yugoslav cities and neighborhoods within the social self-management system.⁹¹ Throughout the socialist period, SKGOJ held large annual conferences and smaller sporadic meetings dealing with particular topics of interest, including urban retail and the service sector.

Experts and Professionals, Abroad: Transnational Dynamics during the Cold War

The second important point made by literature on state-socialist experts is that they were “fundamentally characterized by their transnational dynamism.”⁹² Through education abroad, trainings, conferences and study trips, state-socialist experts internationalized skills and experiences from their home countries, while simultaneously bringing in knowledge and practices acquired during their socialization abroad.⁹³ In their activities, as Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob and Paşca argued, state-socialist experts were relatively autonomous vis-à-vis their homeland politics, international dynamics in their discipline, and the Cold War setting.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Vjećeslav Holjevac, “Osvrt na dosadašnji rad Stalne konferencije,” *Komuna* 1, 1954.

⁹² Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 147.

⁹³ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 149.

⁹⁴ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, “State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective,” 150.

Rather than being marginal to the postwar transnational exchanges and international order, recent literature shows that state-socialist experts were in fact significant participants, who stood at the center of the internationalization of European state-socialist countries from the mid-1950s.⁹⁵ Consequently, the historical analysis of these experts' activities helps rewrite the previous narratives on the Cold War as a period of bipolarity and conflict. In the recent decade, a large number of works have shown the "multileveled-multipolar interaction"⁹⁶ of actors from different states and systems during the Cold War, conceptualizing this period not just as a "chronological context" but "a paradigm for understanding the exchanges and interaction."⁹⁷ Conversely, "the identification and contextualization of the flows of ideas, people, and goods that crossed borders and frontiers among countries, regions, organizations and political systems" lies at the heart of the "revision of the past century's history."⁹⁸

In a similar vein, this thesis demonstrates the centrality of transnational encounters and exchanges and international cooperation between experts, professionals and their organizations for the development of department stores and modernization of retail in Yugoslavia. All expert groups analyzed in the thesis were involved in some kind of transnational and/or international exchange. Retailers organized study visits to Western European department stores, and from the late 1960s joined the International Organization of Socialist Department Stores. Architects and urban planners often went to study trips, conferences, or trainings abroad, particularly to the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. Home economists received stipends from the

⁹⁵ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, "State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective," 146, 154.

⁹⁶ Sari Autio-Sarasma, Katalin Miklóssy, "Introduction: Cold War from a New Perspective," in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed. Sari Autio-Sarasma, Katalin Miklóssy (Oxford & New York: Routledge, 2011), 8.

⁹⁷ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, and Paşca, "State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective," 148. See also, Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, Fabio Lanza (ed.), *De-Centering Cold War History Local and Global Change*, (London: Routledge, 2013); Patryk Babiracki, Austin Jersil (ed.), *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); James Mark, Paul Betts (ed.), *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); Theodora Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022); Kristin Roth-Ey (ed.), *Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular Second-Third World Spaces in the Cold War*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023)

⁹⁸ Iacob, Doboç, Grosescu, Iacob, Paşca, "State Socialist Experts in Transnational Perspective," 146.

International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for education and training in Western Europe, Scandinavia and the United States, while pursuing a lively exchange on modernization of household work with other state-socialist women's organizations. Urban administrators were also engaged in transnational activities through links with other cities as well as through SKGOJ's membership in the West-leaning International Union of Local Authorities and the East-learning United Towns Organization.⁹⁹ In general, department stores and modern retailing systems like self-service were international phenomena, which from Western Europe and North America spread throughout the globe.¹⁰⁰

Mapping the transnational and international activities of Yugoslav experts and professionals contributes to the well-known perception of Yugoslavia's particular geopolitical position during the Cold War. Unlike in the case of European state-socialist countries, where the discovery of experts' transnational and international dynamics revised the Cold War narratives of superblock division and confrontation, Yugoslavia's non-aligned position between the blocs was always an essential element in the regime's domestic and foreign policy. Together with the self-management system, Yugoslavia's non-aligned position served as a basis for Yugoslav exceptionalism. Promoted both by historical actors and scholarship, Yugoslav exceptionalism was amplified with descriptions of the hybrid and in-between position of Yugoslavia in the global order.¹⁰¹ While such labels refer specifically to the Cold War period, in many ways they also echo historically rooted perceptions of Southeastern Europe and the Balkans as a culturally-hybrid "transitional zone", "linking bridge" or "dividing line."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, "Non-Alligned Cities in the Cold War: Municipal Internationalism, Town Twinning, and the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns, 1950-1985" *The International History Review* 44, 3 (2022): 559-560.

¹⁰⁰ Haupt, "Small Shops and Department Stores," 284.

¹⁰¹ Christian, Kott, Matějka, "Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction," 12.

¹⁰² Pamela Ballinger, "Definition Dilemmas: Southeastern Europe as a Culture Area?" *Balkanologie* 3, 2 (1999): 2.

Nevertheless, as this thesis also shows, the awareness of Yugoslav experts and professionals of the special status of Yugoslav self-managed, non-aligned socialism played an important role in their activities and shaped their attitudes towards their foreign partners. In order to give nuance to vague labels of Yugoslav in-betweens, however, this thesis pinpoints the geographies of expert and professional groups, and the technologies and ideas that different Yugoslav individuals, institutions and enterprises were engaged with. While retail experts and retailers explored Western Europe and North America for novelties in retailing systems and technologies, which they extensively imported, business partnerships and expert exchanges were conducted on a more equal footing with enterprises in East-Central and Southeastern European state-socialist countries. In contrast, architects and urban planners were predominantly interested in the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, whose practitioners, experts and theoreticians often visited Yugoslavia, highly interested in planning under the self-management system.¹⁰³

This brings us to a potential limitation of the thesis, which is that the analyzed trajectories of expert and professional interactions predominantly took place on the East-West axis. Although, as I show in chapter 4, wives of politicians from non-aligned countries visited department stores during their tours of Yugoslavia, I was so far not able to find any evidence of Yugoslav cooperation or exchange in the sphere of retail with countries of the non-aligned world. Dominated by foreign trade centered on industrial products, agricultural and military machinery, and construction of large public and infrastructural facilities like dams, hospitals, roads, and schools, department stores were probably too far on the horizon of necessities for the newly independent, non-aligned countries recovering from imperial and colonial domination.¹⁰⁴ Further research, however, is needed to make more definite claims on this issue.

¹⁰³ Christian, Kott, Matějka, "Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction," 12.

¹⁰⁴ See Ljubica Spaskovska, "Building a Better World? Construction, Labor Mobility, and the Pursuit of Collective Self-Reliance in the global South, 1950-1990," *Labor History* 59, 3 (2018): 331-351; Ljubica Spaskovska, Anna Calori, "A Nonaligned Business World: The Global Socialist Enterprise Between Self-Management and

Note on Sources

In order to analyze the experts and professionals employed at various Yugoslav retail enterprises and institutions, this thesis utilizes a wide range of primary sources, from archival documents, to periodicals, publications, and to a smaller extent visual sources. Since I was interested in mapping the variety of expert and professional voices and activities rather than comprehensively analyzing their institutions, my approach to primary sources was guided by a focus on documents. Influenced by the latest anthropological scholarship on bureaucracy, I understand documents both as “instruments of control but also as vehicles of imagination”, which allowed me to use them in order to map the overlapping but dissimilar dimensions of imagining, planning, and realization of department stores within the framework of Yugoslav self-management.¹⁰⁵

Socialist Yugoslavia was, in the words of anthropologist Matthew S. Hull, “a regime of paper documents.”¹⁰⁶ Minutes of meetings, protocols, reports, five-year plans, one-year plans, proposals for five and one-year plans, investment and production plans, official and unofficial correspondence were just some of the genres of documents produced in order to provide detailed information on research, discussions and conclusions made by governing bodies, enterprises, and other institutions. The main cause for this extensive paperwork was the self-management system, whose functionality depended on the production of documentary evidence serving as a source of information for popular participation. While in time, as I show in chapter 4, this “crawling paper trail of self-managed bureaucracy” became a hindrance rather than aid to the self-management system, its legacy is an overabundance of documents in archives left at

Transnational Capitalism,” *Nationalities Papers* 49, 3 (2021): 413-427; Boštjan Udovič, “Going International: the (Non)Importance of Non-Aligned Countries’ Markets in the Foreign Economic Relations of Yugoslavia,” *zeitgeschichte* 49, 1 (2022): 11-32.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew S. Hull, “Documents and Bureaucracy,” *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 260.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew S. Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1.

the researchers' disposal.¹⁰⁷ The contemporary lack of documents, which I experienced myself, is more often than not a result of events after the 1990s, such as war, privatization and institutional poverty experienced by archives and libraries in the post-Yugoslav region, as witnessed by the recent threat of closure of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁰⁸

Main archival sources for this research are documents of Yugoslav governing bodies, such as trade ministries, chambers of commerce, and people's councils (*narodni odbori*) of neighborhoods, cities, and republics; of federal and republic social organizations like unions, women's organizations, and SSRNJ; of expert organizations like SKGOJ and of business organizations like the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores (*Poslovno udruženje robnih kuća Jugoslavije*, PURKJ). Another important type of primary source was the project documentation of department stores, which, when available, could include construction permits, investment plans, location descriptions, architectural renderings and technical information about the buildings. In order to maintain the multi-scalar approach in my research, I consulted collections in the main federal archive, The Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, republic archives in Croatia and Slovenia, regional archives, such as the Historical Archives of Pomoravlje in Serbia, and city archives in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo. For specialized purposes, the Museum of Architecture in Croatia was relevant for its collections of documents of individual architects. The US National Archives and the Hagley Museum and Library Archive were crucial for the transnational aspect of the thesis, particularly for the story of the US supermarket in Zagreb, which I analyze in detail in chapter 1.

A major lack in the archives, as the previous description makes obvious, were the documents from the enterprises themselves. Since both Na-Ma and RK Beograd still exist as

¹⁰⁷ Rebernjak, "From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration," 51.

¹⁰⁸ "Bosnia's National and University Library Suspends Work until Further Notice," N1, August 26, 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/2012/02/08/time-running-out-for-bosnia-s-national-library/>.

businesses, their files are not publicly available, and, as my visit to RK Beograd's headquarters in Belgrade in 2020 proved, not necessarily any longer in existence. In order to remedy this major issue, I relied extensively on periodicals, particularly on enterprise newspapers published by Na-Ma and RK Beograd as well as by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian enterprises Unima and UPI. Just like bureaucratic documents, enterprise newspapers were an important, although much livelier aid to the self-management system, which served to inform the workers of everything that was happening in their enterprise.¹⁰⁹ As the editorial introduction to Na-Ma's enterprise newspaper emphasized, "newspapers of collectives are the foundation of timely and valid information. (...) There is no complete and real self-management if the members of the working collective are not informed enough on the basic happenings in the life and work of their collectives."¹¹⁰ Edited by high positioned managers in the department store chains, with texts provided by any worker who wanted to contribute, enterprise newspapers offered numerous internal information on new department store projects, investment plans, yearly turnover, self-managing councils and unions, problems in the enterprises, but also stories and images from the sports and cultural events for the workers, even after their retirement. Enterprise newspapers also provided external information, such as letters from the consumers, fragments from major political decisions and speeches, and summaries of news about the enterprise from other outlets, such as the column "What others write about us", which RK Beograd's employee Dušan Radojković carefully prepared for each monthly issue in the 1960s and 1970s.

Department store chains and retail enterprises were not the only institutions with their own newspapers. Virtually every institution, organization and expert group had its own publication, often multiple ones in different republics, although their numbers and quality

¹⁰⁹ For more on Yugoslav enterprise newspapers, see Sven Cvek, "Class and Culture in Yugoslav Factory Newspapers," in *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia: (Post)Socialism and its Other*, ed. Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović, Danijela Lugarić (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 120.

¹¹⁰ "Zašto ovako," *Na-Ma* 1-2, 1964.

usually reflected the respective republic's socio-economic and financial means. Architects and urban planners had the Croatian *Arhitektura* (Architecture) and *Čovjek i prostor* (Man and Space), Serbian *Arhitektura-urbanizam* (Architecture-Urbanism) and *Urbanizam Beograda* (Belgrade Urbanism), Bosnian-Herzegovinian *ARH*, and Slovenian *Urbanizem* (Urbanism). All these journals had an institutional affiliation, either to associations of architects and urban planners or to urban planning institutes. Retailers had the Croatian *Supermarket*, Serbian *Ilustrovana Trgovina* (Illustrated Retail), *Trgovina* (Retail), and *Nova trgovina* (New Retail), and Bosnian-Herzegovinian *Trgovinski bilten* (Retail Bulletin). Women's organizations had their federal magazine *Žena danas* (Woman Today), while the Croatian branch had *Žena u borbi* (Woman in the Struggle) and *Žena* (Woman), the Serbian had *Zora* (Dawn), the Slovenian had *Naša žena* (Our Woman), and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian had *Nova žena* (New Woman). Home economics magazines included the Slovenian *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* (Modern Household), the Serbo-Croatian *Porodica i domaćinstvo* (Family and Household), and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian *Domaćinstvo* (Household). The most important journal for urban administrators was SKGOJ's publication *Komuna* (Commune), and for social self-management *Mesna zajednica* (Local Community). I consulted all these publications in the thesis, and sporadically also included information from major and local daily newspapers like *Vjesnik*, *Večernji list*, *Oslobođenje*, and *Novi put*. Finally, I also consulted numerous books and booklets from the period, on topics such as retail and architecture, as well enterprise monographs and exhibition catalogs.

Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of four chapters, which cover what I suggest are the main regimes in the development of department stores and modernization of urban retail in Yugoslavia from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. The period in questions begins with the decentralization and

liberalization of the Yugoslav economy, continues with the government's new political and socio-economic agenda in the late 1950s, the constitutional changes in the early 1960s and the economic reform in 1965, and the constitutional changes and new labors laws in the mid-1970s. During this period, Yugoslav retail transformed from a centralized and administrative into a decentralized, independent sector, whose development started from the early 1950s, blossomed during the 1960s, and further diversified during the early 1970s. This thesis ends with the mid-1970s as a time of increasing crisis in the Yugoslav economic and political system, as well as a generational change in the management of RK Beograd and Na-Ma, which marked the beginning a new phase in their business operations.

The first two chapters focus in detail on the development of the Yugoslav retail sector in the 1950s and early 1960s, the initial production of knowledge on modern retail by different experts and professionals, and the first appearance of modern retail spaces such as supermarkets and department stores. In chapter 1, I argue that after a period of trial and error in the early 1950s, Yugoslav retail experts and retailers more intensely engaged in the modernization of the retail sector from the end of the decade in order to support the Yugoslav government's emphasis on improving light industry, consumer goods, personal consumption and the living standard. I demonstrate that by utilizing the increasingly available Western knowledge on modern retail, spread by US businesspeople and trade missions, Yugoslav retail experts started to promote the self-service system as the foundation for the modernization of Yugoslav retail. They were soon joined by architects and urban planners who, as the chapter shows on the example of architect Lidiya Podbregar-Vasle, were increasingly engaged in planning retail spaces in Yugoslav cities, for which an exchange with their contemporaries in Western Europe and Scandinavia was particularly important.

Chapter 2 moves from retail experts, retailers, architects and urban planners to the engagement of home economists and urban administrators in the initial production of

knowledge on the self-service system. In this chapter, I argue that members of Yugoslav women's organizations and home economists promoted retail modernization through self-service department stores as a part of their broader agenda to modernize household work. By perceiving consumption as a form of household work, Yugoslav women as experts and activists promoted housing and local communities as the ideal administrative framework for retail modernization. In addition, they also advocated for the inclusion of women in popular participation in the retail sector, and for this reason promoted consumer councils as self-managing organs of Yugoslav citizens. In this way, the activities of women's organizations and home economists were important not just for modernization of retail and household work, but for the theoretical and practical development of the social self-management system.

Following the detailed analysis of knowledge production in the 1950s and early 1960s, the third and fourth chapter analyze its implementation in the construction of self-service department stores in different Yugoslav urban and rural centers from the early 1960s to mid-1970s. Chapter 3 analyzes the expansion of department stores chains RK Beograd in Belgrade and Na-Ma in Zagreb in the 1960s by showing how these retail enterprises contributed to the modernization and expansion of Yugoslav urban retail networks. In this chapter, I show that the spread of these department stores encompassed external expansion embedded in the urban growth of capital cities in this period, and in internal expansion based on technological improvements and professionalization of the workforce. These processes resulted in, as I argue, the institutionalization of department stores as ubiquitous retail spaces, which by the end of the decade occupied the physical, social, and cultural spaces of the Yugoslav state. As in the first two chapters, I illustrate that the transnational activities of Na-Ma and RK Beograd were crucial for their external and internal expansion.

Chapter 4 examines the first half of the 1970s as a period when the institutionalization of department stores expanded from capital cities into other urban and rural centers, which I

show on the examples of retail enterprises in Sarajevo, Mostar, Svetozarevo, and Kumrovec. In this chapter I argue that despite the economic crisis of early 1970s, which curbed investment plans and halted economic growth, RK Beograd and Na-Ma introduced new architectural forms and retailing practices in their department stores, while slowly implementing computer technology and cybernetics in their operations. Finally, RK Beograd and Na-Ma also intensified their international activities, first by joining the federal Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores and then the International Association of Socialist Department Stores from the late 1970s.

CHAPTER 1. YUGOSLAVIA GOES SUPER: THE ONSET OF RETAIL MODERNIZATION, 1950-1960S

Introduction

When I say the “Yugoslav” system of self-service, I do not mean that in Yugoslavia we have to invent some totally new system, something completely different than in the rest of the world. We have to operate, as we are doing now, within the limits of those basic principles that characterize self-service throughout the world. But we will have to pursue the exchange of experiences ourselves, in order to adapt the self-service system to the array of particular conditions in our country, the conditions under which economic enterprises function. I only have to mention our entire economic system, our economic legislation, the habits of our consumers, the capabilities of our industry, the possibilities of packaging, staff issues, performance-based payment, etc. In other words, a whole complex of specific things that the entire campaign of modernizing, introducing and further developing the self-service system must be aligned with.¹¹¹

The statement made by retail expert Milutin Janković, the assistant-secretary of the Yugoslav Association of Trade Chambers (*Savez trgovinskih komora Jugoslavije*), during a conference on the self-service system organized by the association in May 1960 illustrated many of the issues that Yugoslav experts and professional had to think about while modernizing the Yugoslav retail sector. In 1960, the self-service system was a state-of-the art retailing system that spread from the US throughout the globe at an impressive speed.¹¹² When it arrived to Yugoslavia in the mid-1950s, the Yugoslav government, its experts and professional were already set on a course of liberalizing the economic system and changing its focus to light industry and consumer goods, while improving the personal consumption and the living standard of the population.¹¹³ Under these conditions, whose seeds were planted by the

¹¹¹ “Savjetovanje o samospoluzivanju,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1960.

¹¹² See Shane Hamilton, *Supermarket USA: Food and Power in the Cold War Farms Race* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2018).

¹¹³ “Trgovina i standard,” *Nova trgovina* 12, 1956.

Yugoslav government already in the early 1950s, retail played an important role as a conduit between production and consumption.

In this chapter, I explore the onset of the modernization of Yugoslav retail by arguing that, after a period of trial and error in the first half of the 1950s, the government's new political and socio-economic orientation in the late 1950s gave the necessary push to various Yugoslav experts and professionals to develop and expand the Yugoslav retail sector. For these experts and professionals, the introduction and spread of the self-service system was the crucial step in the efficient modernization of Yugoslav retail.¹¹⁴ The self-service system, invented in the US before the Second World War, was radically different than what Yugoslav experts and retailers called the classical retailing system, which was centered on the salesperson as the main communicator between the goods and the consumers. In contrast, the self-service system operated on the idea that consumer goods should be directly available to the consumers to select, inspect and ultimately purchase. This seemingly minor change required a major transformation in the way that goods were transported, stored and displayed in the store as well as in the organization of labor, the purchasing process, and the design of the store interiors and exteriors. For this reason, the introduction of the self-service system was not just a matter of implementing changes in labor and technology, but of producing and disseminating a completely new system of knowledge, which had to be adapted to the conditions of the Yugoslav socio-economic and political system. From the late 1950s, Yugoslav retail experts and retailers, but also architects and urban planners, urban administrators and home economists started to organize conferences, lectures, study visits, and publications in order to acquire, adapt and disseminate knowledge on the self-service system as the pinnacle of modern retailing. These processes took off alongside

¹¹⁴ In Yugoslav retailing terminology, the term "self-service system" (*samoposluživanje*) referred to the system used for selling food items, while the "system of self-selection" (*samoizbor*) for selling non-food items. Both systems centered the consumer in the purchasing process and were implemented in department stores.

the import and in time local production of technology and equipment needed for self-service, which would intensify from the early 1960s through its use in department stores.

This chapter consists of three sections, which chronologically cover the discussions and crucial events for the production and implementation of knowledge on the self-service system. The first section provides an overview of the transformation of the Yugoslav retail sector from 1945 to 1956 from a distributive to a commercial activity.¹¹⁵ Following what retail experts called the “administrative period” of Yugoslav retail from 1945 to 1951, the decentralization and liberalization of the Yugoslav administration and economy made retail enterprises independent entities in charge of their own operations.¹¹⁶ In this period, as economist Dragutin Radunović wrote, “retail began to function as an independent economic branch operating on the principle of profitability.”¹¹⁷ This transformation took place in the first half of the 1950s, during a period of trial and errors, when by 1954 large centralized retail enterprises were broken down into smaller independent entities, only to be reintegrated from 1956 as retailers and retail experts strove to create strong enterprises that could power the expansion and modernization of Yugoslav retail networks. The section ends by zooming into a watershed moment for Yugoslav retail, the opening of the first Yugoslav supermarket in 1956 in the small northern Croatian town Ivanec.¹¹⁸

The second section moves from Ivanec to another inaugural moment for modern retail in Yugoslavia, the exhibition of a US supermarket at the Zagreb Trade Fair in 1957. While the Ivanec case showcased the ingenuity of a local, small-scale retailer who took the modernization of Yugoslav retail into his own hands, the supermarket exhibition in Zagreb was a major event

¹¹⁵ Dragutin Radunović, “Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma,” *Nova trgovina* 3, 1974.

¹¹⁶ Radunović, “Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma.”

¹¹⁷ Radunović, “Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma.”

¹¹⁸ In Yugoslav retailing terminology, there was a difference between a self-service store (*samoposluža*) and a supermarket. While both retail spaces used the self-service system, the self-service store was much more modest in size and operation than a supermarket, which had to be bigger than 400 m². In this sense, the store in Ivanec was rather a self-service store than a supermarket. Since the terminology and its application were very fluid, in order to avoid confusion, I use the term supermarket throughout the thesis for both self-service stores and actual supermarkets since the emphasis is on the self-service system rather than the size of the retail space.

embedded in the transnational power relations of the Cold War. Despite the differences in size, quality and impact, I suggest that both the Ivanec and the US supermarket, which was rebuilt in Belgrade in 1958, need to be understood together as evidence of how Yugoslav retailers utilized transnational exchanges of knowledge and technology promoted by Western Cold War agendas in order to import and adapt knowledge, practices and technologies for their own interests.

In addition to labor and technology, the self-service system—as a very visual system of selling and purchasing in which consumer goods had to have an agency of their own in enticing the consumers—also required major changes in the way that the goods were displayed in the store. Products had to be attractively prepackaged in order to be immediately available for purchase, with information on contents, measures and prices. They also had to be displayed on shelves, in gondolas, vitrines, and refrigerators, which would maintain both their quality and appeal. The goods, furniture and equipment also had to be positioned in the interior space of the store in a way that would guide the consumers but also ensure maximum economic use of spatial capacities. Since most of the existing retail spaces in Yugoslav cities and towns were small and badly furnished, their transition from classical retailing to the self-service system was impossible to organize. Consequently, the introduction of the self-service system required the construction of new stores, supermarkets and department stores, which from the early 1960s started to populate existing and emerging urban environments in Yugoslavia. The final section of the chapter deals with the first phase of the production and implementation of knowledge on the architectural design and urban configuration of retail spaces. Alongside a more general overview, this process is analyzed primarily through the work of Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, an architect based in Ljubljana, who dedicated her entire career to understanding the role of retail in the city. In her case, just like in the case of retailers and retail experts, encounters and

exchanges with contemporaneous actors and processes in the West were crucial for the developments in Yugoslavia.

1.1 Trials and Errors: Decentralization of Yugoslav Retail, 1945-1956

From the end of the Second World War to the early 1950s, the Yugoslav retail sector functioned on the principles of centralized, command economy, which was the model that the Yugoslav government adopted under the Soviet influence.¹¹⁹ In the first postwar years of poverty and hardship, the Yugoslav government assigned a strictly redistributing role to the retail sector, which supplied the Yugoslav population with the most basic, rationed and price-regulated staples.¹²⁰ The institution in charge of this distribution was the retail enterprise Narodni magazin, which the Yugoslav government established in May 1945, a week after the liberation. In light of the nationalization of large enterprises, the federal Ministry of Trade and Supply, which at the time oversaw all wholesale and retail activities, moved Narodni magazin into the surviving prewar department stores in major Yugoslav towns and cities, including Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad and Subotica in Serbia, Zagreb, Osijek, Split and Rijeka in Croatia, Ljubljana in Slovenia, Sarajevo and Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Skopje in Macedonia, and Titograd (now Podgorica) in Montenegro.¹²¹

The first Yugoslav retail enterprise was, therefore, a department store chain, whose centralization had an economic, administrative, but also an urban dimension. Since all the prewar stores that Narodni magazin took over were located in city and town centers, the Yugoslav government reassigned the historical role that these urban environments had as zones

¹¹⁹ Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 71.

¹²⁰ "Explanation of the Five-Year Plan from the Central Management of the People's Stores," box 8, General, Common and Other Topics, folder 163, Ministry of Trade and Supply of the FPRY Government, Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, Serbia (henceforth AJ).

¹²¹ "Investments – Year investment plans for Federal enterprises (1947-1951)," box 8, folder 163, AJ; D. Savić, A. Finić, "Razvoj i problemi trgovine u NR Bosni i Hercegovini," *Nova trgovina* 3, 1952; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 70.

of urban retail and commerce. In addition to being a major change in property ownership, the takeover of preexisting department stores was also a process that architecture historian Eve Blau calls “cultural recycling”, a method of “reworking and editing, rather than obliterating” previous structures and institutions.¹²² This process of cultural recycling in the case of retail served as a transitional practice, by which the government during the formation of the new state continued earlier urban activities and adapted them for the new regime.¹²³ The nationalization and recycling of preexisting retail infrastructure, as I show in chapter 3, formed the foundation of what would become Na-Ma and RK Beograd department store chains in the 1960s.

The role that large department store chains had from the early 1960s was envisioned by the Yugoslav government already in the late 1940s. Despite the dire conditions in the aftermath of postwar destruction, the regime was enthusiastic about the future of the Yugoslav state. In a memorandum from 1946, the federal Ministry of Trade and Supply announced the pioneering impact that Narodni magazin was supposed to have on the development of Yugoslav retail.¹²⁴

[...]Narodni magazin represents our country’s respectable retail enterprise. By buying consumer goods directly from producers and selling them in their stores, Narodni magazin should intervene in the prices in our country’s big cities. Its large department stores, which can implement the most perfect organization of labor, should be the nurseries for cadres in retail and should serve as an example to other retail enterprises in terms of sales organization, customer service, and packaging.¹²⁵

In this vision, the department stores of Narodni magazin were supposed to advance the retail sector and economic system, professionalize the retail workforce, and improve the quality and access to consumer goods, which happened from the early 1960s.

¹²² Eve Blau, Ivan Rupnik, *Project Zagreb: Transition as Condition, Strategy, Practice* (Barcelona: Actar, 2007), 16.

¹²³ Blau, Rupnik, *Project Zagreb*, 16.

¹²⁴ “The Development of the Retail Network from the Liberation until Today,” box 46, Circulation of Goods, folder 163, AJ.

¹²⁵ “Memorandum,” box 49, Circulation of Goods, folder 163, AJ.

From the late 1940s to the late 1950s, however, the Yugoslav retail sector was still undergoing significant changes as the Yugoslav government experimented with moving away from the Soviet model. The period of the centralization of Yugoslav retail was short-lived.¹²⁶ In fact, even before the Tito-Stalin split, the retail sector was reorganized with the first Five-Year Plan in 1947, which established new retail enterprises and placed them under the jurisdiction of people's councils in counties (these were called *Sresko nabavno poduzeće* or short Sremag [District procurement enterprise]), and in cities and towns (*Gradsko nabavno poduzeće* or Granap [City procurement enterprise]).¹²⁷ With the nationalization of the remaining private stores by 1948, the Yugoslav retail sector in the late 1940s consisted of Narodni magazin and several other large retail enterprises based in Yugoslav urban areas, and stores owned by agricultural cooperatives in the countryside.¹²⁸

The introduction of the self-management system in 1950 and the economic decentralization and liberalization from 1951 marked the beginning of a new phase for the Yugoslav retail sector. As I wrote in the chapter introduction, retail enterprises were removed from centralized administration and by 1954 became independent entities operating on the level of cities and towns, who oversaw their own business operations with expectations of profit-making.¹²⁹ In contrast to the previous principle of centralized, rationed supply based on administrative decisions, the new, decentralized system based on the law of supply and demand enabled enterprises to make their own decisions vis-à-vis the purchase and reselling of goods, assortment, and price formation, while at the same time mandated that they satisfy consumer demands and achieve enough profit to pay out their own salaries and make investments.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ See also Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 73.

¹²⁷ Savić, Finić, "Razvoj i problemi trgovine u NR Bosni i Hercegovini". Srez (district) was an administrative unit that encompassed towns and village municipalities, which was abolished in the 1963 Constitution.

¹²⁸ For more on rural retail, see chapter 4.

¹²⁹ Radunović, "Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma"; Milutin Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže od 1956. do 1957.," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1956.

¹³⁰ Nikola Čobelić, "O novom sistemu robnog prometa i robne razmene," *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1951; Dušan Vuković, "Neki aktuelni problem trgovinske mreže," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1951; Ismet Muftić, "Tehnika trgovine,"

The changes in the role of the retail sector were, however, not accompanied by a structural transformation of Yugoslav retail enterprises, which remained large entities as they were initially established during the so-called administrative period of centralized planning from 1945 to 1951. In the new phase of economic decentralization and liberalization, the Yugoslav government and retail experts envisioned a more diverse retail sector, full of different enterprises, which were supposed to compete against each in the fight for consumers, and consequently improve the quantity and quality of goods and services.¹³¹ In order to stimulate economic competition, the Yugoslav government decided in 1954 to break down large retail enterprises into smaller entities.¹³²

Very soon, however, the fragmentation of the retail sector proved to be a bad move, as retail enterprises were, despite their numbers, economically too weak to function let alone compete against each other. In 1956, the government started to reverse this process by merging the enterprises back with one another. This process, however, also ended without a desired effect. Instead of supporting economic competition, the newly enlarged retail enterprises, which were administratively linked with their communes, cities, and towns, took over almost the entire circulation of goods and services in a particular territory. Yugoslav experts termed this phenomenon organizational monopolization, and perceived it—alongside other monopolistic factors, such as the inadequately developed light industry, shortage of certain goods, limitations on import, and undeveloped transport—as a big cause of concern. Since the new system of economic decentralization and liberalization explicitly called for market competition, neither the construction nor the dismantling of retail enterprises was able to adequately respond to this call.¹³³

Nova trgovina 1, 1952; Nikola Čobelić, “Razvoj našeg unutrašnjeg tržišta i delovanje ekonomskih zakona,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1952.

¹³¹ Radunović, “Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma.”

¹³² “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije,” *Nova trgovina* 3, 1950; Janković, “Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže,”

¹³³ “Spora reorganizacija trgovinske mreže,” *Nova trgovina* 4, 1954.

The decentralization and liberalization of the Yugoslav economic system were not just political moves aimed against the Soviet model, but also had a direct economic aim as a way of dealing with the rapid pace of industrialization in the postwar period.¹³⁴ The enormous increase in industrial capacities and production intensified the urbanization of Yugoslavia, whose urban centers grew with the massive internal migration of population from the countryside.¹³⁵ The growth of the urban working class through the urbanization of the rural population coupled with the widespread administration of welfare provisions was rapidly improving the working and living conditions of the Yugoslav population. The increase in purchasing power enabled Yugoslav citizens to more actively participate in commodity consumption, which consequently led to the increase in urban consumer demand. While in 1939, the working class participated in overall consumption with 28,3%, by 1951 this increased to 59,2%. In the case of the peasantry, the numbers increased from 17,7% in 1939 to 31,1% in 1951.¹³⁶

The Yugoslav government, however, was not able to respond to this demand. The shortage of consumer goods caused by the underdeveloped light industry, in a system still subordinated to capital projects in heavy industry, and the obstruction in imports posed by the Soviet embargo on trade with the Eastern Bloc (that lasted until 1955) meant that the availability of goods was not in line with the demand and purchasing power in the first half of the 1950s. In order to reverse this relationship, the government introduced the system of supply and demand in order to impact the price formation and consequently balance out the demand and purchasing power with the realistic productive possibilities of the industrial and agricultural sectors.¹³⁷

The government's introduction of the system of supply and demand in the early 1950s came together with another major change, the system of workers' self-management, which was supposed to serve as a corrective to the potentially dangerous forces of the market. According

¹³⁴ Čobelić, "O novom sistemu robnog prometa i robne razmene."

¹³⁵ See Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 71.

¹³⁶ "Razvoj lične potrošnje," *Nova trgovina* 6, 1957.

¹³⁷ Čobelić, "O novom sistemu robnog prometa i robne razmene."

to Yugoslav experts, the management of the socially owned means of production is what made the functioning of market mechanisms in the Yugoslav socio-economic system different than in capitalist countries.¹³⁸ Thanks to five and one-year plans, called social plans for economic development (*društveni plan privrednog razvoja*), the production and distribution of consumer goods and services was a consciously planned socio-economic process, in which social plans functioned as instruments of managing the national economy. In this understanding, market forces operated alongside social plans produced through popular participation in order to regulate the relationship between producers, enterprises, and the society by determining the economic and social conditions and obligations that enterprises had towards the population.¹³⁹

This line of socio-economic thought and praxis brought together market mechanisms with the self-management system, which, as historian Marta Rendla pointed out, were by definition compatible because both assumed economic independency of economic entities.¹⁴⁰ As the economist Nikola Čobelić noted already in the early 1950s, Yugoslav economic development early on went into the direction of “allowing the free operation of market laws”, which would eventually reach its full expansion with the economic reform in 1965.¹⁴¹ Within this transformation of the political and socio-economic dimensions of the Yugoslav economy, Yugoslav economists and retail experts already from the early 1950s perceived economic development as a result of “mutual competitive struggle.”¹⁴² Economic competition reinforced the shift in the role of Yugoslav retail from a purely distributive into a commercial activity, whose success rested on the prevention of monopolization, which still required state intervention.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Čobelić, “Razvoj našeg unutrašnjeg tržišta i delovanje ekonomskih zakona.”

¹³⁹ Čobelić, “Razvoj našeg unutrašnjeg tržišta i delovanje ekonomskih zakona.”

¹⁴⁰ Marta Rendla, “*Kam ploveš standard*”: *življenjska raven in socializem* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2018), 17.

¹⁴¹ Čobelić, “O novom sistemu robnog prometa i robne razmene.”

¹⁴² Borivoje Jelić, “Beleške o temi: Elementi monopola na unutrašnjem tržištu,” *Nova trgovina* 6, 1952.

¹⁴³ Vladimir Raše, “Udruživanje poduzeća u robnom prometu,” *Nova trgovina* 6, 1952.

The emphasis on economic competition in Yugoslavia in the early 1950s belonged to what historians Katalin Miklóssy and Melanie Ilić described as one of the new forms of competition that emerged in state-socialist regimes in the postwar period through the adoption and adaptation of Western models under the influence of economic reformism.¹⁴⁴ In Yugoslavia from the early 1950s, and in European state-socialist countries, like Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, from the late 1950s, economic reform was tied to the relaxation of state control, decentralization of central planning and reduction of heavy industry coupled with an interest in Western practices.¹⁴⁵ The reformist goal of introducing market mechanisms into the state-socialist economic system was to improve the light industry, and the production and import of consumer goods as a means of raising the levels of consumption and the living standard. During the 1960s, consumer-choice, comfortable everyday life, and high living standards became arenas of competition between the Cold War superpowers.¹⁴⁶ Named by sociologist David Riesman as “the Nylon War”, this competition was most famously represented by the so-called “kitchen debate” between presidents Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959.¹⁴⁷ Economic competition in Yugoslavia was, therefore, part of a broader history of different forms of competition and economic reformism under European state-socialism during the 1950s, which in the Yugoslav case appeared earlier and arguably reached a much higher degree in comparison to European state-socialist countries.

Monopolization, as the Yugoslav experts recognized, was nevertheless difficult to solve because it powered a vicious circle; the fragmentation of large retail enterprises created a bigger number of unfunctional smaller enterprises, which eventually closed down or reintegrated back into larger enterprises. These large retail enterprises regained their monopolistic position, but

¹⁴⁴ Katalin Miklóssy and Melanie J. Ilić, *Competition in Socialist Society* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3.

¹⁴⁵ Miklóssy and Ilić, *Competition in Socialist Society*, 4–5.

¹⁴⁶ Miklóssy and Ilić, *Competition in Socialist Society*, 5.

¹⁴⁷ Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism*, 256, 263. See, Ruth Oldenziel, Karin Zachmann, “Kitchen as Technology and Politics: An Introduction,” in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users*, ed. Ruth Oldenziel, Karin Zachmann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 1–32.

were, as Yugoslavia's chief politician and economist Edvard Kardelj pointed out, also the only entities that truly had the economic power and financial means to develop the retail network.¹⁴⁸ The goal was to, according to Kardelj, find a balance between decentralization and integration, mainly by reinforcing the relationship between the retail network and the organs of self-management in communes, in order to bring retail closer to the consumers while preventing centralization.¹⁴⁹ By analyzing their local situation, communes were expected to provide support in financial investments, technical development, and education for stores in their areas, which would then maintain a level of autonomy despite belonging to a certain retail enterprise.¹⁵⁰ As the chief ideologue behind the self-management system, Kardelj emphasized the relationship between retail as an economic activity and communes as units of social self-management that could regulate it. In addition, the consumer councils, first of which were established in 1955, were supposed to represent another mechanism of popular control over retail through the self-organization of consumers.¹⁵¹

From 1956 onwards, retail enterprises continued to grow. Their enlargement, however, was not necessarily equal to an increase in the number of stores in the Yugoslav retail network, whose lack was a major problem for the development of the retail sector.¹⁵² In the early postwar period the retail network in terms of the number of stores was either stagnating or shrinking; in comparison to 89,700 stores before the Second World War, in 1954 in Yugoslavia there were altogether 35,000 stores. Many of these stores, moreover, were badly furnished and rather small, like in Macedonia, where the average store size was only 27 m².¹⁵³ Yugoslav experts believed

¹⁴⁸ Kardelj, "Neki problem tržišta i organizacije unutrašnje trgovine". Edvard Kardelj was one of the key Yugoslav politicians, and in the 1950s he was the minister of foreign affairs, the president of the Committee for legislation and the construction of the people's government (*izgradnja narodne vlasti*), and the vice-president of the Federal Executive Council (*Savezno izvršno vijeće*, SIV). See *Jugoslovenski savremenici: Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, ed. Radošić Rajović (Beograd: Hronometar, 1970), 445-446.

¹⁴⁹ Kardelj, "Neki problem tržišta i organizacije unutrašnje trgovine."

¹⁵⁰ Kardelj, "Neki problem tržišta i organizacije unutrašnje trgovine."

¹⁵¹ For more on consumer councils, see chapter 2.

¹⁵² V. Mitrović, "Snabdevanje gradova," *Nova trgovina* 11, 1953.

¹⁵³ Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže."

that due to monopolization, retail enterprises were not motivated to reconstruct and expand the postwar retail network in a truly effective way. The experts criticized the retailers in these enterprises for failing to open new stores with modern equipment, educate the retail workforce, and improve its working conditions.¹⁵⁴

The lack of retail space, its bad conditions and the low level of education of the retail workforce were obstacles in achieving what experts called the “socialist principle of cultured trade”.¹⁵⁵ Influenced by the Soviet discourse on retailing from the 1930s, Yugoslav experts defined cultured trade “not only as a way of dealing with consumers”, but in a broad sense as the “overall operation in stores, from equipment, presentation, location and issuing to the general organization of sales, fast and correct charging, packaging, etc.”¹⁵⁶ Cultured trade was used by Yugoslav experts as an umbrella term for the modernization of retail in the 1950s, although the specificities of this modernization remained vague.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, in order to develop cultured trade, retail experts emphasized the importance of courses, seminars, lectures, and “agitation” through the press and radio.¹⁵⁸ This shows that Yugoslav retail experts perceived the lack of retail space, technology and educated workforce already from the early 1950s not just as a material problem, but a result of underdeveloped expertise and lack of sources of knowledge on modern retail.¹⁵⁹ In 1951, the Bureau for the Organization and Improvement of the Retail Network from Belgrade organized a travelling exhibition on cultured trade that featured various photographs, posters, models and lectures, and was visited 23,845

¹⁵⁴ “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije.”

¹⁵⁵ “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije.”

¹⁵⁶ “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije.” See also Žimbek, “Mirrors of the city,” 36. For more on Soviet cultured trade, see Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade*, 197-247, and Randall, *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s*, 17-43.

¹⁵⁷ “Uticaj kulturnog trgovanja,” *Trgovina* 2, 1951; Mladen Aleksandrov, “O pojmu kulturno trgovanje: dopis iz Bugarske,” *Nova trgovina* 12, 1956. From the 1960s, the term culture trade falls out of use, which I believe is due to the fact that the conceptualization of what modern retail was became much more concrete.

¹⁵⁸ “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije.”

¹⁵⁹ “Savremene prodavnice univerzalnog tipa,” *Trgovina* 6, 1952; “Uloga i zadaci trgovine u društvenom planu 1953,” *Trgovina* 2, 1953.

visitors from 568 retail enterprises.¹⁶⁰ The establishment of the Bureau and the organization of exhibitions and lectures on cultured trade were early steps in the experts' attempt to modernize Yugoslav retail.¹⁶¹ An imprecise concept like cultured trade, however, also masked the lack of concrete proposals for what this modernization was supposed to entail. This changed in the mid-1950s, when the local initiative to modernize retail by using the growing availability of Western know-how and experience resulted in the opening of the first Yugoslav supermarket in 1956, which set a clear course on the best means to continue the modernization of Yugoslav retail.

In 1954, Andrija Sever—the director of a small retail enterprise *Ivanečki magazin* (The Ivanec Store)—attended a lecture in Zagreb held by businesspeople from the US on the topic of expanding the retail network with supermarkets.¹⁶² In that and the previous year, US businesspeople held a series of lectures in Yugoslav cities on the self-service system.¹⁶³ Patented in the US in 1917 by Clarence Saunders, the owner of the Piggly Wiggly self-service grocery store in Memphis, Tennessee, the self-service system and the supermarket as its original host were deliberately spread around the globe from the 1940s by US economists and businesspeople.¹⁶⁴ Before appearing “in flesh” in 1957, the supermarket was promoted in Yugoslavia by US businesspeople already from the early 1950s, and their promotion left a lasting impression on their Yugoslav colleagues. After a lecture in Ljubljana in 1953, local experts organized an exhibition on packaging, which for the first time attempted—and

¹⁶⁰ “Izložba kulturnog trgovanja,” *Trgovina* 9, 1951.

¹⁶¹ Although the origins of the Belgrade Bureau are unclear, in 1951 the Bosnian-Herzegovinian government established a similar institution, whose role was to bring together retail enterprises in order to discuss and resolve problems with the development of retail in this period. See Ismet Muftić, “Tehnika trgovine”. While there is no detailed information on these bureaus, in 1958 the chambers of commerce in Yugoslav cities and towns established new bureaus for retail development, probably as an updated version of these earlier institutions. For more on the new Bureau in Belgrade, see chapters 1 and 3, and for the one in Sarajevo, see chapter 4.

¹⁶² M. M., “Pionirski podvig ivanečkih trgovaca,” *Na-Ma* 8, 1986; Zrinka Miljan, Josip Mihaljević, “Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija jugoslavenske samoposlužne trgovine,” in *Radovi-Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 48 (2016): 361-363.

¹⁶³ K. “Prodavnica sa samoposluživanjem,” *Privredni list* 40, 1953.

¹⁶⁴ Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 11, 17-18.

failed—to simulate through an exhibit how the self-service system works.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the anonymous commentator, who wrote in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian economic journal *Privredni list (Economic Paper)* that everyone who visited these lectures was surely convinced that the self-service system would not fit Yugoslav conditions at least for some time, was very soon proven wrong.¹⁶⁶

Hearing for the first time about self-service, Andrija Sever was immediately inspired to open a store using this system in his small town Ivanec in northern Croatia. Sever's store, just like most Yugoslav stores at the time, was burdened by underdeveloped selling capacities, a slow working mode, long queues, and frequent overcrowding. In this period Yugoslav stores used the classical retailing system (Figure 1), in which the salesperson stood behind a counter and gave the consumers the goods they asked for.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, the self-service system was based on the idea that consumers could freely circulate the store, select the goods they want to purchase, and buy them at the cashier desk. From the perspective of economic efficiency, the salesperson in the classical retailing system was an obstacle; consequently, the removal of the salesperson from the center to the margins of the purchasing process strikingly increased the number of goods that could be sold at a time.¹⁶⁸ In some of the first articles on self-service in Yugoslavia from the early 1950s, the authors used the US example to describe the system as efficiently saving time and money for the retailers and the consumers, while providing a large assortment of hygienically and accurately packed quality goods.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 361-363.

¹⁶⁶ K. "Prodavnica sa samoposluživanjem". *Privredni list* was a weekly focused on economic topics, which was published by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Trade Chamber from 1954.

¹⁶⁷ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 361-363.

¹⁶⁸ Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ "Trgovine u kojima se kupci sami služe," *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1951; "Samoposlužne prodavnice." *Trgovina* 10, 1952.



Figure 1. The classical retailing system, department store Deva, Kruševac, 1953.

From "Robna kuća Deva, Krusevac" Trgovina 6, 1953.

Andrija Sever was one of the first retailers who believed that the problems of Yugoslav retail could be rectified by the self-service system. While in 1954 the system was impossible to implement because some consumer goods were still rationed, with the abolition of the rationing system two years later, there were no more formal obstacles to the introduction of self-service.¹⁷⁰ After patiently trying to convince Ivanečki magazin's workers' council and Ivanec's People's Council—whose members were afraid of theft and lack of experience for this business venture—the first supermarket in Yugoslavia was opened in December 1956.¹⁷¹ The store (Figure 2) was modest in size, with 75 m² of sales area fitted with wooden furniture and equipment designed by Sever and his commercial manager Stjepan Putarek, and produced by a local agricultural cooperative. Since in 1956 no other equipment and furniture for the self-service system could be found in Yugoslavia, even the shopping baskets were made from willow branches.¹⁷² Sever and Putarek also had to convince the producers and the consumers

¹⁷⁰ M. M., "Pionirski podvig ivanečkih trgovaca".

¹⁷¹ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 361-363.

¹⁷² Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 364.

to embrace the new retailing system; local producers were instructed how to package their goods in a way appropriate for self-service, while the consumers were given shopping guidelines on numerous signs spread throughout the store.



Figure 2. The first Yugoslav supermarket, Ivanec, 1956.

From: Zrinka Miljan, Josip Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija jugoslavenske samoposlućne trgovine," in *Radovi-Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 48 (2016): 364.

In the beginning the local population was skeptical and even afraid to use the store, and many thought it to be a police trap for catching thieves. Another big problem was the still high illiteracy level in this rural area, which made it difficult for some consumers to independently use the store. Nevertheless, in the next few years the sales numbers significantly increased, and in 1960 the store moved to a bigger location in the town center.¹⁷³ Various Yugoslav newspapers published supportive reports on this retailing novelty, and the authorities also showed their encouragement. Risto Bajalski, the secretary-general of the Chamber of

¹⁷³ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 366.

Commerce of Yugoslavia (*Privredna komora Jugoslavije*), visited the store in 1957 and expressed his desire to expand this retailing system throughout the country, which he became impressed with during his earlier travels to the US.¹⁷⁴ During the 1950s, Bajalski was first the Minister of Trade and Supply, then the president of the Macedonian Chamber of Commerce, and finally the secretary-general of the federal Chamber of Commerce, which gave him enough power to turn his enthusiasm for self-service into practice by indirectly standing behind the US supermarket exhibition in 1957.¹⁷⁵ In 1960, the Ivanec store was also visited by Marija Šoljan, Emilija Šeparović and Marija Erbežnik-Fuks from the Croatian section of the League of Women's Organizations, who were at the time interested in modernizing retail as a means of modernizing household work.¹⁷⁶ These women showed their enthusiasm for the "pioneer in [...] the faster and easier connection between retail and consumers and [...] introduction of more cultural and modern habits into the lives of our people."¹⁷⁷

The Ivanec store, as historians Zrinka Miljan and Josip Mihaljević rightfully noted, represented an "experimental location" of Yugoslav self-service that showcased the ingenuity and resourcefulness of retailers in circumstances where very little was available to them.¹⁷⁸ The retailers and retail experts' determination to modernize Yugoslav retail made them receptive to the increasing availability of US know-how on the self-service system. Even when, as the Ivanec store demonstrated, there was still no technology and equipment for the self-service

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 108.

¹⁷⁵ Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 108. For Bajalski, see *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 43.

¹⁷⁶ Marija Šoljan was a political activist who, after graduating in law, participated in the National Liberation Struggle (*Narodno oslobodilačka borba*, NOB). In the postwar period, she was first the president of the Croatian section of the Antifascist Women's Front (*Antifašistički front žena*, AFŽ), and the chief editor of the organization's magazine *Žena u borbi*. Later she was also elected president of the Croatian Conference for the Social Activity of Women. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 47. Emilija Šeparović and Marija Erbežnik-Fuks were both high ranking members of the Croatian sections of AFŽ, SŽDJ and KDAŽJ as well as editors and writers for the organizations' magazines *Žena u borbi* and *Žena*.

¹⁷⁷ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 369. The authors only list the visitors' names and impressions, without noting that they were in fact members of the women's organization. For the role of SŽDJ and home economists in the modernization of Yugoslav retail, see chapter 2.

¹⁷⁸ Miljan, Mihaljević, "Ivanec kao eksperimentalna lokacija," 380. Sever and Putarec also initiated the first mobile supermarket, which Ivanečki magazin opened in 1963 for the population in local villages. See Miljan, Mihaljević, 372. Mobile retail was one of the frequently used methods to improve retail in rural areas, which I discuss in chapter 4.

system, either locally produced or imported, Yugoslav retailers like Sever and Putarek recreated the system in a Do-It-Yourself fashion that made sense to their rural clientele. A year after the US know-how on the self-service system was adopted and adapted by Yugoslav retailers, their colleagues from the US personally came to convince the Yugoslavs on the value of supermarkets.

1.2 Reds Get First Look at Supermart: the US Supermarket in Zagreb, 1957

The major changes in Yugoslav government's political and socio-economic orientation in the late 1950s ensured that the Ivanec supermarket would not remain a singular case for too long. Yugoslavia's second Five-Year Plan from 1957 clearly expressed the government's long-pending economic decentralization and liberalization.¹⁷⁹ The new Five-Year Plan reduced the governmental administrative influence on the economic sector, strengthened republic powers, and shifted the focus from heavy to light industry, with an emphasis on the production and import of consumer goods.¹⁸⁰ In the period from 1953 to 1963, Yugoslavia had one of the fastest growing economies in the world, which coupled with the extensive amount of financial aid provided by the US and the end of the Soviet embargo initiated what Igor Duda called "the Yugoslav economic miracle".¹⁸¹ The Yugoslav government's emphasis on light industry and consumer goods was crucial for providing the wind in the back to retail experts and retailers who were interested in modernizing the retail sector. In the same year as the plan came out, a major transformative event for the Yugoslav retail sector took place, which paved the foundation for its future development.

As a part of a global campaign to promote their political and business models, US officials exhibited a fully functional supermarket at their pavilion at the Zagreb Trade Fair in

¹⁷⁹ Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 75.

¹⁸⁰ Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 44.

¹⁸¹ Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 45.

September 1957. During the 1950s, the US government was active in staging exhibits at foreign trade fairs as the best way to, as an article in *Times* magazine from 1957 emphasized, “spread the gospel of free enterprise [...] and for businessmen to sell their products”.¹⁸² The US participation at trade fairs represented a mixture of economic and political interests that, although not necessarily only aimed at state-socialist regimes, significantly intensified under the perceived threat of “Red propaganda.”¹⁸³ In the late 1950s, the US Chamber of Commerce brought together a group of scholars and businesspeople to analyze the influence of the “Sino-Soviet” presence in global economy and trade on US business.¹⁸⁴ The result was a report published in 1959 titled *What the communist offense means to American business?*, which emphasized that the interconnection between “business and national interests” necessitated “that private imitative must operate within a framework of sound governmental institutions and policies.”¹⁸⁵ The US response to this “communist offensive” was supposed to be an endeavor planned in cooperation between private business and the government, which “does not operate in isolation, but is strategically and tactically coordinated with political, diplomatic, psychological and military operational techniques for conducting foreign relations.”¹⁸⁶ The US participation at trade fairs represented exactly this type of mission, which was from the mid-1950s significantly financially supported by president Dwight Eisenhower, who was allocating millions of dollars to the US Department of Commerce and its secretary Sinclair Weeks for their work on international trade fairs.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² “Trade Fairs: How to Win Friends and Customers Abroad,” *Time*, July 1957, box 16, Correspondence & Reports (1954-1959), Zagreb 1956-Trade Information Centers, folder 489, Records of the International Trade Fair Administration, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, United States (henceforth NARA).

¹⁸³ “Trade Fairs,” box 16, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁸⁴ Box 1, Central files, folder 1411, National Association of Manufacturers records, Hagley Museum and Library Archives, Wilmington, Delaware, US (henceforth Hagley).

¹⁸⁵ *What the communist offense means to American business?* (Washington DC: US Chamber of Commerce, 1959), 1, box 1, folder 1411, Hagley.

¹⁸⁶ *What the communist offense means to American business*, 4.

¹⁸⁷ In 1957 the sum given to the Department of Commerce was 3,600 000 dollars. See box 16, folder 489, NARA.

According to the files of the US International Trade Fair Administration, the first time that the US ventured to set up an exhibition in a European state-socialist country was at the Poznań International Fair in Poland in 1957.¹⁸⁸ Since in 1956 the US officials already organized an exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair, this showed their clear recognition of Yugoslavia's position outside of the Soviet sphere of influence.¹⁸⁹ The US government wanted to capitalize on this position through its so-called "wedge strategy", which was based on the provision of military and economic aid to Yugoslavia with the aim to liberalize the country and turn it into a role model for other state-socialist regimes to similarly break away from the Soviets.¹⁹⁰ In contrast to this explicit interest in destabilizing the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslavia's response was the policy of "active coexistence", which represented a form of neutralism in the bloc divisions of the Cold War. The two country's different foreign policies were important for defining their agendas regarding the US participation at the Zagreb Trade Fair. While US officials saw the exhibition in Zagreb as a part of their wedge policy to disbalance the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslavia supported the US presence in order to "secure a better East-West balance."¹⁹¹

The officials from the Zagreb Trade Fair in fact publicly highlighted their position "between the East and West" as a reason behind the fair's success as the most important Yugoslav trade fair.¹⁹² Since its reopening in 1947, the Zagreb Trade Fair became the central location for the promotion of domestic and foreign industrial production as well as "the center for making trade (import and export) deals" that spanned across geopolitical divides.¹⁹³ Despite their opposite foreign policies, the Yugoslav and US fair officials saw the role of trade fairs in a similar way, as an opportunity to send political messages but also to more practically conclude

¹⁸⁸ Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁸⁹ Box 9, Correspondence & Reports (1954-1959), Salonika 1955-Zagreb 1955, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁹⁰ Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), 190-191.

¹⁹¹ Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁹² Box 32, Bulletins & Commercial Information, folder 1172, Zagreb Trade Fair, State Archives in Zagreb, Croatia (henceforth DAZG).

¹⁹³ Box 32, folder 1172, DAZG.

beneficial business deals. For the officials of the US government-private business cooperation this primarily meant an expansion into the Yugoslav and neighboring markets, and for the Yugoslav government the continued profiting from US aid, which by 1958 reached the amount of 1,5 billion dollars.¹⁹⁴

The unifying framework for US participation in trade fairs from 1956 was the “People’s Campaign”, an exhibition concept designed by Ted Repplier, the president of the Advertising Council, a non-profit organization for the promotion of public service announcements.¹⁹⁵ Following his extensive research of US propaganda efforts in North Africa, Europe, East and Southeast Asia, Repplier designed an exhibition that told the story of the American worker Ed Barnes by showcasing his home, the numerous consumer goods surrounding him in daily life, and relevant local services and small industries, like the butcher and dairy shop.¹⁹⁶ “People’s Capitalism”, which was also displayed at the Zagreb Trade Fair in 1956, was in the words of historian Robert Haddow “a conservative, McCarthy proof” campaign that “portrayed an America in which everyone was gainfully employed, middle class, and a docile consumer.”¹⁹⁷ The campaign was from the very beginning criticized by US officials for being an alienating if not irritating show that the visitors could not relate to. After some modifications, the exhibition was eventually shipped abroad, but even then, as Haddow writes, the Commerce Department’s Office for International Trade Fairs and the United States Information Agency were careful to ensure that their exhibits were relatable to the contexts they were supposed to influence.¹⁹⁸

The decision which theme to display in which location was based on detailed surveys with local experts and professionals as well as an analysis of previous exhibitions. According to a US report, in the Yugoslav case the recommendation for the 1957 exhibition came from a

¹⁹⁴ Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, 162, 227.

¹⁹⁵ Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 1997), 47.

¹⁹⁶ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 47; Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁹⁷ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 14, 52; Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

¹⁹⁸ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 62.

direct initiative of the Yugoslav officials, who were interested in substantially increasing their import of consumer goods. The same sentiment was also shared by the citizens for whom, as the report humorously pointed out, “looking at store windows is a universal form of recreation.”¹⁹⁹ More than recreation, the increase in the production and import of consumer goods were explicit goals of Yugoslav government’s second Five-Year Plan.²⁰⁰ According to the US report, Yugoslavia was suffering from a shortage of consumer goods that the government tried to ease by authorizing their import in the value of 12 billion dinars, and in fact, the Zagreb Trade Fair was the location where most of these foreign consumer goods were acquired.²⁰¹

The deficiency in consumer goods was not the only obstacle on Yugoslavia’s path to improved consumption. Another shortage that was also troubling the country was the lack of retail spaces where to sell the goods.²⁰² As I stated previously, the Yugoslav retail sector was in the late 1950s characterized by unharmonized retailing systems, fragmented retail enterprises, an uneducated workforce, outdated technology, lack of organization, and an overall inadequate retail network.²⁰³ Except for the small wooden-clad store in Ivanec, there was no other self-service store in Yugoslavia in this period, nor was there any locally produced technology, equipment and know-how on the self-service system. The government’s decision to support the US officials in exhibiting a fully equipped supermarket filled with consumer goods, therefore, made perfect sense from the perspective of a country that needed efficient modernization of retail to fulfill its new socio-economic agenda.

¹⁹⁹ Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

²⁰⁰ Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 75.

²⁰¹ Box 16, folder 489, NARA, 489, 16; Box 2, Bulletins, folder 1172, DAZG.

²⁰² Žimbek, “Mirrors of the City,” 44-45.

²⁰³ Ivana Mihaela Žimbek, “The Unrealized Department Store ‘Na-Ma’ in Trnje: Ambitions and Challenges in Expanding the Retail Network and Creating the Urban Space in Zagreb in the Early 1960s,” *Peristil: Scholarly Journal of Art History* 61, 1 (2018): 224.

At the same time, the US already had experience in introducing other countries to the self-service system, ever since Nelson Rockefeller's International Basic Economy Corporation opened a supermarket in Venezuela in 1949.²⁰⁴ Four years later, a travelling exhibition on modern food retail showcased the self-service system in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and West Germany, while supermarkets also became popular attractions at trade fairs in Vienna, Paris, and Rome in 1956, the last one directly inspiring the Zagreb exhibit.²⁰⁵ After the Rome supermarket was purchased by a group of Italian businesspeople interested in starting a chain, the president of the National Association of Food Chains (NAFC) John A. Logan was convinced that a similar outcome would take place in Yugoslavia.²⁰⁶

The supermarket exhibition was organized by the NAFC in the newly constructed American pavilion at the Zagreb Trade Fair, the second permanent pavilion that the US built after Paris.²⁰⁷ Designed by Walter Dorwin Teague Associates from New York, a company founded by a well-known US industrial designer with experience in world fairs, the US pavilion (Figures 3 & 4) was a typical functionalist-modernist building encompassing 3100 m² of closed and 3900 m² of open exhibition space.²⁰⁸ Constructed on the new fairgrounds across the Sava river, where the city would soon build large housing estates, the US pavilion was one of the many new emerging national and foreign pavilions. The 1957 Autumn Fair—during which the supermarket exhibition took place—was a large event with 960 participating enterprises from Yugoslavia, and hundreds of enterprises from 27 countries from Europe, Asia, and North America. The US was by far the most numerous participant with 1250 enterprises; in comparison, the runner-up Czechoslovakia had 480 enterprises taking part. The exhibition featured around 7000 different goods, most of them in fields of mechanical and electrical

²⁰⁴ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 9. See also, Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 75-101.

²⁰⁵ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 62; Shane Hamilton, "Supermarket USA confronts State-Socialism: Airlifting the Technopolitics of Industrial Food Distribution into Cold War Yugoslavia," in *Cold War Kitchen*, 145.

²⁰⁶ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 65.

²⁰⁷ Box 7, Newspaper clippings, folder 1172, DAZG; Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²⁰⁸ Box 16, folder 489, NARA; Box 27, Correspondence & reports, 1954-57, Zagreb-1957, folder 489, NARA.

engineering, metalwork, and communications. The turnover numbered 15 billion dinars in import and 22 billion dinars in the export of goods, which according to the fair officials were their highest numbers until then.²⁰⁹



Figure 3. The first permanent US pavilion at the Zagreb Trade Fair, 1957.

From: The Hungarian National Digital Archives, https://en.mandadb.hu/tetel/187709/Nyaralas__Zagrab (accessed October 22, 2024)

²⁰⁹ Box 2, Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Zagreb Trade Fair, folder 1172, Zagreb Trade Fair, DAZG.

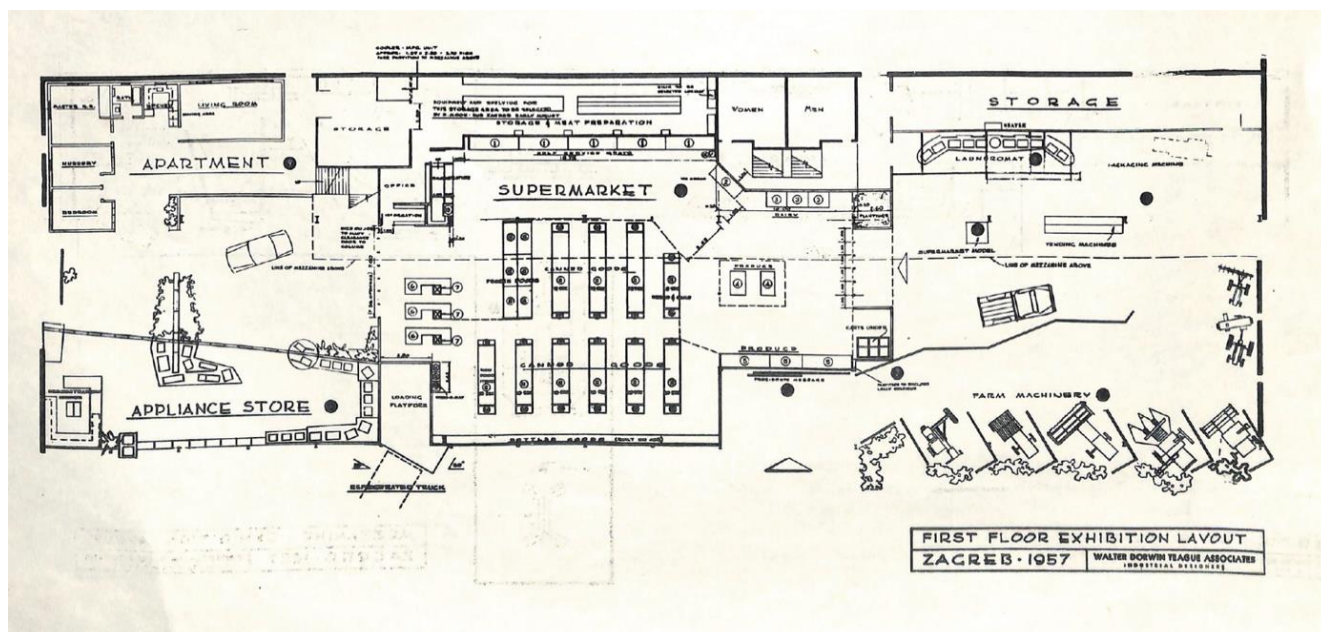


Figure 4. The layout of the US pavilion with the supermarket at the Zagreb Trade Fair, 1957.

From: Box 27, Correspondence & reports, 1954-57, Zagreb-1957, folder 489, NARA

The US pavilion's inaugural exhibition was managed by D. Paul Medalie, an experienced US government officer who also took care of the previous US exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair, and the Poznań exhibition.²¹⁰ Described by the organizers as “a consumer goods show with emphasis on food production from the farm to the table”, the exhibition displayed farm machinery, automobiles, vending machines, a laundromat, a demonstration kitchen, an appliance area, a 5-bedroom apartment, sports and camping goods, business machines, apparel and textiles with a sewing demonstration zone, plasticware, books, and vinyl records.²¹¹

The exhibition's central feature was the “full-scale United States supermarket, completely stocked with appropriate equipment and products” (Figures 5 & 6), which was provided by the grocery store chain Colonial Stores Inc.²¹² The supermarket displayed around

²¹⁰ Box 27, folder 489, NARA.

²¹¹ Box 16, folder 489, NARA.

²¹² “Second Supplement to Zagreb Fair Catalog, 1957,” folder 1172, DAZG; Box 26, Correspondence and Reports, 1954-1958, Tunisia 1957 – Zagreb 1957, folder 489, NARA.

4000 products worth 20,000 dollars, most of which were foodstuffs produced by US companies, including fruits and vegetables “interesting and impressive” for the locals, although locally available produce was also included.²¹³ Even though the products were not for sale, every 100th visitor could take home a grocery bag with instructions on how to prepare frozen food, while the rest was donated to local charities and hospitals.²¹⁴ The visitors—numbering 1,040,000 according to Fair figures, up to 8000 per hour—were able to explore the store and receive their first self-service experience with the aid of instructors, who were mostly local university students.²¹⁵



Figure 5. The US supermarket, Zagreb Trade Fair, 1957.

From: *Večernji list*, September 12, 1957.

²¹³ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²¹⁴ “Izložba SAD na Zagrebačkom velesajmu u stalnom paviljonu,” *Privredni pregled*, September 10, 1957; Box 27, folder 489, NARA.

²¹⁵ Box 26, folder 489, NARA; Box 27, folder 489, NARA.



Figure 6. Figure 6. The US supermarket, Zagreb Trade Fair, 1957.

From: "American Supermarket in Yugoslavia," *New York Times*, September 22, 1957.

The person in charge of demonstrations in the supermarket was Agnes Olmstead (Figure 7), the director of the home economics department at Colonial Stores Inc.²¹⁶ By focusing on "time-saving, work-saving convenience foods" labeled as cheap and fast alternatives for homemakers, the exhibition organizers wanted to respond to the Yugoslav interest in consumer goods helpful for the household, particularly the kitchen, and provide opportunities for licensing arrangements of US products to Yugoslav producers.²¹⁷ Another relevant exhibit of this type was the laundromat, which the organizers eventually sold as a part of the equipment for the new apartment buildings in Zagreb. Olmstead also conducted three cooking courses for around 130 people, including home economists and representatives from home economics schools and the women's press.²¹⁸ As I show in more detail in the next chapter, Yugoslav women's organizations and home economists were also interested in modernizing retail within their broader agenda to modernize and socialize household work. The first edition of the exhibition

²¹⁶ Box 26, folder 489; A.L., "Prikaz brzog kuhanja u američkom paviljonu," *Narodni list*, September 24, 1957; "Izložba SAD na Zagrebačkom velesajmu u stalnom paviljonu."

²¹⁷ Box 26, folder 489, NARA; Box 27, folder 389, NARA.

²¹⁸ Box 27, folder 489, NARA.

“Family and Household” (*Porodica i domaćinstvo*), which they organized in order to promote these ideas, took place at the same time as the supermarket exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair. This shows that, in addition to economic agendas, the technologies for modernizing everyday life and knowledge of their usage were relevant for multiple expert and professional groups in Yugoslavia.



Figure 7. Home economics demonstrations, the US supermarket, Zagreb Trade Fair, 1957.

From: Večernji vjesnik, September 23, 1957.

The supermarket's role in decreasing food costs for the American family and working hours for homemakers were also pointed out by Walter Clyde, the head of the US trade mission that was in this period visiting Yugoslavia for the second time.²¹⁹ Other notable visitors to the Fair included the Chairman of the Commission on Foreign Economic Policy Clarence B. Randall and Sinclair Weeks, the secretary of the US Department of Commerce, who during the

²¹⁹ “Iduće nedelje stiže u našu zemlju američka trgovinska misija,” *Politika*, August 10, 1957; “Zagrebački velesajam daleko bolji od većine sajмова u Europi,” *Oslobođenje*, September 12, 1957.

celebration of “America Day” at the pavilion transmitted Eisenhower’s message of supporting Yugoslavia in “the peaceful development of global trade.”²²⁰

As a governmental and business initiative, the US pavilion was visited not only by political figures, but also by a committee of American food chain executives headed by the president of Colonial Stores Inc. Joseph Seitz. Colonial Stores Inc. was a grocery store chain based in Atlanta, Georgia, whose retailers oversaw the supermarket exhibition. Seitz himself expressed interest in explaining the self-service system to retailers from Yugoslav enterprises and offered help in providing know-how to everyone interested in adapting the supermarket model.²²¹ Seitz did not have to wait too long for the first request to arrive because the supermarket exhibit impressed its numerous visitors, including Milorad Jovanović, the director of Belgrade’s retail enterprise *Vračar*.²²² Jovanović, influenced by Risto Bajalski’s enthusiasm for the self-service system, used the opportunity presented at the Zagreb Trade Fair to purchase the supermarket exhibit after the enterprise’s workers’ council decided to open the first supermarket in Belgrade.²²³

Vračar’s team transported and reopened the supermarket in April 1958 in the center of downtown Belgrade, on Cvetni Square (Figure 8).²²⁴ In a particularly symbolic way, the new supermarket replaced the old green market on the same location.²²⁵ The supermarket had 850 m² of sales area, and its adaptation cost 32 million dinars.²²⁶ Except for the building, the enterprise also bought all the equipment and furniture worth 27,400 dollars (or 36 million

²²⁰ “Predsjednik Eisenhower uputio specijalnu poruku Zagrebačkom velesajmu,” *Vjesnik*, September 15, 1957; “Visoki gostje na Zagrebskom velesejmu,” *Ljubljanski dnevnik*, September 18, 1957.

²²¹ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²²² The US pavilion’s guest book contained predominantly positive comments from Yugoslav visitors, while the negative ones were mainly targeted at the US domestic and foreign politics. See box 27, folder 489, NARA. Milorad Jovanović was an economist and retailer from Serbia. After finishing trade school, he took part in NOB. In 1949 he became the director of *Vračar*. He was also a councilor in the Economic Council in the Serbian government. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 416.

²²³ Box 26, folder 489, NARA; Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 108.

²²⁴ Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism*, 271.

²²⁵ “Deset godina prvog supermarketa u Jugoslaviji,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1968.

²²⁶ “Deset godina prvog supermarketa u Jugoslaviji.”

dinars), which was imported through the enterprise Jugoelektro, and included novelties such as frozen food cases, refrigerated display cases, check-out stands, scales, meat saws, and slickers.²²⁷ Specialized in the import of machinery and electric equipment, Jugoelektro requested from the NAFC additional brochures for equipment needed to open three more stores.²²⁸ On the occasion, Jovanović sent a warm letter to NAFC's John Logan, thanking him for his idea to exhibit the store, which according to Jovanović "represent[ed] a revolution in our commerce."²²⁹ The store installation was supervised by J. Rollin Moon from Colonial Stores Inc., who reported that the Yugoslavs "have studied the literature and information that they received at the Zagreb Fair" and "are telescoping forty years of experimentation and experience with self-service and food distribution to a matter of months."²³⁰



Figure 8. Vračar supermarket, Belgrade, 1958.

From: "Yugoslavia Goes Super," *New York Times*, May 1958, box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²²⁷ Box 27, folder 489, NARA; "Deset godina prvog supermarketu u Jugoslaviji,".

²²⁸ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²²⁹ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²³⁰ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

The Vračar supermarket in Belgrade was not the first new store to use the self-service system after Ivanec. In December 1957, very soon after the Zagreb Trade Fair exhibition, the retail enterprise Konzum (Figure 9) opened a supermarket in Zagreb in Ilica Street. Konzum's director Josip Kovačić and his colleagues visited the US supermarket exhibit off-hours in order to familiarize themselves with the self-service system.²³¹ In fact, Konzum would have purchased the US exhibit if Vračar had not beat them to it. With the help from US officials, the enterprise nevertheless opened its own supermarket, which had 110 m² of sales area, and sold around 1300 items.²³² The press called the supermarket an experiment, and even Moon believed it would serve "to test people's reaction to self-service."²³³ Despite the sceptics, the results in both cases were positive, and the Konzum and Vračar stores quickly became popular, to the extent that both enterprises in the following years transformed into supermarket chains. While some retail enterprises decide to invest into opening new supermarkets, even those with stores using the classical retailing system started to package their goods and decorate the interiors in order to at least resemble the self-service system.²³⁴

²³¹ Box 26, folder 489, NARA. Josip Kovačić was an economist and retailer from Croatia. After trade school, he participated in NOB. After the war he worked in the Croatian Ministry of Trade and Supply, while studying for a high school and then university degree in economics. In 1952, he became the director of Konzum (which was established through a merger of several small retail enterprises in Zagreb) and stayed in this role until his retirement in 1976. See "Njegovo veličanstvo potrošač," *Supermarket* 2, 1976.

²³² "Njegovo veličanstvo potrošač,"

²³³ Box 26, folder 389, NARA; Box 27, folder 489, NARA; "Njegovo veličanstvo potrošač".

²³⁴ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.



Figure 9. Konzum supermarket, Zagreb, 1957.

From: Komuna 3, 1958.

According to the NAFC, the first visitors to the Vračar supermarket were as delighted with the quick, one-stop, pre-priced shopping experience as with the 1300 different items on offer.²³⁵ Unlike the imported furniture and equipment, the products sold in the store in the value of 107 million dinars (or 130,000 dollars)—which included novelty items like prepackaged meats, frozen blueberries, and whole suckling pigs—were completely locally produced and prepackaged.²³⁶ As the US officials pointed out, Yugoslav consumers quickly became accustomed to walking from store to store in order to find meats, groceries, vegetables, bread, milk, and cheese to feed their families. “I can buy a day’s provisions in as much time as is needed to catch the eye of the clerk in old-fashioned markets,” said one homemaker. Another said she would only shop the supermarket from now on and be done with arguments from often impolite sellers in classical stores.²³⁷

Except for the Yugoslav consumers and the media, the appearance of first supermarkets and the self-service system was also discussed by retail experts in professional publications.

²³⁵ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²³⁶ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

²³⁷ Box 26, folder 489, NARA.

Three months after the Zagreb Trade Fair, an article was published in the advertising journal *Naš publicitet* (*Our Publicity*), which reflected on the position of self-service within the Yugoslav socio-economic system.²³⁸ Described as a rational retailing system, self-service was, according to the anonymous author, a system interesting not only for “capitalist countries with mad economic competition”, but also for socialist retail.²³⁹ Since self-service required a well-designed organization of labor, the author declared it to be more appropriate for socialism and the perfect system for the modernization of Yugoslav retail. Even though the author made clear that self-service comes from the US, by emphasizing the system’s rationality, productivity, and efficiency, they treated it as a neutral model adaptable or in fact more suitable for the socialist economy.²⁴⁰

The emphasis on rationality and efficiency proves what Patrick Hyder Patterson wrote about the reception of the department store by state-socialist retailers, who through the prism of rationality and science understood it as a “system-neutral commercial technique.”²⁴¹ Retailers and experts used a similar approach in the case of supermarkets and the self-service system, which allowed them to be adopted and adapted in various political and socio-economic systems. This made the supermarket “a compelling and attractive transnational paradigm for development”, which spread “far beyond its origins in the United States and prove[d] a genuinely global model [...] with considerable modification and adaptation.”²⁴² The “localization and hybridization” of the self-service system were features of both the Ivanec and the Vračar supermarket.²⁴³ In contrast to historian Shane Hamilton’s claim that the “Supermarket USA didn’t result in a hybrid form or a creative adaptation of American business

²³⁸ *Naš publicitet* was the official magazine of the Croatian Advertising Bureau (*Oglasni zavod Hrvatske*, OZEHA) published from 1954 to 1957.

²³⁹ “Samoposluživanje – racionalan oblik maloprodaje,” *Naš publicitet* 3-4, 1957.

²⁴⁰ “Samoposluživanje – racionalan oblik maloprodaje.” See also Žimbek, “Mirrors of the City,” 76-77.

²⁴¹ Patterson, “Risky Business,” 116.

²⁴² Patrick Hyder Patterson, “The Supermarket as a Global Historical Development: Structure, Capital and Values,” in *The Routledge Companion to the History of Retailing*, ed. Jon Stobart, Vicki Howard (New York: Routledge, 2019), 155.

²⁴³ Patterson, “The Supermarket as a Global Historical Development,” 167.

practices in a socialist context”, Yugoslav retail experts were in fact already from the mid-1950s engaged in creatively adapting the self-service system informed by US know-how and business practices.²⁴⁴ Retailers like Sever, Putarek, Jovanović and Kovačić used the opportunity provided by the US foreign policy campaigns in the Cold War to incorporate American know-how, technology and architecture into their own agenda to modernize Yugoslav retail through the self-service system, whilst adapting the system to the possibilities and expectations of their local economy and society.

While historians like Radina Vučetić interpret the US supermarket as an obvious tool of Americanization,²⁴⁵ I subscribe to Patterson’s claim that, even though the US supermarket was clearly of American origin, and directly transported from the US into Yugoslavia, “the mechanics and results of Americanization were by no means straightforward, unvarying, or predictable.”²⁴⁶ The Yugoslav retailers and retail experts’ neutralization of the self-service system expressed their belief in the universality and adaptability of knowledge and technology. In the words of Milutin Janković from the beginning of the chapter, although foreign experience was necessary for introducing the basic elements of the self-service system, the system had to be adapted to the specificity of the Yugoslav socio-economic context, which represented the most difficult task for the retail experts and retailers.²⁴⁷

Even though the know-how, construction, and equipment were provided by US experts and enterprises, the Ivanec and Vračar supermarkets were run by Yugoslav retailers, whose decision-making processes took place in the self-management system, between the workers’ and people’s councils. The stores’ assortment, moreover, consisted of locally produced goods familiar to consumers but presented in a more hygienic and appealing conditions, much different from the previous habit of selling produce and meat in old newspapers. The prices

²⁴⁴ Hamilton, “Supermarket USA confronts State-Socialism,” 142.

²⁴⁵ Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism*, 274; Hamilton, “Supermarket USA confronts State-Socialism,” 173.

²⁴⁶ Patterson, “The Supermarket as a Global Historical Development,” 167.

²⁴⁷ “Savjetovanje o samospoluzivanju,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1960.

were also determined through state intervention and were in the beginning regulated in order not to disadvantage stores using classical retailing.²⁴⁸

Although the US supermarket was the most popular exhibition in terms of visitors and media coverage, the US was in fact commercially much less successful at the Zagreb Trade Fair in comparison to Czechoslovak, Italian, Bulgarian and Polish pavilions, and made only small sales.²⁴⁹ Even though the US trade missions to Yugoslavia continued after the Zagreb Trade Fair, no substantial business deals came out of them. In 1959, for example, a US trade mission visited Sarajevo with the aim to set up an exchange of knowledge and goods for packaging, advertisement, quality control, and department store management, but this was never realized.²⁵⁰ A comic published in the satirical magazine *Kerempuh* at that time made fun of the idea that Yugoslavia even needed the US officials to show them how to produce and sell consumer goods.²⁵¹ The comic (Figure 10) depicted two visitors to the supermarket exhibition, who were wondering how Yugoslavs could ever produce something like the Americans, while being entirely surrounded by cans made by the food enterprise Sljeme from Zagreb.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ “Šest godina uspešnog poslovanja našeg prvog supermarketeta,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1964.

²⁴⁹ “Šest godina uspešnog poslovanja našeg prvog supermarketeta.”

²⁵⁰ S. St., “Američka trgovinska misija u Sarajevu,” *Trgovinski bilten* 12-13, 1959.

²⁵¹ *Kerempuh*, September 20, 1957.

²⁵² *Kerempuh*, September 20, 1957.



Figure 10. The US supermarket exhibition (comic), satirical magazine *Kerempuh*.
From: *Kerempuh*, September 20, 1957.

The comic depicts two male visitors to the US supermarket exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair, who are surrounded by canned food produced by the Zagreb-based enterprise Sljeme. One of the visitors says: “Look at these foreigners, how could we ever produce something like that...”

Very soon, Yugoslav chambers of commerce and enterprises initiated their own exchanges with foreign experts, but these were focused on Western European countries rather than the US. For example, the Center for Retail Improvement “Prosperitet”, which was established in 1957 by Sarajevo’s Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1959 a study visit to Italian and Swiss self-service department stores, and to the Institute for Self-service in Köln.²⁵³ In 1960, the directors of the French Institute for Self-service came to Sarajevo to give a seminar on this retailing system.²⁵⁴ As the following chapters show, Yugoslav producers, retailers and retail experts increasingly orientated their import and expert interests towards West European countries like West Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Italy, and from the late 1950s started to locally produce all the know-how and technology necessary for running supermarkets and

²⁵³ H. Selimović, “Stručna ekskurzija trgovinskih radnika u Italiju i Švicarsku,” *Trgovinski bilten* 6, 1959; “Organizacija trgovinske mreže na malo,” *Trgovinski bilten* 7, 1959; Jaroslav Žak, “Posjeta Institutu za samoposluživanje u Kelnu,” *Trgovinski bilten* 12-13, 1959.

²⁵⁴ “Seminar za samoposluživanje,” *Trgovinski bilten* 10-11, 1960.

department stores. The number of supermarkets also starkly grew from one supermarket in 1956 and two supermarkets in 1958 to 45 supermarkets in 1959 and 138 supermarkets in 1961. In 1963, there were altogether 368 supermarkets, most of them in Serbia, and the least in Montenegro.²⁵⁵

1.3 Commercial Urbanism: the Role of Retail in Yugoslav Cities

The second Five-Year Plan was an important document that proposed a new socio-economic course for Yugoslavia, whose imperatives were confirmed at the League of Communists of Yugoslavia's (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*, SKJ) seventh Congress, which took place in April 1958 in Ljubljana. The *Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia* published afterwards emphasized the importance of the availability of consumer goods and services, and increases in personal consumption and the living standard for the Yugoslav citizens.²⁵⁶ "The right of the individual ownership by citizens of various objects of consumption and use, on which a more varied and more comfortable life of citizens depends", as the *Program* pointed out, became an "essential personal right."²⁵⁷ In its concern with both individual happiness and social progress, the SKJ stressed the role of Yugoslav self-managed socialism in satisfying "as much as possible human needs, activities, tastes, desires."²⁵⁸

The second Five-Year Plan and SKJ's *Program* were important documents from the end of the 1950s that officialized the direction in which Yugoslav political and socio-economic system headed in the following years. In this vision, an increase in personal consumption was not just a socio-economic, but also a political imperative. In Igor Duda's view, 1958 was the year when the Yugoslav consumer culture was born because social values became defined by

²⁵⁵ Vladimir Krehov, "Samoposluživanje u trgovini – da li su dosadašnji rezultati zadovoljavajući?" *Nova trgovina* 4, 1963.

²⁵⁶ Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 46.

²⁵⁷ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia's Way*, 132.

²⁵⁸ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia's Way*, 133.

purchasing power and material ownership.²⁵⁹ The satisfaction of needs with material and immaterial goods and services was the basis for the higher living standard of Yugoslav citizens.²⁶⁰ Even though the rise of the living standard became a concern for the Yugoslav government already from the late 1940s, from 1955 the country officially adopted the “politics of the living standard.”²⁶¹ This was also because 1955 was the first postwar year when the living standard reached its prewar level and became a measurable category.²⁶² From the late 1950s, improvements in personal consumption and the living standard became a priority, which required not only improvements in the production and import of consumer goods, but also in places to sell them.

The first supermarkets that appeared in Yugoslavia in the late 1950s were part of the retailers and retail experts’ effort in realizing the second Five-Year Plan and SKJ’s *Program*. One year after Konzum’s opening, Josip Kovačić, the director of the enterprise, reflected on the store’s first business year. According to Kovačić, the advantages of the self-service system were many, from the increase in turnover, to savings in time, and more comfort in shopping.²⁶³ In order to open the supermarket, however, the enterprise had to invest a lot of time, money and effort in order to fulfill all the necessary preconditions. These included finding a large enough space to serve as a supermarket with an adequate storage area, acquiring proper furniture and equipment and carefully placing it in the store interior, designing the interior space based on the movements of the customers, packaging the goods, and making sound financial calculations. The main obstacle in this process was the general lack of all the necessities for self-service in Yugoslavia at the time: large enough space, equipment, technology, and know-how on how to

²⁵⁹ Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 22.

²⁶⁰ Rendla, *Kam ploveš standard*, 11.

²⁶¹ Boris Kidrič, “Životni standard i trgovina,” *Nova trgovina* 3, 1949; “Ulazimo u period politike životnog standarda,” *Nova trgovina* 9, 1955.

²⁶² Rendla, *Kam ploveš standard*, 11.

²⁶³ Josip Kovačić, “Samoposluživanje i prodaja unaprijed pakovane robe,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1958.

design and run a supermarket.²⁶⁴ Despite these difficulties, once the supermarket was open, customers gladly accepted the new retailing system, and the profits made in the first months were significant. While an average monthly turnover in a classical store was 3 million dinars, in the Konzum supermarket this went up to 22,600,000 dinars (or 857,000 dinars per worker), which immediately proved the economic benefits of the self-service system.²⁶⁵ In time Konzum's turnover increased even more, and in 1958 it was 7,7 times higher than in the previous year. The experience of the Ivanec and Vračar supermarkets were similar; in Ivanec the average monthly turnover per worker was 830,00 dinars, and in Vračar 800,000 dinars.²⁶⁶ Vračar's director Milorad Jovanović confirmed that from the perspective of both retailers and consumers the self-service system should be applied everywhere in Yugoslavia.²⁶⁷

The obvious advantages of the self-service system proved its efficiency in modernizing Yugoslav retail, but because the retail sector was in such bad condition, its modernization required a significant financial and professional effort. The rapid industrialization and urbanization of the country additionally exacerbated problems with the underdeveloped urban retail networks. Yugoslav retail networks chronically lacked retail space, especially since the existing stores were small and inadequate, and could not be converted into supermarkets. The predominance of the classical retailing system resulted in long queues, overburdened sales staff, lack of consumer goods, which were often of bad quality due to being stored too long, high and untransparent prices, and unsuitable working hours.²⁶⁸ In order to offer some expert solutions to these issues, in 1958 the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns and Municipalities (SKGOJ) organized its 7th annual conference on the topic of retail.²⁶⁹ Co-organized with a

²⁶⁴ Kovačić, "Samoposluživanje i prodaja unaprijed pakovane robe".

²⁶⁵ Kovačić, "Samoposluživanje i prodaja unaprijed pakovane robe".

²⁶⁶ Risto Bajalski, "Savremena organizacija prodaje," *Nova trgovina* 2, 1960.

²⁶⁷ Milorad Jovanović, "Tehnička oprema prodavnice Samoposluga u Beogradu," *Komuna* 3, 1958.

²⁶⁸ "Organizacija trgovinske mreže i snabjeđvanje gradova," *Nova trgovina* 6, 1958.

²⁶⁹ Box 3, Seventh Annual Conference – Retail (Belgrade, 29.-31.5.1958), folder 495, Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns and Municipalities, AJ.

number of federal social organizations, such as the associations of trade, industrial and agricultural chambers, unions of workers in retail, hospitality, and tourism, agricultural cooperatives, and women's organizations, the conference was a large event that brought together experts and professionals in different fields interested in the same goal—to find a common ground on how to modernize Yugoslav retail.²⁷⁰

The solutions proposed at the conference mostly defined the means and methods to pursue modernization of retail in the following years. The main aspect to be improved was the retail sector's "material-technical basis", which encompassed retail space, storage and refrigerating facilities, equipment, and transportation. In the experts' view, new retail spaces had to use the self-service system, whose advantages in comparison to classical retailing were now more strongly promoted.²⁷¹ The ideal retail space for the expansion of the retail network, however, was not necessarily the supermarket, but what Yugoslav retail experts called the supply center (*snabdjevački centar*). The supply center represented an ensemble of various types of stores, including supermarkets and stores specialized for different types of consumer goods, where consumers could buy at one place everything they needed. Rather than just one store, supply centers—which under limited financial resources could also be built in stages—would more easily satisfy multiple needs for goods and services of consumers in one location.²⁷² As two experts wrote, "for technological and economic reasons, the concentration of retail enterprises is necessary if modernization of retail is to be carried out through the introduction of self-service and self-choice."²⁷³

From the early 1960s, the support for supply centers was replaced by department stores as more established retail spaces. The idea behind the promotion of department stores as places where everything is available "under one roof" staid the same. As Risto Bajalski wrote in 1959,

²⁷⁰ "The Invitation and Information on the Annual Assembly and Conference on Retail," box 3, folder 395, AJ.

²⁷¹ Sreten Bjeličić, "Posle savetovanja o trgovini i snabdevanju," *Komuna* 3, 1958.

²⁷² "Organizacija trgovinske mreže i snabjedvanje gradova," *Nova trgovina* 6, 1958.

²⁷³ Krehov-Petrović, "Perspektivni razvoj trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1962.

there was no reason to build small useless stores, when only big stores like department stores could pursue rational business practices and supply the consumers.²⁷⁴ An important reference point in this regard was West Germany, where unlike in the US, department stores from the early 1950s increasingly included supermarkets in order to sell both food and non-food items.²⁷⁵

The realization of proposals made by SKGOJ required a serious investment in research, expertise, and workforce, alongside the construction and equipment needed for modern retail.²⁷⁶ Since financial means of retail enterprises were insufficient for major investments, retail experts emphasized the importance of investments from the Federal Executive Council (*Savezno izvršno vijeće*, SIV), on the federal level, and from communes on the local level.²⁷⁷ As data showed, the investments in retail in this period went up from 11,7 billion dinars per year between 1953 to 1956, to 17 billion dinars from 1957.²⁷⁸ While this was a significant increase, these sums were still not enough. In addition, they did not account for other changes needed to smoothly spread the self-service system, such as new ways of packaging and advertising consumer goods, training the workforce, and designing the interior and exterior spaces of stores.

The question of how to properly design stores was discussed in Yugoslav retail journals already from the early 1950s. The decentralization of the retail sector and the accompanying expectation of economic competition emphasized the necessity to improve retail spaces in order to attract customers.²⁷⁹ Hygiene and interior and exterior design were first promoted by experts first within the concept of cultured trade, and many articles in retail journals advised on appropriate lighting, use of colors, design of storefronts, and the right location for opening a

²⁷⁴ Risto Bajalski, "Princip funkcionalnosti u procesu modernizacije trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 2, 1959.

²⁷⁵ K., "Robne kuće: postanak, razvitak, budućnost," *Nova trgovina* 9, 1952; "Od supermarketa ka robnoj kući," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1958. See Žimbek, "Mirrors of the city," 28-29.

²⁷⁶ Bjeličić, "Posle savetovanja o trgovini i snabdevanju".

²⁷⁷ Bjeličić, "Posle savetovanja o trgovini i snabdevanju"; Dušan Vuković, "Narodni odbori i robni promet," *Komuna* 4, 1960.

²⁷⁸ "Organizacija trgovinske mreže i snabjedvanje gradova," *Nova trgovina* 6, 1958.

²⁷⁹ Ivan Vrepić, "Decentralizacija trgovinske mreže u gradovima," *Nova trgovina* 4, 1955.

store.²⁸⁰ The discussions and advice on store design intensified with the appearance of supermarkets, where interior design was crucial for ensuring the efficiency of the self-service system. By shifting the main protagonist of the purchasing process from the seller to the customer, the self-service system represented, as historian Rainer Gries wrote, “an entirely new structure of communication” in which the product had a dual role “as a consumer good and as a communicative good.”²⁸¹ In this sense, the store itself became a kind of “silent seller.”²⁸² While packaging of consumer goods in an attractive way was the obvious method of enhancing the communicative aspects of products in the self-service system, the design of the environment in which these products were located was equally important. The interior design of stores—as well as the design of storefronts as channels of communication between the inside and outside—were all significant elements in advertising, which in Yugoslavia in this period was called economic propaganda.²⁸³

Retail journals like *Nova trgovina* published many articles on the issue of designing the interior spaces of stores and storefronts in order to support the self-service system.²⁸⁴ Many of them, moreover, referred to Western European examples or were translations of articles from French journals like *La Champagne Économique*, *Le Commerce Moderne* and *Vendre*.²⁸⁵ The creation of the interior space, particularly the sales area, was understood as a scientific and an

²⁸⁰ “Zaključci Treće međugradske trgovinske konferencije”; “Robne kuće: postanak, razvitak, budućnost,”; Kako da uredimo izlog?” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1952; R. Vučić, “Odabiranje mesta prodavnice,” *Nova trgovina* 3, 1952; M. M., “Savremeno uređenje prodavnica,” *Nova trgovina* 10, 1952; “Čemu služi izgled moderne prodavnice?” *Ilustrovana trgovina* 1-3, 1954.

²⁸¹ Rainer Gries, “Serve Yourself! The History and Theory of Self-service in West and East Germany,” in *Selling Modernity: Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, and Jonathan R. Zatlin (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2007), 309.

²⁸² “Prodavnica kao instrument prodaje,” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1957.

²⁸³ Ante Domandžić, “Propaganda u trgovini,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1958. For more on advertising in Yugoslavia, see Patterson, *Bought & Sold*, 109-147.

²⁸⁴ *Nova trgovina* was published by the Association of Yugoslav Retail Workers (*Savez radnika i nameštenika trgovačkih preduzeća Jugoslavije*) from 1948. The journal was established in order to improve the knowledge production and education of Yugoslav retailers.

²⁸⁵ “Tehnika trgovine,” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1956; “Nekoliko saveta o modernizaciji prodavnice,” *Nova trgovina* 4, 1956; B. N., “Izgled i uređenje trgovinske radnje,” *Nova trgovina* 6, 1956; “Izgled trgovinskih radnji u Zapadnoj Njemačkoj,” *Nova trgovina* 4, 1957; B. Novković, “Namještaj u savremenoj trgovinskoj radnji,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1957; “Uređenje prodavnica namalo,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1957; “Modernizacija prodavnica u Zapadnoj Njemačkoj,” *Nova trgovina* 7-8, 1957.

artistic process of designing all the elements in such a way that would put the consumer goods in the spotlight. As Ivica Krobot—the assistant director of the Na-Ma chain in the 1960s—later explained, “to apply the self-service systems means to turn the store into an exhibition space.”²⁸⁶ This comparison between retail and exhibition spaces was not by chance since, as sociologist Tony Bennett explained, art museums emerged in close relation to a series of institutions such as department stores, which served as sites for new technologies of vision.²⁸⁷ The choice of furniture and its placement, together with the placement and packaging of goods, and the general design of interior spaces and storefronts in the self-service system were, therefore, important topics for Yugoslav retail experts. From 1960, the Yugoslav Association of Trade Chambers started to publish a series of booklets on the topic in order to instruct retailers on the various aspects of the self-service system.²⁸⁸

In addition to the interior spaces and storefronts, so-called space at a finer scale, two other important aspects to take into consideration were the design of the exterior spaces of stores and their location in urban environments.²⁸⁹ Since the implementation of the self-service system required an adequate amount of space, many existing stores in Yugoslavia were too small to be converted from the classical to the self-service system. For this reason, supermarkets had to be newly built, and their design was recognized by the experts as important for both the retail sector and the city.²⁹⁰ Local governments, as the example of the People’s Council of Zagreb showed, were, however, resistant to the construction of large retail spaces in city centers, fearing

²⁸⁶ Ivica Krobot, “Robne kuće,” *Na-Ma* 7, 1965.

²⁸⁷ Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *new formations* 4 (1988): 73.

²⁸⁸ See France Cegnar, *Priprema, raspoređivanje i prodaja robe u prodavnicama sa samoposluživanjem* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1960), and Milutin Janković, *Planiranje prodavnica sa samoposluživanjem* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1960). Risto Bajalski, Milorad Jovanović, and Čedomir Jelenić (who would later become the first director of RK Beograd) also published booklets in this series. See Risto Bajalski, *Osnovni principi savremene trgovine* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1960), Milorad Jovanović, *Rentabilnost savremenih metoda prodaje robe namalo* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1960), Čedomir Jelenić, *Lični dohoci radnika i savremena trgovina* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1960).

²⁸⁹ Stobart, Howard, “Introduction: Global perspectives on retailing”, 5.

²⁹⁰ Domandžić, “Propaganda u trgovini”.

that they would destroy the small, specialized stores in the historical urban environments.²⁹¹ Consequently, modern retail spaces like supermarkets and department stores more often started to appear in new neighborhoods in cities and towns, whose construction for the rapidly growing urban population intensified from the early 1960s.

In the experts' view, self-service stores as modern buildings could become "architectural masterpieces."²⁹² Their exterior design was in fact an important feature of retail modernization because it could change the urban environment the stores were located in, and in this way contribute to the "cultural and economic propaganda as well as [to] a stronger manifestation of cultural and social life."²⁹³ For the stores to be properly planned, architects like Branko Pešić, who in 1974 became the author of the largest Yugoslav department store *Beogradanka*, emphasized that only qualified experts should participate in their design.²⁹⁴ From the late 1950s, the planning and construction of modern retail spaces and the role of retail in cities increasingly became a topic of discussion for Yugoslav architects and urban planners, who immediately after the war positioned themselves as transnationally active experts interested in the material and social transformation of Yugoslav self-managed socialism.²⁹⁵ From the early 1950s many new architectural offices and urban planning institutes were established with the aim to improve the physical and social conditions in the postwar urban environments.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ "3.8-31. Minutes of Meetings of the Committee for Retail," box 37.3, Minutes of Meetings of the Executive Council, folder 37, People's Council of Zagreb, DAZG.

²⁹² "Trgovine u kojima se kupci sami služe".

²⁹³ "Spoljni izgled savremenih prodavnica," *Trgovina* 7, 1953.

²⁹⁴ Branko Pešić, "Savremena prodavnica," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1956. For Branko Pešić's department store in Belgrade, see chapter 4.

²⁹⁵ The rest of this chapter's section will be published in an expanded form in the forthcoming article "Retail in the System of the City: Lidija Podbregar-Vasle and Commercial Urbanism between Yugoslavia, Scandinavia, and Western Europe, 1960s-1970s," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento / Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient*.

²⁹⁶ Vladi Bralić, "Arhitektura," in *Refleksije vremena 1945.-1955.*, ed. Jasmina Bavoljak (Zagreb: Klovićevi Dvori, 2012), 146-153; Brigitte Le Normand, "Automobility in Yugoslavia between Urban Planner, Market, and Motorist: The Case of Belgrade, 1945-1972," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. L. H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 94.

Due to the early abandonment of the socialist-realist model following the Tito-Stalin split, the visual and intellectual language of late modernism was adopted as the defining element of Yugoslav urban landscapes from the early 1950s. Late modernist architecture and urban planning—discussed at the 4th meeting of the *Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne* (CIAM) in Athens in 1933 and embodied in Le Corbusier's Athens Charter (1943)—centered around the idea that the economical and rational construction of urban space results in the production of ordered and egalitarian societies.²⁹⁷ In the circumstances of the postwar world that was in dire need of both physical and social reconstruction of urban space and society, late modernism became one of the dominant forms of architecture and urban planning.²⁹⁸

The influence of the political and socio-economic changes that took place in Yugoslavia in the late 1950s, however, significantly altered the main objectives of architects and urban planners. As Brigitte Le Normand argued in her study on New Belgrade, the improved economic conditions and the explicit shift towards consumption and light industry led architects and urban planners to abandon the idea of the economical, rational, and egalitarian construction of urban environments. Instead, the primary aim in urban planning became the creation of diverse neighborhoods with increased building quality and living standards. For Le Normand, this transformation was apparent in the fact that the emphasis on the administrative role of New Belgrade was replaced with the need to design the federal capital as a representation of the affluent, good life in Yugoslavia.²⁹⁹

Within the new imperatives of the second Five-Year Plan and SKJ's *Program*, whose federal guidelines were adopted by people's councils in cities and communes, architects and urban planners became interested in improving urban retail networks, perceiving their

²⁹⁷ CIAM was an international organization of architects that between 1928 and 1959 organized numerous congresses and meetings across Europe to discuss modern architecture and urban planning.

²⁹⁸ Sandra Križić-Roban, "Modernity in Architecture, Urban Planning and Interior Design After the Second World War," in *Socialism and Modernity: Art, Culture, Politics, 1950-1974*, ed. Ljiljana Kolečnik (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti–Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2012), 45–105.

²⁹⁹ Le Normand, *Designing Tito's Capital*, 102.

underdevelopment as impairing the quality of urban life. The early 1960s were a period of the first discussions on the issue of designing and constructing modern retail spaces, which made clear that Yugoslav architects and urban planners also lacked knowledge on retail spaces as architectural and urban forms. This was early on demonstrated by the case of an unrealized Na-Ma department store, which was planned for the new center of Zagreb in the neighborhood Trnje in 1960.³⁰⁰ Na-Ma in Trnje was supposed to be a monumental 5-story department store with an adjoining cinema, a restaurant, tourist office, bank, post-office, hairdresser, laundry service, repair shops, as well as salons for fashion shows and art exhibitions. Na-Ma's management also envisioned the store to function as their administrative building, with offices and worker's facilities, such as a canteen, library, kindergarten, and a union hall.³⁰¹

The urban planner behind the new center was Zdenko Kolacio, who was from 1956 to 1971 the Director of the Urban Planning Institute in Zagreb.³⁰² In his vision, alongside an administrative and representative function, the new center would engender the social life of the community, a process in which the building of the department store was supposed to play an important role.³⁰³ With a ground floor opened with glass storefronts, the department store would encourage communication between the activities in the store and the passers-by, thereby raising the appeal of the new center as a humanized, pedestrian space.³⁰⁴ The conceptualization of city centers as humanized spaces made for socialization of residents appeared in international discussions and projects from the early 1950s as a criticism of CIAM's approach to urban planning from the Athens Charter.³⁰⁵ During the 1960s, the replacement of focus on large urban

³⁰⁰ For more information on this project see, Žimbek, "The Unrealized Department Store "Na-Ma" in Trnje," 213-227.

³⁰¹ "Narodni magazin—Department Store Trnje," box 4.7-71. Department for Urban Planning, folder 37, DAZG.

³⁰² Zdenko Kolacio was an architect and urban planner from Croatia, who stood behind urban plans for Zagreb, Rijeka, Crikvenica and other Croatian towns. He also designed several monuments commemorating NOB, and he was active as an essayist and architectural critic. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 474.

³⁰³ "Narodni magazin—Robna kuća Trnje," box 4.7-71, folder 37, DAZG.

³⁰⁴ "Narodni magazin—Robna kuća Trnje," box 4.7-71, folder 37, DAZG.

³⁰⁵ Konstanze Sylva Domhardt, "From the 'Functional City' to the 'Heart of the City': Green Space and Public Space in CIAM Debates of 1942-1952, in *Greening the City: Urban Landscapes in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sonja Dümpelmann (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 133.

schemes with an emphasis on the sensitive, humanized and small-scale approach was promoted by the Association of Urban Planners of Yugoslavia (*Udruženje urbanista Jugoslavije*), an idea which became crucial for the planning of retail spaces in Yugoslav cities.³⁰⁶

The Na-Ma department store in the new center was never built, mostly because neither the enterprise nor the People's Council of Zagreb could afford such an ambitious project. An additional issue was that all the proposals (Figure 11) in the architectural competition for the store were deemed unsatisfactory by the jury, which prompted the architectural critic Darko Venturini to analyze the competition in an article published in the journal *Arhitektura* (*Architecture*).³⁰⁷ In Venturini's view, the main cause behind the improvisatory and insufficient designs were both the architects' and investors' unfamiliarity with the requested typology and the lack of expert knowledge. As Venturini wrote, "for us, the issue of large department stores (...) is still almost a complete novelty."³⁰⁸

Under the new political and socio-economic conditions, the familiarization with modern retail spaces was important for architects and urban planners due to the role that retail had in urban development. Kolacio, who was disappointed by the failure of the project, for which he blamed Na-Ma's concern with the store's profitability, believed that retail spaces were crucial for defining the organization of life in neighborhoods and cities.³⁰⁹ In Kolacio's view, retail spaces supported increases in purchasing power and the living standard, while regulating vehicle traffic. Since retail, urban environments and the quality of urban life depended on each other, urban development required the cooperation of architects, urban planners as well as retail experts and retailers in charge of expanding the retail networks.³¹⁰ Kolacio perceived the

³⁰⁶ Ana Perić, Mina Blagojević, "Passive agents or genuine facilitators of citizen participation? The role of urban planners under Yugoslav self-management socialism," in *Urban Planning During Socialism: Views from the Periphery*, ed. Jasna Mariotti, Kadri Leetmaa (London: Routledge, 2024), 109.

³⁰⁷ *Arhitektura* is a professional journal published by the Croatian Architecture Association since 1947.

³⁰⁸ Darko Venturini, "Natječaj za idejnu skicu robne kuće i kina u Zagrebu," *Arhitektura* 3-4, 1961.

³⁰⁹ Zdenko Kolacio, "Opskrbni centri," *Arhitektura* 3-4, 1961.

³¹⁰ Kolacio, "Opskrbni centri".

expansion of the retail network a part of urban development, which should be defined by the growth of the urban space and its population, and not by plans of single enterprises.

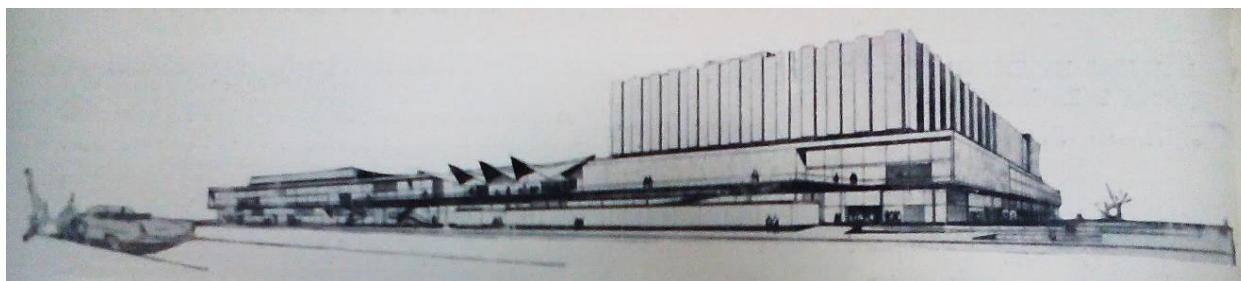


Figure 11. Department store Na-Ma, Trnje. Winning project by Stjepan Milković and Zdravko Gmajner, 1960.

From: *Arhitektura* 3-4, 1961.

In this period, a major contribution to the production of expert knowledge on the role of retail in Yugoslav cities was made by architect Lidija Podbregar-Vasle. Born in Zagreb in 1923, Podbregar-Vasle grew up in Ljubljana, where she began her architecture studies in 1941. In the 1950s, she worked for several architectural offices in Slovenia, such as Slovenijaprojekt, Radovljica, Rudnik and Gradis. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, she designed several small supermarkets in Ljubljana and in towns Ravne na Koroškem and Kranj.³¹¹ Examples of early Yugoslav supermarkets, these stores (Figure 12) were modern but humble retail spaces that fit into the category of “the architecture of everyday life” proposed by Vladimir Kulić and Maroje Mrduljaš.³¹²

³¹¹ Tamara Mateša, “Lidija Podbregar-Vasle,” in *To the Fore: Female Pioneers in Slovenian Architecture, Civil Engineering and Design*, ed. Helena Seražin (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2020), 151.

³¹² Mrduljaš, Kulić, *Modernism In-Between*, 167.



Figure 12. Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, Supermarket, 1959-66, Ljubljana.

Photo taken in 2016 by Tamara Mateša. From: Tamara Mateša, “Življenje in delo Plečnikove učenke Lidije Podbregar-Vasle,” (MA thesis, University of Ljubljana, 2016) 75.

These supermarkets were some of the few construction projects in Podbregar-Vasle’s career, which during her employment at the Slovenian Urban Planning Institute in the 1960s was mainly dedicated to the production and exchange of knowledge on the role of retail in cities. Podbregar-Vasle’s transnational experiences and networks, moreover, played a crucial role in her work. Thanks to her early study on the supply in neighborhoods from 1960,³¹³ Podbregar-Vasle was chosen in 1962 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to go on a trip with two other architects and economists to study retail spaces in England, West Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.³¹⁴ Yugoslavia had observer status in OECD since its establishment in 1961 but was able to benefit to some extent from its many committees, particularly the Committee for Technical Cooperation (TECO), which from 1961 to 1978 gave Yugoslavia 9 million dollars in developmental aid.³¹⁵ Podbregar-Vasle’s 1.5

³¹³ Iva Železnikar, *Dokumentacijski pregled raziskovalne dejavnosti v SR Sloveniji: Regionalno prostorsko in urbanistično planiranje* (Ljubljana: Urbanistični institut SRS, 1969), 39.

³¹⁴ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini* (Ljubljana: Urbanistični inštitut SRS, 1963), 1.

³¹⁵ Andrej Marković, Ivan Obadić, “A Socialist Developing Country in a Western Capitalist Club: Yugoslavia and the OEEC/OECD, 1955-1980,” in *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948*, ed. Matthieu Leimgruber, Matthias Schmelzer (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 101-102.

month study trip took place in the framework of TECO's mission to finance foreign experts to come to Yugoslavia as well as Yugoslav experts to go abroad, with projects focusing on areas where Yugoslavs had little experience.

In all countries they visited, Podbregar-Vasle and her colleagues explored new neighborhoods and retail spaces and attended seminars on the design of interior and exterior spaces of stores, particularly supermarkets and department stores, and their placement in urban environments. The trip represented an important source for her familiarization with achievements in expanding urban areas in Western Europe and Scandinavia after the postwar reconstruction. This period was, similarly to Yugoslavia, marked by strong urban population growth and housing needs, to which governments replied with extensive welfare provisions. As scholar Jytte Klausen argued, the expansion of state intervention during the Second World War continued in the postwar period through the formation of European welfare states.³¹⁶ From the early 1950s new housing estates in peripheral areas became one of the most important features in these welfare provisions, which formed a part of socio-economic modernization processes under governmental jurisdiction.³¹⁷ The same processes in a more extensive matter took place in Yugoslavia and in European state-socialist countries.

The organization of these new housing estates was based on the concept of the neighborhood unit, which was considered an essential part of postwar urban reform.³¹⁸ The concept of the neighborhood unit was first developed in the US in 1929 by urban planner Clarence A. Perry. Perry defined the neighborhood unit as an area with a maximum of 5,000 residents, a school in the center, and retail and service zones on the borders. Everything within

³¹⁶ Jytte Klausen, *War and Welfare: Europe and the United States, 1945 to the Present* (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 1.

³¹⁷ Dirk Schubert, "Transatlantic Crossings of Planning Ideas: The Neighborhood Unit in the USA, UK, and Germany," in *Transnationalism and the German City*, ed. J. M. Diefendorf, M. Ward (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 154.

³¹⁸ Stefan Couperus, "Building Democracy Anew: Neighborhood Planning and Political Reform in Post-Blitz Rotterdam," *Journal of Urban History* 42, 6 (2016): 992-994.

the neighborhood unit had to be reachable by foot, pedestrians were separated from vehicle traffic, and there was an abundance of green areas. The construction of new housing estates centered around the neighborhood unit was a part of the urban decentralization process, which took place after 1945, and was, according to historian Dirk Schubert, a common vision of urban reconstruction on both sides of the Atlantic.³¹⁹ In addition to its use as an element in urban reorganization and a planning instrument, the planners also envisioned the neighborhood unit, as historian Stefan Couperus showed, as a vehicle for political reform, which would support democratization by engendering community ties in urban spaces.³²⁰

New towns and neighborhoods built in public housing programs and organized around the neighborhood unit were defining features of Podbregar-Vasle's study trip. England, the first stop on the itinerary, was one of the first countries that more widely adopted the neighborhood unit in its urban planning.³²¹ Here the group visited several of London's satellite towns, such as Welwyn Garden City, Crawley, Harlow, and Stevenage, which were built as a part of the New Towns program.³²² This was one of the largest public housing programs reacting to the damages of the Second World War, during which from the late 1940s to the late 1970s more than thirty New Towns were built based on experimental ideas aiming to create healthier and more functional urban environments.³²³ The plan originated and was mostly carried out by the Labor government, with a break under the Conservative leadership in the 1950s, and constituted an important feature in the government's welfare provisions.³²⁴ Continuing the legacy of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, a vision of urban planning based on decentralization and proliferation of green spaces, and Le Corbusier's modernist tenets in architectural design, New

³¹⁹ Schubert, "Transatlantic Crossings of Planning Ideas," 141-144.

³²⁰ Couperus, "Building Democracy Anew," 997.

³²¹ Jelka Piškurić, "Housing Construction and the Role of the Neighborhood Unit in Ljubljana under Socialism," *The City and History* 11, 2 (2022): 125.

³²² Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 4.

³²³ Anthony Alexander, *Britain's New Towns: Garden Cities to Sustainable Communities* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 4-7.

³²⁴ Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 30.

Towns included car-free and traffic-free zones, with pedestrian retail precincts and carless residential areas, features built with the public interest in mind.³²⁵

Almost identical elements were found in West Germany, where most of the visit took place in Neue Vahr, the suburbs of Bremen, where the group was hosted by the *Gemeinnützige Wohnungsbaugesellschaft* (Gewoba). Gewoba was a subsidiary of Neue Heimat, West Germany's largest non-profit public construction and housing company.³²⁶ In order to deal with the postwar housing crisis, Neue Heimat built more than 460,000 apartments, 570 public and 100 commercial buildings in the period between 1950 and 1982. This large public construction project emerged in the West German social-democratic welfare system and the government's extensive modernization effort to provide housing to a growing postwar population.³²⁷ The architects active in the early phase of Neue Heimat were also some of the key figures in social modernist housing programs in interwar Germany. A notable example was Ernst May, author of large-scale housing estates in the Weimar Republic and the leader of May's Brigade in the USSR, who from 1954 to 1956 acted as the head of Neue Heimat's planning department and took part in the planning of Neue Vahr.³²⁸ The architectural inspiration for Neue Vahr also came from the Garden City movement that strongly influenced May, as well as late modernism, especially the architecture of high-rises.³²⁹ The suburb consequently came to embody the transitional phase between garden cities and large-housing estates. This was apparent in the

³²⁵ Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 8, 21. Ebenezer Howard was a British urban planner and founder of the Garden City movement, an early 20th century urban planning movement, which advocated for the construction of satellite communities surrounded by green areas.

³²⁶ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 17.

³²⁷ Hilde Strobl, "Hohe Häuser, lange Schatten: Die Bauten des Gewerkschaftsunternehmens Neue Heimat," in *Die Neue Heimat (1950-1982): eine Sozialdemokratische Utopie und Ihre Bauten*, ed. Andreas Lepik, Hilde Strobl (München: Detail, 2019), 9, 13.

³²⁸ Strobl, "Hohe Häuser, lange Schatten," 10.

³²⁹ Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design since 1880* (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 8.

way that the five neighborhoods in Neue Vahr consisted of residential and green areas with small retail zones next to big roads.³³⁰

The final stops on Podbregar-Vasle's trip were Scandinavian countries Denmark and Sweden, which were together with the Netherlands influential transnational models in architecture and urban planning in this period.³³¹ In Denmark, the focus was more on the modernization of existing urban environments than on building new ones. In contrast, Sweden was characterized by the construction of new neighborhoods influenced by England and the US, introduced thanks to the transnational experiences of Stockholm's head urban planner Sven Markelius under the social-democratic government. A prominent example was Markelius' new neighborhood Vällingby, which became one of the most canonical examples of the neighborhood unit.³³² Scandinavia was particularly influential for Slovenian architects focused on housing and some, like Marta and France Ivanšek, also studied neighborhood units in Stockholm.³³³ The new housing estates that emerged in Yugoslavia from the late 1950s and early 1960s in cities like Ljubljana and Zagreb were also structured around the neighborhood unit, and similar examples in other state-socialist countries like Czechoslovakia proved its transnational appeal.³³⁴ In Yugoslavia, just like in other European cities, the neighborhood unit also had a democratizing role, but in this case in supporting the social self-management system, primarily the housing and local community as territorial and socio-political entities.³³⁵

The neighborhood unit was an important conceptual framework within which architects and urban planners reimagined the role of the neighborhood center. As I briefly wrote earlier,

³³⁰ "Bremen Neue Vahr," in *Die Neue Heimat (1950-1982): eine Sozialdemokratische Utopie und Ihre Bauten*, ed. Andreas Lepik, Hilde Strobl (München: Detail, 2019), 9, 140.

³³¹ Schubert, "Transatlantic Crossings of Planning Ideas," 154.

³³² Schubert, "Transatlantic Crossings of Planning Ideas," 142.

³³³ See Marta Malešič, "Pomen skandinavskih vplivov za slovensko stanovanjsko kulturo," (PhD dissertation, University of Ljubljana, 2013).

³³⁴ Piškurić, "Housing Construction", 127; Marijke Martin, Cor Wagenaar, "Building a New Community – A Comparison between the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia," in *Re-Humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950-1970, Vol. 1. East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánsky, Judith Hopfengärtner (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 166.

³³⁵ Perić, Blagojević, "Passive agents or genuine facilitators of citizen participation?" 110.

architects and urban planners gathered in CIAM started to criticize the Corbusian approach to urban planning from the early 1950s. From the CIAM 8 meeting in 1951, which was dedicated to the topic of postwar urban revitalization, emerged a new generation of architects and urban planners gathered in Team 10.³³⁶ In contrast to the Corbusian ideals of rationality, order and the domineering role of the architect in shaping urban space, Team 10 turned to more intimately constructed urban environments created with the participation of residents.³³⁷ The circumstances of postwar reconstruction inspired these discussions because, as historian Judith Hopfengärtner emphasized, “[b]eyond the urgency of meeting basic needs, the re-building of large parts of the European continent triggered fundamental questions about how to build new, better societies—and how to build for them.”³³⁸ In this vision, architects and urban planners emphasized the necessity to pay more attention to the planning of centers, which were reimagined as humanized, pedestrian spaces designed through mixing rather than separation of functions.³³⁹ This rhetoric of humanism, as Ákos Moravánsky pointed out, was a common ground of different political positions in the postwar period.³⁴⁰ The focus on state intervention in planning, however, was characteristic for European welfare states and for state-socialist regimes, which formed a bridge between Western and Eastern European planning practices during the Cold War.³⁴¹

The new emphasis on the mixing of functions meant that city and neighborhood centers should have, as Kolacio argued for the new center of Zagreb, administrative and representative

³³⁶ Team 10 was an international group of architects and urban planners, which emerged from the CIAM meetings as a challenge to Corbusian ideas in urban planning. Although the group membership was fluid, some of the core members included Alison and Peter Smithson, Jacob Bakema, Aldo van Eyck, Georges Candilis, Shadrach Woods, and Giancarlo De Carlo. The group was active until Bakema’s death in 1981.

³³⁷ Domhardt, “From the ‘Functional City’ to the ‘Heart of the City’,” 133.

³³⁸ Judith Hopfengärtner, “Introduction,” in *Re-Humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950-1970, Vol. 1. East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánsky, Judith Hopfengärtner (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 14.

³³⁹ Vladimir Bjelikov, “Nova dispozicija i koordinate gradskih centara,” *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 39, 1966.

³⁴⁰ Ákos Moravánsky, “Foreword: East-West Central: Rebuilding Europe,” 10; Ákos Moravánsky, “Re-Humanizing Architecture: The Search for a Common Ground in the Postwar Years, 1950-1970,” in *Re-Humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950-1970, Vol. 1. East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánsky, Judith Hopfengärtner. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 23.

³⁴¹ Christian, Kott, Matějka, “Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction,” 16.

as well as social and communal roles. Retail spaces in city and neighborhood centers were the key element in this new socializing agenda. Although according to the original concept of the neighborhood unit retail spaces were supposed to be placed in border areas, in England and Sweden retail was located in the center. As Podbregar-Vasle observed, retail spaces were integral parts of English New Towns; specialized stores and self-service department stores were centrally concentrated, and together with other buildings formed the neighborhoods' centers, which were in most cases pedestrian zones separated from vehicle traffic.³⁴² In Stevenage (Figures 13 & 14), for example, the town center was a pedestrian area with retail spaces linked together by cross-canopies, a postwar architectural feature that refashioned the traditional shopping street.³⁴³ A similar feature already existed in Coventry (Figure 15), which although not part of the New Towns program, represented an important case of postwar reconstruction of an urban environment where the former city center was destroyed and then rebuilt under the city's Labour government.³⁴⁴ Here an important emphasis was placed on the retail center, designed as a vehicle free shopping precinct in the form of a shopping street featuring two levels of retail spaces that favored the pedestrian-consumer.³⁴⁵

³⁴² Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 5.

³⁴³ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 11.

³⁴⁴ Tony Mason, Nick Tiratsoo, "People, Politics, and Planning: the Reconstruction of Coventry's City Center, 1940-53," in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendord (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 94, 99.

³⁴⁵ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 15-16.



Figure 13. Main square with the shopping area, Stevenage, 1962.

From Podbregar-Vasle, Trgovinski centri u tujini., VI.



Figure 14. Main square with the shopping area, Stevenage, 1962.

From: Podbregar-Vasle, Trgovinski centri u tujini., VII.



Figure 15. Main square with the shopping area, Coventry, 1962.

From: Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, XII.

In Sweden, new neighborhoods planned under Sven Markelius also emphasized mixing rather than zoning of functions, the role of retail spaces as social spaces, and the integration of vehicle traffic in the period of fast automobilization.³⁴⁶ Since in Sweden, unlike in the US, retail centers emerged in rather populated areas, the incorporation of cars vis-à-vis pedestrians and residential zones was an important consideration in urban design.³⁴⁷ Urban mobility was overall an essential feature of neighborhood centers, where green areas acted as buffer zones between the pedestrian interiors and the vehicle traffic on surrounding roads. Mobility within neighborhood units was supposed to be pedestrian or with public transport, while cars were located outside. Most consideration to this issue was given in Sweden, which in this period went through an intense increase in car ownership. As historians have shown, in Yugoslavia and in state-socialist countries like East Germany and the Soviet Union urban planners were also increasingly considering both public transport and private automobility as crucial elements

³⁴⁶ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 24, 44-45.

³⁴⁷ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 47.

in the design of new neighborhood centers.³⁴⁸ In the 1960s, automobility was on the rise in Yugoslavia; in Belgrade, for example, in 1969 there were 89,718 registered cars, and by 1973 these numbers went up to 180,000 registered cars.³⁴⁹ This high increase in car ownership was not always followed by appropriate road infrastructure and parking spots, which, as chapters 3 and 4 show, became a frequent element in the design of new department stores only by the mid-1970s.³⁵⁰

For the design of central pedestrian retail spaces an influential European model was the Lijnbaan retail center in Rotterdam (1953) (Figure 16), by architects Jo van den Broek and Jacob Bakema, who was a core member of Team 10.³⁵¹ Located in the city center, the Lijnbaan was built in the postwar reconstruction of the severely bombed Rotterdam as a pedestrian promenade with six two-story blocks of stores on either side.³⁵² The elongated layout was highlighted by the design's simplicity, with stores in the shape of concrete cubes opened up with glass storefronts. The design and construction materials were chosen with flexibility in mind, allowing stores to be readily divided and customized to the owners' preferences.³⁵³ Porches alongside the shops protected visitors from the weather, while benches and flowerbeds created a "welcoming and intimate" environment sheltered from vehicle traffic.³⁵⁴ The separation of pedestrians from traffic was one of the main ideas behind the Lijnbaan,³⁵⁵ which made it a secluded environment where residents could shop and socialize.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁸ Le Normand, "Automobility in Yugoslavia," 92-104; Elke Beyer, "Planning for Mobility: Designing City Centers and New Towns in the USSR and GDR in the 1960s," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. L. H. Siegelbaum, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 71-91.

³⁴⁹ Radomir Mišić, "Novi Beograd sa gledišta urbane higijene," *Urbanizam Beograda* 25, 1973.

³⁵⁰ Mišić, "Novi Beograd sa gledišta urbane higijene,".

³⁵¹ Yugoslav retail journals reported on the Lijnbaan already in 1954. See, "Novi trgovinski centar u Rotterdamu," *Ilustrovana trgovina* 6-7, 1954.

³⁵² E. R. M. Taverne, "The Lijnbaan (Rotterdam): a Prototype of a Postwar Urban Shopping Center," in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendord (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 146.

³⁵³ Jo van den Broek, Jacob Bakema, "The Lijnbaan at Rotterdam," *The Town Planning Review* 27 (1956): 24.

³⁵⁴ van den Broek, Bakema, The Lijnbaan at Rotterdam," 26.

³⁵⁵ van den Broek, Bakema, The Lijnbaan at Rotterdam," 21.

³⁵⁶ Žimbek, "Mirrors of the City," 85.



Figure 16. Jo van den Broek, Jacob Bakema, the Lijnbaan, Rotterdam, early 1950s.

From: Jo Van den Broek, Jaap Bakema. "The Lijnbaan at Rotterdam." *The Town Planning Review* 27 (1956), plate 4

Before it was epitomized in the Lijnbaan, the new postwar shopping promenade had a predecessor in the suburban shopping center popularized by architect Victor Gruen in the US. Gruen, an Austro-American architect who pioneered the regional shopping center in the US, was the first to propose that retail spaces can have a commercial, cultural as well as a civic role.³⁵⁷ The open-ground spaces and glass storefronts of Gruen's shopping centers—which were well-known to Bakema and van den Broek—were a design choice intended to erase the divide between the interiors and exteriors. This feature was supposed to, just like in the case of the unrealized Na-Ma department store, create communal space adapted to the human scale.³⁵⁸ According to historian Joseph Malherek, although regional shopping centers became emblems of US capitalism, Gruen's belief in planning for social benefit revealed the social-democratic orientation he was educated and socialized with in his hometown Vienna.³⁵⁹ Despite

³⁵⁷ Victor Gruen, Lawrence P. Smith, "Shopping Center: the New Building Types," *Progressive Architecture*, June 1952, 67.

³⁵⁸ Taverne, "The Lijnbaan (Rotterdam)," 150. Even Gruen himself acknowledged that the Lijnbaan is reminiscent of his suburban shopping centers. See Victor Gruen, Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1960), 272.

³⁵⁹ Joseph Malherek, *Free-Market Socialists: European Emigres Who Made Capitalist Culture in America, 1918-1968* (Vienna: Central European University Press, 2022), 272.

differences in political and socio-economic contexts, the ideas and materializations of the communal function of retail space in urban welfare travelled back and forth between Europe and the US.

A difference in comparison to examples from England and Sweden was shown in the case of Neue Vahr. At first glance, the center of Neue Vahr was similarly located near the central intersection; it encompassed commercial and social areas, including the main retail center (called *Berliner Freiheit*), which consisted of forty-four stores and a department store designed in the same manner as the Lijnbaan, with cross-canopies connecting the shops and forming a kind of shopping precinct around the main square, overlooked by Alvar Aalto's now famous skyscraper.³⁶⁰ The similarity in the choice of design also revealed a connection with Victor Gruen, whom a delegation from Neue Heimat visited in 1961 and a year later the famous architect returned to hold a lecture on the topic of functional mixing and urban consolidation in planning.³⁶¹

Despite the lecture, separation rather than mixing of functions was a central design element in Neue Vahr (Figure 17), which Podbregar-Vasle strongly criticized.³⁶² Instead of bringing together commercial and social content in the neighborhood center, the large and small retail centers were inconveniently located in areas cut off by big roads. This prevented residents from spontaneously accessing them, limiting their function to a single use. This was a type of urban planning characteristic of the earlier Corbusian approach of separating rather than bringing together different urban functions. Problems of accessibility and singular use caused the center of Neue Vahr to often remain empty. This comparison shows that despite the outward

³⁶⁰ Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 18.

³⁶¹ Vera Simone Bader, "Von der Ladenzeile zum Shoppingcenter: eine Entwicklungsgeschichte," in *Die Neue Heimat (1950-1982): eine Sozialdemokratische Utopie und Ihre Bauten*, ed. Andreas Lepik, Hilde Strobl (München: Detail, 2019), 67-68.

³⁶² Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 18.

similarities in design, the success in planning retail centers also depended on their placement in the urban environments.



Figure 17. Retail center, Bremen-Neue Vahr, 1962.

From: Podbregar-Vasle, Trgovinski centri u tujini, XIV.

In this period the priorities in urban planning went through a paradigmatic shift from functional zoning to functional mixing and favoring of pedestrian urban mobility and green space set within the broader discourse of humanization. In Yugoslavia, the support for the humanization of urban space, which was present, for example, in some of Kolacio's work, remained limited in comparison to the major influence of Le Corbusier, CIAM, and the Athens Charter.³⁶³ In contrast to Yugoslav architects who attended CIAM meetings and later had a direct contact with members of Team 10, Podbregar-Vasle was able to immerse herself in new

³⁶³ Tamara Bjažić Klarin, "CIAM Networking – International Congress of Modern Architecture and Croatian Architects in the 1950s," *Život umjetnosti* 99 (2016): 40-57. See also, Žimbek, "The Unrealized Department Store 'Na-Ma' in Trnje," 217-220.

ideas on urban planning by exploring the places where these ideas were very concretely put into practice.³⁶⁴

Upon her return, Podbregar-Vasle aggregated the best practices from her trip and from the early 1960s started to promote a particular vision of urban retail described with the concept of “commercial urbanism.”³⁶⁵ In Podbregar-Vasle’s words, commercial urbanism analyzed the relationship between the “politics of retail” and “politics of urban design” in order to determine how the existing urban environment affects the design and organization of stores, but also how the stores shape neighborhood centers, traffic, infrastructure, and other facilities.³⁶⁶ As she summarized, “in the system of the city retail and services are spatially conditioned.”³⁶⁷ Commercial urbanism was based on the presumption that retail spaces in urban environments have a physical and social role in improving the quality of life by supplying the residents with consumer goods, lessening traffic jams, and creating additional content in neighborhoods.³⁶⁸ Understanding commercial urbanism in these terms was embedded in the Yugoslav architects and urban planners’ belief in the connection between the physical and social dimensions of design and their role as agents of social change under Yugoslav self-managed socialism. The conceptualization of the city as a system whose elements influence each other meant for these

³⁶⁴ These architects included Zdenko Kolacio, Bogdan Bogdanović, but also Aleksandar Dragomanović and Radovan Nikšić, who designed several department stores inspired by the Lijnbaan, which I analyze in chapter 3. See, Vladimir Kulić, “Bogdan Bogdanović and the Search for a Meaningful City,” in *Re-Humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950-1970, Vol. 1. East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánsky, Judith Hopfengärtner (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 199-210; Renata Margetić Urlić, Karin Šerman, “Workers’ University Zagreb: Team 10 Ideas in the Service of Socialist Enlightenment,” in *Team 10 East: Revisionist Architecture in Real Existing Modernism*, ed. Łukasz Stanek (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 157-163; Maroje Mrduljaš, Tamara Bjažić Klarin, “Zagreb Revisionism: Social-Standard Architecture,” in *Team 10 East: Revisionist Architecture in Real Existing Modernism*, ed. Łukasz Stanek (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 165-197; Aleksandar Kušić, “New Belgrade Block No. 22: Order and Freedom,” in *Team 10 East: Revisionist Architecture in Real Existing Modernism*, ed. Łukasz Stanek (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 199-202.

³⁶⁵ Podbregar-Vasle most likely adopted the term from the French *l’urbanisme commercial*, since she was familiar with contemporary French literature on the topic. One clue is, for example, an article from 1974 in which she cites a report called *l’urbanisme commercial* published by the French Ministry of Economics and Finance. See Lidija-Podbregar Vasle, “Optimalno snabdevanje potrošnim dobrima i uslugama u velikim gradovima,” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1974.

³⁶⁶ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, “Trgovački urbanizam – novi pojam trgovačkog oblikovanja,” *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 30, 1964.

³⁶⁷ Podbregar Vasle, “Optimalno snabdevanje,”

³⁶⁸ Podbregar-Vasle, “Trgovački urbanizam”.

architects and urban planners that they could also shape this system in a scientific way. This belief reflected the broader professionalization of urban planning as a scientific discipline and the (self-)perception of urban planners as experts in their own right.³⁶⁹ The awareness of the connection between the physical and the social in architecture and urban planning existed already before the Second World War among socially oriented architects and urban planners in Europe. As Łukasz Stanek writes, “[t]he socialist imagination, itself heterogenous and taking various directions, was the yardstick for Team 10 projects, and it constituted one of the main lines of continuity between modern architecture before and after the war.”³⁷⁰ After the war, these ideas reemerged under novel conditions of postwar affluence and new technological and material opportunities, which was also the case for Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s.

Within the framework of commercial urbanism, Podbregar-Vasle summarized the best solutions for developing urban retail in Yugoslavia in a report published in 1963 by the Slovenian Institute for Urban Planning. In the same year this report was disseminated in a summarized version in several issues of *Urbanizem (Urbanism)*, a bulletin published by the Institute.³⁷¹ In her report, Podbregar-Vasle made various recommendations regarding the urban placement and the exterior and interior design of retail spaces. According to her, all retail zones, administrative and social buildings should be placed in city or neighborhood centers; the type, assortment, and size of the store should be determined by the size and character of the population; pedestrian and vehicle traffic should be separated, but retail zones should include parking spots; the neighborhood unit as the most elementary housing entity should be able to satisfy the basic supply and consumer needs of its residents. The design of stores should ideally be in the hands of one legal entity in order to ensure its accomplishment from the design to the

³⁶⁹ Živa M. Đorđević, “Drugi kongres,” *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 3, 1960; D. S., “Savetovanje o urbanističkim službama i stručnom obrazovanju urbanista,” *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 8-9, 1961; Beyer, “Planning for Mobility,” 85.

³⁷⁰ Łukasz Stanek, Dirk van den Heuvel, “Introduction,” in *Team 10 East: Revisionist Architecture in Real Existing Modernism*, ed. Łukasz Stanek (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 28.

³⁷¹ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, “Trgovinski centri u tujini,” *Urbanizem* 2, 4-5, 6, 1963.

construction phase; stores should have arcades or cross-canopies to protect the customers, as well as glass storefronts and green surroundings. Podbregar-Vasle was against standardization of stores since she believed every retail space needs to be adapted to the context in which it emerges. In contrast, the store interiors—which she inspected in detail in Denmark and Sweden (Figure 18)—should be constructed from typified elements needed for the self-service system, which should be introduced whenever possible. In order to ensure coherence and quality of construction, Podbregar-Vasle argued for the foundation of an entity that would produce guidelines and regulations for designing retail spaces.³⁷²



Figure 18. Supermarket interiors, Sweden.

From: Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, XXV.

Podbregar-Vasle presented these ideas to broader audiences at the 3rd Yugoslav Congress of Urban Planners in May 1965 in Rijeka.³⁷³ The conference was held for the 10th anniversary of the Yugoslav Association of Urban Planners on the topic of the urban development of Yugoslav cities.³⁷⁴ Once again emphasizing the social role of retail spaces in cities, Podbregar-Vasle encouraged the design of pedestrian-oriented shopping streets or

³⁷² Podbregar-Vasle, *Trgovinski centri u tujini*, 74-76.

³⁷³ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, "Prostorska i oblikovna koncepcija trgovačkih centara u okviru grada," in *Koreferati za XII. Savjetovanje urbanista u Rijeci* (Ljubljana: Urbanistično društvo Slovenije, 1965), 1-7.

³⁷⁴ "III. Kongres i 12. Savjetovanje urbanista SFRJ," *Arhitektura* 90, 1965.

precincts in neighborhood units, supported the introduction of unified design guidelines, and underlined the importance of interdisciplinarity and coordination between various experts as the road to success.³⁷⁵ Her recommendations—which were very likely heard by a large number of attending Yugoslav architects and urban planners—reflected the ideas she encountered during her trip, summarized in the concepts of the civic role of retail spaces, retail modernization through the self-service system, the neighborhood unit, humanized pedestrian centers, and the need for interdisciplinarity and centralization of expert governance.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Podbregar-Vasle disseminated her expert knowledge in Yugoslavia and abroad through articles and conference presentations on different topics related to the broader issue of the role of retail in cities. From important professional journals like *Arhitektura-urbanizam* and *Nova trgovina* to conferences on retail, market research, and urban planning in places like Opatija, Mostar, Zagreb, and Belgrade, Podbregar-Vasle's expert output brought into practice her call for interdisciplinary research.³⁷⁶ In addition, she also taught at higher schools for economics in Zagreb, Rijeka, and Sarajevo.³⁷⁷ Both Yugoslav architects and urban planners as well as economists and retail experts were likely familiar with her work, particularly in republics like Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁷⁸ As chapters 3 and 4 show, almost all department store projects realized in the 1960s and early

³⁷⁵ Podbregar-Vasle, "Prostorska i oblikovna koncepcija," 5.

³⁷⁶ Podbregar-Vasle made over thirty conference presentations and articles in this period. Some included the Conference on Market Research and Product Placement (Opatija, 1968), the 15th Yugoslav Conference of Urban Planners (Mostar, 1969), the Conference on Retail and the Market (Zagreb, 1971), the Conference on Economics and Science (Zagreb, 1973), and the Conference on Supply in Large Cities (Belgrade, 1974). See Podbregar-Vasle, "Optimalno snabdevanje".

³⁷⁷ Mateša, "Lidija Podbregar-Vasle," 151.

³⁷⁸ Since Podbregar-Vasle published in professional rather than academic journals that did not strictly adhere to referencing conventions, a detailed impact of her recommendations is difficult to precisely estimate. Nevertheless, examples of expert publications like the economist Davor Benedeković's research on retail and department stores in Zagreb in 1971—who referenced her work as secondary literature and thanked her in the acknowledgements—or economist Živorad Zlatković's book on the development of retail centers titled *Komercijalni urbanizam* (*Commercial Urbanism*) (1980) confirm the influence of her research and terminology. See Davor Benedeković, *Lokalno tržište i prodaja na malo: Pristup formiranju poslovne politike u prodaji na malo i praktična analiza robne kuće* (Zagreb: Ekonomski institut, 1971); Živorad Zlatković, *Komercijalni urbanizam: Koncepcija razvoja trgovinskih centara* (Niš: Biblioteka časopisa Ekonomika, 1980).

1970s one way or another put into practice some of the guidelines that she published in her report.

In the mid-1960s, Podbregar-Vasle's work acquired a new methodological framework when the Slovenian Institute for Urban Planning became increasingly interested in exploring and popularizing regional planning. Regional planning was a new planning approach used in Yugoslavia from the late 1950s, which broadened the planning focus from the city to the entire region, and advocated for a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary perspective.³⁷⁹ A crucial idea behind regional planning was that space is a key feature in economic planning and development. In this understanding, the regional plan was the location where economic planning would find its spatial expression, which was increasingly promoted by Yugoslav urban planners following the 1965 economic reform.³⁸⁰

In Yugoslavia, the strongest push toward regional planning came from one of the most notable examples of transnational knowledge exchange during the Cold War, the American-Yugoslav Project (AYP) in Regional and Urban Planning, which was conducted at the Institute under the leadership of architect Vladimir Braco Mušič between 1966 and 1977 with the financial support of the Ford Foundation.³⁸¹ The first phase of the project was dedicated to applying regional planning in order to prepare a development plan for the Ljubljana region, to which Podbregar-Vasle contributed with her analysis of the spatial dispersion of retail spaces in Ljubljana.³⁸² She conducted this research with project member Andrei Rogers, a US geographer and associate professor of City and Regional Planning at the University of

³⁷⁹ Perić, Blagojević, "Passive agents or genuine facilitators of citizen participation?" 105. See also Tijana Dabović, Zorica Nedović-Budić, Dejan Djordjević, "Pursuit of integration in the former Yugoslavia's planning," *Planning Perspectives* 34, 3 (2019): 215-241.

³⁸⁰ Ermin Kržičnik, "Elementi prostora kao dimenzija društveno-ekonomskog planiranja," *Komuna* 2, 1963.

³⁸¹ Vladimir Kulić, "Ford's Network: the American-Yugoslav Project and the Circulation of Urban Planning Expertise in the Cold War," *Planning Perspectives* 37, 5 (2022): 1001, 1011-1012; Nika Grabar, *Planning and Ideology: American-Yugoslav Project*, Rockefeller Archive Center Research Reports (Tarrytown: The Rockefeller Archive Center, 2017), 6.

³⁸² Železnikar, *Dokumentacijski pregled*, 39.

California in Berkeley.³⁸³ In addition, she also conducted research on the spatial distribution of consumption and the design of urban retail networks in Slovenia.³⁸⁴

The American-Yugoslav project, as Vladimir Kulić pointed out, mainly worked as a “networking instrument” that connected Yugoslav, US and other foreign experts through frequent conferences, seminars, and summer schools in an effort to support transnational knowledge exchange on urban planning.³⁸⁵ Although existing literature mostly focuses on male architects and urban planners who were prominent participants in this network, Lidija Podbregar-Vasle was also undoubtedly active as an expert on urban retail.³⁸⁶ Podbregar-Vasle was in fact familiar with regional planning already before the American-Yugoslav project thanks to her previous transnational experiences. In 1963, she invited the Swedish urban planner Tomas Priberger, whom she met on her trip, to be the keynote speaker at a seminar on contemporary urban planning organized by the Institute.³⁸⁷ Priberger, who was the director of the urban planning department at the largest Swedish consumer cooperative, gave several presentations on the impact of automobility on urban design, the design of Swedish shopping malls, and regional planning in Sweden. Employees of the Institute also held their own presentations, including Podbregar-Vasle, who spoke on commercial urbanism. With Priberger’s help, in the same year Podbregar-Vasle conducted research on the regional distribution of retail centers in the Ljubljana region, which probably served as a foundation for her later work in the American-Yugoslav project.³⁸⁸ Priberger was not the only urban planner whom Podbregar-Vasle brought to Ljubljana; during her trip she also met John Allpas, who

³⁸³ *Quarterly Digest of Urban and Regional Research* 15, 2 (1968): 112.

³⁸⁴ Železnikar, *Dokumentacijski pregled*, 39; Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, “Gravitacija nakupov in problem ureditve omrežja trgovinskih centrov,” *Urbanizem* 3-4, 1966.

³⁸⁵ Kulić, “Ford’s Network,” 1014.

³⁸⁶ See Kulić, “Ford’s Network,” 1001-1027; Grabar, *Planning and Ideology*; Tracy Neumann, “Overpromising Technocracy’s Potential: the American-Yugoslav Project, Urban Planning, and Cold War Cultural Diplomacy,” *Journal of Planning History* 22 (2023): 3-25.

³⁸⁷ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, “Seminar Urbanizem 63,” *Urbanizem* 3, 1963.

³⁸⁸ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, “Množna regionalna razporeditev ccentrov v delu ljubljanske regije,” *Urbanizem* 4-5, 1963.

was the director of the Institute for the Planning of Centers in Copenhagen. Following their encounter, Allpas, whose institute was known for promoting experimental planning methods based on resident participation, regularly came to the Slovenian Institute, and took part in lectures and seminars.³⁸⁹

Another opportunity to deepen her knowledge on regional planning occurred in 1966, when Podbregar-Vasle was chosen by the International Technical Assistance program to spend six months at the Bouwcenter in Rotterdam—a research institute for housing and construction—to study urban and regional planning. In addition to many lectures and study visits to the Netherlands and England, Podbregar-Vasle held a presentation on the development of retail centers and structural change in urban centers. In the same year, she took part in a conference on retail and urban planning in Brussels, where one of the keynote speakers was Victor Gruen.³⁹⁰ These experiences show that in her scientific field Podbregar-Vasle was active as a researcher both in Yugoslavia and abroad; she was immersed in contemporary theoretical and methodological discussions and practices in urban planning, and an initiator of her own expert networks that contributed to the urban planning community in Slovenia.

Despite the impact that regional planning had on Podbregar-Vasle's work, the proposals she made based on her trip from 1960 remained the foundation of her research in the 1960s and 1970s, and were, as chapters 3 and 4 show, the defining features in the design of department stores in Yugoslav cities and towns. When SKGOJ organized a conference on the urban service sector in October 1969, Podbregar-Vasle's presentation restated her main ideas: that retail is a spatial activity that needs to be planned; that the planning of retail networks has to be connected

³⁸⁹ Vladimir Braco Mušič, "In memoriam: John Allpass, 1925-1999," *Urbani izziv* 10, 2 (1999): 77.

³⁹⁰ Lidiya Podbregar-Vasle, "Mednarodni tečaj za planiranje in izgradnjo v Rotterdamu," *Urbanizem* 3-4, 1966. In October 1975, Victor Gruen also visited Yugoslavia and gave a lecture at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb. In his lecture, he spoke about many of the staples of his architectural theories, such as the importance of centers as pedestrian zones for socialization, education, and living. For Gruen, the best example of this approach to urban planning were regional shopping centers in the US, which had a social, cultural, and recreational role. See Sena Sekulić Gvozdanović, "Arhitektura i urbanizam Victora Gruena," *Čovjek i prostor* 272, 1975.

to urban and regional planning; and that retail spaces should be grouped in the centers of cities, towns and neighborhoods for the sake of economic efficiency as well as for strengthening retail's role in "giving real dynamism and atmosphere to these areas."³⁹¹

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed the first phase of the modernization of Yugoslav retail in the 1950s and early 1960s by showing that Yugoslav retailers, retail experts, architects and urban planners utilized the available Western know-how and technology to kickstart the spread of the self-service system, which they perceived as the ideal method for the retail sector. When the Yugoslav government set on a new political and socio-economic course after the split with the Soviet Union in 1948, the Yugoslav retail sector was decentralized and liberalized; retail enterprises were removed from centralized administrative control and embedded into a new system shaped by the law of supply and demand, expectations of profit-making and economic competition but also regulated by self-management units and socio-economic plans. The ensuing period until the late 1950s was characterized by several restructurings of retail enterprises and networks, whose aim was to find the best way to support economic competition while ensuring self-sustainability and business capacities that could support the development of the Yugoslav retail sector.

In the first half of the decade, the vision how to modernize Yugoslav retail was not clear. By using the vague label of cultured trade, Yugoslav retail experts tried to deal with the rising issues caused by major lacks in retail space, technology, consumer goods, and untrained workforce. A challenge to their more active engagement in resolving these problems was posed by the lack of expert knowledge and practices on how to modernize retail. In order to change

³⁹¹ Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, "Research in Retail as an Element in Spatial Planning," box 60, Conference on the Service Sector in Cities, folder 495, AJ.

this situation, institutions and organizations like the Yugoslav Association of Trade Chambers and similar chambers on the republic and city levels initiated the production of knowledge on modern retail by establishing bureaus for retail development, publishing journals and instructional booklets, and inviting foreign experts to give lectures and seminars on the topic. The lectures and seminars held by economic, trade and retail experts from the US in the mid-1950s were particularly impactful, and after attending one such event, retailer Stjepan Putarek from the enterprise Ivanečki magazin opened the first Yugoslav supermarket in Ivanec in 1956.

A year later, the US organized a major supermarket exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair, which was seen by millions of visitors, and was later bought by the retail enterprise Vračar and reopened in Belgrade in 1958. For the 6th year anniversary of the Vračar supermarket, the journal *Nova trgovina* published an article that, notwithstanding the celebratory tone, was accurate in stating that the Vračar supermarket “cleared up the way and became the pioneer of the self-service system in Yugoslavia. It had a revolutionary impact on the production of appropriate goods and equipment, on packaging and retail enterprises that later started to open self-service stores. This store conducted the practical education of retail staff from many bigger and smaller towns in Yugoslavia.”³⁹²

The Ivanec and Vračar supermarkets clearly demonstrated that within the new possibilities and expectations posed by the broader transformation of the Yugoslav political and socio-economic system, a small number of retailers and retail experts seized the opportunities provided by Western know-how and practices in order to develop both their own businesses and the Yugoslav retail sector. By acknowledging the importance of foreign practices and technologies while perceiving them as neutral systems, these pioneers of modern retail successfully adapted the self-service system, and continued its promotion as the fundamental feature in the modernization of Yugoslav retail.

³⁹² “Šest godina uspešnog poslovanja našeg prvog supermarketa.”

The introduction of the self-service system required a significant investment in terms of finances, labor, and expertise, because it involved a profound change in the interior and exterior design of stores, the organization of labor, the packaging of consumer goods, and the use and placement of furniture and technology. Since modern retail spaces based on the self-service system, such as supermarkets but also self-service department stores and supply centers, required the construction of new buildings, their design and placement were important topics for Yugoslav architects and urban planners. Convinced of the importance of their engagement in planning urban retail networks as crucial features of urban development, architects and urban planners were early on engaged in the modernization of Yugoslav retail.

By bringing together socio-economic and urban planning, particularly within the methodology of regional planning that they increasingly promoted from the late 1950s, these experts highlighted retail as a spatial activity whose expert planning and management could improve the living standard and quality of urban environments for their residents. The in-depth analysis of the career of Lidija Podbregar-Vasle, whom I suggest was the first Yugoslav architect and urban planner to introduce and disseminate knowledge on commercial urbanism, a subdiscipline in urban planning focused explicitly on retail, showcased the relevance of discussions and projects in countries like the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and West Germany for Yugoslav architects and urban planners. Many of the concepts analyzed and disseminated by Podbregar-Vasle through numerous articles and conference presentations, such as the social and civic role of retail spaces, neighborhood unit, and urban mobility, were shared between Yugoslavia, social-democratic and state-socialist regimes in Cold War Europe, marked by a belief in state intervention and expansion of welfare regimes in the postwar period. Consequently, as the following chapters show, these concepts and proposals defined the planning and construction of department stores and the role of retail in the transforming urban environments in Yugoslavia in the next decades.

CHAPTER 2. THE EXTENDED FAMILY: WOMEN, RETAIL, AND CONSUMPTION IN THE SOCIAL SELF-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, 1950S–1960S

Introduction

Industrialization of the country caused a fast increase in urban population, change in family structure and way of life. The pace of life is faster, the education and culture of consumers higher. An increasing number of women, main buyers of goods for family consumption, are being employed outside of the home and becoming socially active. This development makes it necessary to resolve new family problems and modernize households. Retail can, by organizing better and more orderly supply, play a big role in relieving the family.³⁹³

In a presentation given at the SKGOJ conference on urban retail in 1958—which was co-organized by the League of Women’s Organizations of Yugoslavia (SŽDJ)—the politician and organization member Milka Kufrin, as the quote above shows, emphasized that modern retail could improve the everyday life of Yugoslav women and families.³⁹⁴ Retail experts, retailers, architects, and urban planners were in fact not the only experts and professionals invested in the modernization of Yugoslav retail in the 1950s. An important yet unrecognized role in initiating the production and implementation of knowledge on modern retail, particularly the self-service system, was played by Yugoslav women’s organizations and home economists.

In this chapter, I argue that members of Yugoslav women’s organizations were engaged as experts and activists in the first phase of the modernization of retail and retail spaces in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s, because they perceived modern retail as an essential

³⁹³ Milka Kufrin, “Retail and Consumers,” box 3, folder 495, AJ.

³⁹⁴ Milka Kufrin had a degree in economics, and after participating in the NOB, she held various economic and political positions, including vice-secretary in the Secretariat for Transport, president of the Committee for Tourism at the SIV, secretary of the KDAŽJ, and a delegate in the Croatian Executive Council. See *Jugoslavenski suvremenici*, 529.

element in their broader agenda to modernize household work, and ultimately relieve Yugoslav women of its burden. In order to achieve this goal, from the early 1950s, the SŽDJ, and from 1961, the Conference for the Social Activities of Women of Yugoslavia (KDAŽJ), established institutions for home economics, a scientific discipline dedicated to the modernization of household work. From the federal to the republican and local levels, members of the SŽDJ, the KDAŽJ, and home economists initiated various activities and genres of knowledge production on the best methods to modernize household work such as exhibitions, conferences, publications, and seminars. Alongside the development of other sectors like education, healthcare, childcare, nutrition, and household technology, they also promoted the modernization of retail through the self-service system. One key element of their activities was their participation in international and transnational meetings and exchanges centered on home economics, primarily supported by foreign aid from international organizations, which were crucial for the development of local knowledge on the modernization of retail and household work.

Members of the SŽDJ, the KDAŽJ, and home economists understood household work as unpaid reproductive labor performed in the home, whose modernization required technological development and socialization in the social self-management system of housing and local communities.³⁹⁵ In their view, consumption, which was predominantly conducted by Yugoslav women for themselves or their families, was a form of unpaid reproductive labor. To modernize the retail sector, therefore, meant to improve consumption for women by reducing the time, effort, and money spent on it. Simultaneously, these women activists and experts also

³⁹⁵ Socialization of household work (sometimes also called collectivization or communalization) primarily means a reorganization of the relationship between capital and labor. In the postwar socialist context, socialization entailed the transformation of private, domestic work into public, social work within state-provided institutions, facilities, and services. In market economies, socialization of household work mostly entailed the commodification and outsourcing of labor, rather than provision through public institutions. See Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 310–11; Eileen Boris, “Subsistence and Household Labour,” in *Handbook Global History of Work*, ed. Karin Hofmeester and Marcel van der Linden (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 339.

advocated for women to be more actively involved in the modernization of the retail sector as its main customers. Since the late 1940s, the Antifascist Women's Front (*Antifašistička fronta žena*, AFŽ) emphasized that the retail sector should be aligned with the wishes, habits, and taste of consumers, and that women in particular, because of their stronger connection to retail through household work, should be more informed and engaged in its development.³⁹⁶ The engagement of consumers in retail was reinforced from 1955 with the decentralization of the sector and the introduction of the social self-management system, whose administrators established consumer councils as self-managing units of consumers. Since the members of the SŽDJ believed that issues in retail were pressing for working women and housewives, who were more sensitive to the irregularities and problems in the retail sector, they were active in the early promotion and development of consumer councils.³⁹⁷ By the late 1950s, as the social self-management system developed, the SŽDJ and other Yugoslav social organizations also initiated the promotion of housing communities as ideal frameworks for the modernization of retail and household work. For this reason, I also argue that with their focus on retail, consumption, and household work, members of the SŽDJ and home economists contributed to the development of theories and practices of the Yugoslav social self-management system.

I begin the chapter with an overview of changes in Yugoslav women's organizing in the 1950s and 1960s and detail the development of their organizational interest in modernizing household work and retail. In the second section, I focus on the establishment of institutions and practices in home economics as the SŽDJ's main scientific framework for the socialization and mechanization of household work, in whose development an important role was played by educational opportunities supported by international organizations and foreign aid. In the third section, I analyze in more depth the SŽDJ's promotion of the self-service system and department stores in housing communities, through the analysis of an exhibition series called

³⁹⁶ "Za demokratičnost naše trgovine," *Naša žena* 6, 1947.

³⁹⁷ "Spremembe v naši trgovini," *Naša žena* 3, 1951; "Šola upravljanja," *Naša žena* 1, 1956.

“Family and Household,” which took place at the Zagreb Trade Fair in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the SŽDJ’s view, the establishment of self-service department stores as retail spaces where consumers could shop for everything in one place was the foundation for the modernization and expansion of Yugoslav retail networks.³⁹⁸ In the final section, by analyzing the formative relationship between retail, household work, consumer councils, and housing and local communities, I illustrate the vital contribution of the SŽDJ, the KDAŽJ, and home economists in developing the Yugoslav social self-management system. By framing women as experts and activists, I move the analysis beyond the usual dichotomy of male experts versus female workers in retail. Although the feminization of labor in retail and the service sector under state socialism was diagnosed both by historical actors and historians—including in the Yugoslav case—focusing on the engagement of women in expert discussions and planning inserts them into a predominantly male historical narrative and redefines the established meanings of experts and expertise.³⁹⁹

2.1 Resolving the Double Burden: Yugoslav Women’s Organization from the AFŽ to the KDAŽJ

The growth of industrial urban centers from the early 1950s was an important factor in changing the economic and social status of Yugoslav women.⁴⁰⁰ Rapid industrialization opened up space for the increased entrance of women into wage labor, many of whom came from the countryside in a mass wave of internal rural-urban migration. As Milka Kufrin’s statement highlighted, the

³⁹⁸ K. Džeba, “Trgovina i potrošači,” *Žena* 8, 1959.

³⁹⁹ Donna Harsch, “Communism and Women,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen A. Smith, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), 491. For more on the feminization of state-socialist retail sectors, see Amy E. Randall, “Legitimizing Soviet Trade: Gender and the Feminization of the Retail Workforce in the Soviet 1930s,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 965–990; Malgorzata Mazurek, “Dishonest Saleswomen: On Gendered Politics of Shame and Blame in Polish State-Socialist Trade,” in *Labor in State Socialist Europe, 1945–1989: Contributions to a Global History of Work*, ed. Marsha Siefert (Budapest: CEU Press, 2020), 123–144; Diane P. Koenker, “The Smile Behind the Sales Counter: Soviet Shop Assistants and the Road to Full Communism,” *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 3 (2021): 872–89.

⁴⁰⁰ Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju samoupravne socijalističke Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Jugoslavenska stvarnost, 1981), 90.

new circumstances of waged employment in growing urban centers induced significant transformations of Yugoslav women's economic status and the social and cultural expectations of women's roles within the family and society.⁴⁰¹

From their foundation, Yugoslav women's organizations were preoccupied with radically changing the roles of Yugoslav women in society and in the household.⁴⁰² The AFŽ, the first Yugoslav women's organization, was founded in 1942, at a time when the lives of millions of Yugoslav women radically changed due to war. Approximately two million women took part in the National Liberation Struggle (*Narodno oslobodilačka borba*, NOB), and while around 100,000 women were combatants, others worked as nurses, doctors, couriers, and teachers. The numerous activities organized by the AFŽ during the war reflected and supported these new roles: they included literacy and nursing courses, political education, diversion and sabotage, the writing and publication of women's wartime periodicals, the collection and storage of weapons, medical supplies, food, and clothing, and care for children, the elderly, and refugees.⁴⁰³ The organization of homemaking courses and the improvement of household technology were further activities that the AFŽ had already initiated during the war, which represented their earliest effort to modernize household work.⁴⁰⁴

Immediately after the war, the AFŽ became actively involved in rebuilding Yugoslavia's various economic and social sectors, from agriculture, industry, and trade to healthcare, education, and social institutions. The organization took part in the clearing of rubble, collected food and money for the needy, volunteered in hospitals, schools, public kitchens, and children's homes, and assisted in developing, implementing, and educating

⁴⁰¹ Some sections of this chapter will appear in extended form in a chapter titled "Household Work and Women's Transnational Activism and Expertise in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1950s–1970s," in the forthcoming edited volume *Nested Internationalisms: New Perspectives on Labour Activism Across Borders and Boundaries*.

⁴⁰² Anka Bujas, "Domaćinsko obrazovanje u školama i tečajevima," *Žena u borbi* 3, 1953; "Kakova je perspektiva za žene u daljnjoj izgradnji socijalizma," *Žena u borbi* 10, 1953.

⁴⁰³ Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* (Belgrade: Devedesetčetvrti, 1996), 131–135, 144.

⁴⁰⁴ Duša Švajger, "Začetki gospodinjskega izobraževanja v partizanih," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 16–17, 1955.

women on the laws and regulations that upheld legal gender equality, maternity and child protection, and the principle of equal pay for equal work.⁴⁰⁵ In those dire circumstances marked by a lack of experts, professionals, infrastructure, and financial resources, members of the AFŽ, as historian Neda Božinović pointed out, “replaced social services.”⁴⁰⁶

In the postwar period, the AFŽ continued to embrace the socialist and communist tradition of women’s liberation.⁴⁰⁷ The organization was independent, but structured in a hierarchical manner, with a network of councils on the level of cities, counties, and republics, whose delegates formed the main federal council in Belgrade. While retaining its independent status, in 1950 the AFŽ became a section in the Yugoslav Popular Front (*Narodni front Jugoslavije*), a mass organization that represented the postwar iteration of the antifascist war alliance.⁴⁰⁸

Under the new conditions of postwar industrialization and urbanization, women’s increasing participation in wage labor became, according to Vida Tomšič—the AFŽ president from 1948 to 1953—a crucial social process, which alongside legislation defined women’s status in the Yugoslav society.⁴⁰⁹ Wage labor represented, in the words of sociologist Martha Lampland, “the very foundation of civic subjectivity, the basis for equal political participation in socialist society.”⁴¹⁰ If women’s wage employment was the basis for “the new order’s new gender contract,” then this contract was obstructed by the traditional division of labor within the household and the outdated means of performing household work, which turned it into a

⁴⁰⁵ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 150, 157.

⁴⁰⁶ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 12.

⁴⁰⁷ Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi*, ed. Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996), 82.

⁴⁰⁸ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 141, 162.

⁴⁰⁹ Vida Tomšič, “Postoji li kod nas žensko pitanje?” *Žena u borbi* 3, 1952. Vida Tomšič was a lawyer and high-ranking member of the SKJ from Slovenia, whose work in policymaking in improving women’s lives, particularly in relation to childcare, was fundamental in establishing welfare institutions for mothers and children in Yugoslavia. Tomšič was also internationally engaged as an expert in gender and welfare at the United Nations. For more, see Chiara Bonfiglioli, “On Vida Tomšič, Marxist Feminism, and Agency” in de Haan et al., “Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited,” *Aspasia* 10, no. 1 (2016): 145–46.

⁴¹⁰ Martha Lampland, “Biographies of Liberation: Testimonials to Labor in Socialist Hungary,” in *Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism*, ed. Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn B. Young (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), 317.

burden felt by women in all aspects of everyday life.⁴¹¹ The increase in women's wage labor brought to the forefront the time and effort spent on household work, as well as the excruciating conditions in which this labor took place, with poor quality housing, technological underdevelopment, and a lack of governmental assistance. Research conducted by the SŽDJ in Serbia in 1953 showed that women spent up to ten hours per day on household work, mostly on difficult chores such as cleaning, washing, and mending clothes by hand.⁴¹² The high amount of time and energy dedicated to household work affected women's waged employment and prevented them from any political and social activism.

When in the early 1950s Vida Tomšič asked members of the AFŽ what the solution to the “double burden” of household work could be—the veneration of household work, the mechanization of individual households, or real equality and liberation from stultifying work—their answer was to turn the household into social industry (*društvena industrija*).⁴¹³ The process of socializing household work entailed the development of various relevant industrial branches and corresponding services and spaces, such as modern retail with favorable opening hours, comfortable and practical apartments, communal infrastructure, cheap and fast restaurants supplied by the food industry, mechanized services and workshops, light industry, healthcare, and welfare institutions for women and children. Equally important were professional and popular education and the further development of expertise.⁴¹⁴ In other words, the AFŽ's vision of the modernization of household work was based on education, technological development, and socialization through the transformation of private, domestic

⁴¹¹ Karin Zachmann, “A Socialist Consumption Junction: Debating the Mechanization of Housework in East Germany, 1956–1957,” *Technology and Culture* 43, no. 1 (2002): 86.

⁴¹² “Review of services—institutions for relieving women of household work,” box 11, Miscellaneous Correspondence, folder 354, Yugoslav Association of Women's Societies, AJ.

⁴¹³ Tomšič, “Postoji li kod nas žensko pitanje?”; “Iz zaključaka VI. Plenuma Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije,” *Zora* 81, 1953.

⁴¹⁴ “Iz zaključaka VI. Plenuma Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije.”

work into public, social work within institutions, facilities, and services supported by the Yugoslav government.

Since the AFŽ's structure and activities were closely tied to the political and administrative apparatus of the Yugoslav government, they were strongly impacted by the significant changes that took place following the split with the Soviet Union in 1948. The introduction of workers' and social self-management with its attendant economic and administrative decentralization pressured the AFŽ to rethink its organizational format and goals. Decentralization affected not just the structure of the AFŽ, but also its singular focus on women's issues, which had already been a burning question for the organization since the end of the war.⁴¹⁵ The AFŽ had to decide whether it should act as a separate, centralized body dealing with women's issues, or whether this responsibility should be redistributed among all Yugoslav social organizations.

In the light of decentralization and the recognition that the most severe obstacle to women's social and political activism was caused by the burden of household work, the AFŽ decided to promote women's issues as social issues that should be dealt with by all Yugoslav social organizations.⁴¹⁶ When in 1953 the government transformed the Yugoslav Popular Front into the mass social-political organization the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ), the AFŽ as one of its sections dissolved.⁴¹⁷ It was replaced by the SŽDJ as a loosely connected, decentralized alliance active at the federal, republican, county, and city levels, which had tens of thousands of members in each republic.⁴¹⁸ In addition to modernizing household work, the SŽDJ continued some of the activities started by the AFŽ, such as literacy

⁴¹⁵ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 166.

⁴¹⁶ Vida Tomšić, "Mjesto i uloga ženskih organizacija," *Žena danas* 112, 1953; Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 167.

⁴¹⁷ Marijana Jukić, "Socijalistički Savez Radnog Naroda Hrvatske—Najmasovnija Društveno-Politička Organizacija u Socijalističkoj Hrvatskoj," *Arhivski Vijesnik* 57 (2014): 295; Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 141.

⁴¹⁸ Aida Ličina Ramić, "Nova ženska organizacija – Savez ženskih društava Bosne i Hercegovine (1953–1961)," in *Zamišljanje žene: O ideološkim i kulturnim konceptima ženskog roda u povijesti Bosne i Hercegovine*, ed. Sabina Veladžić and Aida Ličina Ramić (Sarajevo: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2023), 185.

courses, education on healthcare and agriculture, and support of women's sections (*ženski aktivni*) in factories and enterprises, which were separate organizations fighting for improvements in the workplace.⁴¹⁹ Like all other Yugoslav social organizations, the SŽDJ was placed under the SSRNJ, whose activities focused on social self-management.

Despite the founding of this federal organization, the establishment of different republican and local sections of the SŽDJ took place without clear direction. As Božinović illustrates, while in some parts of the country the formation of local sections of SŽDJ took a long time—sometimes even several years following the dissolution of the AFŽ—in others, the AFŽ sections simply took on a new name and continued their preexisting activities. Nonetheless, the AFŽ sections in smaller towns and villages mostly disbanded, and many members left disappointed with what they perceived as unnecessary restructuring.⁴²⁰ A similar process took place in 1961, when the SŽDJ was transformed into the KDAŽJ, whose sections also exhibited highly differing levels of activity. From 1961 until its dissolution in 1991, the KDAŽJ went through several name changes and was gradually more absorbed by the SSRNJ, but throughout this period maintained a president and several other boards.⁴²¹ Rather than a clear, linear process of dissolution, the transformation of the AFŽ into the SŽDJ, and later the KDAŽJ, was a rather complex and often incoherent process of structural reorganization.

The members of the SŽDJ nevertheless seized upon the opportunity presented by decentralization and participation in the SSRNJ to emphasize the argument that women's issues are social issues. This agenda was formalized at another important meeting at the end of the 1950s: the Brijuni Assembly, the Fifth Plenum of the SSRNJ, held in April 1957. During the

⁴¹⁹ The SSRNJ also included Committees for Women (*Komisije za rad sa ženama*), which focused on women's political activism; they were dissolved when the SŽDJ transformed into the KDAŽJ. See Ličina Ramić, "Nova ženska organizacija," 177, 187, 209. The AFŽ, the SŽDJ, and the KDAŽJ were also not the only women's organizations; there were thousands of smaller independent, local organizations dedicated to women's issues. See Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 171.

⁴²⁰ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji*, 154, 170–172.

⁴²¹ "Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena," ARHINET, accessed April 16, 2024, http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx?ItemId=3_8465.

assembly, modernization of household work as the road to improving women's status and standards of living was promoted by the SSRNJ as a leading social agenda.

The major problem for modernization, according to the SŽDJ, was the deficiency in governmental help for dealing with household work. This lack of systemic support for improving women's lives was the cause of their limited political and social activism, which further weakened the awareness of Yugoslav women's new equal status in society.⁴²² In opposition to the belief that the material improvement of life in Yugoslavia would gradually also improve the women's status, members of the SŽDJ argued that their problems could only be resolved through direct initiatives in parallel with changes in material means. These initiatives centered around organizing social help for women and families, which meant bigger budgetary contributions to improving personal and social standards of living, ensuring the implementation of legal measures and the development of relevant infrastructure in the social self-management system.⁴²³ Equally importantly, all social organizations were encouraged to deal with women's issues within their specific fields of interest.⁴²⁴ The inclusion of the SŽDJ into the SSRNJ initiated a call for the redistribution of activist work and accountability needed for the improvement in women's status and standard of living within a broader network of social organizations.⁴²⁵ From the late 1950s, the planning and development of institutions and measures to support women and families, particularly within the framework of social self-management in housing and later local communities, was not simply the preoccupying task of

⁴²² Božinović, *Žensko pitanje*, 177.

⁴²³ "Naši razgovori," *Žena* 2, 1959.

⁴²⁴ Božinović, *Žensko pitanje*, 177.

⁴²⁵ This distribution refers to the fact that activism was also conceived as a form of labor, and that a "lack of work in this field" sometimes actually meant that "most of the work, almost exclusively, was left to women's organizations," who could not resolve these problems by themselves. See box 236, Women's Commission, folder 117, Association of Yugoslav Trade Unions, AJ. Understanding activism as work also connects to the argument that women's political and social engagement in a way represents the "triple burden." See Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Discussing Women's Double and Triple Burden in Socialist Yugoslavia: Women Working in the Garment Industry," in *Labor in State-Socialist Europe, 1945–1989: Contributions to a Global History of Work*, ed. Marsha Siefert (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2020), 195–216.

the SŽDJ and the KDAŽJ; it was also on the agenda of other organizations and experts, requiring their mutual collaboration.

In opposition to the previously dominant argument that the dissolution of the AFŽ, the integration of the SŽDJ and the KDAŽJ into the SSRNJ, and the organizational focus on household work were “a manifestation of patriarchal backlash” that crushed the AFŽ’s autonomy, subordinated it to the SKJ’s control, and hindered its activist focus, I subscribe to historian Chiara Bonfiglioli’s proposal to analyze these events in the light of the political and administrative decentralization that followed the introduction of the self-management system.⁴²⁶ The debate on women’s issues as social issues was not necessarily marked by a conflict between the AFŽ and the SKJ, but rather between the official, political, and legal dedication to women’s equality and the everyday, patriarchal, misogynist behavior in Yugoslav society, especially within the governing structures.⁴²⁷ These conditions prompted members of the AFŽ, SŽDJ, and KDAŽJ to further stress the need to modernize the home and the family, increase women’s social and political participation, and position the improvement of women’s lives as a broader goal of Yugoslav self-managed socialism.

Although all three organizations were dedicated to improving the lives and the social status of Yugoslav women through a common focus on household work, education, healthcare, and maternity protection, the AFŽ’s activities were defined by the conditions of war and immediate postwar reconstruction. In contrast, the activities of the SŽDJ and the KDAŽJ need to be understood as responding to the new role of women in the peaceful postwar period, which required the strengthening of women’s legal equality and the improvement of their conditions in households and workplaces. Unlike the AFŽ, which provided almost a full replacement of social services, in the post-reconstruction period of economic growth and decentralization in

⁴²⁶ Chiara Bonfiglioli, “Women’s Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia,” *Aspasia* 8 (2014): 15; Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 92–93. For an overview of the historiography on Yugoslav women’s organizations, see Ličina Ramić, “Nova ženska organizacija,” 163–169.

⁴²⁷ Bonfiglioli, “Women’s Political and Social Activism,” 13–16.

the 1950s and 1960s, the SŽDJ and KDAŽJ became the leading social organizations within the SSRNJ to initiate numerous activities aimed at modernizing households and improving women's social status and standard of living. In this regard, the two organizations can be considered, as historian Alexandra Ghit argued of state-socialist women's organizations in general, as a "string of socialist-specific welfare institutions" that "contributed to shaping welfare policies, to the socialization of care, and the process of defining needs and the needy."⁴²⁸

2.2 Household Enlightenment: Home Economics in Socialist Yugoslavia

Even before the declarations of the Brijuni Assembly, the SŽDJ's efforts in socialization, education, and the technological improvement of household work took on new proportions thanks to the introduction of home economics as the scientific framework for the modernization of households. Home economics was established in the late nineteenth century in order to address the need for the reorganization of household work, a result of the fundamental changes brought by industrialization and urbanization. Although scholarship mostly locates the establishment of home economics in the US, where the National Household Economics Association was founded in 1893, organizations and schools for home economics in this period also existed in Europe; for example, in Denmark.⁴²⁹ In the foundation of home economics, women played a central role as educators, practitioners, and consumers of new scientific practices, spaces, and goods linked to the domestic sphere, which were in this period connected with other movements aimed at modernizing labor through efficiency and rational organization, such as scientific management and Taylorism.⁴³⁰ Questions of material and spatial design,

⁴²⁸ Alexandra Ghit, "Partisan Potential," in de Haan et al., "Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited," *Aspasia* 10, no. 1 (2016): 163.

⁴²⁹ Janice Williams Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency* (Athens, GA and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2003), 37; Annette Rasmussen, Karen E. Andreasen, "The Development of Home Economics as a Field of Knowledge and its Contribution to the Education and the Social Status of Women," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 9, no. 2 (2022): 64.

⁴³⁰ Williams Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 43–45.

particularly of appliances, homes, and neighborhoods, formed another crucial aspect of these processes. The consideration of these questions instigated relationships with different architectural and housing movements, which were particularly active after the First World War in countries across the political and ideological spectrum.⁴³¹

Home economics in Yugoslavia dated back to the interwar period. As historian Lea Horvat shows, despite the SŽDJ's insistence that the promotion of rational and efficient households represented a complete novelty in comparison to the interwar period, there was a continuity in the adoption of scientific management and modernist designs between the interwar and postwar home economics in Yugoslavia. The difference in these approaches was that instead of intentionally strengthening the traditional division of labor within the household, which was characteristic of most activities in the interwar period, the SŽDJ continued the legacy of socialist and communist support for the socialization of household work and use of new household technologies in relieving women of the "double burden," contributing to their economic independency, and improving their social status.⁴³² The adoption of home economics by the SŽDJ therefore infused the scientific discipline with an emancipatory dimension, which provided a scientific and practical framework for the development of various welfare and commercial institutions and services to modernize household work.

The SŽDJ's activities in home economics took off in the early 1950s on multiple levels, from the development of expertise and professionalization of staff to the institutionalization of

⁴³¹ See Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 5–10; Susan R. Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen," in *Architecture and Feminism*, ed. Debra Coleman and Elizabeth Danze, 221–53; Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 206–26; Martine Mespoulet, "Housework and Constructing Socialism in the USSR according to Time-Use Surveys," *Clio: Women, Gender, History* 41, no. 1 (2015): 21–40; Dena Attar, *Wasting Girls' Time: The History and Politics of Home Economics* (London: Virago Press, 1990); Joël Lebeaume, *L'enseignement ménager en France: Sciences et techniques au féminin, 1880–1980* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014).

⁴³² Lea Horvat, "Od 'doživotnog strogog zatvora' do kućanskih poslova 'bez velikog napora': reformiranje jugoslavenskog domaćinstva u 1950-ima i 1960-ima," in *Kontinuiteti inovacije: Zbornik odabranih radova s Četvrtog međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa Socijalizam na klupi, Pula, 26.–28. rujna 2019.*, ed. Anita Buhin and Tina Filipović (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2021), 23–47.

education and its dissemination throughout society. Just like the case of the self-service system, due to the underdeveloped state of home economics in Yugoslavia, the SŽDJ had to develop in parallel both the requisite expertise and its practical implementations.

A vital role in the development of home economics was played by educational opportunities abroad, which were financially supported by international aid during the Cold War. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA), a US government agency for foreign aid, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) were essential for delivering the necessary knowledge, education, and experience that the SŽDJ's activists needed to develop home economics in Yugoslavia. The first international funding for knowledge acquisition in home economics was given to AFŽ in 1952 and 1953 by UNESCO and Europahilfe, a Swiss government agency that provided aid in postwar Europe.⁴³³ From the mid to late-1950s, the biggest number of stipends came from the ICA and the FAO in order to support SŽDJ members spending several months abroad at universities and home economics institutes in countries like the US, West Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, France, Norway, the Netherlands, the UK, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and Greece.⁴³⁴ Although the FAO was, unlike the ICA, an international organization, its home economics service was heavily influenced by US home economists. The establishment of the FAO's home economics service in 1949 was encouraged by Eleanor Roosevelt—the first chair of the UN Commission for Human Rights (1946–52)—who was a fervent supporter of the discipline and a patron of the well-established Home Economics Department at Cornell University, whose alumna Margaret Hockin became the first head of the FAO's home economics service.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Box 11, folder 354, AJ.

⁴³⁴ Box 13, Improvement of Households (1958–60), folder 1234, Conference for the Social Activity of Women, Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (HDA).

⁴³⁵ Andrés Sarabia, "The Food We are Not: How the Gendering of Global Food Policy Veiled Body Malleability (Bogota 1990–2015)" (PhD diss., Central European University, 2021), 228–229.

Although stipends for home economics in Yugoslavia were administered through the federal government by the Office for International Technical Aid, they were initiated at the SŽDJ's request, and the organization also proposed candidates from its own ranks based on need or through competition. During the 1950s, the ICA gave hundreds of stipends in three categories: for home economics teachers, researchers, and administrative staff. The recipients were supported in spending six to twelve months in the US, West Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands. The preconditions for applicants were language skills in English or German, which the candidates had to prove by taking a language exam; upon their return, they were obliged to spend at least three years working in the field of home economics.⁴³⁶

The FAO's numerous stipends also supported three-to-six-month training courses in European institutions, mostly in West Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. Although there is no precise information about what these study visits looked like, a list of topics reveals that stipend-holders received education in retail, nutrition, food technology, clothing, interior design, household technology, and in the administrative organization of home economics institutions and schools. The SŽDJ was very intentional about the topics its activists were supposed to study and often asked for changes in the plans proposed by the FAO.⁴³⁷ The lists of stipend-holders likewise remain incomplete, but some of the available information shows that there was a strong—although not always successful—effort to distribute stipends equally among members of all the republics.⁴³⁸ By carving their own space within the international aid Yugoslavia received at the time, proposing activists and negotiating topics, the SŽDJ played an active role in an otherwise one-sided process of international knowledge acquisition.

In the same period, the SŽDJ established its main institutions for home economics, named Centers for Household Improvement (*Centar za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva*). These

⁴³⁶ Box 11, folder 354, AJ.

⁴³⁷ Box 11, folder 354, AJ.

⁴³⁸ Box 11, folder 354, AJ.

Centers existed on federal, republican, county, and city levels, and organized numerous activities dedicated to the modernization of household work in their respective areas. The first Center for Household Improvement was established in 1953 in Ljubljana, and by 1960, there were 124 centers spread throughout Yugoslavia.⁴³⁹ The centers maintained an interdisciplinary character and involved a variety of experts in their establishment and operations, including doctors, agronomists, architects, economists, and pedagogists.⁴⁴⁰ In collaboration with other organizations and institutions, the centers' scope of work included urban and rural retail and services, organization and mechanization of household work, small-scale farming, food preparation and conservation, socialized nutrition (*društvena ishrana*), housing, clothing, maternity protection, healthcare, and childcare.⁴⁴¹

The Centers simultaneously worked on the education of staff, the widespread provision of homemaking courses, and the popularization of home economics in the broader society.⁴⁴² In addition to several one-year home economics schools in each republic, crucial for the education of staff were the Higher Schools for Home Economics, which were established in 1954 in Groblje near Domžale, Slovenia, and in 1957 in Zemun, Serbia.⁴⁴³ Connected with the SŽDJ and the Centers via common personnel and agendas, these Higher Schools offered two-year programs for qualification as home economics teachers, who could afterwards hold classes in schools and communities. By the 1960s, education in home economics went through a process of professionalization and institutionalization; it became a subject in elementary education, and eventually at people's and workers' universities.⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁹ "The Service for Household Improvement," box 7, Activities in the Society and Family, folder 354, AJ.

⁴⁴⁰ Maja Veseli, "Problemi vezani uz rad na unaprjeđivanju domaćinstva," *Žena u borbi* 2, 1954.

⁴⁴¹ Mila Bajalica, "Sistematski izučavati mogućnosti unaprjeđenja domaćinstva," *Domaćinstvo* 1, 1955; "Centri za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva," *Žena u borbi* 7, 1956.

⁴⁴² "Centri za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva."

⁴⁴³ Andreja Grun, "Ustanovljena je prva višja gospodinjstva škola," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 10, 1954.

⁴⁴⁴ Bujas, "Domaćinsko obrazovanje"; "Družina i gospodinjstvo 1960," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 5, 1960; "Katedra 'Porodica i domaćinstvo' na narodnim univerzitetima," *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 1–2, 1960; Emilija Šeparović, "Katedra 'Porodica i domaćinstvo'—koordinator svih faktora za pomoć porodici," *Katedra Porodica i domaćinstvo* (Zagreb: Savez narodnih sveučilišta NRH, 1960), 19–21.

Alongside formal education, homemaking courses in the field remained an important part of the Centers' agendas, especially for those, like in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which predominantly operated in rural areas.⁴⁴⁵ Already organized by the AFŽ since the war, these homemaking courses were similar to the home economics extension service established in the US, and active in some European countries like West Germany.⁴⁴⁶ The home economics extension service consisted of travelling home economists who visited rural communities and offered instruction in different topics. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1953 and 1958, home economists held more than 3,000 courses and lectures, attended by more than 30,000 women.⁴⁴⁷ This was a tradition in home economics that historian Allison Horrocks calls the "extension" of the classroom into the public.⁴⁴⁸ Centers for household improvement—sometimes also called household enlightenment (*domaćinsko prosvjeđivanje*)—were both research and educational institutions that supported the development of the scientific discipline and its dissemination through public institutions and grassroots activism. The Centers' publication activity also played an important role in these processes, and included scientific texts, instructive pamphlets, the professional magazines *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* (Slovenia, 1954–1960) and *Domaćinstvo* (BiH, 1955–1976), and popular exposure through the press, radio, and exhibitions.

Foreign aid gave an important push to the development of Centers and Higher Schools for home economics. The FAO not only provided stipends, but also financed equipment purchases and visits from Western experts, including Margaret Hockin, who in 1957 attended

⁴⁴⁵ "Uspješan rad na domaćičkom obrazovanju seoskih žena u okolini Srpca," *Domaćinstvo* 1, 1955; "Raznovrstan program domaćičkog tečaja za seoske djevojke," *Domaćinstvo* 1, 1955; "Savjetovanje o radu sreskih i opštinskih centara za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva," *Domaćinstvo* 6, 1958; "Učešće Zavoda na izložbi Porodica i domaćinstvo," *Domaćinstvo* 8, 1960; Senha Bešlić, "Osnovni faktori razvoja i unaprjeđenja seoskog domaćinstva u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Domaćinstvo* 4, 1964.

⁴⁴⁶ "Information on the character and goal the Higher School for Home Economics and the need for its establishment," box 11, folder 354, AJ.

⁴⁴⁷ "Informacija o problemu rada Centara za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva," *Domaćinstvo* 1, 1962.

⁴⁴⁸ Allison B. Horrocks, "Good Will Ambassador with a Cookbook: Flemma Kittrell and the International Politics of Home Economics" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2016), 5.

the first Yugoslav federal seminar on home economics at the Higher School in Zemun.⁴⁴⁹ For the educational developments in home economics, key inspiration came from schools and university departments in Denmark, with which Yugoslav home economists became familiar during their study visits abroad. Denmark was especially interesting because of its long tradition of home economics, which blossomed within the social-democratic welfare system of the postwar period, and even became a university major.⁴⁵⁰ The Slovenian political and social activist Jožefa “Pepca” Kardelj, who chaired the organizing committee for the Family and Household exhibitions and became president of the Federal Committee “Family and Household” from 1960 to 1975, travelled extensively through the Scandinavian countries in 1959.⁴⁵¹ During their travels, Kardelj and other members of the SŽDJ were impressed by the high educational level of home economists, the extensiveness of formal education, the strong collaboration between the educational sector, social organizations, light industry, and agriculture, and the use of neighborhood units in urban organization.⁴⁵²

The study visits supported by foreign aid also contributed to the SŽDJ’s support for modern retail. When, in 1955, activist Vilma Pirkovič went to the US to study agriculture with a stipend from the ICA, she saw supermarkets and reported on use of the self-service system for working women, which the SŽDJ actively began to promote from the late 1950s.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ Emily P. Thies, “Utisci o radu na problemima ‘Ekonomike domaćinstva’” *Žena u borbi* 3, 1955; Box 11, folder 354, AJ; Mara Lukanc, “Ekonomika domaćinstva,” *Domaćinstvo* 7, 1960.

⁴⁵⁰ Annette Rasmussen and Karen E. Andreasen, “Education of Women Homemakers in Postwar Denmark: Home Front Alliances and Rearmament in a Welfare State Perspective,” in *War and Education: The Pedagogical Preparation for Mass Violence*, ed. Sebastian Engelmann, Bernhard Hemetsberger, and Frank Jacon (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 323; “Information on the character and goal the Higher School for Home Economics,” box 11, folder 354, AJ.

⁴⁵¹ Nada Marinković, “Utisci Pepce Kardelj po zemljama Skandinavije,” *Žena* 8, 1959; Marinković, “Utisci Pepce Kardelj po zemljama Skandinavije – nastavak,” *Žena* 9, 1959. Jožefa Kardelj was also a member of the central committee of the Confederation of Trade Unions, and the spouse of Edvard Kardelj. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 446.

⁴⁵² Zlata Kunst, “Tečajeви za prosvjeđivanje u domaćinstvu,” *Žena u borbi* 3, 1953; Beška Frntić, “Domaćinsko prosvjeđivanje u Danskoj,” *Žena u borbi* 5, 1956; Vilma Pirkovič, “Domaćičko obrazovanje u Danskoj,” *Domaćinstvo* 3, 1957; Mara Lukanc, “Organizacija i rad savjetodavne službe za ekonomiku domaćinstva u Danskoj,” *Domaćinstvo* 4, 1958; Milka Čaldarović, “Izvještaj o specijalizaciji u Holandiji,” *Domaćinstvo* 8, 1960.

⁴⁵³ Vilma Pirkovič. “Nekaj vtisov s potovanja po Združenih Državah Amerike,” *Naša žena* 2, 1956. Vilma Pirkovič was a political and social activist from Slovenia with a degree in agriculture. After the NOB, she held leading positions in the Slovenian section of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunističke omladine*

2.3 Family and Household: Household Work and Retail in the Housing Community

Yugoslav women's organizations and home economics institutions nurtured a vision of the modernization of household work based on technological development, socialization, and education. A crucial framework for the intensification of their activities was the rapid economic and social development in Yugoslavia from the late 1950s, which was marked by improvements in production, consumption, and standards of living, particularly in underdeveloped sectors such as retail, agriculture, manufacturing, and transport. The second Five-Year Plan from 1957 and the *Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia* from 1958 were important official proclamations of Yugoslavia's new political and socio-economic agendas.⁴⁵⁴

These changes also encompassed the development of communal infrastructure and the social self-management system, which was the political and administrative framework for the self-government of Yugoslav citizens in their homes and neighborhoods. The main social organization tasked with strengthening the social self-management system was the SSRNJ, which in 1960 had around twelve million members.⁴⁵⁵ As noted previously, at the Brijuni Assembly, the Fifth Plenum of the SSRNJ in 1957, the organization proclaimed that the issue of the "double burden" of household work was not just "a problem of women, [but] a social and economic problem of the socialist society."⁴⁵⁶ In order to resolve this issue, the SSRNJ, together with the SŽDJ, began promoting the social self-management system—particularly the establishment of housing communities—as the framework in which household work could be modernized through citizen self-governance and the public provision of technical and material

Jugoslavije), and was later the co-editor of the magazine *Mladina*, as well as president of the sculpture festival Forma viva.

⁴⁵⁴ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia's Way*, 132; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 75.

⁴⁵⁵ "On some problems of the social status of women in Yugoslavia and the tasks of the SSRN and other social organizations," box 13, Conferences (1947–1960), folder 1228, Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia, HDA.

⁴⁵⁶ "On some problems of the social status of women," box 13, folder 1228, HDA.

support for modernizing households.⁴⁵⁷ In the words of Jožefa Kardelj, the housing community became “the mirror that our household should be oriented toward, and the easiest way to help our family.”⁴⁵⁸

In this vision, the housing community was supposed to provide a network of public and commercial services that would support the socialization of household work as a process in which individual work conducted within the home would instead be collectively performed by the broader community.⁴⁵⁹ The infrastructure for the socialization of household work was supposed to include both commercial and welfare services, such as repair shops, laundromats, cafeterias, supermarkets, department stores, kindergartens, and schools.⁴⁶⁰ The housing community was intended to provide the necessary administrative framework, financial resources, decision-making capacity, and labor power for the socialization of household work. Edvard Kardelj, who was the main architect of the self-management system, conceptualized the housing community as an “extended family”:⁴⁶¹

The housing community achieves the idea of a socialist family and socialist household because it transfers certain family and household functions to the housing community. In other words, it connects the individual household with the collective, which in fact relieves the family. Economic work transferred to institutions of the community frees the family from heavy irrational labor in the household, which hinders or even entirely prevents social activity.⁴⁶²

The concept of the housing community as an extended family supported the socialization of household work, while simultaneously affirming the increasingly important role of social self-management for the everyday life of Yugoslav citizens. This process was gaining importance in a period which saw the rapid construction of new housing estates in Yugoslav

⁴⁵⁷ “On some problems of the social status of women,” box 13, folder 1228, HAD.

⁴⁵⁸ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁵⁹ “On some problems of the social status of women,” box 13, folder 1228, HAD.

⁴⁶⁰ “Savjetovanje o radu sreskih i opštinskih centara”.

⁴⁶¹ See Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, 33-45.

⁴⁶² “Izložbe 1957 i 1958,” *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 1, 1959.

cities and towns. More housing estates created more opportunities to design and implement housing communities as administrative units of self-governance within neighborhoods. As I observed in the previous chapter, the organization of these neighborhoods based on the concept of the neighborhood unit was a means of physical as well as social and political cohesion in support of the popular participation of Yugoslav citizens.

The stronger emphasis on families and housing communities, rather than just on women, also revealed the transformation in understanding the gendered character of household work, which—in connection to the argument that women’s issues are social issues—made household work a responsibility of the whole family. I suggest that the connection between household work, women’s issues, and housing communities also points to the gendered origins of Yugoslav social self-management and the different institutions that developed under its umbrella.

In order to promote their campaign that household work should be modernized through socialization and technological development within the social self-management system, the SŽDJ and the Centers for Home Economics organized a series of exhibitions, seminars, lectures, and publications in the late 1950s and early 1960s under the name “Family and Household.”⁴⁶³ The core of this campaign were three exhibitions organized at the Zagreb Trade Fair in 1957, 1958, and 1960 by the SŽDJ and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia (*Savez sindikata Jugoslavije*) under the chairwomanship of Jožefa Kardelj.⁴⁶⁴ Supported by numerous Yugoslav organizations and chambers, including the SKGOJ, the “Family and Household” exhibitions demonstrated to the Yugoslav public in an extensive and ambitious way the plans and achievements for modernizing urban and rural households, improving the conditions of women and families, developing retail, personal consumption, and standards of living, establishing housing communities, and strengthening social self-management.

⁴⁶³ Box 244, Meetings, Reports, Circulars (1953–1959), folder 1228, HDA.

⁴⁶⁴ Holjevac, “Osvrt na dosadašnji rad Stalne konferencije.”

In September 1957, the first edition of the “Family and Household” exhibition took place at the Zagreb Trade Fair, at the same time when US officials were exhibiting their supermarket. The main themes of the exhibition were the history of Yugoslav women before and after the Second World War, as well as the modernization of household work based on home economics, with services and institutions for children alongside improvements in nutrition, clothing, hygiene, and recreation.⁴⁶⁵ Although modest and improvisatory, the exhibition nevertheless gathered around 300 exhibitors from Yugoslavia and abroad and was seen by around 600,000 visitors.⁴⁶⁶

The exhibition had both a commercial and educational character. Unlike conventional trade exhibitions, where different countries or producers had their own stalls, here products from different enterprises were put together to form model spaces, such as kitchens, rooms, laundromats, and kindergartens, with instructors who demonstrated how to use them. The aim was to persuade both Yugoslav producers and consumers into accepting the institutions, spaces, objects, and methods necessary for modernizing household work.⁴⁶⁷ This was vital, the organizers claimed, in the context of the general transition of Yugoslav society from patriarchal and rural to modern and industrialized family life.⁴⁶⁸

The objective of changing consumer habits and increasing the number of consumers, as well as the quantity and quality of consumer goods, fit perfectly into the government’s new socio-economic plans. To this end, the organizers distributed a consumer survey asking for feedback on the exhibited prototypes and products, which was completed by around 250,000 visitors. The answers were supposed to strengthen the contact between producers and consumers which, according to the organizers, remained deficient on the part of the retail

⁴⁶⁵ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁶⁶ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁶⁷ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁶⁸ “Information,” box 2312, Propaganda and Additional Materials (1958), folder 1172, Zagreb Trade Fair, DAZG.

sector.⁴⁶⁹ In addition to individual consumers, the exhibition also proposed a new category of collective consumers: housing communities, housing councils (*kućni savjet*), and associated groups of families.⁴⁷⁰ The proposal to buy appliances, furniture, and household appliances collectively rather than individually supported the effort to socialize household work, but it also corresponded to a period when many white goods were generally unattainable for individual consumers.

The exhibition showcased the initial plans for housing communities as self-managing units of Yugoslav citizens, as well as the different welfare and commercial spaces and services that could develop within their frameworks. This also included plans for the retail sector, which were presented rather modestly, still lacking a vision for the modernization of retail based on the self-service system. Only five retail enterprises participated; their exhibits consisted of four model stores, which used the classical retailing system for selling meat, bread, fruits, and vegetables.⁴⁷¹ In comparison to the American supermarket, which was exhibited at the nearby US pavilion, these stores must have seemed even more unimpressive and outdated.

The SŽDJ and home economists were, however, highly interested in the modernization of Yugoslav retail through the self-service system. Since women spent a lot of time on consumption, the advantages of the self-service system in saving time and money for consumers in comparison to classical retailing could contribute to the reduction of household work.⁴⁷² In addition to the self-service system, the SŽDJ and home economists also promoted the opening of supply centers and department stores, with opening hours adapted to the working day, and the production and sale of ready-made food.⁴⁷³ As I showed previously, members of the SŽDJ

⁴⁶⁹ Box 236, folder 117, AJ; “Pred II. međunarodnu revijalnu izložbu,” *Nova žena* 9, 1958.

⁴⁷⁰ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁷¹ Various documents, box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁷² Lukanc, “Ekonomika domaćinstva”; “Organizacija trgovinske mreže i snabdjevanje gradova,” *Nova trgovina* 6, 1958.

⁴⁷³ Milka Čaldarović, “Uloga trgovine u rasterećenju zaposlene žene,” *Privredni list* 169, 1958; Džeba, “Trgovina i potrošači”. Before the late 1950s, most stores in Yugoslavia were open from 06:00 to 14:00 in fall and winter, and from 06:00 to 12:00 and again from 15:00 to 17:00 in spring and summer, which was very inconvenient for those with full-time jobs. See “Problematika trgovine,” box 11, folder 354, AJ.

who visited the Ivanec supermarket were enthusiastic about the self-service system. Although the retailing system featured at their own exhibition was outdated, they were also impressed with the US supermarket. When the retail enterprise Konzum was not successful in purchasing it, the Croatian section of the SŽDJ and the Center for Household Improvement asked the Federal Secretariat for Trade to financially support Konzum in opening its first supermarket.⁴⁷⁴

The second “Family and Household” exhibition in 1958 illustrated the fast pace of developments in the modernization of retail, household work, and social self-management. The exhibition demonstrated a much clearer vision of the relationship between housing communities and the socialization of household work, with a more elaborate array of spaces, services, and consumer goods. Unlike the previous exhibition that started with the history of Yugoslav women, the central topic in 1958 was the housing community. Although the organizers’ discussions revealed that not all members equally agreed on the transition from women to the broader community, the change was intended to represent household work as a responsibility of the whole family, and women’s issues as social issues.⁴⁷⁵

The sections of the exhibition were prepared by different Yugoslav social organizations and institutions and, alongside the housing community, dealt with retail, services and institutions for children, individual households, housing culture, and industrial production.⁴⁷⁶ In the spirit of the idea that the exhibition had a “programmatic character with scientific results,” the 33,000m² of exhibition space—five times bigger than the year before—was taken up by seven pavilions and three facilities for children, consisting of model spaces with various objects, mock-ups, layouts, schemes, and photographs depicting different forms of household work and self-organizing in neighborhoods.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁴ “To the Federal Secretariat for Trade, September 9, 1957,” box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁷⁵ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁷⁶ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁷⁷ Box 236, folder 117, AJ; M.S., “Vodimo vas kroz izložbu Porodica i domaćinstvo 1958,” *Žena* 9, 1958.

The section on the housing community displayed a large model of a housing community for 5,000 people, in the center of which stood a retail space, surrounded by apartment buildings and green spaces. Different stores for basic needs were scattered among the buildings, together with other services and facilities, and were positioned in such a way as to make them easily reachable by foot. The size, facilities, layout, and emphasis on pedestrian mobility were all based on the concept of the neighborhood unit.⁴⁷⁸

The role of retail in housing communities was depicted in the “Retail and Industry” section—prepared by the Yugoslav Association of Trade Chambers and the Federal Chamber of Industry (*Savezna industrijska komora*)—whose goal was to “organize the circulation of goods between producers and consumers.”⁴⁷⁹ As I described in the previous chapter, by the late 1950s, the development of the Yugoslav retail sector was a governmental priority because the insufficient number of unevenly scattered, badly equipped, and unrepresentable stores represented a hurdle to the government’s new political and socio-economic goals.⁴⁸⁰ Members of the SŽDJ and home economists also assigned an important role to the modernization of retail based on the self-service system in relieving women and families of the burden of household work.⁴⁸¹ For this reason, the exhibition organizers focused on showing how to improve retail by introducing the self-service system, synchronizing the sector with the needs of families and households, adjusting working hours, selling prepackaged and ready-made goods, industrially made clothing, and household appliances, organizing home deliveries and repair shops, and merging smaller shops into department stores.⁴⁸²

Alongside panels, photographs, and charts, these goals were best embodied in the section’s centerpieces, two life-sized and fully functional models of self-service department

⁴⁷⁸ M.S., “Stanovanjska skupnost in družina na zagrebškem velesajmu,” *Naša žena* 9, 1958.

⁴⁷⁹ Various documents, box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁸⁰ Ljubomir Bjelogrić, *Trgovina i industrija na II. međunarodnoj revijalnoj izložbi “Porodica i domaćinstvo”* (Zagreb: Hrvatska seljačka tiskara, 1958), 8.

⁴⁸¹ Krasavina Ćurčić, “Trgovina i njene usluge,” *Žena danas* 171, 1958; Džeba, “Trgovina i potrošači”.

⁴⁸² Various documents, box 236, folder 117, AJ.

stores: one store for clothing, and another universal store for groceries, furniture, household appliances, books, toys, and goods for leisure and vacation (Figure 19). As a journalist for the Slovenian women's journal *Naša žena* (Our Woman) reported:

A novelty in itself was the pavilion that displayed a self-service department store, where you could choose from a needle, soap, and broom to ready-made dishes and clothes, which were then customized in the tailor shop. Such stores are known in many major cities around the world and will certainly slowly establish themselves in our country, because the work done in them is much more economical than in the stores we know today.⁴⁸³

Constructed by enterprises from Krško and Mostar, these department stores were prefabricated structures made from steel, aluminum, and glass, sized 1600m² and 2000m², fully furnished, and filled with consumer goods. In terms of architectural typology, construction technology, and furnishing, the department stores represented a novelty, and their realization was entrusted to enterprises with expertise in steel constructions, although most of the equipment and furniture was imported from Italy.⁴⁸⁴ One of the goals of the exhibition was to stimulate local industrial production by exposing Yugoslav enterprises to foreign exhibitors and products, with the belief that the exchange of experiences could motivate locals to produce more diverse, better-quality goods.⁴⁸⁵ In the case of one of the construction enterprises, Soko from Mostar, this did indeed occur. Although initially an aircraft manufacturer, from the late 1950s Soko started producing prefabricated constructions and equipment for the self-service system; in the 1960s, it became one of Yugoslavia's largest producers in this field.⁴⁸⁶ Since the quantities of furniture and appliances bought by the organizers exceeded the needs of the

⁴⁸³ M.S., "Stanovanjska skupnost in družina na zagrebškem velesajmu." *Naša žena* was a journal published by the Slovenian sections of the AFŽ, the SŽDJ, and the KDAŽJ from 1945 to 2015.

⁴⁸⁴ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁸⁵ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁸⁶ For more on the Soko enterprise from Mostar, see chapter 4.

exhibition, they were later sent to housing communities in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁸⁷

Unlike the furniture and equipment, the consumer goods shown in the store were Yugoslav products. Assisted by the instructors, the visitors could explore the store and familiarize themselves with new features of modern retail like the self-service system, prepackaged goods, or ready-made food items. This made the department store exhibits into exhibition spaces as well as functional retail spaces. In contrast to the previous exhibition, which Jožefa Kardelj claimed was mostly “a result of ideas,” the full functionality of the exhibits made the 1958 exhibition more than “just display material” and supported the organizers’ main aim to show consumers how these department stores really looked.⁴⁸⁸ As the organizers emphasized, “retail facilities... perform a particular economic function, and at the same time a wide propagandistic, educational role, not just during the exhibition, but also permanently after the exhibition.”⁴⁸⁹

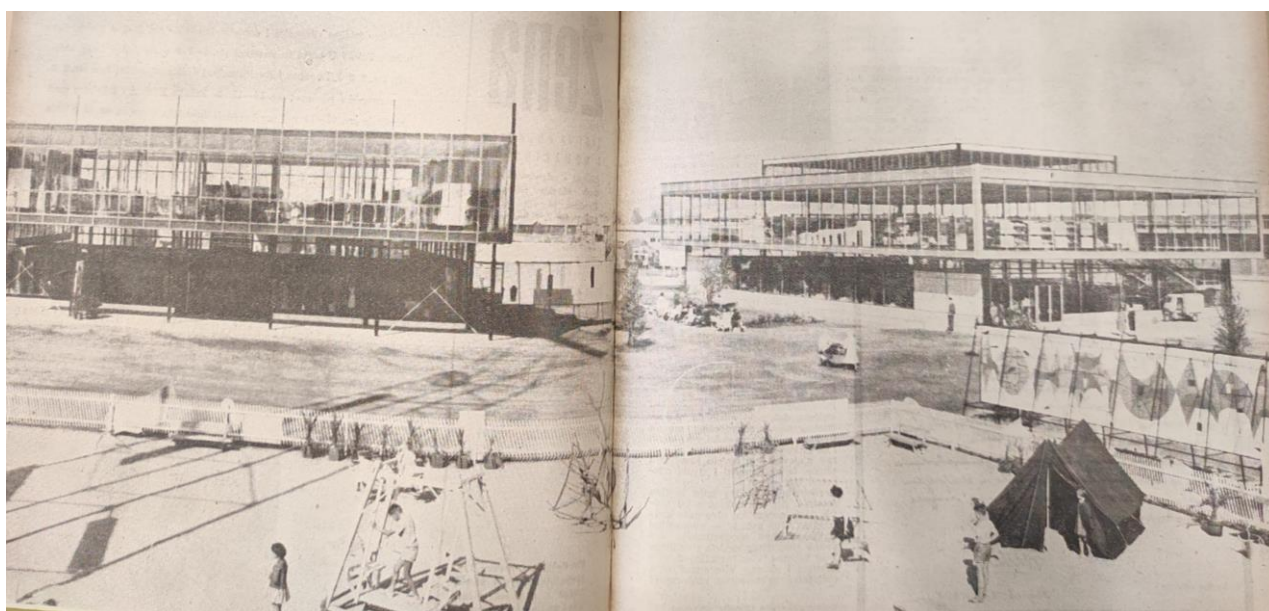


Figure 19. Fashion store (left) and self-service department store (right), exhibition “Family and Household,” Zagreb Trade Fair, 1958.

⁴⁸⁷ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

⁴⁸⁸ “Pepca Kardelj je odgovorila,” *Zora* 149, 1959.

⁴⁸⁹ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

From: Žena 10, 1958.

In order to stimulate the industrial production of quality consumer goods, the exhibition organizers were also focused on increasing the number of Yugoslav consumers and changing their consumer habits. To receive their feedback, the organizers again conducted a survey. They asked visitors for their opinions on housing communities, services, institutions for children, nutrition, clothing, and retail, including where and when they prefer to shop, how they want to be served, and what they think about packaging and industrially made clothes.⁴⁹⁰ Despite these feedback mechanisms, the organizers in fact already had a clearly set, one-directional agenda for their exhibition: to convince visitors of the advantages of modern institutions, services, and technologies in housing communities, including self-service department stores.

The exhibition was important not only because it promoted the self-service system, but also because, unlike the supermarket exhibition, it brought to the forefront the use of self-service in department stores as large retail spaces bringing together different types of consumer goods under one roof. The standards set by the exhibition in terms of the construction and appearance of stores, the concentration of different products in one space, the self-service system and its accompanying equipment, furniture, and goods, and new opening hours formed the foundation of the institutionalization of department stores in the 1960s. Josip Broz Tito, who together with his wife Jovanka attended both the 1957 and 1958 exhibitions (Figure 20), also expressed his positive opinion on the future of Yugoslav department stores:

As for the department store, I would like them to be built in every larger town, in districts. The example of self-service in stores and restaurants was given here in a very nice way and I think that our people will learn some lessons while visiting the exhibition, and then try to implement them where they live, all the more so because, in my opinion, the system of labor in the form of self-service in department stores, restaurants, and shops is no more expensive than the way things were done so far. I think that buildings for such facilities need to be of a lighter type and that multistoried buildings should be avoided, and instead low and one-

⁴⁹⁰ Box 236, folder 117, AJ.

storied buildings should be built everywhere where that is possible. In centers, where there is little space, obviously you will need to have multistoried buildings even for these facilities.⁴⁹¹



Figure 20. Self-service department store (interior), exhibition "Family and Household," Zagreb Trade Fair, 1958.

*Jovanka Broz, Jožefa Kardelj, Josip Broz Tito and Vječeslav Holjevac visiting the self-service department store at the "Family and Household" exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair.
From: box 8, Photoalbum-1958, folder 1172, Zagreb Trade Fair, DAZG.*

The final "Family and Household" exhibition took place in May 1960, this time during the Zagreb Spring Trade Fair. The exhibition had nine sections: retail, housing communities, home economics, housing culture, services, institutions for children, social nutrition, rest and recreation, and rural households. Although the topics remained virtually the same, unlike the previous editions that still included models and prototypes, the 1960 exhibition showcased actual Yugoslav housing communities, as well as furniture and appliances made in Yugoslavia.⁴⁹² For example, following the model housing community in 1958, the 1960

⁴⁹¹ "Izjava predsednika Tita o utiscima sa izložbe Porodica i domaćinstvo 1958," *Zora* 149, 1959.

⁴⁹² "Za delovno družino velika razstava Družina in gospodinjstvo 1960," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 3–4, 1960.

exhibition showcased eighteen realized housing communities in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Split, Rijeka, Sisak, and other towns.⁴⁹³

The section on home economics demonstrated the achievements of the Centers for Household Improvement, which during the exhibition organized different seminars, roundtables, and conferences. Titled as the “Chair for Family and Household” (*Katedra za Porodicu i domaćinstvo*), the new name of the section pointed to the professionalization of home economics as a scientific discipline, which was now also taught at workers’ and people’s universities in Yugoslavia.⁴⁹⁴

Some sections examined new topics. One was on free time and leisure, which reflected the new legislative and social measures that promoted vacation time and holiday breaks in Yugoslavia.⁴⁹⁵ The other was on rural households, which, although a longtime preoccupation of Yugoslav home economists, was represented at the exhibition for the first time, with an insight into models for rural houses, restaurants, and services.

The section “Modern Retail and Supply”—prepared by the Croatian and Zagreb Chambers of Commerce—consisted of five parts: an introductory area with charts and photographs analyzing problems in the retail sector, an exhibition of equipment and furniture for the self-service system made in Yugoslavia, a big supermarket with consumer goods (Figures 21 and 22), a fashion store, and a shoe store. According to the organizers, the goals of the section were to promote the production and consumption of household appliances and consumer goods, adapt the opening hours of stores to consumer needs, modernize and merge smaller stores into department stores, introduce the self-service system, sell prepackaged goods with instructions and technical information, sell ready-made and frozen foods, organize services

⁴⁹³ “Družina i gospodinjstvo 1960,” *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 5, 1960.

⁴⁹⁴ “Družina i gospodinjstvo 1960”; “Katedra “Porodica i domaćinstvo” na narodnim univerzitetima,” *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 1–2, 1960; Šeparović, “Katedra Porodica i domaćinstvo—koordinator svih faktora za pomoć porodici.”

⁴⁹⁵ See Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 73–90.

and deliveries, and strengthen consumer councils “as organs of social control in retail.”⁴⁹⁶ An additional goal was to increase and improve the industrial production and sale of clothes; for these purposes, a fashion show of the Yugoslav textile industry took place twice a day.⁴⁹⁷



Figure 21. Supermarket, exhibition “Family and Household,” Zagreb Trade Fair, 1960.

From: Porodica i domaćinstvo, 6, 1960.



Figure 22. Supermarket, exhibition “Family and Household,” Zagreb Trade Fair, 1960.

⁴⁹⁶ Box 13, folder 1234, HDA.

⁴⁹⁷ “Družina i gospodinjstvo 1960”; “Suvremena trgovina i snabdjevanje,” “Revija suvremenog odijevanja,” *Porodica i domaćinstvo*, special edition, 1960.

Rather than introducing anything new, the retail section at the 1960 exhibition reaffirmed the need for the spread of self-service department stores. As an anonymous commentator in the women's journal *Žena* (Woman) stated:

Self-choice isn't a fashion. It's an essential, radical, and necessary change in the relationship between consumers, goods, and retailers! In order to change this relationship in the next five years, our community plans to invest 210 billion dinars. The investment will go into the widest possible application of self-service and self-choice, but simultaneously also into fixing some shortcomings in our retail sector to the fullest extent, beginning with staff issues and space, which lags far behind the quantity of goods that the market can absorb.⁴⁹⁸

This statement demonstrates that from the 1960s, the self-service system was uniformly promoted as the basis for modernizing retail with clear economic benefits, in which relevant authorities were willing to invest. The modernization of retail was important for economic development in Yugoslavia, from the federal level all the way down to the housing community, and retail experts and urban administrators emphasized the essential role of retail in the socio-economic development of the communes and the standard of living of its residents.⁴⁹⁹ Since modernization of retail was beneficial for housing communities and communes, these entities were expected to financially support the construction of new stores and the expansion of retail networks in their territories.

In addition to the provision of financial support, in the self-management system retail was also supposed to be governed by the citizens. As the SKJ's *Program* from 1958 stated, "[a] substantial part of the supply and service network for the population should gradually become

⁴⁹⁸ "Detalji s izložbe Porodica i domaćinstvo 1960," *Žena* 6, 1960. *Žena* was a women's journal published by the Croatian section of the SŽDJ and the KDAŽJ, published from 1957 to 1992.

⁴⁹⁹ V. Vukas, "Uloga suvremene trgovine na malo u zadovoljavanju potrošača," *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 8, 1960; Branko Đurašković, "Unaprjeđenje i modernizacija trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 7–8, 1960.

services managed by various self-governing organs of citizens.”⁵⁰⁰ In this vision, retail and different units of self-management in housing communities and enterprises related to each other in the sense that their development was mutually reinforcing, which speaks to the complex role that modern retail was supposed to play in the economic, social, and political life in Yugoslav urban environments from the late 1950s.

2.4 Consumer Councils and the Popular Participation of Yugoslav Citizens in the Retail Sector

Members of the SŽDJ and home economists were engaged in the modernization of retail as a means of reducing the “double burden” of household work from the position of consumers rather than workers. Although they were interested in women’s wage labor and the potential of the retail sector to provide employment for a growing female workforce, the organizational work concerning labor issues was left to the unions, worker’s councils, and women’s sections (*ženski aktiv*) within enterprises. Instead, the SŽDJ and home economists wanted to improve retail because its outdated and underdeveloped conditions with inconvenient working hours presented an obstacle to the fast and efficient consumption that was a part of modernizing household work.

As I wrote in the beginning of the chapter, at the 1958 SKGOJ conference on urban retail, Milka Kufrin held a speech on the relationship between women, consumption, and retail, which emphasized that retail must be modernized in order to relieve women of household work.⁵⁰¹ An important element in this modernization was coordination between the retail sector

⁵⁰⁰ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Yugoslavia's Way*, 177.

⁵⁰¹ Box 3, folder 495, AJ. In June 1959, a forum discussion (*tribina*) under the same name was organized in Zagreb as a part of the Month of Family and Household, a series of lectures, roundtables, and publications that connected the goals of the Family and Household exhibitions with concrete practices in certain areas. The forum discussion, which gathered participants from the SŽDJ, the SSRNJ, and the Confederation of Trade Unions, emphasized that the dire state of Yugoslav retail particularly affected working women and homemakers. The forum recommended the introduction of the self-service system and the modernization of retail as the ideal solution to this issue. See K. Ćurčić, “Mesec Porodice i domaćinstva,” *Zora* 57, 1959; K. Džeba, “Trgovina i potrošači”; “Troje pomembnih posvetovanj v okviru Meseca družini in gospodinjstva,” *Naša žena* 7–8, 1959; Box 13, folder 1234, HDA.

and the needs of consumers, which would improve their consumer experience while allowing them to influence industrial production. As self-managers, Yugoslav citizens were both producers and consumers, and these roles politically defined their participation in the self-management system. As Kufrin explained:

[The] introduction of social ownership over the means of production and the management of social production by working people as producers created the new position of man as a consumer. Production is organized according to the needs of the working people. Therefore, the working man and the whole community are interested not just in the production of more goods for people's needs, but also that the produced goods are used in the best possible way and that the consumer is better and more efficiently supplied.⁵⁰²

This statement shows that what started as an agenda to improve retail as a means of improving the conditions of women as consumers quickly evolved into a general interest in improving the status and rights of Yugoslav consumers. The relationship between retail, consumption, and Yugoslav citizens was mutually reinforcing; modern retail would benefit Yugoslav consumers, while their participation in the retail sector through the system of social self-management would modernize retail. In order to protect consumers whilst increasing their participation in the retail sector through the social self-management system, urban administrators in communes supported the establishment of an important self-managing body for this purpose: the consumer council.

Defined as units in the social self-management system that functioned as a “form of social control and assistance for retail,”⁵⁰³ consumer councils were places where Yugoslav citizens could perform their “conscious actions [as] consumers.”⁵⁰⁴ First established in 1955, consumer councils were supposed to work as a liaison between retail enterprises and consumers

⁵⁰² Kufrin, “Retail and Consumers,” box 3, folder 495, AJ.

⁵⁰³ “Čedomir Jelinić: Društveni organi i unaprijeđenje trgovine,” box 3, folder 495, AJ.

⁵⁰⁴ Kufrin, “Retail and Consumers,” box 3, folder 495, AJ.

in order to improve the retail sector.⁵⁰⁵ Since housing communities were expected to take the lead in establishing retail spaces in urban neighborhoods, the local consumer councils, together with the workers' councils, would take care of the goods, prices, and supply issues in these areas.⁵⁰⁶ Satisfactory results could be achieved only through the engagement of all "interested social organs and organizations," because the status of Yugoslav citizens as both workers and consumers required an interaction between the workers' and social self-management systems.⁵⁰⁷ The 1958 SKGOJ conference also dealt with the issue of consumer councils, and a presentation on the topic was made by Čedomir Jelenić, the director of the RK Beograd chain in the 1960s and 1970s. During the conference, members of the SKGOJ assigned an important role to consumer councils as a means of modernizing Yugoslav retail.⁵⁰⁸

From the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, the status and numbers of consumer councils varied. Due to their interest in improving retail for women as consumers, the first consumer councils, particularly in Slovenia, were established at the initiative of the SŽDJ.⁵⁰⁹ Members of the SŽDJ believed that Yugoslav citizens should help correct the negative aspects of retail, for which they also needed education through seminars, courses, and in the press and on the radio.⁵¹⁰ In 1958, there were a total of 1,855 consumer councils—most of them in Slovenia (where Ljubljana alone had almost eighty councils) and Croatia, and the least in Montenegro—and they worked as supervisory administrative bodies with members appointed by municipal

⁵⁰⁵ Jelenić, "Društveni organi i unaprijeđenje trgovine," box 3, folder 495, AJ; Š. D., "Neiskorišteno povjerenje," *Trgovinski bilten* 5, 1960. Other European state-socialist regimes, like Hungary and Poland, also had their own organizations for consumer protection, although the ones in Yugoslavia were the most developed and long-lasting. See Malgorzata Mazurek and Matthew Hilton, "Consumerism, Solidarity and Communism: Consumer Protection and the Consumer Movement in Poland," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 2 (2007): 323.

⁵⁰⁶ "Trgovina i potrošači," *Žena danas* 167, 1958.

⁵⁰⁷ Jelenić, "Društveni organi i unaprijeđenje trgovine," box 3, folder 495, AJ.

⁵⁰⁸ "Trgovina i potrošači."

⁵⁰⁹ Nina Vidervol, "Trgovina-naša skupna skrb," *Naša žena* 1, 1957; "The Activities of Women's Organizations in Housing Communities," box 7, folder 1821, The League of Women's Associations of Slovenia, Archives of Slovenia, Ljubljana (AS).

⁵¹⁰ Vidervol, "Trgovina-naša skupna skrb"; "Razmišljanja o nekaterih nalogah potrošniških svetov," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 1–2, 1956; Cilka Malešič, "Kaj vse lahko nudi trgovina potrošniku," *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 9–10, 1957.

boards.⁵¹¹ From the late 1950s to the late 1960s, the establishment of consumer councils was slow and uneven, and urban administrators blamed the low interest of people's councils, enterprises, and the SSRNJ in their establishment, as well as a lack of clarity regarding what they were actually supposed to do.⁵¹² When they were functional, as some cases in Zagreb in the 1960s showed, consumer councils could influence retail enterprises to extend their working hours or to introduce the self-service system.⁵¹³ Most of the time, however, consumer councils were not very active. As Igor Duda has pointed out, Yugoslav citizens did not often organize as consumers, but even when they did, they behaved like "extras."⁵¹⁴

Following the 1963 Constitution, consumer councils were again promoted by urban administrators as units in local communities, and by the late 1960s there were 800 consumer councils in Yugoslavia.⁵¹⁵ With the 1974 Constitution, the role of consumer councils was strengthened even further, because local communities and their units became mandatory. After the changes in the social self-management system and the Law on Associated Labor in 1976, the activities of consumer councils were regulated through contracts with enterprises and local communities.⁵¹⁶ According to Igor Duda, consumer councils were fully brought to life only in the mid-1970s thanks to the re-establishment of the consumer protection system.⁵¹⁷

Except for consumer councils, the SSRNJ, particularly its sub-organization, the Federal Conference "Local Community and Family" (*Savezna konferencije "Mesna zajednica i porodica"*), were also dedicated to the promotion of consumers. The Federal Conference "Local Community and Family" was a new iteration of the Federal Committee "Family and

⁵¹¹ Jelinić, "Društveni organi i unaprijeđenje trgovine," box 3, folder 495, AJ; Vidervol, "Trgovina-naša skupna skrb"; Igor Duda, "Consumers as the Vehicles of Socialism: Consumer Protection in the System of Yugoslav Self-Management and Associated Labor," *Südost-Forschungen* 76 (2017): 8.

⁵¹² Hazim Eminefendić, "Mjesna zajednica u ulozi savjeta potrošača u oblasti trgovinskih usluga," *Komuna* 4, 1967.

⁵¹³ Ivo Bučić, "Rad saveta potrošača u Zagrebu," *Komuna* 12, 1960.

⁵¹⁴ "Kako rade savjeti potrošača," *Privredni list* 144, 1957; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 67.

⁵¹⁵ "Udruženi potrošači—na startu," *Mesna zajednica* 9, 1969.

⁵¹⁶ "Do kada će biti potreba zaštita potrošača," *Supermarket* 2, 1976; Josip Gavran, "Što je značajno za trgovinu," *Supermarket* 3, 1976; Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, 166.

⁵¹⁷ Duda, "Consumers as the Vehicles of Socialism," 2.

Household” (*Savezni odbor “Porodica i domaćinstvo”*), which was established in 1959 following the second exhibition.⁵¹⁸ It was chaired by the aforementioned Jožefa Kardelj, while one of its most active members was Robert Kramer; in the late 1950s, he was the director of the advertising enterprise Interpublic, which was established to serve as a technical organizer for the “Family and Household” exhibitions. Kramer, who also authored a manual on consumer protection, later became the secretary of the Federal Conference “Local Community and Family.”⁵¹⁹ In 1969, the Federal Conference “Local Community and Family” established the Yugoslav Association of Consumers, which had around 2,000 members.⁵²⁰

The transformation of the exhibition’s organizing committee into the Federal Committee “Family and Household,” and then the Federal Conference “Local Community and Family,” demonstrated the institutionalization of the exhibition’s agenda at the federal level.⁵²¹ At the same time, its scope was broadened from modernizing and socializing household work within housing communities to generally improving housing and, later, local communities and the social self-management system, including the role of consumers within it. This can be witnessed in the many booklets, manuals, and magazines published by the committees, such as the periodicals *Porodica i domaćinstvo* (Family and Household, 1959–1962) and *Stambena zajednica* (Housing Community, 1959), which was in 1963 renamed to *Mesna zajednica* (Local Community, 1963–1990). The Federal Conference “Local Community and Family” also published *Potrošački informator* (Consumer Digest) from 1967 to 1979, which was the only specialized consumer-oriented magazine in Yugoslavia until *YU-Potrošač* (YU-Consumer) appeared in 1989.⁵²² The consumer councils and organizations that stemmed from the Family

⁵¹⁸ “The Minutes of Meeting of the Coordination Commission of the Federal Committee “Family and Household”, Belgrade, 1959,” box 13, folder 1234, HDA.

⁵¹⁹ Marija Erbežnik Fuks, “Naši razgovori-Porodica i domaćinstvo 1960,” *Žena* 4, 1960; Duda, “Consumers as the Vehicles of Socialism,” 9; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 68.

⁵²⁰ “Što nam nudi kodeks udruženih potrošača,” *Nova žena* 5, 1971; Duda, *Socijalizam na kućnom pragu*, 165.

⁵²¹ Box 13, folder 1234, HDA.

⁵²² Duda, “Consumers as the Vehicles of Socialism,” 2, 8.

and Household exhibitions proved that the initially gendered discussions related to household work, modern retail, and consumption received broader societal significance and were transformed into concerns relevant to all Yugoslav citizens.

Paradoxically, the success of the goal to conceptualize women's issues as social issues embedded in the institutional transformations during the 1960s resulted in the loss of women-specific activities. Throughout the 1950s, the SŽDJ and the Centers for Household Improvement faced significant challenges in their work, which gradually started to decline from the mid-1960s, until most of the institutions were closed or transformed by the mid-1970s.⁵²³ The reasons for this were numerous and complex. Except for the Family and Household campaign, which was supported by many social organizations and enterprises, the SŽDJ, the KDAŽJ, and home economists were struggling to realize all their planned activities and educational endeavors because they suffered from a chronic lack of personnel and financial support.⁵²⁴ Many home economists and women's activists were discouraged from their work after they realized that governing bodies, social organizations, and enterprises were ignoring and sabotaging them with their unwillingness to support or respond to their initiatives.⁵²⁵ Since the majority of Yugoslav politicians and activists in these institutions were male, this behavior revealed their strongly harbored patriarchal and misogynist attitudes dismissive of women's organizing and its focus on household work. The lack of collaboration and support between women's and other social organizations hindered the redistribution of activist work focused on

⁵²³ "Proposal for the merger of the Center for Household Improvement with the Center for Buildings for Social Standard," box 13, folder 1234, HDA; "Mjesto i uloga ustanova za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva u našim novim uslovima" *Domaćinstvo* 1 (1963); Jadran Kale, "Rad Centra za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva u Šibeniku, 1957–1972," *Ethnologica Dalmatica* 17 (2009): 95.

⁵²⁴ "Centri za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva u NRBiH i mogućnosti za njihov rad," *Domaćinstvo* 2, 1955; "Savjetovanje o radu Centara za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva BiH koje je održano 21.1.1958.god. u Sarajevu," *Domaćinstvo* 4, 1958; "Diskusija 26.11.1959." *Domaćinstvo* 6, 1959; "Savjetovanje o nekim problemima rada Centara za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva," *Domaćinstvo* 8, 1960; "Decenija plodnog rada Zavoda za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva BiH," *Domaćinstvo* 3, 1963; "Mjesto i uloga ustanova za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva."

⁵²⁵ "Izložba savremenog domaćinstva u Mariboru," *Domaćinstvo* 8, 1958; Lukanc, "Diskusija sa savjetovanja u Saveznom zavodu za urbanizam, komunalna i stambena pitanja," *Domaćinstvo* 9, 1961; "Savjetovanje o radu Centara."

women's emancipation. In these circumstances, the agenda of "women's issues as social issues" eventually resulted in the loss, rather than redistribution, of women-specific activities.

Another challenging factor for the home economists was the changing socio-economic goals of the Yugoslav government, in which the emphasis on economic liberalization, competition, and profit-making, particularly after the economic reform in 1965, reinforced the role of the retail sector as a business venture rather than a part of a social program. The reduction of governmental funding for public services coupled with the development of light industry, advertising, and increases in purchasing power and the standard of living of Yugoslav citizens contributed to the predominance of individual consumption over socialization and collective consumption.⁵²⁶ The consumer habits of Yugoslav citizens, as anthropologist Polona Sitar showed using the example of Slovenia, also changed. Yugoslav consumers not only preferred to individually purchase consumer goods, like washing machines, rather than use them collectively, they were also increasingly able to afford to do so.⁵²⁷

The new economic and social agendas emphasizing the increases in the production and consumption of consumer goods and standards of living had a positive impact on the modernization of retail and expansion of the retail network. As this and the previous chapter show, the late 1950s can be considered as the beginning of the modernization of Yugoslav retail. Through conferences, exhibitions, publications, and transnational exchanges, different experts and professionals, such as home economists, urban administrators, retailers, architects, and urban planners, started to produce expert knowledge on modern retail centered on the self-service system. Moreover, this knowledge production took place in parallel with the appearance of the first supermarkets and self-service department stores in Yugoslav urban centers, at least

⁵²⁶ "Dugoročni program rada Republičkog zavoda za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva," *Domaćinstvo* 1, 1969; Habiba Zukić, "Uloga Zavoda i Centara za unaprjeđenje domaćinstva u procesu društvene aktivizacije žena," *Domaćinstvo* 1–2, 1972.

⁵²⁷ Polona Sitar, *Ne le kruh, tudi vrtnice!: potrošnja, tehnološki razvoj in emancipacija žensk v socialistični Sloveniji* (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2017), 4–89.

three of which were first exhibited at the Zagreb Trade Fair. As journalist and activist Marija Erbežnik-Fuks noted:

The exhibition isn't just an exhibition! It's part of our life and that's what makes it interesting. It's a fair that opens for us at another location. The fashion store "grows" in Zagreb as well as the supermarket, and the other stores with self-choice and self-service are increasingly gaining the right of citizenship.⁵²⁸

During the 1960s, as the next chapter shows, department stores indeed became full-fledged Yugoslav citizens.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that a strong impetus for kickstarting the modernization of Yugoslav retail was provided by Yugoslav women's organizations and home economists in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Organizations and institutions like the SŽDJ, the KDAŽJ, and the Centers and Schools for home economics were committed to improving the lives of Yugoslav women in the postwar period by acknowledging that despite legal measures and increases in employment, the traditional gendered division of labor in the household presented an obstacle to women's political and social engagement. Eliminating the "double burden" of household work became the priority for women's organizations in the 1950s, and by the end of the decade this agenda was promoted by the SSRNJ as an important goal for all Yugoslav social organizations. Women activists and home economists believed that for women as workers, but even more as consumers, consumption formed part of household work, which made the modernization of retail an important element in the overall modernization and reduction of household work.

⁵²⁸ Erbežnik Fuks, "Naši razgovori."

In their view, the modernization of household work entailed an improvement in labor efficiency through mechanization and socialization on both individual and collective bases. As an endeavor in expertise and activism, the SŽDJ utilized home economics as a scientific framework to modernize household work, and established centers and schools for its development and popularization. By utilizing the financial support of international organizations such as the FAO and the ICA to their advantage, Yugoslav administrators and educators in home economics were able to develop their expertise on an international level. These financial and expert resources helped them establish the Centers and Schools for home economics and strengthen their advocacy for a stronger connection between the industrial and retail sectors and the consumers, which included the promotion of the self-service system and its implementation in department stores as a crucial means in modernizing the retail sector.

One of the earliest promotions of self-service department stores took place at the “Family and Household” exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair in the late 1950s. This exhibition series represented an important contribution to the popularization of home economics by using a wide array of objects and spaces to demonstrate the modernization of rural and urban households, the establishment of housing communities and the social self-management system, the development of welfare facilities, and the improvement of retail, consumption, and standards of living. The display of two functional models of a universal department store and fashion store in 1958 concretely showed the best way to modernize Yugoslav retail: by implementing the self-service system in large, multifunctional retail spaces like department stores, adjusting working hours, selling prepackaged and ready-made goods, industrially made clothing, and household appliances, as well as organizing home deliveries. The proposed solutions in terms of store appearance and construction, type and concentration of products, and retailing system defined the self-service department stores in the 1960s.

By exhibiting the various public and commercial services and goods that could be organized by the housing community in order to modernize household work, the exhibition also illustrated “the essence of the communal system” in Yugoslavia.⁵²⁹ The SŽDJ, the SSRNJ, and urban administrators promoted housing communities as the main frameworks for modernizing household work, particularly through socialization and collective consumption in new neighborhoods. By developing ideas of how to modernize household work within the housing community, the SŽDJ in turn strengthened the role the social self-management system. Since the SŽDJ believed that women were most concerned with consumption and retail, the organization advocated for their participation in resolving the problems of the retail sector. From 1955, this participation manifested itself through consumer councils, and the SŽDJ engaged in their early promotion and establishment, while organizing educational seminars on their role and purpose. From the late 1950s, consumer councils in Yugoslavia took off as the main form of social self-management in which Yugoslav citizens took part as consumers, but their development and activity was rather inefficient, at least until the mid-1970s.

The economic, social, and political emphasis on economic competition, liberalization, light industry, consumption, and standards of living led to the prioritization of individual consumption and mechanization at the expense of collective consumption and the socialization of household work. Consequently, many of the proposals involving the socialization of commercial services lost their appeal in comparison to individual purchasing opportunities, and the Centers and Schools for home economics went into decline from the late 1960s. For the retail sector, however, these circumstances initiated an intensification in commercial development, and from the early 1960s self-service department stores began to take over Yugoslav urban centers.

⁵²⁹ Maja Jankes, “Uloga i zadaci sreskih centara odnosno zavoda za domaćinstvo,” *Domaćinstvo* 9, 1961.

CHAPTER 3. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DEPARTMENT STORES IN CAPITAL CITIES: BELGRADE AND ZAGREB, 1960S

Introduction

A department store is opened on the Square of the October Revolution.⁵³⁰

With this simple yet resounding headline, the major Croatian newspaper *Vjesnik* marked a groundbreaking moment for the retail sector in Zagreb. From the morning hours on September 14, 1960, a mass of people stormed the newly opened glass pavilion on the Square of the October Revolution, the center of the working-class neighborhood Trešnjevka. Unlike the historical event that the square was named after, the revolution in question was of a different kind—the opening of the first self-service department store in the Croatian capital after the Second World War. Belonging to the city's leading retail enterprise Na-Ma, the opening ceremony was led by the chain's director Franjo Balen and the President of the neighborhood's People's Committee Petar Rastović.⁵³¹ The large number of visitors—some of whom have probably seen the store exhibited two years earlier at the “Family and Household” exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair—included figures such as Soka Krajačić, the vice-president of the People's Committee of Zagreb and the Central Committee of the Croatian section of SŽDJ, and even a delegation of politicians from Ljubljana.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ M.K-H.K., “Otvorena robna kuća na Trgu Oktobarske Revolucije,” *Vjesnik socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Hrvatske*, September 15, 1960.

⁵³¹ Petar Rastović was the president of the People's Committee of Trešnjevka in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁵³² M.K-H.K., “Otvorena robna kuća.” Soka Krajačić was a political activist and judge from Croatia. After participating in NOB, she held various positions in governing bodies in Croatian towns and on the republic level as well as in organizations like AFŽ, SŽDJ and SSRNJ. In the 1970s, she was a judge in the Croatian constitutional court. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 509.

The opening of the department store Na-Ma in Trešnjevka was one of the events that kickstarted the spread of department stores based on the self-service system in large Yugoslav urban centers. Perceived as pinnacles of modern retail by different experts, professionals and politicians—exemplified by figures such as Balen, Rastović and Krajačić—self-service department stores began to define Yugoslav urban environments from the early 1960s. During this time, as I showed in the previous chapter, the Yugoslav government placed more emphasis on increasing personal consumption and the consumer experience as essential components of its political and socio-economic system. This trend, which was also occurring in other European socialist states, ignited the modernization and expansion of urban retail networks and the professionalization of the retail workforce, conjoined with the import and production of new equipment, technology, and business know-how.⁵³³

In this chapter, I demonstrate that large department store chains were the key players in the modernization and expansion of Yugoslav retail, which in the 1960s took place in large urban centers, primarily capital cities. By focusing on two largest Yugoslav department store chains—Na-Ma and RK Beograd—I illustrate how the expansion of these retail enterprises through new department stores, technological advancements, innovations in retailing, and professionalization of the workforce shaped and were shaped by the urban environments of capitals Zagreb and Belgrade. Not just limited to the physical dimension of urban space, during the 1960s new department stores came to increasingly occupy, in Lefebvrian terms, the social and mental spaces of the Yugoslav socialist state as the preferred means for the modernization and expansion of urban retail networks. I argue that the result of these processes was the institutionalization of department stores as the most ubiquitous, tangible elements of Yugoslav retail and consumption in large urban areas. As I explained in the introduction to the dissertation, the institutionalization process refers to the repetitiveness of spatial construction

⁵³³ Greene, “Selling Market Socialism,” 108.

that engenders a generalizability thanks to which spaces are experienced and perceived as neutral.⁵³⁴ For Martina Löw, a prime example of such institutionalized spaces are supermarkets, which:

[..] are all designed with similarities that are seemingly independent from time and space. In the supermarket, for example, the arrangement of the shelves with respect to each other, the placement of goods in relation to other goods, people's paths around the shelves, the arrangement of cash registers, the shopping buggies, and the obligatory barrier at the entrance are all institutionalized.⁵³⁵

What Löw describes as the supermarket is in fact the self-service system, whose incorporation in new department stores was from the late 1950s considered by Yugoslav experts and professionals as essential for the modernization of the Yugoslav retail sector. The planning and construction of department stores, therefore, was a modernizing process that intersected retailing and with the physical and social transformations of urban environments in capital cities impacted by decentralization and liberalization of the Yugoslav economy and the self-management system. The focus of the chapter is mainly on the external expansion through physical and infrastructural growth in urban environments, but internal expansion vis-a-vis managerial practices and the workforce is also addressed.⁵³⁶ The transnational encounters and exchanges of Yugoslav experts and professionals, as I show, were crucial for powering both of these interconnected processes.

The chapter begins with an overview of the socio-economic and urban changes in Yugoslav capitals Zagreb and Belgrade in the 1950s and 1960s in order to showcase how these capitals were dynamic urban environments rather than just static backdrops for the construction of new department stores. The following sections then trace the external expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd by following how the construction of department stores was connected to the

⁵³⁴ Löw, *The Sociology of Space*, 134-138.

⁵³⁵ Löw, *The Sociology of Space*, 138.

⁵³⁶ del Moral, *Buying into Change*, 24.

growth and transformation of urban environments in Zagreb and Belgrade, starting from the city centers, travelling to the peripheral, transitional zones between the old and new urban environments, occupying the tabula rasa areas of completely new housing estates, and returning to the city with monumental projects. The large department stores in Belgrade and Zagreb at the end of the 1960s symbolically marked the successful accomplishment of the institutionalization of self-service department stores and the high status of modern retail and consumption in Yugoslav urban society, which would continue to expand in new ways in the 1970s. The final section deals more explicitly with the internal expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd by focusing on the professionalization of the retail workforce and the improvements in retailing technology and practices, demonstrating the crucial role that transnational encounters and exchanges with Western and Eastern Europe played in these processes.

3.1 Belgrade and Zagreb: Capital Cities as Political Landscapes

The rapid pace of industrialization and urbanization in the postwar period strongly affected capital cities in Yugoslavia. The fastest-growing Yugoslav cities in the postwar period were the republic capitals Zagreb, Belgrade, and Skopje, although the majority of the Yugoslav population still lived in small-sized urban settlements.⁵³⁷ In the mid-1960s, in a country where around 18 million people lived on an area of approximately 255,800 km², only seven cities had more than 100,000 inhabitants, and the urban population made up 35% of the total population. As the vice-secretary of the Executive Council of Serbia Živorad Kovačević pointed out, the

⁵³⁷ Rajko Rajić, “Yugoslavia’s Communal System and the Processes of Urbanization,” *Komuna*, special issue, June 1965; Jiří Musil, “City Development in Central and Eastern Europe before 1990: Historical Context and Socialist Legacies,” in *Transformation of Cities in Central and Eastern Europe: Towards Globalization*, ed. F.E. Ian Hamilton, Kaliopa Dimitrovska Andrews, Nataša Pichler-Milanović (New York: United Nations University, 2005), 41.

percentage of the inhabitants in Yugoslav capitals in the total population was in fact much smaller than these cities' "economic, cultural, political and other significance."⁵³⁸

Kovačević's remark demonstrated that Yugoslav experts and professionals were aware of the symbolic status of Yugoslav capitals, which is important for understanding the implications of their activities in these urban centers. As anthropologist Adam T. Smith noted, cities are places where governing systems and their elites construct and use physical forms in order to create and reproduce "constellations of authority."⁵³⁹ Conversely, the capital city can be defined as "the critical place where we demonstrate how physical spaces and political power structures dynamically negotiate authority in a relational network; the setting where these competitive relationships are constructed or intersected in the political terrain (...)."⁵⁴⁰ For this reason, capital cities represent a specific model of what Smith calls a political landscape, which is an amalgamation of the physicality of man-made environments, their aesthetic dimensions, and reflections in the common spatial imaginary.⁵⁴¹ Understanding capital cities as political landscapes, both real and imagined, means acknowledging their urban environments as "not simply a backdrop for political activities but rather the very stake of political struggle."⁵⁴² The spread of department stores in Yugoslav capitals in the 1960s was therefore crucial for their institutionalization even if it was in the beginning mostly confined to larger urban areas.

Belgrade and Zagreb represented the political, socio-economic, and cultural centers of their republics, with Belgrade having a dual role as the capital of the federation. From the early 1950s, the two capitals went through a common process of dynamic growth, marked by a rapid

⁵³⁸ Živorad Kovačević, "The City in the Yugoslav Communal System," *Komuna*, special issue, June 1965. Živorad Kovačević was a political scientist from Serbia. As the secretary-general of SKGOJ in the 1960s and the director of the Serbian Institute for Public Administration, Kovačević extensively published on communes and the social self-management system and was the editor of the journal *Opština* (County). See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 506.

⁵³⁹ Jessica Joyce Christie, Jelena Bogdanović, Eulogio Guzmán, "The Spatial Turn and the Political Landscape of Capital Cities," in *Political Landscapes of Capital Cities*, ed. Jessica Joyce Christie, Jelena Bogdanović, Eulogio Guzmán (Boulder: Colorado University Press, 2016), 20.

⁵⁴⁰ Christie, Bogdanović, Guzmán, "The Spatial Turn and the Political Landscape of Capital Cities," 21.

⁵⁴¹ Adam T. Smith, *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 5.

⁵⁴² Smith, *The Political Landscape*, 6.

increase of population and urban space, which was fostered by intense industrialization that attracted numerous inhabitants from the countryside in waves of internal migration.⁵⁴³ Before the Second World War, Belgrade had 300,000 inhabitants, and these numbers grew to 457,000 inhabitants in 1963, and to 780,000 inhabitants by 1970.⁵⁴⁴ In comparison, Zagreb had 125,591 inhabitants before the war, 345,000 inhabitants in 1953, and 551,124 inhabitants by 1970.⁵⁴⁵ These numbers speak of the high volumes of population growth, which were coupled with the expansion of urban space powered by the government's tremendous effort to provide housing for the growing urban population. Overall, the period from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s was marked by intense urban development and construction of new housing, infrastructure and institutions, largely financed by the city governments and housing funds.⁵⁴⁶ Due to its size and status as the federal capital Belgrade became a true Yugoslav metropolis in the 1960s.⁵⁴⁷ Following a typology proposed by geographer F. E. Ian Hamilton in the late 1960s, Zagreb was categorized as a secondary metropolis.⁵⁴⁸

The growth of urban population and physical space in these cities organically increased the retailing activities, but the actual number of stores remained low. Even though the number of stores is only one of the factors for evaluating retail networks—others include average store

⁵⁴³ Ivo Goldstein, "Novo lice grada," in *Povijest grada Zagreba: knjiga 2.: 20. i 21. stoljeće*, ed. Ivo Goldstein, Slavko Goldstein (Zagreb: Novi liber, 2013), 174-240; Slobodan Selinić, *Beograd 1960.-1970.: snabdevanje i ishrana* (Beograd: INIS, 2005), 56-57.

⁵⁴⁴ Josip Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu," *Komuna* 10, 1960; "Razvoj Beograda i aktuelni urbanistički problemi," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 41-42, 1966; Selinić, *Beograd 1960.-1970*, 57.

⁵⁴⁵ Box 178, The Minutes of Meetings of the Economic Council, folder 948, The City Assembly of Zagreb, DAZG; Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu,"; "Razvoj Beograda i aktuelni urbanistički problemi," Selinić, *Beograd 1960.-1970*, 57.

⁵⁴⁶ Biljana Arandelovic, Milena Vukmirovic, *Belgrade: The 21st Century Metropolis of Southeast Europe* (Cham: Springer, 2020), 37-39. For mass housing, see Horvat, *Harte Währung Beton*.

⁵⁴⁷ Nicole Münnich, *Belgrad zwischen sozialistischem Herrschaftsanspruch und gesellschaftlichem Eigensinn: Die jugoslawische Hauptstadt als Entwurf und urbane Erfahrung* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2013), 25-26.

⁵⁴⁸ F. E. Ian Hamilton, *Yugoslavia: Patterns of Economic Activity* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 3. See also, Ivana Podnar, "The Image of Zagreb as a Second Metropolis within Yugoslavia," *Ars & Humanitas* 4, 1-2 (2010): 203-229. Despite the destruction in the Second World War, the metropolitan status of these capitals was already established during the interwar period, particularly in the case of Belgrade, whose growth outpaced that of Zagreb. See, Jovana Babović, *Metropolitan Belgrade: Culture and Class in Interwar Yugoslavia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

size, number of workers, and the ratio between the number of stores and the population in a given area—their small numbers nevertheless demonstrated the underdeveloped state of Yugoslav retail networks in this period.⁵⁴⁹ In 1955, three years after the decentralization and liberalization of the Yugoslav retail sector, there were altogether 7392 retail enterprises in Yugoslavia, out of which 3460 were in Serbia and 1447 in Croatia.⁵⁵⁰ The overall number of stores in Yugoslavia in 1955 was 35,000, which was significantly lower than before the war, when there were around 91,519 stores.⁵⁵¹ By 1958, the number of stores increased to 38,608, and in the early 1960s, to 43,866 stores, owned by altogether 8667 retail enterprises.⁵⁵² The rapid population growth increased the number of inhabitants per store, which in the late 1950s came up to one store per 470 inhabitants.⁵⁵³ This was very high in comparison to Western European countries, whom Yugoslav retail experts almost exclusively used as a reference point. For example, in Italy in this period there was one store per 99 inhabitants, in Austria one store per 74 inhabitants, and in West Germany one store per 83 inhabitants.⁵⁵⁴

In contrast to the Yugoslav retail network that by the early 1960s expanded at a low pace, the growth of workforce and turnover in the retail sector were high. In 1958 there were 113,012 retail workers, which was an increase of 8000 workers (or 7.6 %) in comparison to 1955. The increase in turnover in this timespan was even more significant, and it went up from 13 billion to 21 billion dinars per year, which was an increase of 47 %.⁵⁵⁵

The two capitals reflected the numbers on the federal level. While before the war there were 39,873 stores in Serbia, after the war this number drastically shrunk.⁵⁵⁶ In Belgrade in

⁵⁴⁹ Rajko Kukulj, "Projekt proučavanja stanja i razvojnih mogućnosti tercijarnih djelatnosti u Zagrebu," *Komuna* 9, 1969.

⁵⁵⁰ Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže,".

⁵⁵¹ Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže"; "Private retail network in 1939," box 46, folder 163, AJ.

⁵⁵² "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, The Cabinet of the Vice-President for Commerce, folder 222, Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, AJ.

⁵⁵³ Berislav Šefer, "Trgovina i lična potrošnja," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1959.

⁵⁵⁴ Šefer, "Trgovina i lična potrošnja,".

⁵⁵⁵ Šefer, "Trgovina i lična potrošnja,".

⁵⁵⁶ "Private retail network in 1939," box 46, folder 163, AJ.

1948 there were 2660 stores, with one store per 140 inhabitants, and by 1956 the numbers further decreased to 2047 stores, with one store per 255 inhabitants.⁵⁵⁷ In contrast, in Zagreb the number of stores increased from 1463 stores in 1952 to 1796 stores in 1959.⁵⁵⁸ Although this growth continued and by 1965 there were 2676 stores, these numbers were in fact still lower than before the war, when in 1939 there were 3654 stores, out of 20,475 stores in the entire republic.⁵⁵⁹ The increase in the number of stores was still not able to follow the intense growth of the urban population, and despite the proliferation of retail spaces, in 1959 the ratio was one store per 261 inhabitants, which represented a worsening of the situation in comparison to one store per 234 inhabitants in 1952. Nevertheless, the increase in retail turnover in Zagreb from 1953 to 1959 was rather high and jumped from 21,541 billion dinars to 78,430 billion dinars. The retail workforce in the city similarly grew from 3319 workers in 1952 to 5017 in 1959.⁵⁶⁰ These number shows that while Belgrade suffered from a decrease in store numbers in the 1950s, Zagreb went through an increase. In both cases, however, the workforce and turnover significantly grew. Capital cities were in fact the main contributors to the overall number of stores and turnover rates in their republics. In the mid-1950s, stores in Belgrade formed 13% of the retail network in Serbia, while the city's turnover constituted 25% of the republic turnover. The retail turnover in Zagreb formed 26% of the republican turnover, with the stores contributing to 15% of the retail network in Croatia.⁵⁶¹

From the late 1950s, as I showed in the previous chapters, the government, experts and professionals increased their professional and financial support for the modernization and expansion of Yugoslav retail networks. The second Five-Year Plan adopted by cities in this period reiterated the need for a modern, comprehensive retail network. Zagreb's Five-Year Plan

⁵⁵⁷ Bogdan Pilić, "Posleratne investicije u trgovinu Beograda," *Nova trgovina* 10, 1958.

⁵⁵⁸ Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu."

⁵⁵⁹ Box 178, folder 948, DAZG; "Private retail network in 1939," box 46, folder 163, AJ.

⁵⁶⁰ Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu."

⁵⁶¹ Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže,".

from 1957, for example, emphasized the systems of self-service and self-choice and the use of prepackaging as the basis for the modernization of the local retail sector. In fact, at least one of these three elements had to be implemented for a retail enterprise to get permission to build a new store.⁵⁶² The transition to the self-service system required a significant investment in terms of finances and expertise. Even though the turnover in the retail sector at that time was rather high, the funds that retail enterprises had left for investments into new retail spaces were still rather low, and most of the capital accumulation went into federal funds. The management in retail enterprises also showed a certain level of passivity in introducing the self-service system, revealed by the fact that only 160 million dinars were withdrawn from the Yugoslav General Investment Fund for use in the modernization of retail.⁵⁶³

Nevertheless, the biggest chunk of the 58,9-billion-dinar investments made between 1952 and 1956 in fact still came from the retail enterprises.⁵⁶⁴ Following a period of increase in retail investments in the two years after the war, from 1947 to 1952 the investments went down.⁵⁶⁵ Between 1956 and 1962, which roughly covered the period of the second Five-Year Plan, the investments starkly grew back to 185 billion dinars. Out of this, 120,6 billion (or 65%) came from the enterprises, while 64,4 billion (or 35%) came from loans from different investment funds. While 82,5 billion dinars went into the construction of new stores, the rest was invested into storage facilities, new equipment, primarily refrigerating systems, and transportation.⁵⁶⁶ These numbers show that investments in retail were very limited and not necessarily channeled towards the construction of new retail spaces and the expansion of retail networks. Although the experts constantly pushed for an increase in governmental funding, the

⁵⁶² Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu."

⁵⁶³ Kolar, "Problemi modernizacije trgovine u Zagrebu."

⁵⁶⁴ Milutin Janković, Branislav Petrović, "Material-Technical Basis of Retail," box 3, folder 495, AJ.

⁵⁶⁵ Bogdan Pilić, "Posleratne investicije u trgovinu Beograda," *Nova trgovina* 10, 1958.

⁵⁶⁶ "Trgovina u Nacrtu društvenog plana za 1964. godinu," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1963.

expansion of the retail network was largely funded by the enterprises, who, because of their inadequate funds, were in most cases only able to construct small stores.⁵⁶⁷

3.2 The Decentralization of the National Department Store

Between 1945 and 1956, the Yugoslav retail network, as I explained in chapter 1, went from a period of strict centralization, through decentralization, which brought into existence many smaller retail enterprises, back into consolidation and formation of larger enterprises from the late 1950s. The decentralization of the central retail enterprise Narodni magazin, which the government established in 1945, created in the 1950s twelve independent retail enterprises located in various Yugoslav cities and towns, including Zagreb and Belgrade.⁵⁶⁸ During the 1960s, some of these department stores grew into the main retail enterprises in their territories. This was the case for Zagreb and Belgrade, where the decentralization of Narodni magazin served as a foundation for what would become Yugoslavia's two largest department store chains—Na-Ma and RK Beograd.

In Zagreb—a city that survived the war mostly unscathed—Narodni magazin opened a branch in the city's single department store, built by the Austrian chain Kastner & Öhler in the late 19th century (Figure 23). Located in Ilica Street right next to the central Ban Jelačić Square, the store was already semi-nationalized by the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War, and in 1945 taken over by the Yugoslav government.⁵⁶⁹ With the reorganization of the retail network in 1947, Narodni magazin turned from a federal into a republic enterprise. Although the centralized enterprise ceased to exist, the distribution and rationing of goods

⁵⁶⁷ "Modernizacija trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 11, 1959.

⁵⁶⁸ "Investments – Yearly investment plans for Federal enterprises (1947-1951)," box 8, folder 163, AJ.

⁵⁶⁹ See Rory Yeomans, "Purifying the Shop Floor: Kastner & Öhler Department Store as a Case Study of Aryanisation in Wartime Europe," in *Modern Antisemitism in the Peripheries: Europe and its Colonies, 1880-1945*, ed. Raul Cârstocea, Éva Kovács (Vienna & Hamburg: New Academic Press, 2019), 383-426.

continued to be centrally managed by the central distribution authority in Belgrade until 1951, when the enterprise was made fully independent on the level of the city.⁵⁷⁰

When Narodni magazin transformed into Na-Ma, the new director of the chain in 1952 became Franjo Balen. After graduating from trade school, Balen worked as a travelling salesman and independent retailer in Zagreb, where he joined the communist resistance movement during the war. Afterward, Balen was the director of Zagreb Purchasing and selling cooperative (Zanap) and the director of the retail enterprise Hrana, until he came to lead Na-Ma at the age of 44. He remained a director for 22 years, until his retirement in 1974. During his mandate, Balen was also politically active as a councilor for retail and trade in the city government, and the vice-president of the republic and the federal chambers of commerce.⁵⁷¹



Figure 23. Department store Narodni magazin, Zagreb, late 1940s.

From: Zvonimir Milčec, *Nama – monografija* (Zagreb: Nama, 1997).

⁵⁷⁰ Franjo Balen, “1945.-1965.” *Na-Ma: Posebno izdanje lista za 20. godišnjicu poduzeća*, 1965.

⁵⁷¹ “Život ugrađen u rast i razvoj Name,” *Na-Ma* 7, 1974. See, *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 50.

In Belgrade, Narodni magazin took over two central retail spaces, department stores Ta-Ta and Mitić, which were opened before the war by local retailers. The two department stores were both located in the representative Knez Mihajlo Street, which was the city's key area for retail and commercial activities already from the late 19th century.⁵⁷² Unlike in Zagreb, where Na-Ma always remained a single enterprise, in Belgrade in January 1966 Narodni magazin merged with several other department stores—namely Beograd, Gradski magazin (Gramag), and Modna kuća—in order to form a large chain called RK Beograd.

The decision to merge these enterprises was made by the city government and its influential mayor Branko Pešić.⁵⁷³ The directors of the stores supported this decision, alongside 95% of workers who voted for the merger in a referendum.⁵⁷⁴ After the merger, RK Beograd became a department store chain with nine stores, with altogether 22,235 m² of sales area, 1582 workers and a turnover of 459,36 million dinars. The director of the chain became Čedomir Jelenić, who previously managed the retail enterprise Beograd and oversaw the merger.⁵⁷⁵ Called by SKJ's newspaper *Borba* as the “heir to Vlada Mitić”—an interwar retailer who owned the previously mentioned Mitić department store—Jelenić was an economist and retailer, who after participating in NOB held different political positions in Belgrade's city councils and in the republic and federal chambers of commerce.⁵⁷⁶ He was, however, not interested in politics, and asked Dragi Stamenković, then the president of the central committee of Belgrade's SKJ,

⁵⁷² Željko Škalamera, “Knez-Mihajlova ulica,” *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 21, 1963. The department store Mitić, established by retailer Vlada Mitić in 1919, was located on the ground and first floor of a residential building erected in 1912 in Knez Mihajlo Street. Designed by architect Konstantin Jovanović, the building was a typical example of academic style in architecture of the late 19th century. The department store Ta-Ta, established in 1935 by retailers Milorad and Đodre Radojlović, was also located in Knez Mihajlo Street in a sleek, interwar modernist corner building.

⁵⁷³ “Reč Čedomira Jelenića,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1973. Branko Pešić was a politician and mayor of Belgrade from 1964 to 1974, and is, similarly to Zagreb's Vječeslav Holjevac, remembered as one of the most popular Yugoslav mayors in charge of many important construction and infrastructural projects in the capital city. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 789.

⁵⁷⁴ Jovan Ilić, “Privreda Beograda u novim uslovima,” *Komuna* 9, 1965; Vučko Nikolić, “Dobili smo Oktobarsku nagradu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1966.

⁵⁷⁵ Luka Anđelić, *Uspon i pad giganta: Robne kuće Beograd* (Beograd: Mrlješ, 2003), 9.

⁵⁷⁶ D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1969.

to give him a position in the retail sector. Afterward, he was assigned to conduct the merger and stayed as a director of RK Beograd until 1974.⁵⁷⁷ Balen and Jelenić were crucial figures behind the intense development of their chains, and the two directors had very similar biographies. Although both were assigned to their positions by high-ranking officials invested in the socio-economic development of Zagreb and Belgrade, Balen and Jelenić were educated retailers already before the war, in which they actively participated, and in addition also possessed political experience in local government and chambers of commerce.

Upon its establishment, RK Beograd immediately became the largest Yugoslav retail enterprise, followed by Na-Ma in Zagreb with 1400 workers, and Merkur in Skopje and Na-Ma in Ljubljana, each with around 400 workers.⁵⁷⁸ While some of RK Beograd's initial nine department stores were nationalized retail spaces from the interwar period, some were also built before the merger in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Unlike Na-Ma, which had no new stores between 1945 and 1960, RK Beograd stores from the late 1950s, located in Knez Mihajlo Street and on Terazije, showcased how department stores looked like in a period when experts and professionals were still trying to find the best way to modernize Yugoslav retail.

In contrast to Zagreb, Belgrade was damaged during the Second World War, and its city center was left unfinished. Terazije was a specific case of an incomplete and undefined central zone, whose reconstruction and expansion were topics of many discussions and proposals among architects and urban planners in Serbia already from the interwar period.⁵⁷⁹ In the 1950s Terazije became a construction site, and one of the first monumental new buildings to emerge was the headquarters of the Chamber of Industry. Designed in 1959 by architect Lavoslav Horvat, the Chamber of Industry occupied the upper part of the eight-story building, while the

⁵⁷⁷ Rade Grujić, *Kako smo smenjeni: Govore bivši direktori velikih kolektiva u Srbiji* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1989), 104. For more on Balen's and Jelenić's final years in their chains, see chapter 4.

⁵⁷⁸ "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1966.

⁵⁷⁹ Oliver Minić, "Transformacije centra Beograda," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 1, 1960; S. V., "Uređenje terazijske terase," *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 6, 1960; Kosta Karamata, Borivoje Anđelković, "Terazijska terasa i terazijski proctor: o jednoj neostvarenoj ideji," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 21, 1963.

lower half was taken over by department store Beograd, which later merged into RK Beograd.⁵⁸⁰ With 4000 m² of sales area, this was at the time the largest department store in the republic.⁵⁸¹ The department store was initially not planned for the building, and the original space was supposed to hold a permanent exhibition of non-food items. The neighborhood's People's Council, however, requested to use the space for a socially and economically more dynamic activities. The replacement of the exhibition space with a department store reflected the Yugoslav government's changing socio-economic agendas at the time.⁵⁸² The building was a representative piece of 1950s architecture, shaped as a slight concave from reinforced concrete, with a very textural façade with numerous windows hanging over a slim colonnade (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Lavoslav Horvat, department store RK Beograd, Chamber of Industry, Terazije, Belgrade, 1959.

From Arhitektura-Urbanizam 1, 1960

⁵⁸⁰ Lavoslav Horvat was an architect from Croatia. Before the war he was active in Grupa Zemlja, a leftist, socially engaged artistic group dedicated to depicting the everyday life of workers and peasants. After the war, Horvat designed many industrial and infrastructural buildings such as factories and hydroelectric power plants. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 353.

⁵⁸¹ Olga Miličević-Nikolić, "Robna kuća Beograd," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam 1*, 1960.

⁵⁸² Oliver Minić, "Transformacije centra Beograda"; Miličević-Nikolić, "Robna kuća Beograd".

While the building itself was praised by architects, the store interior was a subject of criticism. The original plans made by Horvat and his associates were rejected in favor of a design proposed by the Bureau for Retail Development, which, as I explained previously, was established in 1958 by Belgrade's Chamber of Commerce.⁵⁸³ The Bureau's purpose was to provide people's committees, chambers, cooperatives and other governing and investment bodies with research and expert knowledge needed for the modernization and expansion of the retail network. The Bureau employed economists and architects who produced research studies, investment programs, and interior designs for stores. In its first year, the Bureau, for example, made proposals for new refrigerating facilities, reconstruction of butcheries, and designs for twelve supermarkets in Belgrade, in addition to the interior design for the department store in Terazije.⁵⁸⁴ Despite the Bureau's mission to support modernization of retail, and its familiarity with the systems of self-service and self-choice, the interior design that was proposed and eventually built in Terazije still used the classical retailing system. In her review for the architectural journal *Arhitektura-urbanizam*, architect Olga Miličević-Nikolić criticized the overcrowded interior, which lacked gondolas and display tables, but was abundant in large and impractical wooden furniture. This created, as photographs of the time witnessed, an uninviting atmosphere (Figure 25). Despite the state-of-the-art lighting, large storefronts, and interesting wallpapers with abstract shapes, Miličević-Nikolić highlighted "the lack of a single author and conception" in the design.⁵⁸⁵

In Miličević-Nikolić's view, the department store on Terazije "was neither a result of researching the possibilities for retail in our country nor an architectural solution that responds to the psychology of contemporary consumers and the pace of selling."⁵⁸⁶ These comments

⁵⁸³ Miličević-Nikolić, "Robna kuća Beograd"; Branislav Lj. Petrović, "Zavod za unaprjeđenje trgovine u Beogradu," *Komuna* 4, 1959.

⁵⁸⁴ Petrović, "Zavod za unaprjeđenje trgovine u Beogradu".

⁵⁸⁵ Miličević-Nikolić, "Robna kuća Beograd."

⁵⁸⁶ Miličević-Nikolić, "Robna kuća Beograd." Olga Miličević-Nikolić graduated in architecture in Belgrade in the mid-1950s and had an active career as an urban planner and landscape architect.

revealed a puzzling situation in the early phase of the institutionalization of department stores, which were despite obvious advances in expertise and interdisciplinary collaboration still suspended between classical and modern retailing systems. In contrast, the insightful criticism coming from a young, only recently graduated architect demonstrated, similar to the case of Lidija-Podbregar Vasle, the emergence of a new generation of architects, urban planners and designers who were increasingly well-versed in the planning and construction of modern retail places. During the 1960s, these “young cadres of designers” in fact had a crucial role in the quick adaptation of department store buildings to the self-service-system and other demands of retail modernization.⁵⁸⁷



Figure 25. Department store RK Beograd (interior), Terazije, Belgrade, 1959. Designed by the Bureau for Retail Development.

From: Arhitektura-Urbanizam 1, 1960.

⁵⁸⁷ “Pioniri suvremene trgovine,” *Na-Ma* 10, 1975.

Before the merger, the retail enterprise *Modna kuća* built in 1962 in Knez Mihajlo Street a department store, which later part of the RK Beograd chain (Figure 26). Designed by architect Mihajlo Janković, the five-story building, with a colonnade on the ground floor and a glass façade, was similar in its features to the Chamber of Industry, but much smaller and more robust.⁵⁸⁸ Architects criticized its overly large proportions and crowded ground floor, and the overall opinion was that it did not fit into the historical environment of Belgrade's city center.⁵⁸⁹ The local government's imperative to protect the historical cores in capital cities was a feature with significant impact on the expansion of urban retail networks. While these legislations preserved the prewar department stores, they also prevented the construction of new ones. Except for these few new RK Beograd stores, centers in capital cities were mainly locations of small classical stores, which due to their limited size were not always able to switch from the classical to the self-service system.⁵⁹⁰ This was particularly the case for Zagreb, where in the mid-1960s 70% of stores in the city center still used the classical retailing system.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Mihajlo Janković was an architect from Serbia who designed several notable buildings in Belgrade in the 1950s and 1960s, including the Partisan Stadium, the Museum of May 25 (now the Museum of Yugoslavia), and the headquarters of the central committee of SKJ.

⁵⁸⁹ Zoran Manević, "Knez-Mihajlova ulica danas i sutra," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 21, 1963.

⁵⁹⁰ "3.8-31. Minutes of Meetings of the Committee for Retail," box 37.3, folder 37, DAZG.

⁵⁹¹ "3.8-31. Minutes of Meetings of the Committee for Retail," box 37.3, folder 37, DAZG; Vlaho Vukas, "Samoposluživanje u Zagrebu u svetlu statistike," *Nova trgovina* 10, 1966.



Figure 26. Mihajlo Janković, department store RK Beograd, Belgrade, 1962.

From: *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 21, 1963.

The fact that Na-Ma and enterprises that later merged into RK Beograd only had one to two stores in the 1950s was typical for the Yugoslav retail sector. In this period, retail enterprises mostly owned a small number of stores, which were, except in quantity, also small in size, with 46 m² as the average store size. The exception were supermarkets, but their numbers within the overall number of stores, even with the more intense increase from 1959, were still limited. From the 43,866 stores in Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, only 325 were supermarkets.⁵⁹² This meant that most of the stores in the late 1950s and early 1960s, both old and newly built ones, were small in size and used classical retailing.⁵⁹³

Retail experts from the Federal Chamber of Commerce, as an evaluation report from the early 1960s attested, were critical of the fact that the dominant model for the expansion of the retail network was the small store. They considered small stores conservative retail spaces that

⁵⁹² Milutin Janković, “Da li je tempo modernizacije trgovine zadovoljavajući?”, *Nova trgovina* 11, 1967.

⁵⁹³ “Further Development and Modernization of Retail,” box 63, folder 222, AJ.

perpetuated the private retailing culture from before the war.⁵⁹⁴ Čedomir Jelenić went even further in proclaiming them characteristic of retail during the times of prince Miloš Obrenović, the Serbian ruler in the first half of the 19th century.⁵⁹⁵ Both the stores and the retail enterprises were small: the 59 department store chains in the late 1950s owned altogether 94 department stores, which showed that most of these “chains” in fact only had one to two stores, whose average size was 672 m². For such small retail enterprises, with only a handful of stores, it was financially difficult to invest into the expansion of their business operations, which meant that they were unable to power the expansion and modernization of urban retail networks in Yugoslavia.⁵⁹⁶

To improve this situation, experts from the Federal Chamber of Commerce advocated for the establishment of large retail enterprises, with an expansive network of stores and warehouses not territorially limited to a certain area. Instead of a retail network with many small stores, the emphasis was put on a smaller number of large stores like department stores, sized between several hundred and several thousand square meters, and supplemented by supermarkets, specialized stores, kiosks, and vending machines, as well as mobile stores in rural areas. In the experts’ view, the main advantages of department stores were better conditions and lower prices of acquiring goods in bulk, more rational usage of space, transport, equipment, and workforce, implementation of new technology and equipment for the mechanization and automation of labor, education and specialization of workers, pursuit of economic research, and easier adaptation to sudden market changes. Yugoslav retail experts considered universal department stores, with an incorporated supermarket and minimum 1000 m² sales area, particularly suitable for large towns and cities. In addition to the universal type, specialized

⁵⁹⁴ “Further Development and Modernization of Retail,” box 63, folder 222, AJ.

⁵⁹⁵ D. R. “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1968.

⁵⁹⁶ “Further Development and Modernization of Retail,” box 63, folder 222, AJ; “Razvoj tercijarnih delatnosti: Proširena sednica Predsedništva SPK,” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1965.

department stores for clothes, footwear and furniture were also considered formidable retail spaces.⁵⁹⁷

From the 1960s, Yugoslav retail experts promoted self-service as the ideal retailing system, and department stores as best retail spaces for modernizing and expanding the retail network. With their size, variety of consumer goods and services, and the ability to implement the systems of self-service and self-choice, department stores were considered epitomes of modern retail. At the same time, they required a significant financial investment, and the question looming large over these proposals was who would finance them. The fact that finances mainly came from retail enterprises, whose capacities were limited, meant that most newly built retail spaces were the small stores dreaded by the experts. The proposal made by Federal Chamber of Commerce to establish the Republic and Local Funds for the Construction of Retail (*Fond za izgradnju trgovine*), which would collect money from other investment funds, contributions and taxes, was never implemented.⁵⁹⁸

As a result, in the early 1960s only large enterprises were able to finance the construction of new stores, which in the case of department stores gave an advantage to those enterprises that emerged from the decentralization of Narodni magazin in capital cities. Their greater capacities in terms of finances, expertise, technology, and trained workforce, together with the support of their wealthier local governments, turned them into leaders in modernization and expansion of retail networks in certain areas. This was the case for Na-Ma and RK Beograd, which during the 1960s embarked on a process of external and internal expansion, which was inextricably linked to the physical and social transformations of their capital cities' urban and social environments, and led to the institutionalization of department stores by the end of the decade.

⁵⁹⁷ "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AJ.

⁵⁹⁸ "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AJ.

3.3 Linking the Urban Periphery

Following the consolidation of their department stores in the city centers, Na-Ma and RK Beograd began to externally expand their chains by opening new stores in growing neighborhoods on the outskirts of Zagreb and Belgrade. The year 1960 was a watershed year for Na-Ma. The enterprise officially switched to only using the self-service system and opened its first new department store, which initiated the enterprise's transformation into a department store chain. The location of the new Na-Ma store was both pragmatic and symbolic; placed on the Square of the October Revolution, Na-Ma opened its first new department store in the center of the historically working-class, and very populated neighborhood Trešnjevka, which was one of the city's main peripheral areas impacted by rapid industrialization.⁵⁹⁹ The pre-fabricated, one-story glass and steel department store was designed two years earlier by architects Stjepan Milković and Zdravko Gmajner for the second "Family and Household" exhibition at the Zagreb Trade Fair, and Trešnjevka People's Council asked for the store to be transferred there after the exhibition's closing (Figure 27). With its 158 classical stores per 62,000 inhabitants (which amounted to one store per 455 inhabitants, almost double the city's average), Trešnjevka was in dire need of modern retail spaces.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁹ See Goran Arčabić, "Modernizacija prostora Trešnjevke," in: *Trešnjevka – prostor i ljudi*, ed. Kristian Strukić, Goran Arčabić (Zagreb: Muzej grada Zagreba, 2018), 42.

⁶⁰⁰ "3.8-31. Minutes of Meetings of the Committee for Retail," box 37.3, folder 37, DAZG; A.Ž., "Otvorena robna kuća: I Trešnjevka dobila Na-Mu," *Večernji list*, September 15, 1960; Biljana Kašić, "Razvoj društveno-političkog sistema od 1953. do 1963 godine," in: *Crvena Trešnjevka*, ed. Drago Zdunić, Slobodan Žarić (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, Spektar, Skupština općine Trešnjevka, 1982), 302; Lidija Sklevicky, "Privredni razvoj od 1953. do 1963." *Crvena Trešnjevka*, 315.



Figure 27. Stjepan Milković, Zdravko Gmajner, Department store Na-Ma, Trešnjevka, Zagreb, 1960.

From Porodica i domaćinstvo 10, 1960.

Trešnjevka's Five-Year Plan from 1957 echoed proposals made on city, republic, and federal levels, which emphasized the need to transition to light industry, improve the supply of consumer goods, and increase personal consumption. The plan's principal goal was to raise the neighborhood's economic, social, and cultural conditions by implementing measures that would have an immediate impact on the residents' living standard. The plan emphasized a speedy modernization of retail spaces and an expansion of the retail network as crucial preconditions for achieving these goals.⁶⁰¹

Na-Ma's investment plan shows the big, almost super-heroic role envisioned for the self-service department store as the leader of retail modernization in the neighborhood. The size and key location of the store were highlighted as having a crucial impact in improving the retail network, ensuring its economic effectiveness, and modernizing community life. Through the

⁶⁰¹ Box 9, Minutes of Meetings of the Municipal Council, folder 909, People's Committee of Trešnjevka, DAZG.

self-service system and the provision of a variety of consumer goods from domestic and foreign producers in one place, the store would save consumers' time and money while offering them a more hygienic place to shop in comparison to the neighborhood's green market across the street. The department store would also provide other services, such as a tailor shop, and in this way contribute to the local infrastructure dedicated to the socialization of household work that was, as I showed in chapter 2, an important social agenda in this period.⁶⁰²

According to the Five-Year Plan, all these transformations would take place in the center of the neighborhood, which would be, in the spirit of the new trends in urban planning focused on urban decentralization and revitalization, invigorated through the department store as an economic, social, and cultural institution. For Trešnjevka's residents, the contrast between the life before and after the department store appeared on the Square of the October Revolution must have been stark, since the location was previously occupied by a cornfield.⁶⁰³ The placement of retail and commerce alongside housing, schooling, public transportation, and communal services demonstrated that in the first half of the 1960s, retail spaces were still considered elements in the Yugoslav welfare system.⁶⁰⁴

The adoption of the investment plan by Trešnjevka's People's Council cemented the decision to construct the department store, which was not subject to debate or contestation. The new Na-Ma store was unanimously seen by local politicians as a necessary step in the socio-economic and cultural development of the neighborhood and the city in general.⁶⁰⁵ Between the decision and the actual construction of the store, however, a debate occurred about which enterprise would manage the store. From late 1958 to early 1959, the People's Council unanimously agreed to establish a local retail enterprise called Trešnjevački magazin

⁶⁰² "Trešnjevka Square – Department Store, folder 1122, Project Documentation, DAZG.

⁶⁰³ Sklevicky, "Privredni razvoj," 315.

⁶⁰⁴ Box 9, folder 909, DAZG.

⁶⁰⁵ Box 9, folder 909, DAZG.

(Trešnjevka Store) to manage the store.⁶⁰⁶ This was typical for Yugoslav housing communities, which were to the dismay of retail experts usually keen to support only their local retail enterprise.⁶⁰⁷

A year before the store opened, however, a new proposal was put forward by the People's Council to integrate Trešnjevački magazin into Na-Ma. The arguments given were Na-Ma's experience as a retail enterprise, which its representatives supported by using the example of the economic feasibility of foreign department store chains that Na-Ma was set to follow.⁶⁰⁸ Despite counterarguments that this integration would lead to the predominance of a single large retail enterprise, or in other words, to monopolization instead of economic competition, in the end the local enterprise was absorbed by Na-Ma in order to facilitate the establishment of the new department store and ensure its economic viability.⁶⁰⁹ Despite the experts' criticism of monopolization, especially when enforced by housing communities in favor of their local retail enterprises, the case of Na-Ma in Trešnjevka showed that a competitive retail enterprise, especially with high financial and infrastructural capacities, would simply absorb the smaller, local enterprise and regain its monopolistic position.

In its design, the Na-Ma store in Trešnjevka was an ideal model of the large, modern retail spaces that were supposed to expand the Yugoslav retail network. The building was a prefabricated steel structure, which was considered by Yugoslav architects and urban planners at the time as the most efficient type of construction, crucial given the conditions of accelerated growth in population, industry, and housing.⁶¹⁰ The 1700 m² of sales area encompassed 600 m² of ground floor where groceries were sold using the self-service system (Figures 28 & 29). Upon entering the store, the customers could take a metal basket or trolley and examine the

⁶⁰⁶ Box 9, folder 909, DAZG.

⁶⁰⁷ "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AY.

⁶⁰⁸ Box 30, Minutes of Meetings of the Advisory Council for Trade and Agriculture, folder 909, DAZG.

⁶⁰⁹ Box 30, folder 909, DAZG.

⁶¹⁰ "Zagrebački Velesajam," *Čovjek i prostor* 82, 1959.

prepackaged goods, from bread, dairy, and fresh produce, to meat, coffee, sweets, and beverages, stored on shelves, gondolas, and refrigerators, which were completely new equipment at the time. The sale of non-food items like clothes, cosmetics, textiles, household appliances, bicycles, and children's goods were organized on the 1100 m² of upper floor based on the system of self-choice (Figure 30). To finish their purchase, the customers would pay at the cashier, with the option to have some of the items additionally packed. In a period when architects and urban planners were still not so familiar with designing self-service department stores, the interior design was personally proposed by Risto Bajalski, who was, as I mentioned in chapter 1, an enthusiastic supporter of the self-service system.⁶¹¹



Figure 28. Department store Na-Ma (interior), Trešnjevka, Zagreb, 1960.

From: *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 10, 1960.

⁶¹¹ "Sketch of a Self-service Store," box 87, Equipment for Supermarkets, folder 229, Yugoslav Association of Trade Chambers, AJ.



Figure 29. Department store Na-Ma (interior), Trešnjevka, Zagreb, 1960.

From: *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 10, 1960.



Figure 30. Department store Na-Ma (interior), Trešnjevka, Zagreb, 1960.

From: *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 10, 1960.

The Na-Ma store in Trešnjevka at the time employed around 100 workers, and the daily turnover in the first month was around 4 million dinars, which spoke of the success of the self-service system.⁶¹² The combination of supermarket on the ground floor and other goods and services on the upper floor, which Yugoslav retail experts were familiar with from West-German department stores, became typical for the Na-Ma chain and the common way to organize interior spaces in Yugoslav department stores. The many written and textual materials produced for the store, from the detailed investment plan, newspaper reports, and high-quality photographs made in the first month after the opening, speak of the importance that the store had in the eyes of experts, politicians, and the media as a pioneering space of modern retail. No wonder since in terms of finances, the store was also a hefty investment of 336 million dinars, most of which was provided by the city, while Na-Ma invested 21 million dinars.⁶¹³ This financing model contrasted the general pattern of the expansion of the Yugoslav retail network, where enterprises mostly invested their own funds into opening new stores, despite expert recommendations that the government and communes should play a more prominent role in this process.

Although it took Na-Ma fifteen years to open its first new store, after Trešnjevka the enterprise rapidly continued its expansion. In October 1962 Na-Ma opened a store in the neighborhood Kustošija on the western outskirts, which was part of the enterprise's goal to improve retail and supply in the peripheral areas of the city.⁶¹⁴ During the 1960s, many Na-Ma and RK Beograd's stores were erected in peripheral zones, which F. E. Ian Hamilton described as transitional spaces in socialist cities, where—in the range between historical cores and completely new areas—the socialist construction emerged within an older urban

⁶¹² "Otvorena je robna kuća na Trešnjevci u Zagrebu," *Porodica i domaćinstvo* 10, 1960.

⁶¹³ "Otvorena robna kuća: I Trešnjevka dobila Na-Mu."

⁶¹⁴ "U punom pogonu," *Na-Ma* 3, 1962.

environment.⁶¹⁵ Zagreb's Five-Year Plan from 1957 recommended the construction of self-service department stores in peripheral areas of the city because they were the best type of retail space to satisfy the supply and consumer needs of emerging and expanding neighborhoods. Simultaneously, they also fit better into the city's financial possibilities that were often limited to building one retail space.⁶¹⁶

Originally also intended for a local retail enterprise, the Na-Ma store in Kustošija was designed by architect Zdravko Gržičić, and consisted of a 410 m² supermarket on the ground floor, and a similarly sized upper floor (Figure 31).⁶¹⁷ The construction of the store quickly proved inadequate, and by the end of the decade the building had to be fully renovated.⁶¹⁸ In 1971 the store was redesigned and enlarged by architect Josip Hitić (Figure 32) in a manner that became characteristic of Na-Ma's stores in the 1960s, with a ground-floor supermarket with large glass storefronts and a closed upper floor for non-food items.⁶¹⁹ The design of Na-Ma stores corresponded to instructions given in the booklet titled *Department Stores (Robne kuće)*—written by retail expert Milutin Janković and published in 1962 by the Federal Chamber of Commerce—which recommended using open, glass storefronts on the ground floor, and closed, protruding facades on the upper floors, features that would attract the customers inside and, once there, keep their attention on the consumer goods.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁵ F. E. Ian Hamilton, "Spatial Structure in East European Cities," in *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*, ed. R. A. French and F. E. Ian Hamilton (Chichester: New York, 1979), 227.

⁶¹⁶ "3.8-31. Minutes of Meetings of the Committee for Retail," box 37.3, folder 37, DAZG.

⁶¹⁷ "Proposal for the Design of the Department Store in Kustošija," box 87, folder 229, AJ; "U punom pogonu." Zdravko Gržičić was an architect and painter from Croatia.

⁶¹⁸ "Department Store Podsused," folder 1122, DAZG.

⁶¹⁹ Josip Sudac, Josip Vuković, *Robne kuće Hrvatske* (Varaždin: NIŠRO, 1984), 142; "Proširenje i adaptacija robne kuće u Kustošiji," *Na-Ma* 5-6, 1970.

⁶²⁰ Milutin Janković, *Robne kuće* (Beograd: Privredni pregled, 1962), 15-18.



Figure 31. Zdravko Gržičić, department store Na-Ma store, Kustošija, Zagreb, 1962.

From "U punom pogonu: otvorena robna kuća Na-Ma IV," Na-Ma 3, 1962.



Figure 32. Josip Hitil, department store Na-Ma, Kustošija, Zagreb, 1970.

From: Gavranović, Nama – 25 godina

This design was also applied to the Na-Ma store opened on May 8, 1965—on the 20th anniversary of the liberation of Zagreb—in the peripheral eastern neighborhood Volovčica (Figure 33). The store's architect was Marta Berček Gomoš, the only woman among the designers of Na-Ma stores.⁶²¹ The opening of the store on the anniversary of the city's liberation, as this and the following chapter show, was a frequent occurrence in which department stores were used by local governments to celebrate important dates on the Yugoslav calendar. Following Na-Ma's now established formula, the store had a 1330 m² supermarket on the ground floor, and 700 m² sales area on the upper floor. The construction and equipment were financed by 253 million dinars from the city's Housing Construction Fond and 65 million dinars from the Na-Ma chain. During the opening day the store had a turnover of 2 million dinars.⁶²²



Figure 33. Marta Berček Gomoš, department store Na-Ma, Volovčica, Zagreb, 1965.

From Gavranović, Nama – 25 godina.

⁶²¹ "Izvršili smo još jedan od postavljenih zadataka," *Na-Ma* 3, 1965; Sudec, Vuković, *Robne kuće Hrvatske*, 138.

⁶²² "Izvršili smo još jedan od postavljenih zadataka."

Some months later in October 1965, the enterprise opened a similar-looking store in Dubrava, a working-class neighborhood on the eastern periphery, which was designed by architect Nikola Krneta (Figure 34).⁶²³ The store was built by the prolific construction enterprise Industrogradnja, while the equipment was provided by Alprem from Kamnik, a Slovenian enterprise specialized in the production of aluminum goods, which, alongside Soko from Mostar, was one of the main Yugoslav producers of modern retailing equipment. Similar in size to its predecessors, Na-Ma in Dubrava encompassed 500 m² sales area on the ground floor and 1100 m² sales area on the upper floor, and was the first Na-Ma department store to include a furniture showroom.⁶²⁴



Figure 34. Nikola Krneta, department store Na-Ma, Dubrava Zagreb, 1965.

From: Gavranović, Nama – 25 godina

On the enterprise's 20th anniversary in 1965, Na-Ma had altogether 15,000 m² of sales and storage area, made 27 billion dinars, and employed 1273 workers. In comparison to 1945, when the store employed 309 workers and made 494 million dinars, these were stark

⁶²³ "Dubrava – Department Store," folder 1122, DAZG.

⁶²⁴ "Super-market u punom značenju," *Na-Ma* 11, 1965.

increases.⁶²⁵ Although Na-Ma's growth was embedded in the overall economic boom in Yugoslavia in this period, the chain's unwavering support and implementation of the self-service system, which improved the equipment, design, and the workforce, was an important reason behind its economic success and popularity.

Unlike Na-Ma, RK Beograd came into existence in 1966 already as a chain of nine department stores. The external expansion of the chain from the mid-1960s, however, shared similarities to Na-Ma's. Although RK Beograd's store were much less uniform and comprehensive in their architectural design in comparison to Na-Ma, in terms of urban location they were similarly constructed in peripheral, transitional zones of the city, and in the centers of new neighborhoods, which they were supposed to economically, socially and culturally revitalize.

The department store in Dušanovac (Figure 35) was opened in 1964 in a traditionally working-class neighborhood in the eastern periphery of Belgrade.⁶²⁶ The one-story building, made from concrete and glass, had 1400 m² of sales area for selling non-food items, and was annexed to a neighboring 16-story skyscraper. The department store was designed by architect Radoš Rođa Todorović from the construction enterprise Jugoprojekt.⁶²⁷ The department store was located in the center of Dušanovac, which was formally planned only two years later as a part of a series of regulatory plans for local communities in Belgrade aiming to decentralize the city by removing some of the retail and social zones from the old city center to the peripheral neighborhoods. The RK Beograd department store was included in this regulatory plan as an essential element of the new center of Dušanovac.⁶²⁸ The case of the Dušanovac store was

⁶²⁵ "Uvijek u službi potrošača," *Na-Ma* 9, 1965; Balen, "1945.-1965."

⁶²⁶ Dušan Bosančić "Reorganizacija prodajnih odeljenja u robnoj kući na Dušanovcu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1966.

⁶²⁷ Radoš Rođa Todorović was an architect from Serbia who worked for the construction enterprise Jugoprojekt. See I. M., "In Memoriam: Arhitekta Radoš Rođa Todorović," *caglas.rs* <https://www.caglas.rs/in-memoriam-arhitekta-rados-rodja-todorovic/> (accessed December 15, 2024).

⁶²⁸ "Urbanističko rešenje rejonskog centra Dušanovac u Beogradu," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 41-42, 1966; Stojan Maksimović, "Detaljni urbanistički plan dela rejonskog centra na Dušanovcu," *Urbanizam Beograda* 10, 1970.

typical for urban planning in transitional zones of the city, where retail spaces emerged before any formal urban plan was made for the local community. Like all RK Beograd stores at the time, the department store in Dušanovac was initially only selling non-food items, but after RK Beograd started to introduce the systems of self-service and self-choice in all of their stores from 1967, the basement area in Dušanovac was reconstructed in the early 1970s to fit a supermarket.⁶²⁹



Figure 35. Radoš Rođa Todorović, department store RK Beograd, Dušanovac, Belgrade, 1964.

From: *Crno-Beli Beograd*,
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=4271954629527470&id=146241745432133&set=a.212837462105894> (accessed December 15, 2024)

The first new department store that RK Beograd built after the merger in 1967 was in Karaburma, a neighborhood on the eastern outskirts of the city near the Danube (Figure 36).⁶³⁰ Designed by architect Milivoje Žugić, the department store RK Beograd in Karaburma was a

⁶²⁹ “Department Store Belgrade, Dušanovac Square,” Project Documentation, Historical Archives of Belgrade, Serbia (IAB); Vojislav Nanić, “Uloga prodavca u sistemu samoizbora,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1968.

⁶³⁰ “Otvorena robna kuća na Karaburmi i specijalizovana robna kuća za decu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1967.

one-story, prefabricated building made from iron, concrete and glass. Typical for the time, the building had a glass storefront on the ground floor and a closed upper floor, which carried RK Beograd's logo.⁶³¹ Although originally planned in the early 1950s for 6000 inhabitants, the neighborhood Karaburma was due to its inconvenient geographical location and lack of funds still under construction when RK Beograd erected the store in neighborhood's center, which in the late 1960s had 26,000 inhabitants.⁶³² Similar to the case of Dušanovac, the center of Karaburma was officially planned only in the early 1970s.⁶³³ With 1700 m² sales area and 50 workers, the department store was the result of an investment of 400 million dinars from combined funds of the local community and the enterprise.⁶³⁴

The equipment and furniture for the self-service system in Karaburma were imported from Sweden, and Swedish experts even personally came to install it.⁶³⁵ This was not the only influence that the Scandinavian country had on the store; the department store was also built with a surrounding parking lot, with the idea that customers could arrive by cars in order to make large purchases. This was characteristic for department stores and supermarkets in Sweden, where, as I described in chapter 1, there was a high degree of automobilization, and the urban expansion of cities and the construction of retail spaces more extensively took into consideration vehicle traffic during urban planning.⁶³⁶

⁶³¹ "The Main Project of the Department Store in Marija Gregoran Street," Project Documentation, IAB.

⁶³² Nikola Gavrilović, "Karaburma – novo stambeno naselje," *Urbanizam Beograda* 6, 1970.

⁶³³ Dragutin Kadović, "Karaburma – deo centralnog naselja," *Urbanizam Beograda* 13-14, 1971.

⁶³⁴ Milan Marinković, "Uskoro nova robna kuća na Karaburmi," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1966.

⁶³⁵ "Ponovno otvorena robna kuća u Knez Mihajlovoj 5," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1967.

⁶³⁶ "Otvorena robna kuća na Karaburmi i specijalizovana robna kuća za decu."



Figure 36. Milivoje Žugić, department store RK Beograd, Karaburma, Belgrade, 1967.

From: "Otvorena robna kuća na Karaburmi i specijalizovana robna kuća za decu," *Robne kuće Beograd 5*, 1967.

The department stores that RK Beograd and Na-Ma built in the peripheries of Belgrade and Zagreb significantly improved the living standard in these areas by bringing in income, lowering unemployment, supplying the residents, and providing new zones for consumption and leisure in the growing neighborhoods.⁶³⁷ Nevertheless, they were not without fault. The managers of Na-Ma's stores in Kustošija, Volovčica and Dubrava were very vocal in interviews given to Na-Ma's enterprise newspaper about the various problems plaguing their peripheral stores. These included difficulties with the delivery of goods from the enterprise's central warehouse, mostly due to the bad state of the vehicle fleet, or issues with the workers who were still largely unqualified and untrained, which led to customer dissatisfaction and what was called "inventory deficits", a euphemism for theft.⁶³⁸ Complaints from customers on the sales staff published in Na-Ma and RK Beograd's enterprise newspapers and in daily newspapers

⁶³⁷ "Ponovno otvorena robna kuća u Knez Mihajlovoj 5."

⁶³⁸ "Posjet našoj robnoj kući u Volovčici: Na dobrom putu," *Na-Ma* 3, 1966; "Ne ispunjavamo predviđena očekivanja," *Na-Ma* 11, 1966.

remained a constant staple by the end of the 1960s, with the general conclusion that neither the sellers nor the customers were still fully used to the systems of self-service and self-choice.⁶³⁹

The management of RK Beograd's department store in Rakovica, a faraway neighborhood in the south of the city, similarly complained on the long distance between the store and the enterprise's central warehouse.⁶⁴⁰ Notwithstanding its successful first year, the manager of the RK Beograd store in Karaburma similarly pointed out the problems with the delivery of goods, but also with the workforce, which in peripheral stores was often inexperienced or unskilled.⁶⁴¹ The cases of these peripheral department stores revealed that while the skilled workforce was probably kept in centrally located department stores, untrained and unskilled workers were sent to the outskirts. There, they conversely suffered from unsatisfactory working conditions, such as bad transport connections and nonexistent worker's infrastructure.⁶⁴²

In addition to persistent problems with the quality of service—which was judged by Yugoslav customers based on the low levels of politeness and knowledgeability of the sales staff—another issue with the internal operations of the stores was the low quality and lack of some consumer goods, especially household appliances and electronics.⁶⁴³ The lack of goods, however, was not necessarily caused by faulty production or import, but by problems in communication between the enterprise's commercial department and the individual department

⁶³⁹ "Prodavac u sistemu samoizbora i samousluživanja," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1969. Both Na-Ma and RK Beograd were highly interested in their customers, and regularly conducted surveys and meetings with them, which made them one of the first retail enterprises to conduct research into consumer behavior. They also published letters from their customers in their enterprise newspapers, alongside news reports from other outlets, which often included comments on their service. Both chains were very transparent about the criticism they received, which was mostly directed to the low quality of some goods and the bad service. See "Osnovno: zadovoljiti sve naše potrošale," *Na-Ma* 3, 1967; "Ispitivanje motivacija za potrebe robnih kuća," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1967; D. R., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1969.

⁶⁴⁰ Dušan Kulundžić, "Kako se posluje u Rakovici," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1966.

⁶⁴¹ M. K., "Marko Macura: Takozvane periferne kuće se zapostavljaju," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1968.

⁶⁴² "Strukturu asortimana prilagoditi stalnim potrošačima," *Na-Ma* 8, 1964.

⁶⁴³ "Subjektivne slabosti," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1969.

stores, which caused delays in the delivery of goods from the warehouses.⁶⁴⁴ The still limited sales areas and the inadequate storage space in the store also prevented all the goods from being displayed for sale or led to damages.⁶⁴⁵

Most of the department stores, both old and new, were located in buildings that needed some level of repair. After the merger, RK Beograd had to invest millions of dinars into modernizing their older department stores, usually by enlarging the sales area, and introducing the systems of self-choice and self-service, which involved refurnishing the stores with new equipment and furniture. In the case of Na-Ma, the new department store buildings in the peripheries, despite the opening ceremonies, were in fact not really finished, usually lacking some furniture and equipment, ventilation, heating, storage space, or access roads.⁶⁴⁶ Even though Na-Ma's director Franjo Balen often emphasized the expansion of the chain into the periphery as an important socio-economic agenda, managers of these stores were under the impression that no one cared about them.

At the same time, annual sales numbers showed that stores located in the peripheral neighborhoods, where housing was still under construction, were one of the most successful, always exceeding the turnover plans set by the chains.⁶⁴⁷ Partially due to the self-service system, an important factor in their success was their location in the centers of growing peripheral neighborhoods, where a continuous increase in residents meant a continuous increase in potential customers.⁶⁴⁸ The stores in the peripheries were therefore a significant source of

⁶⁴⁴ "Poslovna politika u 1968. godini usklađena sa privrednom reformom," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1967; M. K., "Moglo je i bolje," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1969.

⁶⁴⁵ "Razvijena trgovina – velika proizvodnja," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1969; M. K., "Moglo je i bolje".

⁶⁴⁶ "Posjet našoj robnoj kući u Volovčici"; "Robna kuća br. 6: prva zapažanja," *Na-Ma* 11, 1965; "U prvom planu borba za definitivnu prodajnu fizionomiju," *Na-Ma* 1, 1966.

⁶⁴⁷ Z. Pjanić, "Brz porast obima prometa," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1969; Vasilije Pejanović, "Ostvaren promet od preko sto milijardi dinara," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1970.

⁶⁴⁸ Milan Radujević, "Svake godine bolji rezultati," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1968; Gradimir Živanović, "Planirani promet prebačen za 2,84 odsto," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1969; Z. Pjanić, "Brz porast obima prometa," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1969.

income for both the chains as well as for the new neighborhoods, which were being developed as Zagreb and Belgrade rapidly grew outside of their historic borders.

3.4 The Other Side of the Sava River: New Belgrade and New Zagreb

In addition to the peripheral, transitional urban zones in Zagreb and Belgrade, department stores also began to emerge in the previously unurbanized areas of new housing estates—New Zagreb and New Belgrade. The two large new urban areas were located on the southern side of the Sava River in their respective capitals. The construction of New Belgrade began in 1948 on the swampy fields between Belgrade and Zemun, but due to the difficult political and financial situation following the Tito-Stalin split, this area received its full outline only from the mid-1960s. In 1960, when the first department store—initially Narodni magazin, and later RK Beograd—was built, New Belgrade’s original administrative function was slowly replaced with new housing blocks for the rapidly growing urban population.⁶⁴⁹

The RK Beograd store in New Belgrade was located in Blok 5—as the neighborhood units in New Belgrade are called—but was initially not intended to be a department store. Identical to the story of the store in Terazije, the department store was placed into a space connecting a fifteen-story skyscraper with an adjoining four-story residential building, whose original purpose was to exhibit the construction materials used to build New Belgrade. The investor was the Direction for the Construction of New Belgrade, whose motivation for the exhibition was to remedy the problems that occurred on construction sites due to the construction enterprises and planners’ unfamiliarity with building materials. The exhibition space was also supposed to serve for lectures and discussions between investors, constructors and the future users, with offices and a restaurant.

⁶⁴⁹ Ljiljana Blagojević, *Novi Beograd – Osporeni modernizam* (Beograd: ZUNS, 2007), 121.

Designed by architect Dragoš Balzareno, the skyscraper and the adjoining building were the earliest residential buildings in Blok 5, one of the first neighborhoods in New Belgrade that was built with the goal to provide apartments for those citizens whose housing had to be destroyed to make space for New Belgrade.⁶⁵⁰ Due to New Belgrade's original administrative use, retail spaces were not even included in the first urban plans, but with the reorientation towards residential housing, the exhibition space was transformed into a much needed and also more profitable department store.⁶⁵¹ Whether the space ever served for an exhibition is unclear, but what is certain is that, alongside the restaurant, one floor was taken over in the early 1960s by Narodni magazine (Figure 37) and another by the textile enterprise Franjo Kluz.

In 1967, after the merger of Narodni magazin and RK Beograd, the chain bought the space, equipment, assortment and even workers from Franjo Kluz in order to significantly increase the sales area and turnover of their store.⁶⁵² The store's location in New Belgrade, which was nicknamed the "biggest Yugoslav construction site", influenced the choice of assortment and innovations in retail. In order to support but also profit from new housing, the store was the first one to have a furniture showroom, where an architect was employed to give free interior design advice to customers.⁶⁵³ These features speak of the innovativeness of Yugoslav retailers, who used the opportunities provided by the specific locations of their department stores to increase their turnover, attract customers and in turn provide them with new, useful services, usually free of charge.

⁶⁵⁰ "Blok 5 – Object S-4," Project Documentation, IAB.

⁶⁵¹ "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AY.

⁶⁵² "Proširuje se robna kuća u Novom Beogradu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1967.

⁶⁵³ D. Radojković, "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1969.



Figure 37. Dragoš Balzareno, department store RK Beograd, New Belgrade, 1960.

From: Postcard from the author's collection.

In contrast to its improvised cousin in New Belgrade, the first department store in New Zagreb was a thoroughly planned and architecturally accomplished store that won the republic architecture award for best achievement in 1966.⁶⁵⁴ The Na-Ma store in the neighborhood Trnsko was the first major retail space in New Zagreb, whose urban planning was directed from the early 1960s by Zagreb's chief urban planner Zdenko Kolacio. As I showed in chapter 1, Kolacio was invested in the position of retail in the city, but he believed that, unlike architects and urban planners, retail experts were not sufficiently interested in the proper planning of retail spaces. This accusation, however, was not entirely true. Yugoslav retail experts were, in fact, advocating for the inclusion of retail into urban plans, which they thought was still not the case in Yugoslavia.⁶⁵⁵ They believed that during the construction of new housing estates retail spaces should be built together with residential buildings as an inherent element of urban planning.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ "Arhitekt Aleksandar Dragomanović," *Arhitektura* 97-98, 1968.

⁶⁵⁵ Kolacio, "Opskrbni centri"; "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AY.

⁶⁵⁶ Bojana Tomašević, "Problemi urbanističkog i regionalnog planiranja distributivne mreže," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1968.

This demand emerged within the broader criticism of the lack of infrastructure and services in new housing estates.⁶⁵⁷ Urban expansion was, as architect Aleksandar Đorđević pointed out, not just a sign of economic progress, but also the basis for future development, in which the retail sector plays an important economic, social and cultural role in increasing the economic and profit-making activities of neighborhoods, ensuring the supply of goods and services for the residents, and providing them with a network of spaces for socialization and leisure.⁶⁵⁸

The Na-Ma store in Trnsko reflected many of the successes and problems in planning and constructing modern retail spaces in new housing estates in the mid-1960s. On the one side, it took five years for Trnsko to receive a retail space of considerable size and capacity, which was a problem in a completely new neighborhood with only one small retail center and otherwise underdeveloped traffic connections with the rest of the city.⁶⁵⁹ On the other side, once built, the Na-Ma store in Trnsko became the economic, social, and cultural center of the neighborhood, thanks to a careful planning process executed by retailers, architects and urban planners on multiple levels, with significant transnational experience and dedication to understanding the role of retail in cities.

The opening of the Na-Ma store in Trnsko in February 1966 was a notable event. In addition to hundreds of residents, other guests included the mayor of Zagreb Pero Pirker, the president of Zagreb's Chamber of Commerce Emil Ludviger, and many other heads of local communities.⁶⁶⁰ The department store was once again a significant investment from the city

⁶⁵⁷ "Further Development and Modernization of Retail," box 63, folder 222, AY; "Aktivnost Saveta za trgovinu Savezne privredne komore," *Nova trgovina* 9, 1966.

⁶⁵⁸ Aleksandar Đorđević, "Prateći objekti u izgradnji novih i rekonstrukciji postojeći naselja," *Mesna zajednica* 3, 1964.

⁶⁵⁹ In 1964 a small supply center was built in the norther part of the neighborhood. Designed by architects Mirko and Spomenka Maretić, this supply center included a supermarket, restaurant, and butcher shop. See K. M., "Trgovinsko-ugostiteljski potcentar u naselju Trnsko," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 25, 1964.

⁶⁶⁰ Pero Pirker had a degree in law, and in the 1950s and 1960s held several presidential and secretarial positions in governing bodies and organizations in Zagreb, such as SSRNJ. From 1963 to 1967 he was the mayor of Zagreb, succeeding Vječeslav Holjevac. See *Jugoslavenski savremenici*, 809. Emil Ludviger was a retail expert and economist, who held several positions in governing bodies and organizations connected to the retail sector. In the 1970s, he became a member in SIV and the federal secretary for foreign trade.

and the housing fund in the value of 299,550 000 dinars, to which the enterprise added an extra 965,000 dinars for equipment.⁶⁶¹ Built by Industrogradnja and furnished by Alprem, who were frequent business partners of the Na-Ma chain, the store had 10,596 m² of sales area, and employed around 60 workers, which made it one of the largest Na-Ma stores at the time.⁶⁶²

The key role in the design of the Na-Ma store in Trnsko was played by architect Aleksandar Dragomanović, who together with architects Radovan Nikšić and Edo Šmihlen also designed the neighborhood's retail center in which the department store was the central feature.⁶⁶³ Built in the typical late modernist style, which became characteristic for Na-Ma stores in the 1960s, the Na-Ma department store in Trnsko was a white cube with an enclosed upper floor that hovered over the glass storefront of the ground floor (Figure 38). With its architectural design and urban location, the Na-Ma store in Trnsko was the embodiment of the new trends in urban planning in the 1950s, which—as I described in chapter 1—were moving away from the Athens Charters towards a more humanized approach to spatial design. Dragomanović, Nikšić, and Šmihlen were proponents of these trends, influenced by a direct contact with Team 10 members Jacob Bakema and Jo van den Broek, who were the most famous representatives of this new approach.⁶⁶⁴ The three architects familiarized themselves with contemporaneous Dutch architecture during their numerous trips to the Netherlands. As professors at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb, they took their students in 1964 to a study trip to Rotterdam, where they met the Dutch architectural duo and explored their famous retail center the Lijnbaan.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶¹ This investment was criticized by architecture historian Žarko Domjan, who believed that not enough money was given to residential buildings, while a lot of it was wasted on representative projects. See Mrduljaš, Bjažić Klarin, “Zagreb Revisionism: Social-Standard Architecture,” 185.

⁶⁶² “Novi objekt u Trnskom,” *Na-Ma* 12, 1965; “Na-Ma u prvim redovima borbe za modernizaciju opskrbe građana,” *Na-Ma* 2, 1966.

⁶⁶³ Aleksandar Dragomanović graduated in architecture in Zagreb and was employed at the University. He designed many public buildings like schools, department stores, and universities. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 221.

⁶⁶⁴ See Mrduljaš, Bjažić Klarin, “Zagreb Revisionism: Social-Standard Architecture,” 177-182.

⁶⁶⁵ Nikšić spent six months of professional training in Bakema and van den Broek's architecture office already in 1956, while Šmihlen and Dragomanović took several study trips to the Netherlands in 1959, 1961 and 1964. See



Figure 38. Aleksandar Dragomanović, department store Na-Ma, Trnsko, New Zagreb, 1966.

From: Collection of Aleksandar Dragomanović, Croatian Architecture Museum, Academy of Arts and Sciences (HAZU-HMA).

A year later, Bakema returned to Zagreb for one of his many visits and gave several lectures at the University in which he discussed his vision for the urban planning of New Zagreb. Yugoslav architects and urban planners were enthusiastic about Bakema's visit and impressed by his ideas. They expressed a sense of commonality in dealing with urban problems and an openness to gain expert knowledge across borders.⁶⁶⁶ Yugoslav architects were particularly interested in the Lijnbaan as a role model for, as I explained in chapter 1, the revitalization of city centers with retail spaces built for pedestrians. The single but strongest criticism of this project came from the architect Sena Sekulić-Gvozdanović, who was skeptical of the idea that retail centers could have a civic role in a capitalist system. According to Gvozdanović, the concept of the Lijnbaan as a social center where people can meet amid a bustling city ultimately failed because, unlike the fully realized commercial aspects, its social

Aleksandar Dragomanović, Radovan Nikšić, Berislav Radimir, *Studijsko putovanje apsolutenata 63-64 po Holandiji* (Zagreb: Arhitektonski fakultet), 1964; Žunić, Karač, "Robne kuće i opskrbeni centri arhitekta Aleksandra Dragomanovića," 282.

⁶⁶⁶ S.G, "Povodom posjete J. Bakeme Zagrebu," *Čovjek i prostor* 152, 1965: 2.

aspects could not be achieved in a political and socio-economic system that alienated people. In her view, although the Lijnbaan was revolutionary for postwar reconstruction, it “remain[ed] only two rows of parallel storefronts, [where] people will always turn their back to each other.”⁶⁶⁷

Dragomanović’s intention for the Na-Ma store in Trnsko—as his unpublished habilitation thesis revealed—was exactly the opposite. By bringing the Lijnbaan model into Yugoslav self-managed socialism, the Na-Ma store was in Dragomanović’s vision supposed to become “the organizer of life” in the neighborhood.⁶⁶⁸ Unlike the “aggressive” shopping malls in the US or large department stores in France and Italy, the Na-Ma store would humanize the pedestrian setting of the neighborhood center, and connect it to other services like small stores, a restaurant, the local community center and an infirmary (Figure 39). This was achieved, just like in the Lijnbaan, by linking these buildings together with wooden cross-canopies and paths that connected the center to the surrounding residential area. The retail center was separated from the road to, as Dragomanović put it, “take people away from the large features of automobile traffic and bring them to the world of pedestrians, the world of human footsteps, where all the residents of the neighborhood meet.”⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ S.G, “Povodom posjete J. Bakeme Zagrebu.”

⁶⁶⁸ Aleksandar Dragomanović, “Problematika robnih kuća na primjerima Trnsko-Zagreb, Novi Sad, Vinkovci” (hab. thesis, University of Zagreb, 1972), Collection of Aleksandar Dragomanović, Croatian Architecture Museum, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HMA).

⁶⁶⁹ Dragomanović, “Problematika robnih kuća”. Collection of Aleksandar Dragomanović, HMA.

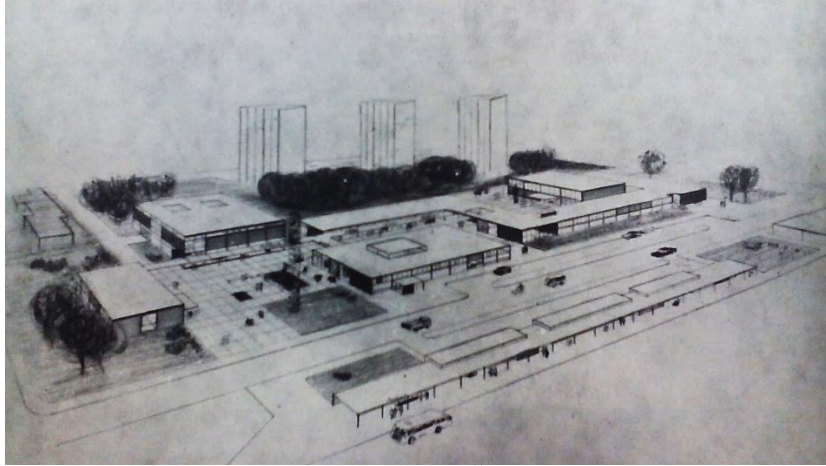


Figure 39. Aleksandar Dragomanović, Radovan Nikšić, Edo Šmidihen, Retail center, Trnsko, New Zagreb, 1966.

From: *Arhitektura* 93-94, 1967

In Dragomanović's view, the human design of urban space entailed the construction of small-scale pedestrian zones, which together with department stores—described as “focal point[s] of urban energy”—formed the physical and social centers of new neighborhoods.⁶⁷⁰ Retail in fact had to be combined with other leisure and recreational activities in order for the department store to lose its “aggressive commercial character” and ensure that “social centers in commercial urbanism” become the dominant element in the planning of neighborhoods.⁶⁷¹ After the store was built, the architect Boris Magaš described it as the “*cuore*” of the neighborhood where all the residents meet, a “substantive world of man in the future center of Trnsko.”⁶⁷²

In a material sense, the design of the Na-Ma store in Trnsko utilized contemporary ideas and aesthetics promoted by international architectural groups like Team 10. What made a crucial difference was the embeddedness of the design in the system of Yugoslav social self-management, in which retail played an economic, social and cultural role. The department store as a key location of retail, supply, but also socialization and leisure in neighborhoods had an

⁶⁷⁰ Dragomanović, “Problematika robnih kuća”. Collections of Aleksandar Dragomanović, HMA.

⁶⁷¹ Dragomanović, “Problematika robnih kuća”. Collections of Aleksandar Dragomanović, HMA.

⁶⁷² Boris Magaš, “Robna kuća Na-Ma, Trnsko, Zagreb,” *Arhitektura* 93-94, 1967.

additional meaning in a system where strengthened communication and community bonds were crucial for improving popular participation in the social self-management system.

A survey conducted by store managers several months after the opening showed that 85% of the customers were happy with the department store Na-Ma in Trnsko.⁶⁷³ The store represented not only a much needed source of consumer goods for the residents of the new neighborhood, but also a location for socialization and leisure. The success of the store motivated Dragomanović to repeat the Trnsko model, which he did once in Vukovar and twice in Novi Sad (Figure 40), thereby spreading the adaptation of transnational ideas on the civic role of retail centers throughout Yugoslavia. The case of the department store Trnsko confirmed what architecture historian Sanja Matijević Barčot wrote about Yugoslav department stores as buildings who thanks to their commercial, social and political significance were not bound by “profitability dictates” like their capitalist counterparts, but could be designed by notable architectural names, placed on valuable, central urban locations, and used in the creation of public space and revitalization of city centers.⁶⁷⁴



Figure 40. Aleksandar Dragomanović, department store Zvezda, Novi Sad, 1967.

From Alen Žunić, Zlatko Karač. “Robne kuće i opskrbni centri arhitekta Aleksandra Dragomanovića,” *Prostor: Časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam* 23, 2015: 292

⁶⁷³ “Anketa potrošača u robnoj kući 7,” *Na-Ma* 9, 1966.

⁶⁷⁴ Sanja Matijević Barčot, “Svi putevi vode u Koteks,” in *Pejzaži potrošačke kulture u Socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*, ed. Nataša Bodrožić, Lidija Butković Mićin, Saša Šimpraga (Zagreb & Eindhoven: Slobodne veze, Onomatopee, 2018), 197.

3.5 After the Economic Reform: the Monumental End of the 1960s

A major change and challenge for retail enterprises was posed by the Yugoslav economic reform in 1965, which introduced the system famously known as “market socialism.” In many ways, the reform was simply a culmination of processes that started already in the early 1950s with the government’s attempt to liberalize, depoliticize and de-étatize the economy.⁶⁷⁵ As I described in the previous chapters, the Yugoslav government wanted to develop a socialist economy with market incentives, defined by the laws of demand and supply, collective ownership through the self-management system, and decentralized socio-economic plans.⁶⁷⁶ Economically, the 1965 reform was introduced by the government in response to economic stagnation, growing inflation, and the need to integrate Yugoslavia into the world market caused by the government’s increasing dependence on foreign capital and goods. Politically, the reform represented the victory of SKJ’s “liberal camp”, which advocated for the final push in the introduction of market mechanisms, versus the “conservative camp” that supported a return to stricter centralization and administrative planning.⁶⁷⁷

Some of the major provisions that the reform brought included the reduction of fiscal burdens on enterprises with government taxation of collective income lowered to 30%, liberalization of foreign trade with no restrictions on imports, lowering of custom duties, unified exchange rate with the introduction of the “new dinar”, and temporary price control as a safety measure during their exposure to free market formation.⁶⁷⁸ The government replaced the Federal Investment Fund with the Federal Fund for the Development of the Underdeveloped

⁶⁷⁵ Dennison Rusinow, “Understanding the Yugoslav Reforms,” *The World Today* 23, 2 (1967): 77.

⁶⁷⁶ Goran Musić, “Yugoslavia: Worker’s Self-Management as State Paradigm,” in *Ours to Master and to Own: Worker’s Control from the Commune to the Present*, ed. Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), 176-177.

⁶⁷⁷ Musić, “Yugoslavia: Worker’s Self-Management as State Paradigm,” 180; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 76-81.

⁶⁷⁸ “Aktivnost Saveta za trgovinu Savezne privredne komore,” *Nova trgovina* 9, 1966; Rusinow, “Understanding the Yugoslav Reforms,” 78; Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 282.

Republics and Regions, which, according to historian Goran Musić, further disintegrated the economic development of the country. While some republics, like Croatia and Slovenia, were posited as bearers of economic growth, others were receivers of what were essentially solidarity transfers, a scheme in which the federation had only a redistributive role, while the republics represented the main economic units.⁶⁷⁹ The federal one and five-year plans now became informative documents, and there were no means of actually enforcing them.

The government's Five year-plan from 1966 to 1970 was centered on the implementation of the economic reform.⁶⁸⁰ Although the plan envisioned a stronger role of the retail sector in the economic development of the country, in reality the retail enterprises with their still undeveloped selling and storage capacities were ill-prepared for the new profit-making imperatives of the economic reform.⁶⁸¹ Even though Na-Ma's managers in the beginning claimed that they were ready to welcome the reform, many articles in Na-Ma's enterprise newspaper expressed their dissatisfaction with the changes.⁶⁸² Despite the supposed increase in market mechanisms, the government still had to intervene by regulating the prices in order to protect them from market exposure. This temporary measure was unwelcome by the Na-Ma management and other Yugoslav retail experts because price regulation caused a gap between the purchase and sales prices of goods, which then had to be covered by the retail enterprises.⁶⁸³ This reduced the financial means to expand business operations, limited the assortment of goods as well as the power of the retail sector to influence industrial production, which was one of its main roles.⁶⁸⁴ For retailers and retail experts, who were struggling to have

⁶⁷⁹ Musić, "Yugoslavia: Worker's Self-Management as State Paradigm," 183.

⁶⁸⁰ Boris Krajger, "Trgovina – aktivan faktor stabilizacije," *Nova trgovina* 5, 1966.

⁶⁸¹ Dragutin Radunović, "Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma," *Nova trgovina* 3, 1974.

⁶⁸² "Ustrajati u reformi," *Na-Ma* 11, 1966.

⁶⁸³ "Kakva kretanja u trgovini do 1967. godine: Daljni razvitak – ali kako?" *Na-Ma* 9, 1966; "Cijene," *Na-Ma* 3, 1966; Andrej Verbič, "Mere za stabilizaciju tržišta i položaj trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 4, 1965; "Aktivnost Saveta za trgovinu Savezne privredne komore".

⁶⁸⁴ Verbič, "Mere za stabilizaciju tržišta i položaj trgovine,".

retail recognized as a productive economic force, these changes represented a setback that reinforced the prevailing impression that retail was just a distributing, public service.⁶⁸⁵

The Na-Ma stores opened during the first years of the economic reform were hit by the decrease of purchasing power and limitations in consumer credit, which also came as a part of the reform package. RK Beograd's position was different because the chain was established in 1966 under the pressure of the economic reform to create strong retail enterprises, mainly through the merger of existing, small enterprises. Although the increase in retail turnover in Belgrade and Zagreb after 1965 was a result of a spike in prices, the economic reform in fact reduced some of the measures that were previously blocking the capital accumulation of retail enterprises.⁶⁸⁶ More capital accumulation allowed the retail enterprises to increase their share in investments, which by the end of the decade rose to 68.7%.⁶⁸⁷ As historian John Lampe observed, a common characteristic for successful Yugoslav enterprises was precisely a strong reliance on the reinvestment of their own profits instead of on help from the government, creditors or foreign partners.⁶⁸⁸ Nevertheless, many measures like the control of prices and profit margins still persisted into the 1970s, which, as I show in the next chapter, remained a consistent problem for Yugoslav retailers.

In spite of the difficulties brought by the economic reform, both Na-Ma and RK Beograd ended the decade by opening monumental department stores. As a response to the requirements of the economic reform, and a result of their continuous growth during the 1960s, both chains were ready to open large department stores in order to bring their business operations to the next level.

⁶⁸⁵ Krajger, "Trgovina – aktivan faktor stabilizacije,"; B. Nikolajević, "Dosad bez promena: ekonomski položaj unutrašnje trgovine," *Nova trgovina* 2, 1967.

⁶⁸⁶ Eduard Čapka, "U novim uslovima pririvredivanja: Trgovina Zagreba," *Nova trgovina* 10, 1966; Predrag Stanković, "Ostvaren veći promet za 5,95 odsto," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1967.

⁶⁸⁷ Rajka Zečević, "The Causes of the Underdevelopment of Retail in Zagreb," box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁶⁸⁸ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 313.

RK Beograd's first steps after the merger, as I mentioned previously, were to modernize their existing department stores. The chain enlarged the sales area in the older department stores, and implemented the system of self-choice, mostly by using equipment imported from abroad.⁶⁸⁹ RK Beograd also reconstructed its central warehouse, improved the vehicle fleet, expanded and professionalized the workforce.⁶⁹⁰ Unlike Na-Ma, RK Beograd's department stores in this period mainly sold non-food items, while supermarkets were built in new stores or integrated into a handful of old ones only from the end of decade.⁶⁹¹

RK Beograd's biggest new project in the late 1960s was a large department store in Zemun. Previously separated from Belgrade with the swampland that would later become New Belgrade, Zemun was incorporated into the city in the 1930s. In 1961, the local community's Five-Year Plan envisioned an expansion of the area with new residential neighborhoods for 64,000 inhabitants, who would be supplied by a department store in the old city center, on the Marshall Tito Square.⁶⁹² In addition to supply, the department store was also supposed to revitalize the historic core of Zemun with new activities.⁶⁹³

The RK Beograd store in Zemun (Figure 41) opened in October 1968, three months after the original opening planned for June 7, the celebration of the uprising of the Serbian people against fascism. The store employed 250 workers, who operated on 3600 m² of sales area of the store, which was worth an investment of 14,092,849 dinars.⁶⁹⁴ Unlike other RK Beograd department stores, the store in Zemun had a supermarket in the basement and five floors for non-food items. The top floor, originally made for a restaurant, was in the end repurposed into a furniture showroom.⁶⁹⁵ Designed by Dušan Milenković from the architectural

⁶⁸⁹ Vojislav Hahić, "Ostvaruje se plan adaptacija i rekonstrukcija," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1966; Anđelić, *Uspon i pad giganta*, 17.

⁶⁹⁰ Čedomir Jelenić, "Godina uspeha i perspektive," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1966.

⁶⁹¹ M. K. "Preuređuje se robna kuća u Knez Mihajlovoj broj 5," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1967.

⁶⁹² "Urbanističko planiranje i razvoj Zemuna," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 41-42, 1966.

⁶⁹³ Josip Svoboda, "Prostorno planiranje i građenje u donjem Zemunu, sa prikazom detaljnih urbanističkih planova I i IV mesne zajednice," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 53-54, 1968.

⁶⁹⁴ N. Veselinović, "Izgradnja univerzalna robne kuće u Zemunu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1966..

⁶⁹⁵ Miloš Besaraba, "Robna kuća u Zemunu," *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 53-54, 1968.

office Stadion, the building was a massive block made from raw concrete, the first to use this material after the TV tower on Avala. The façade was sporadically opened up by windows, and suspended over thin colonnades, whose purpose was to create a protected space for the customers to browse the storefronts regardless of the weather.⁶⁹⁶ The equipment for the store was the same one imported from Sweden for the store in Karaburma, and the interior was done by experts in RK Beograd's Sector for Organization, Plan and Analysis, which was specifically established to plan the chain's expansion.⁶⁹⁷



Figure 41. Dušan Milenković, department store RK Beograd, Zemun, 1968.

From Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća 10, 1968

The reactions of architects and urban planners to the store were mixed. Much more than their Croatian colleagues, architects in Serbia approached new department stores with an almost poetic yet precise criticism. In his review for *Arhitektura-Urbanizam*, architecture critic Miloš Besaraba proclaimed that the RK Beograd store in Zemun finally succeeded in creating a retail

⁶⁹⁶ "Usprkos smetnjama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća 1*, 1968.

⁶⁹⁷ "Počela izgradnja robne kuće u Zemunu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća 6*, 1967.

space whose “raison d’être” were the customers rather than the goods.⁶⁹⁸ Since the chain mainly sold non-food items, a major problem with its department stores was that they were often packed full, which made the sales area seem overcrowded. In contrast, Besaraba believed that the Zemun store was more spacious, designed with the customers in mind. By emphasizing the connection between the space and its users, Besaraba highlighted the impact that the exterior and interior design of department stores have on shopping and window-shopping not just as economic, but also social and cultural experiences. Signaling the institutionalization of department stores in Yugoslavia that peaked by the end of the 1960s, Besaraba noted that, in the department store, the consumers, the goods, and the building became one:

The consumer of RK Beograd’s goods becomes, usually unconsciously, an even more active consumer of architectural ideas and the shapes of their existence. While primarily looking for RK Beograd’s goods, the citizens runs through all the veins of the building and run the building through their own veins—they look for goods from the self-service store in the basement to the top floor, and this is intentional.⁶⁹⁹

Several months earlier, the Na-Ma chain in Zagreb also finalized its almost decade long process of modernization and expansion by opening its largest department store on Kvaternik Square, a major area between the city center and the eastern periphery (Figures 42 & 43). Although this part of the city, as any other, lacked retail spaces, the Kvaternik Square was already the location of the city’s second-most popular green market, after the Dolac market on Ban Jelačić Square. While in the beginning the local community was more interested in creating an enclosure for the open green market space, following the discussions with the Croatian Urban Planning Institute, the urban administrators concluded that the area would benefit more from a department store. After, in a somewhat typical story for Zagreb, the local enterprise Robni

⁶⁹⁸ Besaraba, “Robna kuća u Zemunu”.

⁶⁹⁹ Besaraba, “Robna kuća u Zemunu”.

magazin (Department Store) for financial reasons rejected the local community's proposal to lead the project, the construction of the department store was taken over by Na-Ma.⁷⁰⁰



Figure 42. Josip Hitil, department store Na-M, Kvaternik Square, Zagreb, 1968.

From: Gavranović, Nama – 25 godina.

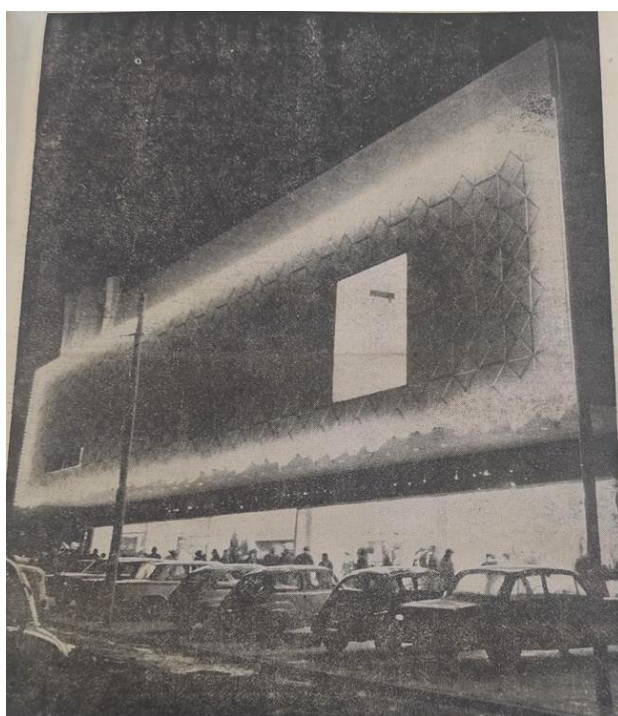


Figure 43. Josip Hitil, department store Na-Ma,, Kvaternik Square, Zagreb, 1968.

From: Na-Ma 2, 1968.

⁷⁰⁰ "Izgradnja Robne kuće na Kvaternikovom trgu," *Na-Ma* 1-2, 1968; "Izgradnja robne kuće na Kvaternikovom trgu," *Nova trgovina* 3, 1968.

The opening was a popular event attended by almost a thousand people, many of whom were notable figures in local political and economic life. The ceremonial ribbon was once again cut by the mayor of Zagreb, who was at the time Josip Kolar.⁷⁰¹ The attendees were greeted by Na-Na's director Franjo Balen, who gave a speech that started with an overview of the chain's history. A similar speech was given by RK Beograd's director Čedomir Jelenić during the opening of the store in Zemun, and in both cases the speeches were printed in the enterprises' newspapers.⁷⁰² Like the Zemun store, Na-Ma on Kvaternikov trg, popularly called Kvatrić, was a massive building with more than 5000 m² of sales area spread out on four floors, including the 860 m² supermarket in the basement.⁷⁰³ Both the department store and the supermarket were at the time largest in the republic, and they employed 490 workers. The store was an investment of 2.5 billion dinars, out of which 680 million came from investment loans, while the rest came from the chain.⁷⁰⁴ This was a major financial effort for the chain, which probably explains why the construction took longer than planned.⁷⁰⁵ Around 500 million dinars were also given by the city's Unemployment Office in exchange for Na-Ma hiring their entire workforce from the pool of unemployed workers in Zagreb. RK Beograd also hired a completely new workforce from Belgrade's Unemployment Office for the store in Zemun, which received 2000 applications for 135 job openings.⁷⁰⁶ This showed that department store chains were not just popular employers but also assisted capital cities in dealing with the rising rate of unemployment following the economic reform.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰¹ "Zadovoljstvo potrošača," *Na-Ma* 1-2, 1968. Josip Kolar was a politician active in different governing positions in Zagreb and Croatia. He was the mayor of Zagreb between 1967 and 1972. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 475.

⁷⁰² "Zadovoljstvo potrošača"; "U Zemunu otvorena najmodernija robna kuća u Srbiji," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1968.

⁷⁰³ "Najveće samoposluživanje," *Na-Ma* 10-11, 1967.

⁷⁰⁴ "Još jedna Na-Ma u Zagrebu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1968; "Orientacioni podaci o RK-8," *Na-Ma* 10-11, 1967.

⁷⁰⁵ "Zadovoljstvo potrošača".

⁷⁰⁶ Nevenka Marić, "U robnu kuću u Zemunu primljeno 162 radnika," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1968.

⁷⁰⁷ "Zadovoljstvo potrošača"; "U Zemunu otvorena najmodernija robna kuća u Srbiji".

The Na-Ma on Kvaternik Square also included a café, a cafeteria for the workers, a restaurant for the customers, a tourist office and a tailor shop, confirming its role as a versatile retail space where everything could be found under one roof.⁷⁰⁸ The positioning of various categories of goods on each floor were thoroughly thought through. Smaller consumer goods were located on the ground floor, where passers-by could notice them through the storefront and buy them on the go. Clothes and textiles were sold on the first floor, while household appliances, electronics and furniture on the second floor. The RK Beograd store in Zemun had a similar set up.⁷⁰⁹

In its exterior design, the Na-Ma on Kvaternik Square had an enclosed upper section placed over the glass storefronts of the ground floor. The department store was designed by architect Josip Hitil—who a few years later renovated the store in Kustošija—and built by the construction company Industrogradnja from expensive materials like Istrian stone, which covered the façade and the floors. The building also had escalators, which were imported from Italy, and a comprehensive ventilation system. Other novelties included fashion shows, free photography courses, and a recycling system for glass bottles, which speak to the diversification of retailing activities and the innovativeness of retailers.⁷¹⁰ With the Na-Ma store on Kvaternik Square, as the director Franjo Balen emphasized, the enterprise finalized its chain of department stores around the capital city.⁷¹¹

3.6 Internal Expansion: Department Stores as Sites of Provision and Exchange

During the 1960s, a crucial role in both the external and internal expansion of department store chains RK Beograd and Na-Ma was played by different forms of transnational experiences and

⁷⁰⁸ “Prodajni prostor nove robne kuće,” *Na-Ma* 10-11, 1967.

⁷⁰⁹ “Orientacioni podaci o RK-8”; M. P., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1968.

⁷¹⁰ “Orientacioni podaci o RK-8”; “Ispunjena očekivanja,” *Na-Ma* 2-3, 1969.

⁷¹¹ “Zadovoljstvo potrošača”.

exchanges. Both Western and Eastern technology, know-how, educational exchanges and political visits were crucial for supporting the development of these chains and the institutionalization of department stores in capital cities by the end of the 1960s. Already during the period of centralized distribution in the 1940s, according to Pavao Vogin, Na-Ma's first commercial manager, the enterprise based its business operations on the US retail enterprise Woolworths.⁷¹² Although Woolworths indeed had a centrally organized distribution system, in which goods were shipped to stores from a large warehouse as a means of saving money, whether this was really the inspiration for Na-Ma or rather a later attempt to distance the enterprise from any type of Soviet influence is difficult to say. The reference to Woolworths nevertheless pointed to the familiarity with Western practices, which exerted a crucial influence on the chain from the early 1960s. The manager of Na-Ma's flagship store in Ilica Ante Antonić described how the initial knowledge on the self-service system in the chain was rather low. The first information on the use of self-service in department stores in fact came from lectures by "foreign experts" arranged by the city's Chamber of Commerce in the late 1950s. In 1960, the same institution organized a study visit to West German department stores for retailers in Zagreb, which served as a preparation for the opening of the Na-Ma store in Trešnjevka.⁷¹³

Afterwards Na-Ma put more effort into organizing study visits to department stores abroad, mostly in countries like West Germany, Italy, UK, and Scandinavian countries. Although not everyone supported these travels—Antonić claimed some considered them tourism at the expense of the chain—the managerial staff was insistent on sending not just their own staff, but all workers, including the sales staff, who were in the technical communist lingo referred to as the "practical holders of sales."⁷¹⁴ Vogin described one such study trip in 1962 to West German department stores in Munich, Stuttgart, and Frankfurt, which included famous

⁷¹² Pavao Vogin, "Komerčijalno poslovanje," *Na-Ma: Posebno izdanje lista za 20. godišnjicu poduzeća*, 1965. Pavao Vogin was a commercial manager in Na-Ma from 1945 to 1965.

⁷¹³ "Jedino iskustvo bila je literature," *Na-Ma* 10, 1970.

⁷¹⁴ "Razgovori o našim robnim kućama: modernizacija je otvorila nove perspektive" *Na-Ma* 3, 1965.

chains like Kaufhof and Hertie, as an experience that turned the remaining sceptics in the chain into “agitators for modern retail.”⁷¹⁵

RK Beograd similarly benefited from foreign business know-how and practices. When in 1967 RK Beograd’s management decided to transform an older department store in Marshall Tito Street into a department store for children, which was the first of its kind in Yugoslavia, they sent their workers to a similar specialized department store in Prague.⁷¹⁶ Another example of adopting foreign practices was the use of carts to sell goods on sale in front of the RK Beograd store in Terazije, which followed the example of Parisian department stores.⁷¹⁷ Na-Ma’s sales catalog, introduced in 1967 as a novelty in Yugoslav retail, was modeled after the West German mail order catalog Neckermann.⁷¹⁸ In addition to business know-how and practices, Na-Ma and RK Beograd also imported equipment and furniture from Western European enterprises, mainly from Sweden, West Germany, Italy, and Austria. Some Austrian and West German enterprises became more regular business partners; for example, RK Beograd often bought goods from Neckermann and Assmann, an Austrian producer of retailing equipment from Leibnitz.⁷¹⁹ The Western produced furniture and equipment were then combined with locally produced items from enterprises like Alprem from Kamnik and Soko from Mostar.

While visits to Western Europe were done for purposes of education and business, trips to European state-socialist countries were usually described by Na-Ma and RK Beograd’s management as an exchange of experience. These trips mostly included study visits or

⁷¹⁵ “Koristan put”, *Na-Ma* 1, 1962; “Razgovor na rastanku: Na-Ma – jedan odlomak moga života” *Na-Ma* 10, 1966.

⁷¹⁶ “Posetili smo robnu kuću Beli labud u Pragu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1967; “Otvorena robna kuća na Karaburmi i specijalizovana robna kuća za decu.”

⁷¹⁷ “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1966.

⁷¹⁸ Branko Vranešić, “Prodaja robe putem kataloga,” *Na-Ma* 3-4, 1964.

⁷¹⁹ Predrag Pavković, “Odluke koje smo doneli,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1967; Čedomir Jelenić, “Kako je kod drugih,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1968; Č. Jelenić, J. Danilović, “Povoljni uslovi za saradnju s firmom Asman,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1968; J. D., “Zanimljiva zapažanja iz Minhena,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1969.

exchanges of workers with department stores in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, GDR, and the Soviet Union.⁷²⁰ RK Beograd's director Čedomir Jelenić was explicit about strategically using foreign know-how and experiences. He insisted that the workers travel abroad with cameras and tape recorders in order to record rather than just memorize what they saw in foreign department stores.⁷²¹ Upon their return, each worker was obliged to submit two reports, describing what they saw and how this can be implemented in the chain.⁷²² Some of these reports were also published in professional journals like *Nova trgovina*, and in this way contributed to knowledge exchange on a broader Yugoslav level.⁷²³ Both Western and Eastern European department stores and retail enterprises were frequently featured in Na-Ma's and RK Beograd's enterprise newspapers.⁷²⁴

When time came for Na-Ma and RK Beograd to act as hosts, however, Westerners were not frequent guests. An exception was a visit to Belgrade from Paul Brundin, a Swedish expert on retail from Gothenburg, which was organized by RK Beograd's program in workers' education.⁷²⁵ In contrast, retailers and retail experts from Eastern European and non-aligned countries, like Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, USSR, Bulgaria, Guinea, Cuba, and Tanganyika (present day Tanzania), were frequent guests in Zagreb and Belgrade.⁷²⁶ In

⁷²⁰ "Doneto je 45 važnih odluka," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1966; "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1966; P. Pavlović, "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1967; "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1968.

⁷²¹ Grujić, *Kako smo smenjeni*, 105.

⁷²² D. P., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1969.

⁷²³ See Čedomir Jelenić, "Organizacija, tehnička opremljenost i poslovanje robnih kuća u SR Neamčkoj," *Nova trgovina* 12, 1967.

⁷²⁴ "Kaufhof, Köln," *Na-Ma* 1, 1965; "De Bijenkorf, Amsterdam," *Na-Ma* 1, 1966; "Forum se okreće Jugoslaviji," *Na-Ma* 2-3, 1969; "U znaku Marks & Spencera," *Na-Ma* 2-3, 1969; "Poslednji i najvažniji princip firme Marks i Spencer," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1969; "Spektakularna robna kuća u Ansiju (Francuska)," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1969.

⁷²⁵ "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1968.

⁷²⁶ "Posete našem poduzeću," *Na-Ma* 4, 1962; "Pismo Saveznog centra za obrazovanje rukovodnih kadrova u industriji Na-Mi," *Na-Ma* 2, 1963; "Posjete našem poduzeću," *Na-Ma* 7, 1964; "Naši gosti iz Čehoslovačke," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1966; B. H., "Posetili su nas trgovinski stručnjaci iz Rumunije," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1966; M. O., "Naši gosti iz Mađarske," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1966; "Delegacija trgovinskih organizacija iz Moskve posetila naše preduzeće," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1967; "Poseta delegacije radničke omladine iz Varšave," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1967; "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1967; "Posetili su nas predstavnici robnih kuća iz Mađarske," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1968; "Zadovoljan sam opremljenošću robne kuće," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1969.

addition, Na-Ma and RK Beograd often served as locations where politicians brought foreign delegations during their visits to Belgrade and Zagreb. These visits were highly gendered: while department stores were used to display the achievements of the Yugoslav retail sector to male politicians, they were showcased as spaces for consumption and leisure to female politicians and “first ladies”, like the Bulgarian Mara Zhivkova, who were often accompanied by Jovanka Broz.⁷²⁷

Worker’s from Na-Ma and RK Beograd travelled to both Western and Eastern Europe. The trips to Western European countries like Austria, West Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK included internships and workers’ education, familiarization with know-how and business practices, accompanied by visits to trade fairs and enterprises that sold retailing equipment.⁷²⁸ These trips and educational exchanges formed an important part of the professionalization of the retail workforce, which the chains supported during the 1960s. In the immediate postwar period, the lack of retail workers meant that enterprises accepted anyone to work in their stores, which often-included unskilled workers like war veterans or rural population who recently moved to cities.⁷²⁹ This trend persisted by the end of the 1960s, when the largest number of retail workers in Yugoslavia still only had elementary school education (39,9%), while the smallest number had higher education (2,9 %).⁷³⁰ In order to train their workforce, everyone from sellers and accountants to window display designers and managerial staff, big department store chains like Na-Ma and RK Beograd organized various courses and seminars. From the late 1950s this type of worker education intensified because the introduction

⁷²⁷ “Drugarice Mara Živkov i Jovanka Broz posetile našu robnu kuću,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1967; “Svega ima kao u svim drugim savremenim robnim kućama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1969; “Japanke u robnoj kući u Zemunu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1969.

⁷²⁸ “Dva mjeseca u Premier supermarketu,” *Na-Ma* 1, 1963; Pavle Nikšić, “S puta po Austriji: Trgovina u Beču,” *Na-Ma* 11-12, 1964; “Doneto je 45 važnih odluka,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1966; “Odluke koje smo doneli,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1966; Predrag Pavković, “Odluke koje smo doneli,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1967; Miljenko Nedeljković, “Sa sajma u Diseldorfu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1968; “Odluke koje smo doneli,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1968.

⁷²⁹ “Kroz Narodni magazin u Beogradu,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1951; “Razvoj i problemi trgovine u NR Bosni i Hercegovini,” *Nova trgovina* 3, 1952.

⁷³⁰ Omer Muhić, “Društveno-ekonomski i politički problem razvoja trgovine,” *Nova trgovina* 5, 1967.

of the self-service system necessitated further professionalization. While some of the courses, such as for foreign languages, were optional, others were mandatory. For example, all new workers in Na-Ma and RK Beograd had to go through an introductory course that explained the working culture and rules of the enterprise.⁷³¹ Alongside the department store chains' internal education, individual republics also opened trade schools, while the chambers of commerce and the Federal Center for the Education of Cadres organized additional courses and supported enterprises in educating their workers.⁷³²

Education was, together with housing provision, vacations in enterprise resorts (at the seaside or in the mountains), and services like hairdressing and free public transport, part of the welfare benefits that department store chains provided to their workers.⁷³³ The more turnover the chain made, the more money was put into the common spending fund, which was used to finance many of these benefits, including financial assistance at events like weddings, births, illnesses, and funerals. In addition, Na-Ma and RK Beograd often helped victims of natural disasters like earthquakes and floods or supported sports and culture clubs.⁷³⁴ The growth in profit also contributed to salary increases as well as to higher sales taxes that poured into the accounts of local communities.⁷³⁵ In this regard, department stores were, similar to Yugoslav factories, "crucial site[s] of redistribution of welfare services (canteens, health services, childcare facilities, subsidized housing and holidays) and other fringe benefits (scholarships and trainings, solidarity funds, banking), which were organized and administered by the trade unions in cooperation with workers' council and management."⁷³⁶ This made large department

⁷³¹ D. M., "Rad na stručnom usavršavanju naših kadrova," *Na-Ma* 1, 1962; "Seminar za novoprimljene prodavače u naše robne kuće," *Na-Ma* 9, 1965; "Tečaj za novoprimljene prodavače: Mnogo smo naučili," *Na-Ma* 11, 1965.

⁷³² Rudolf Kurelić, "Raznovrsna aktivnost i dobra iskustva Trgovinske komore NR Hrvatske," *Nova trgovina* 5, 1954; Dragica Pejović, "Upoznavanje sa savremenom trgovinom," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1966.

⁷³³ Nikolić, "Dobili smo Oktobarsku nagradu".

⁷³⁴ "Odluke koje smo doneli," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1969; "Ostvareni rezultati u prošloj godini su iznad očekivanja," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1970.

⁷³⁵ "Ostvareni rezultati u prošloj godini su iznad očekivanja."

⁷³⁶ Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Women and Industry in the Balkans: The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Textile Sector* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 40.

store chains like Na-Ma and RK Beograd sought for employers, who improved the working conditions and quality of life of their workforce as well as the local communities they were located in.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed that retail enterprises RK Beograd and Na-Ma became the leaders in the modernization and expansion of urban retail networks through the construction of new self-service department stores, which were filled with locally produced and imported furniture, equipment, and consumer goods, and employed an increasingly professionalized workforce. The external expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd through new department stores, which transformed these enterprises into chains, was embedded in the growth of Yugoslav capital cities. External expansion was also linked to internal expansion, focused on technological advancement, retailing innovations, and professionalization of the workforce, who could enjoy the comfortable working conditions and benefits provided by the growing chains.

As I demonstrated, the internal and external expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd, which significantly contributed to the expansion and modernization of retail networks in Zagreb and Belgrade, culminated by the end of the decade in the institutionalization of department stores as the dominant spaces of modern retail in Yugoslav urban centers. Set in the politically charged urban landscapes of capital cities, department stores increasingly occupied central locations in their urban environments as well as in the economic, social, and cultural lives of Yugoslav citizens. Politicians and urban administrators additionally used department stores to symbolically commemorate important dates on the Yugoslav calendar, and to communicate and promote the successes of Yugoslav self-managed socialism in diplomatic encounters and foreign relations.

Both RK Beograd and Na-Ma grew from the foundations set by Narodni magain in the late 1940s as the first centralized Yugoslav retail enterprise and department store chain. From the early 1960s, these enterprises grew into chains by expanding their operations from their capitals' historical city centers to peripheral areas, where the preexisting urban environments transitioned into new residential zones built for the growing urban population. Department stores also emerged in new housing estates on the unurbanized southern banks of the Sava River in New Zagreb and New Belgrade, and by the end of the decade returned to the city in a new monumental shape, necessitated by the profit-making pressures of the economic reform. In their expansion, Na-Ma and RK Beograd's improved the living standard and quality of everyday life in new neighborhoods by utilizing systems of self-service and self-choice to provide Yugoslav citizens with various consumer goods and services, to save their time and money, and to create new urban zones for socialization and leisure. Cornfields and swamplands were replaced by glass, concrete and steel buildings in the late modernist style, whose open ground floors invited Yugoslav citizens to shop, window-shop, or simply spend time together in the new pedestrian centers of their neighborhoods. In this regard, department stores had a civic role in strengthening the Yugoslav social self-management system, in addition to an important economic role in pumping money into housing and local communities from sales taxes, while pushing local classical stores to modernize their business operations.

Capital cities as crucial political landscapes in which various federal, republic and local agendas came together also defined the Na-Ma and RK Beograd's paths of development. Some influential processes in this regard were the prevention of large-scale construction in historical city centers and their decentralization with new neighborhoods, the changing role of urban environments from administrative to residential and commercial, the construction of large housing estates on unurbanized lands, the increasing powers of local communities, the

government's management of employment and unemployment, and the creation and dissolvment of investment possibilities.

A crucial aspect in the growth of the chains was marked by the openness of the Yugoslav government to transnational exchanges and imports of know-how and technology, which allowed Yugoslav retailers, retail experts, architects, and urban planners to acquire valuable foreign know-how and experiences and utilize them in the expansion and modernization of retail netowkrs. Their transnational activities took multiple forms, from import of technology and equipment to study visits, hosting of foreign delegations, and publication of reports on, as the Na-Ma chain called it, "foreign practice." Key players in these processes were the workers in chains, headed by Na-Ma and RK Beograd's influential directors Franjo Balen and Čedomir Jelenić, together with an array of retail experts, architects, urban planners, and urban administrators, who were active in different institutions and governing bodies in the Yugoslav self-management systems. In the following decade, as the final chapter shows, this intense expansion of department stores, which the daily *Politika Ekspres* said were growing like mushrooms, continued in Zagreb and Belgrade, and intensified in smaller capitals like Sarajevo, while simultaneously reaching out across capital borders into smaller towns and rural areas.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁷ "U Zemunu otvorena najmodernija robna kuća u Srbiji".

CHAPTER 4. THE GOLDEN AGE? THE TRAJECTORIES OF THE 1970S

Introduction

The paths of development know no borders.⁷³⁸

The maxim that Na-Ma used to announce its development plan in 1970 effectively predicted the direction that retail modernization in Yugoslavia would take in the first half of the new decade. During the 1960s, RK Beograd and Na-Ma became successful department store chains whose modern stores traversed the urban environments of the capital cities Belgrade and Zagreb. In 1970, Na-Ma had 20,000m² of sales area, 3,100 employees, and a yearly turnover of 950 million dinars.⁷³⁹ These numbers put it in second place behind RK Beograd, the largest Yugoslav retail enterprise and department store chain, which in the same period had 40,365m² of sales area, 3,560 employees, and a yearly turnover of 1 billion dinars.⁷⁴⁰ Supported by a combination of governmental funding and their own accumulated capital, the expansion of RK Beograd and Na-Ma during the 1960s institutionalized self-service department stores as omnipresent retail spaces in Yugoslav urban centers.

By the early 1970s, both chains had also already expanded beyond the borders of their respective capitals and republics and established their businesses in other locations in the country. While Na-Ma was much more restrained in its expansion outside of Zagreb, only opening stores in Kumrovec and Bjelovar, and merging with a local enterprise in Sisak, RK Beograd's conquest of the Yugoslav market was a crucial part of the chain's business politics. In the late 1960s, it opened new stores in Smederevska Palanka, Niš, Vršac, Bihać, Bor, and

⁷³⁸ "Putevi razvoja ne poznaju granice," *Na-Ma* 7–8, 1970.

⁷³⁹ "Putevi razvoja ne poznaju granice."

⁷⁴⁰ Ivan Jaslo, "Realne ambicije," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

Kragujevac, and merged with local department stores in Kragujevac, Niš, Zrenjanin, and Titograd (today Podgorica).⁷⁴¹

In this chapter I argue that in the 1970s Yugoslav department store chains and other retail enterprises expanded their operations in multiple ways thanks to the strong foundations formed by the expansion processes in the 1960s. In the language of Yugoslav experts, chains like RK Beograd and Na-Ma gained a sufficiently strong “material and technical base” in the 1960s to set themselves free from the boundaries of local markets, going on to expand throughout the federation in the 1970s.⁷⁴² Furthermore, I show that the expansion of the Yugoslav retail sector in the first half of the 1970s was a multifaceted process that encompassed more than just opening new stores in Yugoslav towns. Two other important processes defined the retail expansion in the 1970s: new innovations in retailing, including the introduction of computer technology into business operations, and the intensification of the chains’ participation in the international arena. Taken together, these trajectories emerged from the foundations set by department store chains in the 1960s and broadened the institutionalization process in the 1970s by taking over new spatialities of the Yugoslav state: the regional, the international, and the cyber.

Discussing the period from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, when this expansion took place, Patrick Hyder Patterson tentatively termed it “the Golden Age of Yugoslavia.”⁷⁴³ He and other scholars argued that the continuous rise of GDP, personal income, purchasing power, and production and import of consumer goods were fertile conditions under which Yugoslav consumer culture reached its peak.⁷⁴⁴ By turning from consumers to retailers, however, I offer a more nuanced look into this period by showing how the global economic crisis in 1972

⁷⁴¹ Jaslo, “Realne ambicije.”

⁷⁴² Nikolajević, “Dosad bez promena: ekonomski položaj unutrašnje trgovine.”

⁷⁴³ Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 38.

⁷⁴⁴ Igor Duda, “O vrhuncu jugoslavenske potrošačke kulture,” in *Pejzaži potrošačke kulture u Socijalističkog Jugoslaviji*, ed. Nataša Bodrožić, Lidija Butković Mićin, and Saša Šimpraga (Zagreb: Slobodne veze, Eindhoven: Onomatopée, 2018), 96–113; Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 38–42.

negatively affected the Yugoslav economic system, particularly department store chains and retail enterprises. The reasons for this negative effect were the strict measures of economic stabilization imposed by the Yugoslav government on the retail sector, which was, unlike industrial production, not considered a productive economic activity. Consequently, while Yugoslav consumer culture was reaching its apogee, department store chains and retail enterprises were struggling to fulfil their plans. The period of the early 1970s was, at least for the retail sector, full of contradictions: although economic restrictions drastically changed the department store chain's development plans, the limited available financial means were nevertheless used for venturing into the unknown, in terms of location, retailing methods, technology, and international cooperations.

The chapter begins by exploring the activities of RK Beograd and Na-Ma in the capital cities until the mid-1970s by showing how, despite the limited construction of new retail spaces in Zagreb and Belgrade, the realized projects introduced many novelties in terms of retailing methods, service, and architectural design. In addition to Zagreb and Belgrade, where the modernization and institutionalization processes in the 1960s showed many similarities, the chapter also turns its focus to Sarajevo. Under much more disadvantaged economic circumstances, and without a strong department store chain, the modernization of retail in Sarajevo unfurled at a slower pace. Not defined by the formation of department store chains across the city, the modernization of retail in Sarajevo was marked by a single, albeit monumental, project by the department store Sarajka in 1975. With its design, technological equipment, and a rich offer of goods and services, Sarajka contained all the features characteristic for modern retail spaces in Yugoslavia. An additional novelty in its internal operations was an NCR 315 computer used for electronic data processing, which, as the chapter shows, represented the opening of a new, although more invisible phase in the modernization of Yugoslav retail through the use of computer technology and cybernetics.

Moving away from the capital cities into the Yugoslav interior, the chapter then surveys several selected case studies of department stores in Yugoslav regional centers and rural areas. The expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd is followed into Kumrovec and Svetozarevo (today Jagodina) respectively, two locations whose diametrically opposite features show that economic reasons were not the only motivation behind the construction of modern department stores. As the birthplace of Josip Broz Tito, Kumrovec was one of the first villages to receive a self-service department store as early as 1962, although the reasoning behind this decision was only partially connected to the effort to modernize rural retail. In contrast, when RK Beograd opened its store in Svetozarevo, the town was already an important industrial center with its own local retail enterprise, whose clash with the newcomer from Belgrade demonstrates in detail the character of economic competition on the Yugoslav market. The store in Svetozarevo also illustrates the methods used by RK Beograd to integrate their business into the local context, which in this case was visible in the store's distinctive architectural style. The issue of regionalism in the architectural design of Yugoslav department stores in the 1970s is also analyzed in the pioneering case of the department store Razvitak in Mostar. In contrast to Sarajevo, Mostar welcomed not one, but two modern department stores in the early 1970s, confirming the different trajectory that modernization of retail took in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was mostly powered by regional retail enterprises.

The final section of the chapter deals more explicitly with the transnational and international activities of Yugoslav department store chains. In addition to the continuation of transnational encounters and exchanges initiated by Na-Ma and RK Beograd from the early 1960s, during this period Yugoslav department store chains were also members of two supra-republic organizations: the federal Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores (PURKJ), and the International Organization of Socialist Department Stores (MOSU). Active at the federal and international level, both PURKJ and MOSU aimed to strengthen the

cooperation and joint participation of socialist department store chains on the global market, demonstrating in this case that Yugoslav department stores were much closer to their counterparts in the East rather than the West.

4.1 The Contradictions of the 1970s

The 1970s were a prosperous decade for Yugoslavia, but this prosperity came at a price.⁷⁴⁵ The Yugoslav government maintained economic stability through consistent economic growth, increases in GDP, and investments in industry, personal consumption, and standards of living. These investments, however, largely depended on foreign loans. When most Western countries entered a period of economic recession after the first oil crisis in 1972–73, Yugoslavia continued its growing investments in industry, which went beyond its realistic possibilities and credit capacities.⁷⁴⁶ Foreign debt increased from 4.6 billion dollars in 1972 to 21 billion dollars in 1981.⁷⁴⁷ In order to maintain the comfortable living standards to which many Yugoslav citizens were by then accustomed, the government's rising debt was used to hide problems such as increases in the cost of living, unemployment, a negative trade balance of 1.438 billion dollars, and a yearly inflation rate of 20%.⁷⁴⁸

The first half of the 1970s was also a period of major constitutional change, which included a complete overhaul of the self-management system. The existing decentralization and growing autonomies of individual republics peaked with the new Constitution of 1974. Apart

⁷⁴⁵ Marie-Janine Calic, "The Beginning of the End—the 1970s as a Historical Turning Point in Yugoslavia," in *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s*, ed. Marie-Janine Calic, Dietmar Neutatz, and Julia Obertreis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 74; Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 39; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 28–29.

⁷⁴⁶ Rory Archer and Goran Musić, "The Belgrade Working Class from Tito to Milošević: New Geographies of Poverty and Evolving Expressions of Grievances in an Era of Crisis, 1979–1986," *Revue d'Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest* 50, no. 1 (2019): 57; Calic, "The Beginning of the End," 72.

⁷⁴⁷ Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2018), 241; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 29.

⁷⁴⁸ Calic, *History of Yugoslavia*, 223, 240–241; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 31; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 94.

from the federal law, the economic system, and the army, the 1974 Constitution almost entirely transferred political power from the federation to the republics. In the face of a worsening economic situation, the strengthening of individual republics gave rise to national competition whilst deepening the preexisting socio-economic inequalities.⁷⁴⁹ The rising nationalist tendencies at the turn of the decade cumulated in several events: the demonstrations in Kosovo in 1968, the Croatian Spring in 1971, and the attack on Serbian liberals in 1972. The response to all was a series of arrests and expulsions of involved SKJ members and politicians, including the liberal political and economic leadership in both Zagreb and Belgrade. Unlike the events that took place surrounding the economic reform in 1965, this time the liberals were punished because of their support for economic liberalization and a market economy.⁷⁵⁰ As I show later, alongside the political leadership, several directors of the strongest Serbian enterprises—labeled by the local leadership as “technocrats”—were also forced to resign, including Čedomir Jelenić, the director of RK Beograd.

This so-called “purge of liberals” took place within the government’s efforts to defeat the “techno-managerial elites” and the growing “bureaucracy,” which it saw as consequences of the 1965 economic reform. The most significant change in this direction was the transformation of the self-management system. Two years after the implementation of the 1974 Constitution, the government passed the Law on Associated Labor, with which it reorganized enterprises into units called Basic Organizations of Associated Labor (*osnovna organizacija udruženog rada*, OOUR).⁷⁵¹ Defined as the basic self-governing units of the social community, OOURs absorbed the functions previously held by workers’ councils.⁷⁵² In this way, the entire enterprise became a self-governing body whose relations with other enterprises, political

⁷⁴⁹ Calic, *History of Yugoslavia*, 223, 244.

⁷⁵⁰ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 303.

⁷⁵¹ Musić, “Yugoslavia: Worker’s Self-Management as State Paradigm,” 186.

⁷⁵² Vučko Nikolić, “Kako organizovati OOUR u trgovini?” *Nova trgovina* 8–9, 1976. For the sake of clarity, I will continue using terms like “department store chain” and “retail enterprise” to describe entities that were, in the mid-1970s, transformed into OOURs.

bodies, and social organizations were defined by a series of contracts. These contracts were signed either with other OOURs (called *samoupravni sporazumi* or “self-management agreements”) or with local communities (called *društveni dogovori* or “signed compacts”).⁷⁵³ While multiple OOURs could together form Complex Organizations of Associated Labor (*složena organizacija udruženog rada*, SOUR), economic and social units formed “self-governing communities of interest” (*samoupravna interesna zajednica*).⁷⁵⁴

The new legal and constitutional order envisioned contracts between various workers’ and social self-governing units as building blocks of the common management of social property, which was the foundational principle of the new system of negotiated economy (*dogovorna ekonomija*).⁷⁵⁵ Centered on the idea that self-managed citizens should more strongly govern over market forces, the negotiated economy was a direct and critical response to the economic reform of 1965. Instead of favoring the free flow of market forces and economic competition, whose supporters were now accused of being capitalists and “technocrats,” the new system of “market-planned self-managed economy,” as the Serbian economist Dragutin Radunović explained, was based on “free-manifesting, but consciously guided economic laws.”⁷⁵⁶ This guidance came from the common self-management of social property, social planning and negotiation, and market development.⁷⁵⁷

Yugoslav retail experts and retailers saw this new version of the self-management system as an opportunity for the retail sector to finally collaborate with industrial production. As I explained in the previous chapters, retail experts and retailers were consistently emphasizing that retail was not just a redistribution mechanism, but a legitimate economic activity that could and should influence the planning of industrial production. Theoretically, the

⁷⁵³ Musić, “Yugoslavia: Worker’s Self-Management as State Paradigm,” 186.

⁷⁵⁴ Musić, “Yugoslavia: Worker’s Self-Management as State Paradigm,” 186; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 92.

⁷⁵⁵ Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 25; Calic, *History of Yugoslavia*, 243–244.

⁷⁵⁶ Krsta Abramović, “Robna proizvodnja i tržište,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1974; Dragutin Radunović, “Tržište u teoriji i praksi samoupravnog socijalizma,” *Nova trgovina* 4, 1974.

⁷⁵⁷ Radunović, “Tržište u teoriji i praksi samoupravnog socijalizma.”

new system of negotiated economy and contracts between OOURs provided an opportunity for retail enterprises to establish direct partnerships with industrial enterprises, thanks to which they could exert mutual influence on each other's business politics, jointly take on business risks, as well as earn and distribute common income. In this way, retail would stop being simply a "mediator" between production and consumption, and instead become an "integral part of the unified process of reproduction."⁷⁵⁸ The opportunity to form such partnerships became an imperative for retail enterprises embedded in Article 43 of the Constitution, but in practice began to take place from the late 1970s.⁷⁵⁹ Retail enterprises (now as OOURs) were also expected to sign contracts with self-governing communities of interest, such as local communities and consumer councils.⁷⁶⁰

Even though many of these changes were introduced in the form of constitutional amendments in 1972, and consolidated two years later in the 1974 Constitution, retail enterprises usually needed a couple more years to put the system into practice. Initially, there was a lot of vagueness regarding how retail enterprises were supposed to transform into OOURs. One pertinent question, for example, was if every individual store should become an OOUR.⁷⁶¹ By 1976, when the laws were officially introduced, retail experts produced clarifying guidelines that instructed each individual department store and supermarket to become an OOUR, or in some cases even a SOUR.⁷⁶² Although directors and managers at Na-Ma and RK Beograd never openly admitted it, articles and discussions published in their enterprise newspapers revealed the extent of administrative work put into a process whose primary purpose was to reduce "bureaucratization."⁷⁶³

⁷⁵⁸ Radivoje Hercog, "Organizacija udruženog rada trgovine u samoupravnim odnosima," *Nova trgovina* 8–9, 1974.

⁷⁵⁹ "Mjesto trgovine u udruženom radu," *Na-Ma* 11, 1974. Na-Ma and RK Beograd began arranging contracts with manufactures from 1976. See "200 sporazuma Robnih kuća Beograd," *Supermarket* 1, 1976; "Udruživanjem do veće prometa," *Supermarket* 1, 1976.

⁷⁶⁰ Josip Gavran, "Što je značajno za trgovinu?" *Supermarket* 3, 1976.

⁷⁶¹ Dragutin Radunović, "Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma," *Nova trgovina* 3, 1974.

⁷⁶² Nikolić, "Kako organizovati OOUR u trgovini?"

⁷⁶³ Calic, *History of Yugoslavia*, 243–244; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 25.

In the first years of the new decade, the retail sector was still optimistic. Thanks to the economic reform's elimination of some of the regulatory measures imposed on the retail sector's capital accumulation, the overall turnover of department stores increased from 226 billion dinars in 1968 to over 780 billion dinars in 1974.⁷⁶⁴ The growth was most visible in the expansion of the Yugoslav retail network, which increased from 58,167 stores in 1969 to 68,092 stores in 1971, and to 74,770 stores in 1975.⁷⁶⁵ Although much needed, these increases still covered up many of the problems persistently affecting the retail sector from the early 1960s.⁷⁶⁶ When, in October 1969, the SKGOJ organized a conference on the service sector, experts from all republics described the state of Yugoslav retail with words that echoed problems from a decade ago: underdeveloped, territorially limited, insufficiently technologically developed, and with a slowly professionalizing workforce. Yugoslav retail enterprises and networks were, moreover, fragmented, locally bound, and badly dispersed, and their reproductive capacities were limited.⁷⁶⁷

According to the experts, there were two main reasons for this situation. Although the economic reform largely removed controls on capital accumulation, the retail sector was still recovering from measures designed to prevent it from amassing too much capital, such as the freezing and capping of prices and profit margins. These measures badly affected retail enterprises by preventing them from fully expanding their business operations.⁷⁶⁸ A second major problem was the often-haphazard process of retail modernization, which was run by managers with no qualifications and not based on scientific methods. Even after a store

⁷⁶⁴ "Analysis of the Economic Justification for the Existence of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores," box 3, Board of Directors of the Business Association, folder 694, the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores Archives of Yugoslavia, Serbia (AJ).

⁷⁶⁵ "Service Activities in Cities – Basic Material," box 60, folder 495, AJ; Radunović, "Proces izgrađivanja trgovine samoupravnog socijalizma"; "Savet za trgovinu Privredne komore Jugoslavije u 1974." *Nova trgovina* 3, 1975; "Od samoposluge do hipermarketa," *Na-Ma* 12, 1976.

⁷⁶⁶ Alenka Kerin, "Organizacija i informacije u trgovinskim preduzećima," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1974.

⁷⁶⁷ "Findings and Proposals from the Conference of SKGOJ on Urban Services in Cities," box 60, folder 495, AJ.

⁷⁶⁸ Mladen Butković, "The Causes of the Current Underdevelopment of Retail and Suggestions of Measures for Improvement," box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

transitioned to the self-service system, it often employed too many workers, had inadequate prepackaging, storage, and transport facilities, or expanded the assortment of goods to include too many non-food items.⁷⁶⁹ Despite the introduction of new types of research in light of the economic reform—like market research and consumer satisfaction analysis, which were conducted either internally or by specialized research institutions—research in retail was, as described by Bogdan Kosanović from the Center for Market Research in Belgrade, “rudimentary, underfunded, and very one-sided.”⁷⁷⁰

The solutions proposed by Yugoslav experts at the SKGOJ conference were also almost the same as a decade ago, and included the expansion of urban and rural retail networks with self-service department stores and supermarkets run by large chains.⁷⁷¹ Other recommendations included a closer cooperation with the industrial sector and a further extension of working hours, including on Sundays and holidays; this was something that, when introduced by RK Beograd in the late 1960s, unions of retail workers thought felt was “inhumane.”⁷⁷² Local communities were also supposed to play a more prominent role in the long-term development of the retail sector by connecting socio-economic considerations with urban planning, which was part of the new methodology of regional planning advocated by economists and urban planners following the economic reform.⁷⁷³ The fact that local communities could profit from sales taxes made them a relevant stakeholder in the development of local retail enterprises and networks, especially when it came to the issues of spatial dispersion and management of retail space.

⁷⁶⁹ Vlaho Vukas, “Neiskorišćene prednosti sistema samoposluživanja,” *Nova trgovina* 11, 1975; “Motivi osnivanja i karakteristike poslovanja potrošačkih super-magazina,” *Komuna* 4, 1976.

⁷⁷⁰ Bogdan Kosanović, “Scientific Research is Necessary for the Further Development of Retail,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁷¹ “Findings and Proposals from the Conference of SKGOJ on Urban Services in Cities,” box 60, folder 495, AJ.

⁷⁷² “Findings and Proposals from the Conference of SKGOJ on Urban Services in Cities,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁷³ Findings and Proposals from the Conference of SKGOJ on Urban Services in Cities,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama.”

Despite the positive increases in the number of stores, many other factors relevant for the modernization of retail were still not at a high level. Out of around 60,000 stores in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s, only around 1,600, or 2.8%, were supermarkets.⁷⁷⁴ By 1975, this number increased to 3,475 supermarkets, which the experts considered too slow of a growth.⁷⁷⁵ The average store size was 40m², and there was on average one store per 400 inhabitants. Retail spaces were, moreover, not only small and lacking, but also inadequately spatially dispersed, since almost 40% of Yugoslav stores were located in just seventy of the largest cities, mostly in the city centers.⁷⁷⁶

One positive feature in the development of the retail sector in this period was the overall increase in yearly turnover, which was partially fueled by the reintroduction of consumer credit in 1969. After a period of restrictions following the economic reform, consumer credit was fully available until another reduction in 1972.⁷⁷⁷ While cash was in decline, consumer credit and wire transfers became the most popular payment methods from the late 1960s, which showed that the citizens as much as the government depended on debt to maintain their consumer habits.⁷⁷⁸ The conditions of retail in the first half of the 1970s at the Yugoslav level showed significant improvement in quantitative and qualitative terms, although many of the same issues remained unresolved for more than a decade. A closer look into the major department store chains in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo in the first half of the 1970s revealed an even more complex situation in a period set between prosperity and impending economic collapse.

⁷⁷⁴ "Service Activities in Cities—Basic Material," box 60, folder 495, AJ.

⁷⁷⁵ "Motivi osnivanja i karakteristike poslovanja potrošačkih super-magazina"; "Od samoposluge do hipermarketa."

⁷⁷⁶ "Izveštaj radne grupe Trgovina," box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁷⁷ "Service Activities in Cities—Basic Material," box 60, folder 495, AJ.

⁷⁷⁸ Milan Radujević, "Svake godine bolji rezultati," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1968.

4.2 Belgrade and Zagreb: In the Face of Crisis

From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the Yugoslav retail network undoubtedly grew.⁷⁷⁹ In Serbia and Croatia, the growth of the retail network continued with the same intensity of the previous decade, particularly in the capital cities. By 1975, there were 18,739 stores in Serbia, which made it the Yugoslav republic with the highest number of stores; 713 of these were supermarkets.⁷⁸⁰ In the meantime, Belgrade had become Yugoslavia's biggest commercial center. In 1972, the city had a total of 3,610 stores—128 supermarkets and seventeen department stores (eleven of which were owned by RK Beograd)—which supplied around 800,000 inhabitants.⁷⁸¹ Retail activities formed 61% of the city's national income and 10% of the overall Yugoslav retail sector. Enterprise mergers, which were a priority of the economic reform, were particularly strong, and by the early 1970s, the number of retail enterprises in the capital dropped from 270 to seventy.⁷⁸² The second largest retail enterprise after RK Beograd, the supermarket chain Centroprom, was also a result of a merger. The chain was established in 1969, through the merger of Centroprom, Sava, Dunav, and Vračar, which bought the US supermarket in 1957. The average store size in Belgrade was 54m², larger than the federal average, and the employment structure mainly consisted of highly qualified (41.16%) and qualified (31.60%) workers, with a total of 27,566 people employed in the retail sector (16%).⁷⁸³

In Croatia in 1975, citizens could go shopping in 17,776 stores: of these, 889 were supermarkets and thirteen were department stores, which meant that there was approximately one store per 283 inhabitants.⁷⁸⁴ In Zagreb, where around 720,000 people lived at the time, there were 2,237 stores, with retail forming 51% of the city's national income, and employing 16.4%

⁷⁷⁹ Patterson, *Bought & Sold*, 38–39; Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 19; Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: glavni procesi, 1918–1985* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1985), 387.

⁷⁸⁰ “Od samoposluge do hipermarketa.”

⁷⁸¹ Živko Tešić, “The Development of Retail in Belgrade,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁸² Bilandžić, *Historija*, 186.

⁷⁸³ Tešić, “The Development of Retail in Belgrade,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁸⁴ Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje*, 40; “Od samoposluge do hipermarketa.”

of the population.⁷⁸⁵ Of these, 163 stores were supermarkets, most of them unsurprisingly located in New Zagreb, and the fewest in the city center.⁷⁸⁶ By the middle of the decade, around 50,600 people were employed in the city's retail sector.⁷⁸⁷

Flying high on their successes of the 1960s, RK Beograd and Na-Ma began the 1970s with very ambitious Five-Year Plans. By 1975, RK Beograd planned to have forty-two new department stores, comprising 270,000m² of sales area, 10,000 workers, and a yearly turnover of 452 billion dinars.⁷⁸⁸ Na-Ma's plan included nineteen new department stores with an overall sales area of 60,000m², a new warehouse, 6,000 employees, and a yearly turnover of 1.6 billion dinars.⁷⁸⁹ While RK Beograd wanted to open new stores both in Belgrade and in each of the Yugoslav republics, Na-Ma was set on only one new department store in Zagreb, with the rest in other towns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁷⁹⁰

In the first couple of years, business proceeded as usual for both chains. RK Beograd focused on opening new stores outside the capital, which was central to the chain's business politics since the late 1960s. In two years, the chain opened new stores in Vršac, Niš, Bihać, Bor, Bosanski Brod, Valjevo, Doboj, and Zaječar.⁷⁹¹ The decision not to open new stores in Belgrade, however, was not so much the result of a deliberate plan, but rather of an administrative obstacle. RK Beograd's managers complained that their requests to open stores in emerging areas of the city were challenged by the urban planners, who were inexplicably reluctant to issue construction permits, sometimes even for several years.⁷⁹² This was a

⁷⁸⁵ Rajka Zečević, "The Causes of the Underdevelopment of Retail in Zagreb," box 60, folder 495, AJ; Stojanka Vujković, "Karakteristike strukture zagrebačke privrede i tendencije njenih promjena," *Komuna* 1, 1975.

⁷⁸⁶ Vlaho Vukas, "Neiskorišćene prednosti sistema samoposluživanja."

⁷⁸⁷ "Razvojne mogućnosti zagrebačke trgovine," *Na-Ma* 8, 1975.

⁷⁸⁸ "Radnički savet doneo program razvoja preduzeća od 1971. do 1975. godine," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1971.

⁷⁸⁹ Zdenka Strega, Roko Taslak, "Development Issues of Large Retail Organizations under Business Conditions Before and After the Economic Reform," box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁷⁹⁰ "Program razvoja Name," *Na-Ma* 3–4, 1971.

⁷⁹¹ I. L., "Pozitivni poslovni rezultati," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1970; "Otvorene robne kuće u Bosanskom Brodu i Valjevu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1971.

⁷⁹² D. Radojković, "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1971.

perplexing situation, considering that new neighborhoods in Belgrade lacked retail spaces in comparison to the city center.⁷⁹³ Nevertheless, except for renovating some of its older stores and buying a new warehouse in Bežanija in New Belgrade, by 1972 RK Beograd had built only one new store in Belgrade, called *Dragstor*.⁷⁹⁴

A Belgrade sensation, *Dragstor* (Figure 44) showcased the high level of innovation of Yugoslav retailers in the early 1970s. Opened in December 1970 in a new underground passage in the city center called the Terazije Tunnel, *Dragstor* was the first Yugoslav department store with 24/7 service. During the day it was a regular, albeit underground department store selling food items and small consumer goods within a total sales area of 800m². During the night, however, the sales staff was accompanied by vending machines selling a variety of products: from sandwiches, frankfurters, coffee, tea, and chocolate, to cigarettes, toys, postcards, and even socks and ties.⁷⁹⁵ If, in the middle of the night, a Belgrade resident had the urge to buy a rotisserie chicken—one of the store’s most sought-after items—they could either drop by the store or order it via telephone with immediate delivery, for no extra charge.⁷⁹⁶ Although the store took its name from American drugstores—shops selling pharmaceuticals and other types of related goods—it was in a true sense a convenience store, which is what the word *dragstor* stills means today in the Serbian language. In order to prepare for the opening of the store, RK Beograd’s management travelled to another global hotspot of convenience stores and vending machines: Japan.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹³ “Ekonomski razvoj,” *Arhitektura-Urbanizam* 70–72, 1973.

⁷⁹⁴ “Rezultati dostojni pažnje i prinanja,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1971.

⁷⁹⁵ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1970; D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1970.

⁷⁹⁶ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1970.

⁷⁹⁷ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1972.



Figure 44. Ljubomir Profirović, *Dragstor*, Terazije Tunnel, Belgrade, 1970.

From: Ljubomir Profirović, "Novi podzemni pešački prolaz," *Urbanizam Beograda* 11, 1971.

Designed by architect Ljubomir Posfirović, *Dragstor* was an essential element in the pedestrian passage that formed part of the Terazije Tunnel, which meant that retailing activity was directly incorporated into an infrastructural project.⁷⁹⁸ As a much-needed solution to the heavy traffic in the city center, the Terazije Tunnel was in fact so important that Tito and Jovanka Broz took part in its opening ceremony, which included a visit to *Dragstor*.⁷⁹⁹ When, during the opening, Tito asked if the vending machines really worked, the chain's director Čedomir Jelenić replied by offering the country's leader a hot scone bought for one dinar.⁸⁰⁰ Novel and attractive, *Dragstor* was a sign of the distance that Yugoslav retailers were willing to go in order to gain financial advantage while providing consumers with constant service. In this regard, Yugoslav retailers abided by the central business principle that "one should

⁷⁹⁸ Vlada Macura, "Beograd," *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 63, 1970; Ljubomir Profirović, "Novi podzemni pešački prolaz," *Urbanizam Beograda* 11, 1971. A major criticism of the project was that *Dragstor* was designed without freight elevators and entrances for bringing in goods to the store. The workers were forced to use the same entrances and escalators as the customers and other pedestrians. See G. Keller, "Nove transverzale Beograda: ispravka autora," *Čovjek i prostor* 217, 1971.

⁷⁹⁹ Later that same day, the couple also opened the Gazela Bridge, another critical infrastructural project in Belgrade that was accomplished under the mayorship of Branko Pešić.

⁸⁰⁰ D. Radojković, "Šta drugi pišu o nama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1970.

constantly be putting something new on the market.”⁸⁰¹ *Dragstor* suggested that shopping could and should be done at any time, and that Yugoslav consumers should be able to acquire consumer goods whenever they wanted. Although in practice, as it turned out, *Dragstor* in fact had the lowest number of visitors during the night, the idea behind it illustrated how far the possibilities of Yugoslav retail and consumer culture had expanded in the 1970s.⁸⁰²

The optimism of the early 1970s, however, was short-lived. By 1972, RK Beograd and Na-Ma had to come to terms with the fact that their ambitions would be impossible to realize. Yugoslavia’s foreign trade deficit and inflation were worsening in the light of the global economic crisis and recession of the early 1970s, which led the Yugoslav government to introduce a series of economic stabilization measures. These austerity measures upheld reductions in investments, savings in collective consumption, and an emphasis on profitability and workers’ discipline.⁸⁰³ The reduction in investment hit the retail sector particularly hard because, to the dismay of retail experts and retailers, the government considered it an uneconomic and unproductive activity.⁸⁰⁴ For this reason, unlike the industrial sector, the retail sector suffered from some additional restrictions, including a mandatory deposit of 30% on investments, an obligation for enterprises to have a minimum of 55% of their working capital, and increases in sums that had to be paid to cities, counties, and republics, such as the housing fund, child protection fund, and the fund for undeveloped republics.⁸⁰⁵ Retailers particularly fought against the 30% deposit, but the decision to introduce it rested on the republics rather than the federation; Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, unlike Slovenia, stuck to it.⁸⁰⁶ Some measures were additionally aimed at restraining consumers by limiting consumer credit

⁸⁰¹ Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism*, 274.

⁸⁰² D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1971.

⁸⁰³ Archer, Musić, “The Belgrade Working Class from Tito to Milošević,” 57.

⁸⁰⁴ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1972.

⁸⁰⁵ “Ipak još dvije karike u našem lancu,” *Na-Ma* 6, 1972.

⁸⁰⁶ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1971; “Naša radna organizacija u sklopu novih privrednih mera i društveno-ekonomskih odnosa,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 9, 1972.

and banning purchases with foreign currency.⁸⁰⁷ Under these circumstances, RK Beograd had to significantly curb its development plan, while Na-Ma's was almost completely canceled; even just maintaining business operations proved to be difficult.

Before the economic stabilization measures were fully realized, Na-Ma had completed the renovation of its older department store in Kustošija, which I discussed in the previous chapter, and opened a supermarket in the small town of Klanjec in northwestern Croatia. This supermarket, however, was not administratively considered an individual store, but part of the department store in Kumrovec.⁸⁰⁸ The only new investments Na-Ma made between 1972 and 1975 were for a new department store in Trešnjevka and the partial construction of a new warehouse on the outskirts of the city, in an area called Žitnjak. Although Na-Ma only had enough funds to finish around 40% of the planned 100,000m² (the rest would only be completed in 1979), the warehouse in Žitnjak was an important project considering that the chain never had a centralized storage space.⁸⁰⁹ Instead, all the goods were stored either in the department stores themselves or scattered across twenty warehouses around the city.⁸¹⁰ A centralized warehouse was badly needed to improve the adequate storage of goods and their supply to the stores, while in return freeing up more sales area.⁸¹¹ The fact that both Na-Ma and RK Beograd built warehouses only in the early 1970s revealed the difficulties that the chains faced in their effort to improve the capital cities' retail networks, which often meant there was little money left for investments in other facilities.

Na-Ma's other completed project was a second department store in Trešnjevka (Figure 45). This opened in September 1972 in an area popularly called Remiza because of its location near the tram garages of the city's main public transport company, the Zagreb Electrical Tram

⁸⁰⁷ "Zašto je opao promet?" *Na-Ma* 3, 1973; "Sužavanje potrošnje—ali dokle," *Na-Ma* 5, 1973.

⁸⁰⁸ "Jedanaesta Nama," *Na-Ma* 1–2, 1971.

⁸⁰⁹ "Ipak još dvije karike u našem lancu," *Na-Ma* 6, 1972.

⁸¹⁰ "Tisuće novih radnih mjesta," *Na-Ma* 1, 1972.

⁸¹¹ "Put suvremenijem trgovanju," *Na-Ma* 6, 1971.

(ZET).⁸¹² In addition to its vicinity to public transport, which ZET accommodated by moving the tram stop directly in front of the department store's doors, this part of the still-growing neighborhood Trešnjevka was home to 50,000 residents, many of whom worked for the nearby Rade Končar Electrical Industries and Engineering factory, one of the most important Yugoslav enterprises.⁸¹³ Designed by architects Milivoj Peterčić and Ivo Velnić, and built by the construction enterprise Novotehna from Karlovac, the new store differed from the usual projects made by Na-Ma in the 1960s.⁸¹⁴ In its elongated form, covered by 220 meters of glass storefronts, the store was a single-story structure built into the ground floor between two residential buildings, which formed a new urban micro-location called Faller's Promenade.⁸¹⁵ Since Na-Ma took over the store already under construction since the late 1960s, the enterprise did not have much influence on its design, and did not hesitate to call the new development "unsightly" in its enterprise newspaper.⁸¹⁶ With its 771m² of sales area set on four half-stories, the new department store was the enterprise's third biggest after Ilica and Kvaternik Square, and had one of the largest supermarkets in the city, equipped with furniture and equipment imported from Austria and Italy.⁸¹⁷ The entire project cost 52 million new dinars, most of which had to be paid by Na-Ma under the new regulations of economic stabilization.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹² The Croatian word *remiza* comes from the Austro-German word *Remise*, originating from the French *remise*, which means a building for storing and repairing trains and trams.

⁸¹³ "Jadanesta ljepotica u lancu Na-Me," *Na-Ma* 9, 1972.

⁸¹⁴ "Robna kuća Na-ma u Zagrebu predana investitoru," *Novotehna* 69–70, 1972. Milivoj Peterčić was an architect from Croatia who stood behind several architectural designs and urban plans for new neighborhoods and residential buildings in Zagreb.

⁸¹⁵ "Robna kuća Na-ma u Zagrebu predana investitoru," *Novotehna* 69–70, 1972; "Fallerovo u slici," *Novotehna* 21, 1968.

⁸¹⁶ "Otvorena jedanaestica," *Na-Ma* 10, 1972.

⁸¹⁷ "Jadanesta ljepotica u lancu Na-Me," *Na-Ma* 9, 1972.

⁸¹⁸ "Ipak još dvije karike u našem lancu," *Na-Ma* 6, 1972.



Figure 45. Milivoj Peterčić, Ivo Velnić, department store Na-Ma, Remiza, Zagreb, 1972.

From: "Robna kuća Nama na Remizi," *Mapiranje Trešnjevke*, <https://mapiranje-tresnjevke.com/kvartovi/stara-tresnjevka/nama-remiza/> (accessed September 27, 2024)

The economic stabilization measures otherwise forced Na-Ma to sell the land bought for new stores outside of Zagreb, as well as the department store in Varaždin, the construction of which was already underway.⁸¹⁹ The economic troubles also claimed another victim: Na-Ma's otherwise successful sales catalog. As I briefly mentioned previously, Na-Ma introduced its sales catalog in 1967 in order to remedy the lack of retail space, while also reaching out to more distant areas of the federation. With a print run of 500,000 copies, the catalog was sent to towns and rural areas in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Vojvodina.⁸²⁰ More than 1,000 products were advertised across 100 pages, which were photographed and designed in Ljubljana, then printed in Vienna.⁸²¹ While the overall costs for the sales catalog only comprised 0.5% of total turnover (which was low in comparison to the 4% of the West German catalog Neckermann, which was Na-Ma's main inspiration), the profits made were on the level of a moderately sized-department store.⁸²² This made the catalog a successful venture, but its

⁸¹⁹ "Stop investicijama," *Na-Ma* 8, 1972.

⁸²⁰ B. Vranešić, "Prodaja putem kataloga," *Na-Ma* 7, 1967.

⁸²¹ "Već katalog za jesen-zimu," *Na-Ma* 5, 1968.

⁸²² "Orijentacija: daljnje jačanje kolektiva," *Na-Ma* 12, 1967; "Katalog nije izdržao," *Na-Ma* 8, 1972.

high printing costs, difficulties with product shipment, and the unstable market with frequent price fluctuations led to its permanent discontinuation in 1972.⁸²³

While Na-Ma was severely impacted by the economic stabilization measures, RK Beograd's everyday business operations were still comparatively profitable.⁸²⁴ RK Beograd was a much larger enterprise than Na-Ma, with business operations spanning several republics, and the chain's department stores outside of the capital were in fact a crucial factor in maintaining positive capital accumulation because they were very often the biggest, or the only, retail spaces in their areas.⁸²⁵ Nevertheless, the pace of the enterprise's growth declined, and planned investments were halved, with only five more department stores built by 1975.⁸²⁶ Most of these stores were again outside of Belgrade: in Kula, Leskovac, Novi Pazar, and Svetozarevo. The single store built in Belgrade, however, became the symbol of the city and marked the peak of the modernization of Yugoslav retail in the 1970s.

Opened in April 1974, Belgrade Palace—popularly known as *Beograđanka* (Figure 46)—was immediately proclaimed the tallest building in the Balkans.⁸²⁷ The skyscraper, made from reinforced concrete, was 101 metres high and had a total of twenty-nine floors, of which twenty belonged to RK Beograd. While most of the floors held office space, five stories were for the chain's—and Yugoslavia's—new biggest department store, which sprawled over a sales area of 17,000m².⁸²⁸ In an odd coincidence, the building was designed by architect Branko Pešić during the mayorship of Branko Pešić.⁸²⁹ The project was an impressive investment of 200

⁸²³ “O našem katalogu,” *Na-Ma* 1, 1972.

⁸²⁴ “Uspešno šestomesečno poslovanje,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1972; “Izvršenju narednih zadataka posvetiti posebnu pažnju,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1973.

⁸²⁵ Zdravko Pjanić, “Uspešno poslovanje,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1972.

⁸²⁶ “Završni račun na našem nivou,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1973; D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1973.

⁸²⁷ “Naša robna kuća u Beograđanki,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1974; “Ime i prezime Palate Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1974.

⁸²⁸ “Ime i prezime Palate Beograd.”

⁸²⁹ Branko Pešić was an architect and professor at the Faculty of Civil Engineering in Belgrade and the creator of hundreds of architectural projects, such as a dozen of Yugoslav pavilions at international exhibitions, *Beograđanka*, and the Temple of Saint Sava in Belgrade. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 789.

million dinars, which was finalized despite the economic constraints because the construction was already underway, and the project—on a much modest scale—had been planned since the early 1960s.⁸³⁰ On its opening day, Beograđanka was visited by 100,000 people and made a daily turnover of 198 million dinars.⁸³¹



Figure 46. Branko Pešić, department store RK Beograd, Beograđanka, Belgrade, 1974.

From: postcards from the author's collection.

If the Yugoslav Golden Age had an edifice, then this was definitely *Beograđanka*, whose anodized aluminum plates covering its façade gave off a red-golden shine. With its appearance, size, 800 employed workers, an assortment of 90,000 different items, a restaurant, and an observation deck on the twenty-second floor, *Beograđanka* represented, in the words of

⁸³⁰ “Ime i prezime Palate Beograd.”

⁸³¹ “U Beogradu otvorena naša najveća robna kuća,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1974.

one expert, “a site of consumer pilgrimage.”⁸³² While *Dragstor* invoked the innovativeness of Yugoslav retail, *Beograđanka* was simply imposing in its size and the amount of consumer goods and services on offer. The building embodied the pinnacle of retail modernization and state-of-the-art architectural design and construction technology. That the highest building in Yugoslavia was owned by RK Beograd, which grew into an economic giant, was not coincidental. *Beograđanka* also symbolized the role that Yugoslav retail had in powering the economic, social, and material development of Yugoslav self-managed socialism. More than just an economic activity, Yugoslav retail was a powerful force that shaped the urban and social environments and had a major role in instigating and maintaining Yugoslav consumer culture. As a skyscraper, *Beograđanka* very literally illustrated the extent of the success of Yugoslav retailers, as well as the expectations of consumers.

Beograđanka occupied the physical and the social, but also the mental space of the Yugoslav state, as a symbol of the prosperity and success of Yugoslav self-managed socialism, in which retail played a significant role. The symbolic power of the building was already obvious to retailers and politicians of the time, who consciously used this palace of consumption for political purposes. In his opening speech, the mayor Branko Pešić dedicated the building to the honor of the Seventh Congress of the Serbian SKJ, which was taking place in May 1974. The Congress was a particularly important event in the light of the Tenth Congress of the SKJ and the 1974 Constitution, which marked a turbulent period of crisis and reinvention for Yugoslav communists.⁸³³

In subsequent years, both RK Beograd and Yugoslav politicians featured *Beograđanka* as an item on the itinerary during visits of foreign delegations. Even before it opened, *Beograđanka* was visited by the famous Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Shatalov; other visitors

⁸³² Đura Đukić, “Refleksija o psihologiji kupoprodaje: svi putevi vode—u robnu kuću,” *Nova trgovina* 2, 1975; “Milijun kupaca u Beograđanki,” *Na-Ma* 5, 1974.

⁸³³“U Beogradu otvorena naša najveća robna kuća.”

included politicians from European socialist states and non-aligned countries, like the Soviet Andrei Kirilenko and the Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov, as well as the leaders of Cambodia, Burma, Nepal, and Ethiopia.⁸³⁴ Jovanka Broz also continued her tradition of bringing “first ladies” to Belgrade department stores: she now took them exclusively to *Beograđanka*, which was shown to Anastasia Tsedenbal Filatova of the Mongolian People’s Republic, Josephine Bongo of Gabon, and Céline Ngouabi of Congo.⁸³⁵ Tito himself visited the store in 1975, and after *Terazije* and *Dragstor*, this was his third official visit to RK Beograd. The numerous postcards of Belgrade from this period often depicted *Beograđanka*, a monument of the capital city and the federation.

Dragstor and *Beograđanka* illustrated the complex and contradictory conditions in Yugoslavia in the 1970s, in which innovative and monumental projects coexisted with the abandonment of development plans and the restrictions of economic stabilization. In contrast to the slow pace of external expansion, both RK Beograd and Na-Ma went through significant internal changes in the mid-1970s. The inability to realize development plans was not accepted lightly by the chains’ management. Hit hard by economic stabilization in the stormy atmosphere of the Croatian Spring and the reform of the self-management system, Na-Ma’s enterprise newspaper was full of articles on the role of self-managed communists in Croatia and Yugoslavia. While Na-Ma’s managers explicitly expressed their loyalty to Tito against the Croatian liberal leadership, the political and economic crises also motivated them to take an honest look at their own chain.⁸³⁶ The situation was worsened when an internal audit revealed that almost half of the department stores paid out salaries in amounts higher than could be

⁸³⁴ “Robnu kuću IV posetila delegacija iz SSSR-a i Bugarske,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1974; “Gošća iz Burmanske unije U Ne Vina u robnoj kući u Palati Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1974; “Predsjednik Nepala u Palati Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1974; “Delegacija privremenog revolucionarnog saveta Etiopije posetila robnu kuću u palati Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1975.

⁸³⁵ “Drugarice Cedenbal i Broz u Palati Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1974; “Žozefina Bongo i Jovanka Broz u robnoj kući u palati Beograd,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1975; “Gospođa Selin Nguabi i drugarica Jovanka Broz u Beograđanki,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1975.

⁸³⁶ “Put samoupravnog socijalizma – put budućnosti,” *Na-Ma* 3–4, 1972.

accounted for, or that many stores suffered from so-called “deficits,” which meant theft or some kind of malpractice.⁸³⁷ Additional problems included investments made without sound financial analyses, purchases of expensive foreign equipment, and even a case of embezzlement in the department store in Trnsko.⁸³⁸

When the constitutional amendments introduced in 1972 required the chains to transform themselves into OOURs, Na-Ma’s management saw this as an opportunity to deal with its problems by employing what it called “the policy of clean accounts.”⁸³⁹ During the transformation of department store chains into OOURs—a process called OOUR-ization (*ourizacija*)—almost every store became an individual entity that was henceforth solely responsible for its own profit-making and distribution of workers’ income. When the OOUR-ization process finished in 1973, Na-Ma became a collection of fourteen OOURs, while RK Beograd had thirty-six OOURs; most were individual department stores, with separate OOURs for the development and commercial departments, and one for the transportation service.⁸⁴⁰ The OOURs were expected to conduct business independently with regulation through mutual contracts, which defined a joint performance on the market, procurement of goods, and assurance of the economic viability of each OOUR.⁸⁴¹ Aware that many department stores were disadvantaged by their location, size, or the poor conditions of equipment and furniture, the chains’ management established a so-called solidarity fund, which was used to help OOURs in emergencies or to cover the differences in paychecks.⁸⁴²

The OOUR-ization of RK Beograd and Na-Ma also coincided with a change in leadership, although the reasons behind the two cases were completely different. After working

⁸³⁷ “Kako radimo u 1972.,” *Na-Ma* 8, 1972.

⁸³⁸ “Danica Maretić: Moramo reći gdje smo pogriješili,” *Na-Ma* 12, 1972.

⁸³⁹ “Beskompromisno: dosljednja primjena amandmana,” *Na-Ma* 13–14, 1972.

⁸⁴⁰ “Dvanaest OOUR-a Name,” *Na-Ma* 7, 1973.

⁸⁴¹ “Intenzivne pripreme za provedbu amandmana,” *Na-Ma* 8, 1972.

⁸⁴² “Beskompromisno: dosljednja primjena amandmana”; “Odlučivanje—izričito pravo radnika,” *Na-Ma* 13–14, 1972.

in Na-Ma for twenty-two years, Franjo Balen retired, and in the summer of 1974 the chain chose a new director.⁸⁴³ Balen was replaced by Ivo Raić, a company man who worked at Na-Ma with some breaks since 1951, and who moved to his new position from his previous role as head of the commercial department. Raić's career path was similar to Balen's; he also took part in the NOB and later entered the retail sector, taking increasingly influential positions. He was simultaneously completing a degree from the Higher School for Economics in Zagreb, while carrying out various political duties in the city.⁸⁴⁴ When Ivica Krobot, Balen's long-time assistant director, moved to a directorial position in the enterprise Croatiatekstil in 1976, the old management that led the expansion of the enterprise in the 1960s had completely departed, and a new era started for the department store chain.⁸⁴⁵

In December 1974, RK Beograd also voted in a new director. However, unlike Na-Ma, whose beloved long-standing director Balen was celebrated in the pages of the enterprise newspaper, RK Beograd never even mentioned why Čedomir Jelenić was suddenly leaving. Although Jelenić had in fact been re-elected in 1973, a year later he was replaced by Marko Uzelac, the director of the import-export company Jugoexpert, who had until then been based in New York.⁸⁴⁶ Described as a "man with a clean past," Uzelac was an economist who held various political positions in federal retail and food councils and was the president of the Federal Direction for Food Reserves (*Savezna direkcija za rezerve prehrambenih proizvoda*).⁸⁴⁷ Unlike Na-Ma's Ivo Raić, however, Uzelac was an outsider brought in to replace Jelenić, who was forced to resign following the so-called "purge of Serbian liberals."⁸⁴⁸

Beginning in 1972 and spanning several years, the Serbian political leadership dismissed hundreds of directors of Serbian enterprises, cultural and educational institutions,

⁸⁴³ "Ivo Raić – novi generalni direktor," *Na-Ma* 3, 1973.

⁸⁴⁴ "Život ugrađen u rast i razvoj Name," *Na-Ma* 7, 1974.

⁸⁴⁵ "Krobot," *Na-Ma* 1, 1976.

⁸⁴⁶ "Za Jednodušna odluka o izboru," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1973.

⁸⁴⁷ See *Jugoslavenski savremenici*, 1110.

⁸⁴⁸ Milan Kukolja, "Povodom naimenovanja generalnog direktora," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1975.

and the press. The economic sector was a particular target of dismissals in the fight against “technocrats,” among whom the Serbian political leadership also included the RK Beograd director Jelenić. Information about the circumstances of his forced resignation comes from a collection of interviews conducted in the late 1980s with Serbian directors eliminated in the purge. In his interview, Jelenić explained that in 1974 he was ordered to resign from his position by Ivan Stambolić, a prominent communist who was then the director of the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce.⁸⁴⁹ To the shock of his employees, Jelenić accepted the resignation, but nevertheless became a target of a campaign of slander, which pushed him to accept a directorial position in the foreign trade enterprise Progres and move to East Berlin, where he stayed for a year. After failed attempts to become the representative of Slovenian industry in Serbia and a representative of the Montenegrin foreign trade enterprise Industrija-import in Belgrade, Jelenić retired prematurely in his mid-fifties. Marko Uzelac, RK Beograd’s new director, was the only candidate for the job: according to Jelenić, he was established in his new position by Dušan Gligorijević, the Secretary of Belgrade’s SKJ.⁸⁵⁰ The removal of Jelenić from his position proved the power of RK Beograd and its director, but also showed how fickle power could be in the Yugoslav system, especially if it posed a threat in the eyes of the political leadership. For RK Beograd, Jelenić’s replacement with Uzelac marked the end of an era for Yugoslavia’s largest department store chain.

4.3 More than a Building: The Modernization of Retail in Sarajevo

In contrast to Belgrade and Zagreb, the modernization of retail in Sarajevo took a different path.

Due to economic difficulties and changes in leadership and self-management structures, the

⁸⁴⁹ Ivan Stambolić was a prominent politician who was both prime minister and president of Serbia in the 1980s, and the president of the Serbian SKJ.

⁸⁵⁰ Grujić, *Kako smo smenjeni*, 110–116. Dušan Gligorijević was an economist who oversaw several Yugoslav mines and held various political positions and was a representative in the SIV. See *Jugoslovenski savremenici*, 305.

period of modernization of retail in Belgrade and Zagreb that started in the early 1960s was coming to a close by 1975. At the same time, in Sarajevo, a completely opposite process was taking place. Despite the disadvantageous economic situation and the stabilization measures introduced to counter it, in 1975 the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina received its first modern department store. The planning and construction of the department store Sarajka, fondly called “the blue beauty” because of the striking color of its façade, illustrated the specific path of retail modernization in Sarajevo.

For a long time after 1945, Bosnia and Herzegovina remained a predominantly rural republic. Immediately after the war, only 17% of the population lived in urban areas, while the rest lived in the poor countryside in difficult conditions.⁸⁵¹ The growth of industrial capacity, a general feature of Yugoslav postwar development, was a modernizing imperative, with an emphasis placed on heavy and military industry.⁸⁵² The impact of industrialization on the population’s socio-economic structure resulted in the creation of an urbanized society, with the population in urban areas rising to 50% in 1960, and to 60% a decade later.⁸⁵³

Sarajevo, typically for Yugoslav capitals, underwent a process of intense industrialization and urbanization, including a substantial population increase. The prewar population of 85,000 inhabitants grew to 110,000 in 1945 and continued to increase more rapidly than in Belgrade or Zagreb, particularly from the early 1950s.⁸⁵⁴ In 1953, Sarajevo had 156,018 inhabitants, in 1969, 263,000 inhabitants, and in 1975, 330,000 inhabitants.⁸⁵⁵ The

⁸⁵¹ Husnija Kamberović, “Osnovna obilježja razvoja društva u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1945. do 1953. godine,” in *Hod po trnju: iz bosanskohercegovačke historije 20. stoljeća*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011), 100–101.

⁸⁵² Kamberović, “Osnovna obilježja razvoja društva u Bosni i Hercegovini,” 122.

⁸⁵³ Budimir Miletić, “Demografsko-geografski aspekti alociranja maloprodajne mreže u BiH,” *Nova trgovina* 7, 1975; Hannes Grandits, “Ambivalentnost u socijalističkoj nacionalnoj politici Bosne i Hercegovine u kasnim 1960-ima i u 1970-ima: perspektive odozgo i odozdo,” in *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za historiju, 2009), 15–38.

⁸⁵⁴ Amra Čusto, “Perspektive socijalizma—obnova, izgradnja naselja i novi stil života,” in *Prilozi historiji urbanog razvoja Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. stoljeću*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: UMHS, 2016), 156.

⁸⁵⁵ “The Retail Space in Sarajevo,” box 97, Materials of the SKGOJ Committee for Retail, Hospitality and Tourism, folder 495, AJ.

stark population growth was predominantly based on internal rural-urban migration, and it continuously exerted pressure on the city's underdeveloped housing and infrastructural capacities.⁸⁵⁶ In addition to housing provision, the primary concern of the new postwar government in Sarajevo was to organize an adequate supply of goods for the rapidly growing population.⁸⁵⁷

This was particularly difficult since the retail network in Bosnia and Herzegovina shrunk after 1945: from 12,468 stores before the war, by 1953 the numbers went down to 4,243 stores.⁸⁵⁸ Of these, 428 stores were in Sarajevo, where the ratio was one store per 310 inhabitants.⁸⁵⁹ After the decentralization of retail took place in the early 1950s, the number of stores had increased to 5,077 by 1960, which came up to one store per 659 inhabitants, much higher than the federal average of one store per 452 inhabitants.⁸⁶⁰ In the same period, the number of stores in Sarajevo reduced to 172, which meant that there was one store per 930 inhabitants.⁸⁶¹ Most of these stores, moreover, predominantly used the classical retailing system; the self-service system was only slowly introduced from July 1959, when the first supermarket, Pionir, was opened in Sarajevo. In the early 1960s, Bosnia and Herzegovina had only twenty-seven supermarkets, which put it on the penultimate position in the federation. In comparison, Serbia and Croatia were at the top of the list with 120 and fifty-five supermarkets respectively; only Montenegro had a smaller number, with just two supermarkets.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁶ Kadro Fetahagić, "Business Conditions in Service Activities in Sarajevo," box 60, folder 495, AJ; "Proposal for the Social Plan for the Development of Sarajevo, 1971–1975," folder, City Assembly of Sarajevo, Historical Archives of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (HAS).

⁸⁵⁷ Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: biografija grada* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2006), 237; "Proposal for the Social Plan for the Development of Sarajevo, 1971–1975," City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS.

⁸⁵⁸ "The condition of the private retail network in 1939," box 46, folder 163, AJ; "Reorganizacija trgovinske mreže," *Trgovinski bilten* 12, 1953.

⁸⁵⁹ D. Šimšić, "Investicije u trgovinskoj mreži," *Nova trgovina* 10, 1953; "Organizacija trgovinske mreže Bosne i Hercegovine," *Nova trgovina* 9, 1953; D. Šimšić, "Iskustva i problem reorganizacije trgovinske mreže Bosne i Hercegovine," *Nova trgovina* 6–7, 1954.

⁸⁶⁰ Janković, "Problemi organizacije trgovinske mreže"; Dušan Šimšić, "Iskustva u organizaciji trgovine Bosne i Hercegovine," *Nova trgovina* 4, 1958; "Organizacija trgovinske mreže na malo," *Trgovinski bilten* 7, 1959; Alija Latifrić, "Trgovina i tržište u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Trgovinski bilten* 4, 1962.

⁸⁶¹ "Godišnje skupštine sreskih Trgovinskih komora," *Trgovinski bilten* 8–9, 1959.

⁸⁶² "Poslovanje prodavnica za samoposluživanje u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Trgovinski bilten* 12, 1961.

During their 1969 conference, SKGOJ experts concluded that Sarajevo's retail network was small, fragmented, outdated, and lacked sufficient capital accumulation to expand.⁸⁶³ With the federal and republican socio-economic agenda focused mainly on industrialization, the investments in retail in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and particularly in Sarajevo, were rather low, further hampered by a high number of small-sized retail enterprises and misdirected, inefficient business plans.⁸⁶⁴ Although Bosnia and Herzegovina theoretically benefited from the fund for underdeveloped republics, most of the money was invested into major infrastructure projects like railways, hydroelectric power plants, and an oil refinery. As a result, there was very little funding for more local development projects in other economic branches, even if their modernization was badly needed after the economic reform.⁸⁶⁵ Under these circumstances, the retail network in Sarajevo was too small and badly dispersed, with outdated equipment and undereducated staff.⁸⁶⁶ The retail space in Sarajevo remained inadequate both in quantity and quality. Most of the stores were inherited from the prewar period, and many were so small and badly maintained (one expert even referred to them as "barracks") that it was impossible to renovate and modernize them by introducing the self-service system.⁸⁶⁷ Notwithstanding the expansion of the city with new housing from the 1950s, 55% of retail space in Sarajevo was still located in the city center by the early 1970s.⁸⁶⁸ Most of these stores used the classical retailing system, although the number of supermarkets had increased to forty-one by 1970.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶³ Fetahagić, "Business Conditions in Service Activities in Sarajevo," box 60, folder 495, AJ.

⁸⁶⁴ Štefan Kos, "Oko investicionih ulaganja u trgovini," *Trgovinski bilten* 1, 1958.

⁸⁶⁵ Vera Katz, "Bosna i Hercegovina u Jugoslaviji (1943–1993)—kratak pregled," in *Prilozi istoriji Bosne i Hercegovine u Socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2017), 28–29.

⁸⁶⁶ "The Retail Space in Sarajevo," box 97, folder 495, AJ.

⁸⁶⁷ Mirko Levinger, "Kapaciteti maloprodaje i promet robe u trgovini sreza sarajevskog," *Trgovinski bilten* 3, 1960.

⁸⁶⁸ "Razgovor s predsjednikom Novog Sarajeva," *Komuna* 3, 1968.

⁸⁶⁹ "Investiciona ulaganja i izgradnja savremenih tržišnih objekata u trgovini Bosne i Hercegovine," *Trgovinski bilten* 12–13, 1959; Savo Sovilj, "Početak preporoda," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu*, special issue, April 5, 1975.

In the same year, Sarajevo had altogether 1,100 stores, which meant that there was one store per 3,000 inhabitants.⁸⁷⁰

Department store chains, which led the modernization of urban retail, were non-existent in Sarajevo. As in the other Yugoslav capitals, the government opened a Narodni magazin in the city in the late 1940s; however, in contrast to Belgrade and Zagreb, the store never served as a foundation for a large chain.⁸⁷¹ By 1970, Sarajevo had eleven department stores, out of nineteen in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but none were owned by a department store chain in the same manner as Na-Ma or RK Beograd.⁸⁷²

The situation improved in the late 1960s with the formation of large enterprises through mergers, whose influence was crucial to the socio-economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸⁷³ One of the enterprises formed through a merger in Sarajevo in this period was Unima, whose economic activities encompassed wholesale, foreign trade, and retail. Upon its creation in the early 1970s, Unima owned more than half of the department stores in Sarajevo, as well as around fifty other stores in the city and its vicinity. These six department stores, including the original Narodni magazin, were small and cramped, mostly located in the city center. In the early 1970s, they still used the classical retailing system, while lacking basic necessities such as storage space, escalators, and freight elevators.⁸⁷⁴

The economic hardship and decline in growth in the first half of the 1970s also struck Sarajevo's already weak retail sector, which suffered from poor organization and staff

⁸⁷⁰ Sovilj, "Početak preporoda."

⁸⁷¹ "A List of State Enterprises," box 49, folder 163, AJ; "Explanation of the Five-Year Plan from the Central Management of Narodni magazin," box 8, folder 163, AJ.

⁸⁷² "Proposal for the Social Plan for the Development of Sarajevo, 1971–1975," City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS; *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1971*. [Yugoslav Statistical Yearbook 1971] (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku), 436.

⁸⁷³ Zoran Mladenović and Zakir Hadžimusić, "Kako se sprovodi integracija u trgovini," *Privredni glasnik* 12, 1964; Azra Đelmo, "Modernizacija i oblikovanje potrošačke kulture u Mostaru ranih 70-ih," *Hercegovina: časopis za kulturno i historijsko nasljeđe* 18 (2019): 139.

⁸⁷⁴ H. K., "Sarajevska Na-Ma—njeni uspjesi i nevolje," *Privredni list* 143, 1957; "Modernizacija robnih kuća neophodna," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 13, 1972; Sanjin Kožemjakin, "Nabavka robe—najveći problem," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 14, 1972.

problems.⁸⁷⁵ During a meeting of the city's Economic Council in 1973, one of the councilors asked whose fault it was that Sarajevo did not have a department store.⁸⁷⁶ Although this was not entirely true, the existing department stores could hardly be described as modern retail spaces. For this reason, the effort to construct a truly modern department store became the main economic and social imperative for the city in this period, which came to symbolize the overdue process of modernizing retail in Sarajevo. As the president of the city assembly Borivoje Ostojić later emphasized in a speech given at the opening of Sarajka, "the city had a need to receive a department store not just as a building, but as modern retail."⁸⁷⁷

Why there was no modern department store in Sarajevo before 1975 is difficult to answer precisely, but the reason was likely a combination of factors. Retail experts in Sarajevo were as active as in the other Yugoslav capitals, especially from the late 1950s when the Yugoslav government officially turned toward improving light industry, personal consumption, and the standard of living.⁸⁷⁸ In 1957, Sarajevo's Chamber of Commerce established the Center for Retail Improvement called "Prosperitet," which became the hub for producing expert knowledge on modern retail.⁸⁷⁹ As I wrote in chapter 1, Prosperitet organized lectures on different topics as well as study visits to foreign department stores and retail enterprises—in countries like Italy, Switzerland, and West Germany—in order to educate directors of local enterprises and other retailers.⁸⁸⁰ There was plenty of knowledge on modern retail and department stores, and as early as the mid-1950s, retail experts recognized the need to build a large department store, similar to Na-Ma's oldest store in Zagreb.⁸⁸¹ "Prosperitet" also offered

⁸⁷⁵ "Proposal for the Resolution on the Basics of the Socio-economic Development of Sarajevo in 1974," City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS.

⁸⁷⁶ "Tape-Recording of the Minutes of Meeting of the Economic Council at the City Council of Sarajevo, January 4, 1973," box 22, folder, the Economic Council of the City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS.

⁸⁷⁷ "Riječ predsjednika," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu*, special issue, April 5, 1975. Borivoje Ostojić was the president of the city assembly for the neighborhood Centar Sarajevo.

⁸⁷⁸ "Trgovinske komore i unapređenje robnog prometa Bosne i Hercegovine," *Trgovinski bilten* 11, 1959.

⁸⁷⁹ "Organizacija trgovinske mreže na malo," *Trgovinski bilten* 7, 1959.

⁸⁸⁰ Selimović, "Stručna ekskurzija trgovinskih radnika u Italiju i Švicarsku."

⁸⁸¹ Vladimir Pokrajčić, "Robna kuća velikog kapaciteta," *Privredni list* 106, 1956.

advice and technical assistance to stores willing to introduce the self-service system, and was active in publishing.⁸⁸²

While expert knowledge was not necessarily an issue, putting it into practice proved more difficult. During the meeting in 1973, the councilors frankly admitted that they were to blame for the underdeveloped state of retail in Sarajevo. By pursuing the government's continuous favoring of industrial production, they left the retail sector not only underdeveloped, but badly perceived, and treated, in the words of one councilor, like a thief. These remarks point out the continuous problem that Yugoslav retailers and retail experts faced from the late 1950s, when the government's agenda to modernize retail and improve personal consumption clashed with the ossified view that in the socialist system, retail was not a significant economic sector. In the case of Sarajevo, this conceptualization had obvious material consequences because without funding and care, the retail sector was left underdeveloped. Negatively perceived by the workforce, the retail sector also did not appeal to educated and skilled workers, which meant that retail enterprises often had to resort to employing workers without qualifications and interest in the job.⁸⁸³ The republican Chamber of Commerce perceived the lack of educated retail workers and the low level of education in retail as a constant problem, which mirrored the generally low educational levels of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸⁸⁴

The situation in Sarajevo was, however, unlike that of other urban centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Towns like Mostar, Bihać, and Zenica had modern department stores, and the fact that the citizens of Sarajevo travelled there to shop meant that their money was leaving the city. For the city councilors, the reasons to modernize the retail sector in the capital by constructing a modern department store were many: to overcome the economic crisis, to create new jobs for

⁸⁸² H. K., "Kako stojimo s literaturom u trgovini?" *Privredni list* 145, 1957; "Do kraja godine realizovaće se radovi u Zenici, Bihaću, Bijeljini, Doboju, Mostaru, Sarajevu i Trebinju," *Privredni list* 168, 1958; "Prosperitet i njegovi pogoni," *Trgovinski bilten* 1–2, 1960.

⁸⁸³ "Tape-Recording of the Minutes of Meeting of the Economic Council at the City Council of Sarajevo, January 4, 1973," box 22, the Economic Council of the City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS.

⁸⁸⁴ "Problem stručnih kadrova," *Privredni list* 169, 1958; Katz, "Bosna i Hercegovina u Jugoslaviji," 29–30.

the rapidly growing urban population, to provide citizens with an adequate supply of goods while keeping their money in the local market, and to create a new monumental city center.⁸⁸⁵

The main goal of Sarajevo's Five-Year Plan until 1975 was to develop the retail sector, and the primary method of doing this was through constructing a new department store.⁸⁸⁶

This finally happened on April 5, 1975, when Sarajka (Figure 47) was opened on October Square. The date was important for Sarajevo, because it marked the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation of the city, showing again how department stores were used to mark important dates on the Yugoslav calendar.⁸⁸⁷ Sarajka was built in a year by the local construction enterprise Vranica, one of Yugoslavia's largest producers of mass housing, which began to expand its portfolio with business spaces from the late 1960s.⁸⁸⁸ The department store was a result of a 1.16 billion dinar investment made by Unima (the majority investor), UPI (another merged enterprise for agriculture, industry, and transportation), and the Sarajevo Housing Enterprise, which built and managed the city's housing and business space.⁸⁸⁹ Designed by architect Vladimir "Vova" Zarahović, Sarajka had 10,000m² of sales area spread across four floors, with a snack bar on the ground floor (including a designated desk for the local specialty, *burek*), a restaurant on the roof terrace, a supermarket, and a cafeteria and facilities for the workers in the basement.⁸⁹⁰ The building had a fully glazed ground floor above which the upper floors looked like they were floating, covered with blue metal pressed plates

⁸⁸⁵ "Tape-Recording of the Minutes of Meeting of the Economic Council at the City Council of Sarajevo, January 4, 1973," box 22, the Economic Council of the City Assembly of Sarajevo, HAS.

⁸⁸⁶ SŽ. Đ., "Do 1975. planira se izgradnja osam robnih kuća," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 20, 1973.

⁸⁸⁷ "Sarajevu, s ljubavlju," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu*, special issue, April 5, 1975.

⁸⁸⁸ "Robna kuća Razvitak u Mostaru," *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 59, 1969.

⁸⁸⁹ "Robna kuća bez prodavača," *Na-Ma* 4, 1974. UPI was established in 1972 after the merger of five enterprises. It had a very diverse business focus, from retail, manufacturing, and import-export to banking, wholesale, tourism, and hospitality. UPI had around 600 stores in Sarajevo and 2,300 throughout the country, as well as thirty-four factories and 350 catering and tourist facilities. See "Veliki planovi maloprodaje," *UPI: informativne novine* 5, 1972; "Integracijom do obilja," *Oslobođenje*, April 6, 1975.

⁸⁹⁰ "Po ugledu na velike," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1975; Staniša Bosiljčić, "Za sve ukuse," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu*, special issue, April 5, 1975; "Od bureka do savjeta arhitekta," *Oslobođenje*, April 4, 1975. Vladimir "Vova" Zarahović was an architect and one of the founders of the artistic group EXAT 51 in Zagreb in the 1950s, which was interested in abstract art and design. After moving to Sarajevo, he became the head of the architecture office Dom.

facing in various directions, whose captivating visual effect gave Sarajka the nickname “the blue beauty.” In contrast to the predominantly rectangular shapes and monochrome colors of department stores in the 1960s, the dynamic and colorful features of Sarajka’s design were a sign of a new phase in Yugoslav architecture, which was moving away from the more uniform functionalist architecture of previous decades toward the aesthetic pluralism of the 1970s.⁸⁹¹



Figure. Vladimir “Vova” Zarahović, department store Sarajka, Sarajevo, 1975.

From: “Robna kuća Sarajka,” *Historijski Arhiv Sarajevo*, <http://www.arhivsa.ba/wordpress/?p=2415> (accessed September 27, 2024).

In terms of the urban environment, Sarajka had a clear city-building role. Since the early 1960s, the city government and local architects were interested in creating a new central square for Sarajevo, which would lie between the Ottoman historic core of Baščaršija and the new parts of the city emerging alongside the Miljacka river to the west.⁸⁹² The October Square,

⁸⁹¹ Ivan Štraus, *99 arhitekata sarajevskog kruga 1930.–1990*. (Sarajevo: TKD Šahinpašić, 2010), 68.

⁸⁹² “Položaj grada Sarajeva,” *ARH* 2–3, 1963.

which at the time was still a parking lot, represented the ideal location, but there was no unanimity concerning the features that would turn it into a new social space for the residents. While a group of artists organized a campaign in the mid-1960s to turn October Square into the new center by using cultural and social content, the Sarajevo Housing Enterprise was keen to use the location for a major department store.⁸⁹³ Since Sarajevo desperately needed a modern retail space, the department store eventually won, but the disagreement between various stakeholders over the new city center demonstrated the competition over whether to favor commercial or non-commercial content in urban spaces. Although examples like the department store Na-Ma in Trnsko in New Zagreb showed that department stores—in the spirit of Victor Gruen and the Lijnbaan—could be reinterpreted as social rather than just commercial buildings, this view was not unanimously accepted by Yugoslav architects and urban planners.

Sarajka nevertheless became the main feature of October Square, and the creation of the urban environment was just one of the roles the store had in the city's modernization. Other functions were similar to what Na-Ma and RK Beograd achieved with their chains, which was to professionalize the local retail workforce, advance retailing technology, and provide citizens with an elevated consumer experience. As a large department store, Sarajka employed around 500 workers, of whom 180 were taken from the unemployment office, and another 160 were recent graduates of the local trade school. This meant that the workforce was young, with an average age of twenty-two.⁸⁹⁴ Together with the city's Center for the Education of Cadres, all workers were additionally trained eight months before the opening and undertook study visits to other Yugoslav department stores. When, in the first months after the opening, a consumer survey revealed that not all customers were happy with the sellers' attitudes, Unima additionally sent them to a seminar on psychology and behavioral culture in sales. Just like in Na-Ma and

⁸⁹³ Aleksandar Levi, "Grad se guši," *Čovjek i prostor* 252, 1974.

⁸⁹⁴ S. B., "Po ugledu na najveće," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu*, special issue, April 5, 1975.

RK Beograd, the workers also had many benefits like high salaries, holidays in enterprise resorts, opportunities for further education, a cafeteria, and an internal hairdressing salon.⁸⁹⁵

The interior design and equipment of the store were a result of a combination of local and foreign expertise (Figure 48). Belgrade's Center for the Improvement of Retail made a list of necessary equipment and furniture, some of which was produced by local enterprises, like Soko from Mostar, and some of which was imported from Austria and the US.⁸⁹⁶ Two interior designers even came from West Germany to propose a program for decorating the store's interior space and storefronts.⁸⁹⁷ As I showed in chapter 3, the use of imported retailing equipment and furniture from West Germany, Italy, and Austria, alongside local products from Soko or Alprem, became common staples in the construction of new department stores by the late 1960s. Sarajka also had eighteen electronic cash registers, affectionally called "Unima's Mercedeses," which were a significant novelty at the time because they could automatically register the goods customers bought and provide them with a printed receipt.⁸⁹⁸ This was certainly necessary, since Sarajka sold around 50,000 different items, many previously unavailable, and offered other services like interior design advice from an in-house architect, free delivery and installation of furniture and appliances, a tailor shop, a tourist agency, and an exchange office.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁵ "Osvrt na planirane i ostvarene zadatke u robnoj kući Sarajka," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 48, 1976.

⁸⁹⁶ "Po ugledu na velike."

⁸⁹⁷ "Neće biti prekoračenja rokova," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 27, 1974.

⁸⁹⁸ "S foto-reporterom kroz robnu kuću," *Oslobođenje*, May 5.1975.

⁸⁹⁹ "Od bureka do—savjeta arhitekta."



Figure 47. Department store Sarajka (interior), Sarajevo, 1975.

From: *Robna kuća Sarajka*, "Historijski Arhiv Sarajevo, <http://www.arhivsa.ba/wordpress/?p=2415> (accessed September 27, 2024)

After the opening, Sarajka immediately became the symbol of Sarajevo.⁹⁰⁰ The department store's impact on retail and supply in the city was obvious. Even though Unima had another fifty stores in the city, Sarajka made more profit than all of them combined.⁹⁰¹ Although several years earlier, the management of Unima decided to transform the enterprise into a department store chain and modernize their older stores by introducing the self-service system while specializing them for specific categories of goods, Sarajka remained the city's largest universal department store.⁹⁰²

⁹⁰⁰ A. Levi, "Robna kuća u Sarajevu," *Čovjek i prostor* 280-281, 1976.

⁹⁰¹ "Gradi se najveća robna kuća kod nas," *UPI: informativne novine* 17, 1973.

⁹⁰² "Riječ direktora."

4.4 Cybernetics in Yugoslav Department Stores

The department store Sarajka brought all the state-of-the-art features of modern retail available in Yugoslavia in the mid-1970s under one roof, from the systems of self-service and self-choice, their furniture and technology, to numerous services for consumers. The store also had another important novelty, which slowly started to transform retailing in Yugoslavia from the late 1960s, although in a largely invisible way: computers.⁹⁰³

Computers entered Yugoslav department stores in the late 1960s in order to automate data processing. Electronic data processing or business information processing refers to the processing and managing of large quantities of commercial data using computer systems. In the 1950s and 1960s, the use of computers for electronic data processing appeared within the global movement of cybernetics. Cybernetics, whose origins are tied to mathematician Norbert Wiener's 1948 study *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, is difficult to universally define. As a scientific and historical phenomenon, cybernetics was concerned with the study of machines, systems, and organizations with the aim of managing their operations.⁹⁰⁴ A foundational idea behind cybernetics revolved around the possibility of generating a universal method of problem-solving using computer simulation.⁹⁰⁵ Emerging in US academia in the 1940s, cybernetics was influential for a variety of disciplines until the 1970s, such as information and communication sciences, computer engineering, cognitive science, and social sciences. Beyond the academic context, cybernetics was also particularly relevant for industrial management, which is how it was extensively employed in Yugoslavia.

The rich historical scholarship on cybernetics demonstrates its formation in different national and systemic contexts, from the US, UK, and France, to China, the Soviet Union, and

⁹⁰³ "Po ugledu na najveće."

⁹⁰⁴ Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*, 8–9.

⁹⁰⁵ Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 1.

Chile. This formation was, as scholars also pointed out, under the significant influence of transnational exchange.⁹⁰⁶ Cybernetics, however, was not just a scientific pursuit: as historian Slava Gerovitch emphasizes, it was a social movement for the radical transformation of science and society, which made it particularly interesting for socialist states. There, like in the most notable cases of the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s and Chile in the early 1970s, the government made major investments in cybernetics with the aim of using it to manage the country's economic system and social institutions.

Although the scholarship on cybernetics in Yugoslavia is scarce, existing literature shows that cybernetics never reached the scale of government policy like it did in the Soviet Union or Chile.⁹⁰⁷ Instead, as design historian Rujana Rebernjak argues, the use of cybernetics and automation of business operations with computer technology were promoted from below by economists and technologists employed in Yugoslav enterprises.⁹⁰⁸ Using the example of Rade Končar Electrical Industries and Engineering, Rebernjak demonstrated how the enterprise used computers and data processing not only to improve its rapidly growing business operations, but also to facilitate its internal workers' self-management system. As Rebernjak wrote, the technologists in Rade Končar replaced the complex reports and paperwork that aggravated the decision-making process of the workers' councils with "mechanized administration" on computers.⁹⁰⁹ Based on data input, the computer would produce much more readable documentation, which ensured the smooth running of the enterprise in terms of business, administration, and self-management. In this way, technologists in Rade Končar echoed on a practical level the theoretical ideas of Yugoslav cyberneticians that cybernetics and self-management were similar.⁹¹⁰ In this vision, both computer systems and workers' councils

⁹⁰⁶ Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*, 9. See Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*, 245 for a comprehensive overview of the literature on cybernetics.

⁹⁰⁷ Rebernjak, "From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration," 54.

⁹⁰⁸ Rebernjak, "From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration," 55.

⁹⁰⁹ Rebernjak, "From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration," 53.

⁹¹⁰ Rebernjak, "From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration," 57–59.

were “management devices” that would input and process data in order to regulate the enterprise’s workflow.⁹¹¹

In addition to industrial production, cybernetics was utilized in Yugoslavia in another field: the management of large department store chains. The first theoretical ideas on the use of cybernetics in department stores appeared in the late 1960s, with the publication of cybernetician Bogdan Č. Orlović’s study *Cybernetic Automation of Business Operations in Department Stores (Kibernetička automatizacija poslovanja robnih kuća)* in 1968. Using the definition of the Soviet cybernetician A. I. Berg that cybernetics is the science of managing complex, dynamic systems toward an optimal goal, Orlović argued that enterprises should be understood as similar types of complex systems, whose mechanical components can be automatically regulated. To automate the enterprises’ mechanical functions meant that their control would be given over to machines in order to guarantee optimal functioning. This optimal functioning was not the end goal, but the foundation for the creation of a model for future enterprises with perfected business operations.⁹¹²

In this vision, department store chains were perceived as complex operations whose elements, such as sales, stocks, profits, and expenditures, could be recorded and analyzed by computers as they occurred in real time in order to optimize future performance. This was, in fact, the core principle of the feedback loop process that was central to cybernetics.⁹¹³ The feedback loop was facilitated through electronic data processing with mainframe computers, and it included several steps. Information was first punched into cards, which were then inserted into a reader that would send the data into the computer’s central unit, where it was analyzed, and the results of this analysis printed or again punched into cards.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹¹ Rebernjak, “From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration,” 62.

⁹¹² Bogdan Č. Orlović, *Kibernetička automatizacija poslovanja robnih kuća* (Belgrade: Zavod za ekonomske ekspertize, 1968), 3–4.

⁹¹³ Orlović, *Kibernetička automatizacija poslovanja robnih kuća*, 14–15.

⁹¹⁴ Mića Marković, “Kibernetika u poslovanju,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1969.

How the application of cybernetics in department store chains worked in practice was demonstrated by Na-Ma and RK Beograd from the late 1960s. In 1969, Na-Ma was the first Yugoslav department store chain to open its data center, which used NCR's 315 Data Processing System (Figure 49). Produced in the US and bought by the chain in West Germany, the computer was a major investment of 642 million dinars, which at the time put Na-Ma on the list of four Yugoslav enterprises that owned a computer (Rade Končar bought IBM's System 360 in 1967).⁹¹⁵ In 1971, RK Beograd established its data center which—like the one in Rade Končar—used the IBM 360 System, and was monitored by the chain's Cybernetics Office, run by the cybernetician Jovan Babić.⁹¹⁶ In this case, RK Beograd and Na-Ma were once again ahead of their time, as the Yugoslav government began to regulate business investments into cybernetics and computer use with a new law in 1973.⁹¹⁷ Although from the early 1970s the Mihailo Pupin Institute in Belgrade began to develop computers for electronic data processing, Na-Ma, RK Beograd, and eventually Sarajka, which also used an NCR computer bought in West Germany, depended on foreign technology and know-how to establish their data centers.⁹¹⁸ This speaks to the claim in scholarship that, due to the imbalance in the field of informatics, computers were some of the key technologies to bridge “the East and the West.”⁹¹⁹

⁹¹⁵ “Otvoren Elektronski centar,” *Na-Ma* 1, 1969; Jovan Babić, “Uloga i značaj kompjutera u procesu savremenom upravljanja i rukovođenja,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1970; Rebernjak, “From Paperwork to Mechanized Administration,” 59.

⁹¹⁶ Babić, “Uloga i značaj kompjutera u procesu savremenom upravljanja i rukovođenja.”

⁹¹⁷ Momčilo Jović, “Konceptija primjene elektornskog računara u jednoj prometnoj organizaciji,” *Nova trgovina* 1, 1974.

⁹¹⁸ The first Yugoslav computer, CER-10, was produced in 1960, but the problem with computers made in Yugoslavia was that they were kept secret and used only by the secret police. See Marko Miljković, “Kitchen Without the Debate: The Yugoslav Exhibition of Consumer Goods in Moscow,” *Tokovi istorije* 3 (2022): 137. For more on Yugoslav computers, see Marko Miljković, “CER Computers as Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Yugoslav Computer Industry in the 1960s,” *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* 24, no. 2 (2017): 99–123.

⁹¹⁹ Christian, Kott, and Matějka, “Planning in Cold War Europe: Introduction,” 9.



Figure 48. Data center, Na-Ma, late 1960s.

From: Gavranović, *Nama—25 godina*

The use of computer systems in department store chains was a result of economic necessity. During the 1960s, particularly with the increasing mergers of enterprises after 1965, department store chains like Na-Ma and RK Beograd grew into large businesses, which were becoming more and more difficult to manage using manual methods of data processing, especially given the change in the character, volume, and function of retail.⁹²⁰ The

⁹²⁰ Jovan Babić, "Primena kompjutera u poslovanju našeg preduzeća," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1970.

modernization of data processing and management was, therefore, essential for handling and improving the chains' operations as well as the retail sector in general, which was still perceived by the government as an inefficient economic sector.⁹²¹ Due to the expansion of business operations, the planning and management of department store chains became almost impossible without the use of computers, and the availability of foreign technology and local expertise once again allowed the chains to establish their own data centers. Unlike Rade Končar, whose technologists had a very elaborate use of cybernetics and computers combined with spatial design and improvements in workers' self-management, Na-Ma and RK Beograd's use of their data centers was more elementary. Although cybernetician Jovan Babić published articles in RK Beograd's enterprise newspaper expressing his belief in computers as tools which—just like self-managed socialism—would help workers fulfill their potential and humanize labor, in practice their use had a much more pragmatic, albeit not always easily fulfillable, purpose.⁹²²

The first task that data centers in Na-Ma and RK Beograd set out to resolve was the electronic processing of consumer credits, which were previously very difficult for the chains to oversee. Other tasks included stock monitoring in warehouses, bookkeeping and finances, and staff records.⁹²³ Often, however, the introduction of new assignments to data centers took years because the collection and preparation of information to feed into the computer were major jobs requiring a lot of time, precision, expertise and skill, which was still in short supply.⁹²⁴ More time was needed to fully take advantage of electronic data processing, but the

⁹²¹ Alenka Kerin, "Organizacija i informacije u trgovinskim preduzećima," *Nova trgovina* 1, 1974.

⁹²² Babić, "Uloga i značaj kompjutera u procesu savremenom upravljanja i rukovođenja."

⁹²³ "Otvoren Elektronski centar," *Na-Ma* 1, 1969; Babić, "Uloga i značaj kompjutera u procesu savremenom upravljanja i rukovođenja"; Babić, "Primena kompjutera u poslovanju našeg preduzeća"; Jovan Babić, "Početkom juna u našem preduzeću se pušta u rad elektronsko-računski centar," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1971; "Elektronika u platnim vrećicama," *Na-Ma* 3, 1974.

⁹²⁴ Jovica B. Todorović, "Dobra organizacija—dobro korišćenje elektroničkih računara," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1970; "Kompjutor—knjigovođa ili?" *Na-Ma* 8, 1975; Ž. Ranković, "Prvi izveštaj iz ERC-a," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1972; I. S., "Kibernetika organizacija upravljanja donijeće plodove trajne vrijednosti," *Unima: preduzeće za unutrašnju i spoljašnu trgovinu* 28, 1974; "Svi podaci iz blagajne," *Na-Ma* 12, 1975; Milka Tvrdišić, "Kibernetika u privredi i elektronska obrada podataka," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1975.

introduction of computer technology in the mid-1970s opened up space for the automation of other routine processes in stores, primarily with electronic cash registers and POS machines (Figure 50).⁹²⁵

Unlike the self-service system, computers and electronic data processing were not as visible to ordinary consumers but nevertheless started a new phase in the modernization of retail. Their groundbreaking effect, much like the self-service system, was not a result of overnight change, but of a long-term transformative process in which retailers and technologists in Yugoslavia were embedded in the zeitgeist of cybernetics and transnational networks of technological exchange. As historian Eden Medina wrote about Chile, Yugoslavia demonstrated how a country with limited technological resources used them creatively to advance what was technologically possible at the time.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁵ “Supermarket u znaku elektronike,” *Na-Ma* 1, 1972.

⁹²⁶ Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*, 14.

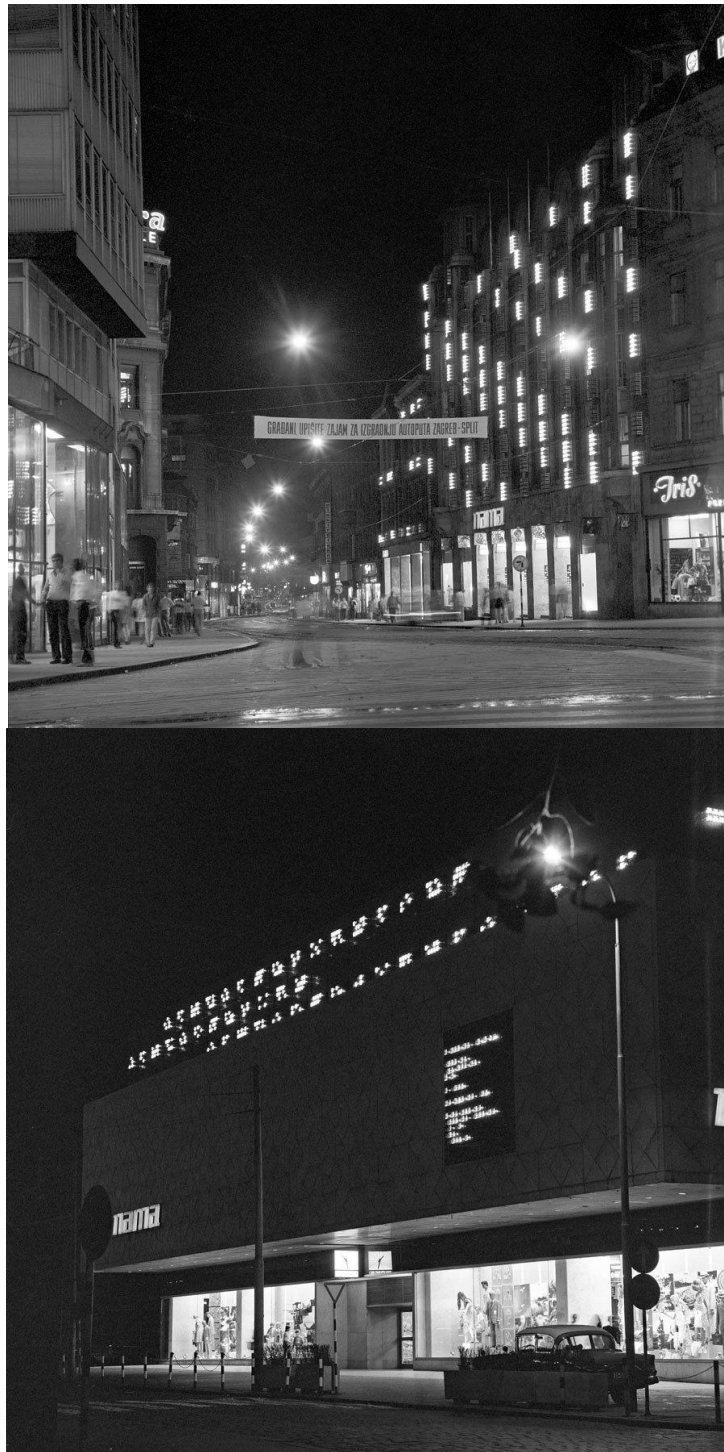


Figure 49. Vladimir Bonačić, light installations, department stores Na-Ma in Ilica and on Kvaternik Square, 1969–1971.

From: “Vladimir Bonačić,” *Digitalna umjetnost u Hrvatskoj*, <https://digitalna-umjetnost-u-hrvatskoj.eu/en/autori/vladimir-bonacic> (accessed September 28, 2024)

Except for industrial management, cybernetics in Yugoslavia was also popular in the artistic movement called the New Tendencies (Nove tendencije), which was interested in the use of computer technology in artmaking. Interestingly, department stores were also connected to this movement thanks to the scientist and artist Vladimir Bonačić, who in 1969 and 1971 created two artworks for the Na-Ma stores in Ilica and on Kvaternik Square. These works consisted of the installation of a light grid on the department stores' façades, whose flickering was set according to Galois-field polynomials. See Armin Medosch, *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution (1961–1978)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 188–189.

4.5 Outside the Capitals: *Kumrovec, Mostar, Svetozarevo*

In the 1970s, the expansion of Yugoslav retail in terms of innovation and technological advances was also accompanied by the material expansion of department store chains from the Yugoslav capitals into other urban centers, both within and outside their respective republics. During the 1960s, especially after the economic reform, retail experts already often complained about the closedness of Yugoslav retail within republic borders.⁹²⁷ In order to address these complaints, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce conducted a detailed study in 1970, analyzing the territorial expansion of Yugoslav retail. In the example of Croatia, the study showed that in 1970 other republics, predominantly Serbia, had altogether 1,031 of their stores in Croatia, while Croatia had 1,034 stores in other republics, most of them also in Serbia. Although this represented less than 10% of all Croatian stores, the numbers showed that the situation was not as dire as the experts thought. Moreover, as the study pointed out, only from the 1970s was the Yugoslav retail sector financially strong enough to pursue “the politics of expansion” into areas outside of their native republics.⁹²⁸

The growth of department store chains that took place in Yugoslav capitals like Zagreb and Belgrade made it possible for these chains to open new stores outside their cities. While Zagreb’s Na-Ma was much more modest in its expansion, RK Beograd became, as its director Čedomir Jelenić boasted, a truly Yugoslav enterprise, with stores in towns all over Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.⁹²⁹ Indeed, as stated earlier, the growth of RK Beograd outside of the capital helped the chain survive the difficulties of the early 1970s.

The expansion of department store chains like Na-Ma and RK Beograd never meant that Yugoslav towns did not have their own local department stores. While in some cases Na-Ma and RK Beograd were the first modern department stores in a particular area—either newly

⁹²⁷ “Dosad bez promena: ekonomski položaj unutrašnje trgovine,” *Nova trgovina* 2, 1967; “Jugoslavija u Na-Mi,” *Na-Ma* 3, 1972.

⁹²⁸ “Jugoslavija u Na-Mi.”

⁹²⁹ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1971.

built or taken over from an existing enterprise—in many other cases, the new department store became a direct competitor to a local store. The establishment of department stores in small towns depended not only on the chain's motivations and financial situation, but also on the agendas of local politicians and retail enterprises, who very often fought against their potential competitors.⁹³⁰ As several cases of RK Beograd department stores in small towns demonstrated, the opening of these stores was sometimes preceded by convoluted, behind-the-scenes struggles. For example, in the late 1960s the chain wanted to open a new store in Sombor in Vojvodina, which required the demolition of the nineteenth-century In Foro Palace on the main town square. In order to prevent the store from opening, the local politicians made the county's monument protection service put the palace under protection. Sometime later—for unknown reasons—the protection service changed its decision, after which the palace was demolished and the new department store opened in its place.⁹³¹

Although they were not always documented, these types of conflicts were probably common, especially considering that RK Beograd had an explicit expansion policy, and Čedomir Jelenić was clear that the interests of consumers and economic development were more important than the interests of what he called “undeveloped local retail.”⁹³² Jelenić, like many other retailers and retail experts, supported the idea of a single Yugoslav market, even at times like the early 1970s, when republics received more autonomy. Jelenić's support for a unified economic arena also translated into criticism of any kind of political and economic nationalism. In his words, RK Beograd “is in favor of a single Yugoslav market and... not at

⁹³⁰ Časlav Protić, “The Role of the Branch System of Department Stores in the Development of a Modern Retail Network in Cities,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

⁹³¹ “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1968. See also Zorić and Đorđević, “Robne kuće Beograd i konzumerizam u Jugoslaviji 1960ih,” 278.

⁹³² Svetislav Stojković, “Counties are Very Interested in Opening Department Stores in Small Places,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

all interested in republic borders nor in the tense intra-national relations created by certain individuals.”⁹³³

Despite Jelenić’s support for a single Yugoslav market, he was equally unhappy when another enterprise became a competitor to his own chain. One year after RK Beograd opened the first department store in the central Serbian town Smederevska Palanka—which was also the chain’s first store outside of Belgrade—a local enterprise built its own store.⁹³⁴ When Jelenić accused the competitor of destroying the modernization of local retail conducted by his chain, a local politician responded that economic competition was simply the rule of the game, one which RK Beograd was also playing.⁹³⁵ The following three cases of department stores in Kumrovec, Mostar, and Svetozarevo demonstrate some of the commonalities and peculiarities of establishing department stores in small urban and rural areas.

4.5.1 Kumrovec: Department Stores in the Countryside

Despite the struggles, stores opened by Na-Ma and RK Beograd in most cases had a significant impact on local economic development and the standard of living in a particular area. One of the earliest examples was the department store that Na-Ma opened in Kumrovec in 1962, which was the chain’s second new store after Trešnjevka. Although this might have indicated that the chain was already prepared to expand outside of city limits, the opening of Na-Ma in Kumrovec was primarily the result of political factors. As a self-service department store built in what was essentially a village of around 1,000 inhabitants, Na-Ma undeniably worked as a motor of retail

⁹³³ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1971. In the interview Jelenić gave in the late 1980s on his dismissal, he claimed that the fact that RK Beograd was a Yugoslav enterprise (not just in terms of stores, but also in the origin of goods and the ethno-national identity of its employees) was taken against him in the early 1970s and the chain was, for example, prevented from opening a store in Priština, the capital of Kosovo. See Grujić, *Kako smo smenjeni*, 105–106.

⁹³⁴ “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1968.

⁹³⁵ “Živadin Vulović, “Opening up the Market—A Precondition for a Faster Development of a Modern Retail Network,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969; Protić, “The Role of the Branch System of Department Stores in the Development of a Modern Retail Network in Cities,” box 60, folder 495, AJ; D. R., “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1969.

modernization in a rural area in northern Croatia. As Rajka Zečević, the vice-president of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, pointed out during the opening, the store was supposed to introduce and educate the rural population on how to use the self-service system and buy new types of consumer goods.⁹³⁶ Once the villagers were convinced of the advantages of the self-service system, they would also be more motivated to improve their agricultural production in order to sell their products to retail enterprises.⁹³⁷

The conditions for retail in the Yugoslav countryside were significantly poorer than in urban areas. If the urban retail network was consistently underdeveloped, the one in the countryside was even worse. This was particularly a problem in those republics, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a large part of the population lived in villages. A study from 1964 showed that, despite the high rural population, only 29% of the retail network in Bosnia and Herzegovina was located in the countryside.⁹³⁸ For example, while in Sarajevo there was one store per 1,000 inhabitants in the city, in the surrounding rural area this increased to one store per 1,529 inhabitants. In addition to the low number of stores, most of them were improvised spaces offering very limited choice in terms of consumer goods.⁹³⁹ As the material means and purchasing power of the rural Yugoslav population increased during the 1960s, the underdeveloped retail network was even less able to respond to their needs and financial capabilities, which consequently had a negative impact on their standard of living.⁹⁴⁰ Even though the gap between the urban and rural society in Yugoslavia always remained large, as Patrick Hyder Patterson pointed out, from the late 1960s the consumer way of life also spread

⁹³⁶ Rajka Zečević was a retail expert from Croatia who authored several books on the subject.

⁹³⁷ "Naš novi pogon u Kumrovcu," *Na-Ma* 2, 1962.

⁹³⁸ Čengiđ, "Mreža trgovine na malo na selu."

⁹³⁹ The analysis of rural retail in Yugoslavia is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but most stores in the countryside were owned by agricultural cooperatives. Although in poor condition, these stores were often the only available retail spaces. When the Yugoslav government decided to take the stores away from cooperative ownership and merge them with retail enterprises in 1958, the cooperatives and local politicians resisted this measure, fearing that the stores would eventually be closed. See Šimšić, "Iskustva u organizaciji trgovine Bosne i Hercegovine."

⁹⁴⁰ Čengiđ, "Mreža trgovine na malo na selu"; Faik Ajanović, "Trgovina i selo," *Savremeno domaćinstvo* 2, 1966.

into the poorest rural areas.⁹⁴¹ The situation described for Bosnia and Herzegovina, where even the urban retail sector was comparatively underdeveloped, reflected what was happening across the federation. As a solution to the problem, the study proposed the formation of large enterprises that would be able to open stores in both urban and rural areas.⁹⁴² To tackle some retail experts' frequent argument that there was often no economic justification to open these stores, other suggestions included the provision of so-called "ambulatory supply" through mobile stores, and even private ownership.⁹⁴³

The improvement of rural retail, however, was not the major motivation behind Na-Ma's store in Kumrovec (Figure 51). In Yugoslavia's symbolic geography, Kumrovec was not just any village; it was the birthplace of the state's leader, Josip Broz Tito. The opening of the store even took place on Youth Day, May 25, 1962, which was the celebration of Tito's symbolic birthday. Tito visited the store with Jovanka a few days before the official opening (Figure 52), accompanied by Na-Ma's director Franjo Balen. The director explained how the self-service system worked, something which Tito was probably already familiar with after visiting the US supermarket at the Zagreb Trade Fair in 1957. A report published in Na-Ma's enterprise newspaper stated that Tito was pleased with what he saw and spent around 6,000 dinars in the store.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴¹ Patterson, *Bought and Sold*, 39.

⁹⁴² Čengić, "Mreža trgovine na malo na selu."

⁹⁴³ Čengić, "Mreža trgovine na malo na selu"; Budimir Miletić, "Demografsko-geografski aspekti alociranja maloprodajne mreže u BiH," *Nova trgovina* 7, 1975.

⁹⁴⁴ "Naš novi pogon u Kumrovcu."



Figure 50. Department store Na-Ma, Kumrovec, 1962.

From: Gavranović, Nama—25 godina.

Unlike Na-Ma stores in Zagreb, which were designed in the functional style of late modernism, Na-Ma in Kumrovec was most likely incorporated into an existing building, which better fit its rural environment.



Figure 51. Department store Na-Ma, Kumrovec, 1962.

Jovanka Broz, Josip Broz Tito, and Na-Ma director Franjo Balen, visiting the Kumrovec store.

From: Gavranović, Nama—25 godina.

While Na-Ma would more seriously expand outside of Zagreb in the 1970s, the case of Kumrovec illustrated how the business politics of the chain was not always necessarily guided by socio-economic considerations. Na-Ma's store manager in Kumrovec would later deny that the store was opened for political reasons. However, in the early days of retail modernization, when retailers and retail experts wanted to improve the position of retail within a Yugoslav system dominated by factories and industrial production, establishing a modern department store in Tito's hometown was a clear message, if not a particularly subtle one.⁹⁴⁵ In time, the decision to open the store also paid off economically, as Kumrovec became a popular tourist location in the 1960s.⁹⁴⁶ This was particularly the case on Youth Day when Kumrovec was, in the words of the store manager, "invaded by consumers."⁹⁴⁷ Despite the political motivations behind the opening, by the 1970s, and especially after the store was renovated and enlarged in 1974, it proved its economic feasibility and importance as a commercial center for the local rural population and the tourists.⁹⁴⁸

4.5.2 Mostar: The Power of Regional Enterprises

The modernization of retail in Bosnia and Herzegovina unraveled at a slower pace than in the more economically prosperous Yugoslav republics, but when the capital Sarajevo received its first modern department store in 1975, other urban centers in the republic already had their own. This stood in contrast to the common trajectory that modern retail spaces first appear in the capital, usually established by a major department store chain or retail enterprise. An example of Bosnia and Herzegovina's different development trajectory was Mostar, which in the span

⁹⁴⁵ "Franjo Šporiš: Teškoće u Kumrovcu," *Na-Ma* 12, 1972.

⁹⁴⁶ "Urbanistički plan naselja Kumrovec," *Arhitektura-urbanizam* 39, 1966.

⁹⁴⁷ "Šest godina rada," *Na-Ma* 5, 1968.

⁹⁴⁸ "Franjo Šporiš: Teškoće u Kumrovcu"; "Selo je objeručke prihvatilo modern trgovinu," *Na-Ma* 5, 1964.

of a few years in the first half of the 1970s welcomed two new modern department stores, whose establishment demonstrated the economic and modernizing potential of regional enterprises.

Like the rest of the republic, Herzegovina had long been a highly agricultural area, but industrialization increased the share of the urban population to 55% by 1971. While ten years earlier Mostar had 72,452 inhabitants, by the early 1970s its population had increased to 91,483 inhabitants.⁹⁴⁹ The growth of the urban population and its purchasing power, supported by a high percentage of the local population who earned their living abroad as guest workers, required a retail network that could fulfill the population's growing needs. In the early 1950s, there were a total of 443 stores in Herzegovina; most of these were in Mostar, where the ratio was one store per 246 inhabitants.⁹⁵⁰ By the early 1960s, the ratio dramatically increased to one store per 561 inhabitants, and of the hundreds of stores, only two were supermarkets.⁹⁵¹

After the economic reform, the local economy in Mostar started to boom thanks to the creation of large enterprises through mergers. Two such large, regional enterprises opened Mostar's two modern department stores in the first half of the 1970s. The first modern department store in the city was opened in March 1970, by the wholesale enterprise Razvitak. Established in 1947 in the Croatian town Metković, located near the border with Herzegovina, around forty-five kilometers from Mostar, Razvitak was one of the most important enterprises in the borderland region connecting the southern Croatian coast with Herzegovina. By the early 1980s, Razvitak managed around 190 stores in this area, including an additional thirty-three supermarkets, the first of which was built by the enterprise in 1962.⁹⁵² Razvitak in Mostar was the enterprise's first department store, located on the eastern bank of the Neretva River as one

⁹⁴⁹ Delmo, "Modernizacija i oblikovanje potrošačke kulture u Mostaru ranih 70-ih," 139–140.

⁹⁵⁰ "Organizacija trgovinske mreže Bosne i Hercegovine," *Nova trgovina* 9, 1953; Šimšić, "Iskustva i problem reorganizacije trgovinske mreže Bosne i Hercegovine."

⁹⁵¹ "Poslovanje prodavnica za samoposluživanje u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Trgovinski bilten* 12, 1961; Čengić, "Mreža trgovine na malo na selu."

⁹⁵² "Izložba Prošlost Metkovića od najstarijih vremena do danas," Virtualna izložba Robna kuća Razvitak Metković - Uvođenje samoposluživanja u poslovanje Razvitka, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://dolinaneretve.topoteka.net/#>

of the first buildings in the new entry area into the town envisioned by the local Department of Urban Planning.⁹⁵³ The department store was built by the construction enterprise Vranica from Sarajevo—which, five years later, would build Sarajka—together with a seven-floor residential building, an inner courtyard, and a restaurant.⁹⁵⁴ As a modern retail space, the Razvitak department store brought for the first time to the residents of Mostar many of the perks that Belgrade and Zagreb had already been enjoying: a sales area of 3,100m² across four floors with over 24,000 items, a supermarket, a furniture showroom, a home delivery service, a beauty salon, and a tailor shop. When the local newspaper *Sloboda* called Razvitak “a super luxury department store,” this was not far from the truth.⁹⁵⁵

The department store Razvitak (Figures 53 and 54) was also remarkable for another reason: its architectural design. The store was a pioneer in referencing local architectural and cultural heritage in its design, a feature that became common for department stores in small towns in the 1970s, as the architectural expression moved away from the modernist functionalist tradition toward a postmodernist heterogeneity of styles. Designed by architect Ante Paljaga—Vranica’s technical director—Razvitak was in its form a typical modernist department store, with a ground floor made from aluminum and glass, and the upper floors enclosed in a cube.⁹⁵⁶ This cube, however, was covered with ten large panels made from reinforced concrete, each featuring a unique depiction of motives and ornaments from *stećci*.⁹⁵⁷ *Stećak* is a type of a richly decorated medieval tombstone found all over Bosnia and Herzegovina and its borderland regions. Paljaga’s incorporation of a local, regional and

⁹⁵³ “Poslovno-stambena zgrada u Mostaru,” *Čovjek i prostor* 187, 1968.

⁹⁵⁴ “Robna kuća Razitak u Mostaru.”

⁹⁵⁵ Đelmo, “Modernizacija i oblikovanje potrošačke kulture u Mostaru ranih 70-ih,” 145.

⁹⁵⁶ Ante Paljaga was an architect employed by the construction enterprise Vranica. He was the designer of the two Razvitak department stores, in Mostar and in Metković. Opened in 1981, the design of the department store in Metković also referenced the local context, because the shape of the building was modelled after the boats sailing down the Neretva River. See “Uvođenje samoposluživanja u poslovanje Razvitka,” Virtualna izložba Robna kuća Razvitak Metković, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://dolinaneretve.topoteka.net/#>.

⁹⁵⁷ “Poslovno-stambena zgrada u Mostaru.”

vernacular motif into a highly functionalist design resulted in what historian of architecture Karin Šerman called “the extended modernist field.”⁹⁵⁸ This extension occurred through the “regionalization of architectural shapes and spatial expressions,” which started appearing on the Yugoslav architectural scene from the early 1970s in the architecture of hotels alongside the Adriatic Coast or in mountain areas.⁹⁵⁹ Department stores outside of capitals were also common representatives of regional modernism, which served as a kind of “preconsciousness of postmodernism”; there, regional, vernacular, and historical elements were often employed in architectural design in an even more unrestrained, playful, and ironic way.⁹⁶⁰



Figure 52. Ante Paljaga, Razvitak department store, Mostar, 1970.

⁹⁵⁸ Karin Šerman, “Boris Magaš and the Emergence of Postmodernist Themes in the Croatian Modernist Tradition,” in *Re-Framing Identities: Architecture’s Turn to History, 1970–1990*, vol. 3, *East-West Central*, ed. Ákos Moravánszky and Torsten Lange (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017), 202.

⁹⁵⁹ Antoaneta Pasinović, “Dvosjeklost regionalizacije prostornog izraza: uz spomen-dom boraca i omladine u Kumrovcu,” *Arhitektura* 144, 1973.

⁹⁶⁰ Šerman, “Boris Magaš and the Emergence of Postmodernist Themes,” 191. Among the architectural community, the most notable example of this style was the department store in Jajce, built in 1976 by architects Radivoj Jadrić, Džemaludin Karić, and Nedžad Kurto. With steep roofs typical of the traditional architecture in this mountain region, the department store won the *Borba* award for the best architectural work in 1976. See Ivan Štraus, *15 godina bosanskohercegovačke arhitekture: 1970–1985* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987), 44.

The photograph was taken on the opening day by photographer Ivica Grubišić. From: "Otvorenje robne kuće Mostar," *Virtualna izložba robna kuća Razvitak Metković*, <https://dolinaneretve.topoteka.net/#doc=692033> (accessed September 16, 2024).



Figure 53. Ante Paljaga, Razvitak department store interior, Mostar, 1970.

From: "Otvorenje robne kuće Mostar," *Virtualna izložba robna kuća Razvitak Metković*, <https://dolinaneretve.topoteka.net/#doc=692033> (accessed September 16, 2024).

The second modern department store in Mostar was HIT (an abbreviation for Hercegovačka integrisana trgovina, Herzegovina Integrated Trade), which opened three years later, not far away on the western bank of the Neretva River (Figure 55). HIT was established in 1971 through a merger of a large number of retail enterprises in Herzegovina and Dalmatia, and the enterprise's business focus was on retail, foreign trade, and the production of construction materials. In the early 1970s, HIT owned 340 stores in Herzegovina and Dalmatia, and employed around 1,500 workers.⁹⁶¹ Opened in September 1972, the HIT department store was designed by architect Safet Galešić, and built by construction enterprises Soko from Mostar and Herceg-Invest from Stolac, in partnership with the city's Department for Urban Planning.⁹⁶²

⁹⁶¹ "HIT – preduzeće za unutarnju i spoljnu trgovinu Mostar," *Mesna zajednica* 11, 1972.

⁹⁶² "HIT – preduzeće za unutarnju i spoljnu trgovinu Mostar."

Soko, frequently mentioned earlier as a producer of equipment for the self-service system, was one of the leaders of industrial development in Herzegovina.⁹⁶³ Initially established in 1951 as an aircraft manufacturer, by the 1960s it also produced retailing equipment and furniture for stores, car parts, prefabricated constructions, and refrigerators.⁹⁶⁴

In its architectural design, the HIT department store continued the usual style of modernist department stores as cubes hovering over glass storefronts. In fact, Galešić took the design of the white perforated screen covering the façade from the West German department store chain Herten. The surrounding square was carefully decorated with flowers and a fountain, creating a micro-urban location centered around the department store. It also included a parking lot, a more common feature of Yugoslav department stores from the late 1960s.⁹⁶⁵



Figure 54. Safet Galešić, department store HIT, Mostar, 1973.

From: “Kultne mostarske građevine koje ostavljaju bez daha,” *mostarski.info*, <https://mostarski.info/kultne-mostarske-građevine/> (accessed October 20, 2024)

⁹⁶³ Đelmo, “Modernizacija i oblikovanje potrošačke kulture u Mostaru ranih 70-ih,” 139.

⁹⁶⁴ “Kako smo počeli,” in *Soko-Mostar: 1951–1971*, ed. Šerif Dugalić (Novi Sad: Novosadski sajam, 1971).

⁹⁶⁵ HIT, like many other large enterprises at the time, also used computers (NCR’s Century 75) and electronic data processing to manage its business operations. See Jović, “Konceptija primjene elektornskog računara u jednoj prometnoj organizaciji.”

Not far away from each other in terms of time and location, Razvitak and HIT were in direct competition with each other. Even before Razvitak opened, local skeptics forecast the economic failure of the department store.⁹⁶⁶ However, not only was Razvitak an economic success, but its turnover after the opening of HIT actually increased rather than decreased, which confirmed the arguments of those Yugoslav economists and retail experts who advocated for economic competition.⁹⁶⁷ Built by regional enterprises, whose activities in Herzegovina and southern Dalmatia continued a long-term tradition of economic connections in these areas, Razvitak and HIT also demonstrated the modernizing power of regional business in urban centers outside the influence of the capital city.⁹⁶⁸

4.5.3 Svetozarevo: Localizing the Store from the Capital

The opening of department stores by competing enterprises in a single location, despite the positive outcome shown in the case of Mostar, was often a fraught affair. This was certainly the case for the department store that RK Beograd opened in the central Serbian town Svetozarevo (now Jagodina) in August 1974. From 1969, when the city council made the decision to erect a new department store, until the opening day five years later, the atmosphere behind the scenes was fraught. Records in the town council's minutes of meetings shed light on the extent of the background struggles that emerged as the local community faced a new competitor from the capital.

During the late 1960s, Svetozarevo grew rapidly as an industrial town; its productive capacities, headed by the well-known Svetozarevo Cable Factory, brought in money and new inhabitants from its rural surroundings.⁹⁶⁹ The population of the town grew from 20,000

⁹⁶⁶ "Predstavljamo vam OOUR-e," Virtualna izložba Robna kuća Razvitak Metković, accessed September 19, 2024, <https://dolinaneretve.topoteka.net/#doc=692019>.

⁹⁶⁷ Đelmo, "Modernizacija i oblikovanje potrošačke kulture u Mostaru ranih 70-ih," 146.

⁹⁶⁸ St., "Trgovina Mostara i Hercegovine u drugoj polovini XIX. veka," *Nova trgovina* 7–8, 1952.

⁹⁶⁹ "Razgovor sa predstavnicima tri pomoravske opštine: Međuopštinska saradnja Svetozareva, Čuprije i Paraćina," *Komuna* 3, 1966.

inhabitants in the mid-1960s to 27,500 by the early 1970s.⁹⁷⁰ As was the case all over Yugoslavia, Svetožarevo's retail network was not adequately able to supply this growing population. During this period, there were five retail enterprises in Svetožarevo, which owned around 254 stores.⁹⁷¹ The largest and most central of them was the Morava department store (Figure 56), opened in 1965 by a local retail enterprise of the same name. Designed by the architect P. Tatić and built by the local construction enterprise Pomoravlje, the Morava department store occupied the ground floor and first floor of a residential building in the vicinity of the future main square and was, in all aspects, a local enterprise.⁹⁷² The residents of Svetožarevo, however, were not necessarily admirers of this local establishment, and they generally expressed many grievances about their local retail enterprises, from the rudeness of the sales staff and the low quality of fresh produce, to the lack of price transparency, refrigerators, and storage.⁹⁷³



Figure 55. P. Tatić, department store Morava, Svetožarevo, 1965.

⁹⁷⁰ "Razgovor sa predstavnicima tri pomoravske opštine"; "Svetožarevo: General Urban Plan," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetožarevo, First Half of 1973, Istorijski Arhiv Srednje Pomoravlje, Jagodina (IASP).

⁹⁷¹ "Proposal for the Plan of Socio-Economic Development of the Svetožarevo County for 1972," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetožarevo, First Half of 1972, IASP.

⁹⁷² "Project Documentation of the Department Store Morava," folder 55, Project Documentation, IASP.

⁹⁷³ S. Stanković, "Potrošači imaju reč," *Novi put*, June 5, 1974.

From: "Svetozarevo iz 1965," Kupindo, https://www.kupindo.com/Srbija-i-ex-YU-1961-80/75472945_Svetozarevo-iz-1965

The limited capacities and outdatedness of local retail obliged the town council to invest in a new department store. In 1969, the council invited several chains and retail enterprises to open a department store in Svetozarevo. For Na-Ma from Zagreb, and Merkator and Prehrana from Ljubljana, Svetozarevo was simply too far away. Meanwhile, RK Beograd was already busy with the construction of a department store in the neighboring town of Paraćin. The council's offer was eventually accepted by Interexport, a foreign trade enterprise based in Belgrade. According to the contract between the town council and Interexport, the new department store was to be built on the main town square by 1972. When the deadline passed and Interexport had not even requested a construction permit for the building, the town council simply offered a new contract to RK Beograd, and the chain now gladly accepted the offer.⁹⁷⁴

Interexport, however, was not planning to leave without a fight. A complicated set of accusations cast by all sides revealed that, after Interexport agreed to build the new department store, the local enterprise Morava, in an attempt to suppress any kind of competition, decided to merge with Interexport. As I mentioned previously, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, mergers of small enterprises were a common occurrence, and Morava had already merged with two other retail enterprises from Svetozarevo. Inex Svetozarevo, the enterprise established through the merger with Interexport, would not have raised any suspicion, were it not obvious that—as the councilors also noticed—the only reason behind the merger was so that Morava could own the new department store without paying for its construction. As the preparation of the urban location for the new store took longer than expected, Morava's plans were ruined by

⁹⁷⁴ "The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevi, November 7, 1972," the Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevo, Second Half of 1972, IASP.

the economic crisis and stabilization measures, which ultimately made it impossible for Interexport to build the new store.⁹⁷⁵

Another problem for Morava was that the councilors did not favor their local retail enterprise. The councilors perceived Morava as an economically underdeveloped entity, which was unable and unwilling to modernize the retail network in Svetozarevo. Even one of Morava's workers, who took part in the town council, criticized her own employer by saying that it was embarrassing to work on counters "left to them by capitalists sixty years ago."⁹⁷⁶ The situation with retail in Svetozarevo was made worse by the fact that the neighboring town, Paraćin, had a modern department store built by RK Beograd, where residents of Svetozarevo mostly shopped.⁹⁷⁷ Although not all councilors agreed that economic competition would automatically modernize local retail, they were not necessarily interested in protecting a local enterprise if they thought that it was not contributing to local development. In 1972, when RK Beograd got the contract for the new department store, there was no reason not to believe that Yugoslavia's largest department store chain would build a modern department store easily and on time.

The new RK Beograd department store in the center of Svetozarevo had 2,750m² of sales area across three floors and a supermarket in the basement, and was equipped with furniture and appliances from West Germany and Austria as well as from Yugoslav enterprises like Radulaška from Belgrade, Metalija from Subotica, and Soko from Mostar.⁹⁷⁸ The building (Figure 57), designed by architect Petar Petrović from the Belgrade-based architectural bureau Arhitektura, resembled a ziggurat made from concrete and red brick, suspended over the glazed

⁹⁷⁵ "The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevi, November 7, 1972," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevo, Second Half of 1972, IASP.

⁹⁷⁶ "The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevi, November 7, 1972," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevo, Second Half of 1972, IASP.

⁹⁷⁷ "The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevi, November 7, 1972," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetozarevo, Second Half of 1972, IASP.

⁹⁷⁸ "Svetozarevački potstrek," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1974.

storefronts of the ground floor.⁹⁷⁹ RK Beograd's enterprise newspaper described the building's style as "Sumadian-Moravian" (*šumadijsko-moravski stil*), an imaginary concoction referring to the regional Moravian style of medieval Orthodox monasteries, also built in red brick.⁹⁸⁰ As the example of the Razvitak department store in Mostar showed, using references to local architecture and cultural heritage became a common feature in the design of department stores in small towns from the early 1970s. This was one of the new aesthetic possibilities that emerged with the pluralization of architectural expression in this period. At the same time, local inspiration was combined with contemporary building techniques and materials, such as concrete, and incorporated into the architect's personal visual style. Later projects designed by Petrović together with his wife Olivera, like the residence of the Iranian Ambassador and a boarding house for single workers (*samački hotel*) in Belgrade, echoed the materials, shapes, and colors from the store in Svetožarevo.⁹⁸¹ The new department store, as was usually the case, was the first of several buildings used to create the new town center, which was planned according to Svetožarevo's General Urban Plan of 1972.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁹ Jevta Jevtović, *Salon arhitekture 75* (Beograd: Muzej primjenjene umetnosti, 1975).

⁹⁸⁰ M. Milošević, "Robne kuće u Svetožarevu i Novom Pazaru," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1972; "Otvorena nova robna kuća u Svetožarevu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1974.

⁹⁸¹ Jevtović, *Salon arhitekture 75*; Jevta Jevtović, *Salon arhitekture 76* (Belgrade: Muzej primjenjene umetnosti, 1976), 6.

⁹⁸² "Svetožarevo: General Urban Plan," The Minutes of Meeting of the Town Assembly of Svetožarevo, First Half of 1973," IASP; "Objekat je doprinos kolektiva robnih kuća Beograd," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1974.



Figure 56. Petar Petrović, RK Beograd department store, Svetozarevo, 1974.

From: Jevta Jevtović, *Salon arhitekture 75* (Belgrade: Muzej primjenjene umetnosti, 1975).

The architectural design was not the only feature that RK Beograd used to connect the Belgrade department store chain with Svetozarevo. Petar Matić, the head of RK Beograd's Development Department, stated in his opening speech that not only would the store sell many of the products made by the local industry, but that the building itself was built using the cables made in the renowned Svetozarevo Cable Factory. The new department store also employed 130 workers from Svetozarevo and its surroundings—selected from a staggering number of around 4,000 applicants—for whom this was usually their first job after trade school.⁹⁸³ Petar Matić even linked the new store to the central local political and historical figure after whom the town was named, the socialist philosopher and writer Svetozar Marković. In Matić's words, Marković's aspirations, dating to the late nineteenth century, were only fulfilled by Yugoslav self-managed socialism, in which department stores served as evidence of the progressive development that Marković passionately supported.⁹⁸⁴ The case of the department store in Svetozarevo showed that by using material and discursive means, the chain's management

⁹⁸³ "Ostvaren je san—raditi u preduzeću robnih kuća...", *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1974; Rade Jovanović, "Nova robna kuća Beograd otvara vrata," *Novi put*, July 23, 1974.

⁹⁸⁴ "Otvorena nova robna kuća u Svetozarevu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1974.

simultaneously connected the store both to its local environment and to the federation, although the activities preceding its opening were not as smooth and harmonious as it might have seemed to the hundreds of visitors on opening day.

These three case studies, selected from the hundreds of department stores that existed in Yugoslavia by the mid-1970s, demonstrate some of the concerns and challenges in expanding the retail network outside of capitals into other urban centers and even rural areas. Behind the modernist façades, which increasingly featured local cultural and architectural features, and the numerous goods and services offered to the consumers, there was often a tough long-term process of planning and construction. Once built, however, these department stores had a positive impact on the modernization of local retail, and increased the standard of living of the Yugoslav population, whose purchasing power reached its peak in the mid-1970s.

4.6 The Adriatic in Moscow: The International Organization of Socialist Department Stores

The large department store chains' conquest of the federal market took place alongside the intensification of their activities in the international arena during the 1970s. As I showed in the previous chapters, from the mid-1950s Yugoslav retail experts and retailers were active in transnational exchanges with retail enterprises from different parts of Europe. Whether commercial (exchange of goods and technology), scientific (exchange of know-how and business practices, workers' education), or ceremonial (using department stores for visits by foreign delegations), retail experts and retailers were well-versed in navigating and taking advantage of Yugoslavia's unique position in the Cold War. These transnational exchanges were also the staple of Na-Ma and RK Beograd's business politics. Čedomir Jelenić proudly

proclaimed that RK Beograd was using the experience of large foreign enterprises by “buying other people’s knowledge.”⁹⁸⁵

The transnational activities of Na-Ma and RK Beograd from the 1960s continued in a similar vein in the following decade. Alongside regular reports on foreign practices in their enterprise newspapers, both Na-Ma and RK Beograd organized study visits and sent their workers to Western European department store chains, mainly to West Germany, Switzerland and Italy, although RK Beograd also sent a team to the US to visit the Sears chain.⁹⁸⁶ In comparison, visits from Western retailers were rare, unless they were invited by the chains. For example, a group of West German retailers was brought to RK Beograd to give lectures, while a group of trade students from the US came on their own initiative because they were interested in Yugoslavia’s socio-economic system.⁹⁸⁷ Except for a brief moment in 1970, when Richard Nixon parked his car in front of one of RK Beograd’s stores and allegedly said it was one of the best he had ever seen, Western politicians were also not frequent visitors to Yugoslav department stores.⁹⁸⁸ In contrast, trade and political delegations from state-socialist and non-aligned countries like Romania, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, the GDR, Mongolia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Venezuela were often guests of Na-Ma and RK Beograd.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁵ D. Radojković, “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 2, 1972.

⁹⁸⁶ “Utisci iz Minhena,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1970; “Poslije posjete inozemnim robnim kućama,” *Na-Ma* 9–10, 1970; “Poseta europskim robnim kućama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1971; “Godina velikih napora, ali i uspeha,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1972; I. L., “Kralj potrošač,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1972; “Poseta robnim kućama u Minhenu,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 3, 1972; “Izlaganje robe,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1974.

⁹⁸⁷ “Unapređenje poslovanja,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1970; “Odluke koje smo doneli,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1970; “Studijska grupa iz SAD posetila naše preduzeće,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1972.

⁹⁸⁸ “Šta drugi pišu o nama,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1970; “Studijska grupa iz SAD posetila naše preduzeće,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1972.

⁹⁸⁹ “Gosti iz Moskve, Velikog Trnova i Zagreba,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 11, 1970; “Moskovljani u našem preduzeću,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 12, 1970; “Visoki gost iz DR Nemačke,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1970; “Potpredsednik rumunjske vlade posetio naše preduzeće,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1971; P. P., “Trgovinska delegacija iz Rumunije,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1971; “Luvsandamdin proučavao naša iskustva,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 6, 1971; “Uvaženi gosti iz Moskve u našem preduzeću,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 5, 1972; “Gosti iz Rumunije, Mongolije i Lenjingrada,” *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1972; P. P., “Čehoslovački ministar na Terazijama i u Zemunu,” *Beograd: preduzeće*

In this period, the expansion of department store chains outside of the capitals also gave rise to another novel practice: cross-border shopping from neighboring state-socialist countries. While in academic and popular discourse Trieste is often evoked as the Western shopping mecca for Yugoslavs, Yugoslavia was equally interesting for its state-socialist neighbors.⁹⁹⁰ One example was RK Beograd's department store in Vršac in Vojvodina; after it opened in 1970, it was often frequented by Romanian citizens from across the nearby border. Romanians had the right to come to Yugoslavia once per year, and during this time, especially on state holidays, they would often go shopping in Vršac, while customs and forwarding agents had special permission to deliver goods to Romania.⁹⁹¹ Vršac was also visited by politicians from Timișoara, and the Western Romanian border around this area gained a reputation as a source for the supply of Western, Yugoslav, and Hungarian goods.⁹⁹²

Alongside these transnational encounters and exchanges, from the 1970s Yugoslav department store chains also engaged in more formal international activity via their membership in the International Organization of Socialist Department Stores (MOSU). MOSU, headquartered in Bratislava, was established in 1967 to support mutual cooperation and exchange between state-socialist department stores. Its founding countries were the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria. RK Beograd was

robnih kuća 12, 1972; "Iz Moskve na Terazije," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 8, 1972; "Gosti iz Bugarske u Zaječaru," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1972; "Gradonačelnik Berlina u robnoj kući II," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1973; "Zvanična delegacija Poljske u našem preduzeću," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 4, 1973; "Gosti iz Venecuele u robnoj kući na Terazijama," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 7, 1973; "Gost iz dalekog Branjska u Svetozarevu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1974.

⁹⁹⁰ See Breda Luthar, "Shame, Desire, and Longing for the West: A Case Study of Consumption," in *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2010), 341–378; Maja Mikula, "Highways of Desire: Cross-Border Shopping in Former Yugoslavia, 1960s–1980s" in *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Budapest & New York: Central European University Press, 2010), 211–237; Polona Sitar, "Cross-Border Shopping Tourism in Socialist Yugoslavia: Gender, Socialist Economy, and Reconfiguration of Borders," *Cross-Border Review: Yearbook 2017* (2017): 79–96; Francesca Rolandi, "Yugoslavia Looking Westward: Transnational Consumer Contact with Italy During the 1960s," in *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia: (Post)Socialism and Its Other*, ed. Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović, and Danijela Lugarić (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 191–207.

⁹⁹¹ Milivoj Solarević, "Rumuni sve češći potrošači RK u Vršcu," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 1, 1970.

⁹⁹² Liviu Chelcea, "The Culture of Shortage During State-Socialism: Consumption Practices in a Romanian Village in the 1980s," *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2002): 40.

the first Yugoslav member until 1978, when MOSU was joined by the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores (PURKJ).

The PURKJ had a similar role to MOSU, but on the scale of the Yugoslav federation. After an initial meeting in September 1962, the association was established in May 1963 by nine Yugoslav department store chains: Beograd, Gramag and Crvena zvezda from Belgrade, Na-Mas from Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Ljubljana, Skopje from Skopje, and Titograd from Titograd (now Podgorica).⁹⁹³ The association had both commercial and expert aims, such as the joint import of local and foreign goods, the organization of exhibitions, the creation of a common catalog, and the exchange of know-how and experience at the federal level.⁹⁹⁴ These activities were initiated in order to assist department store chains in expanding their business operations throughout the federation, in support of the idea of the single Yugoslav market. As retail activities intensified from the late 1960s, commercial operations—predominantly the import of foreign goods—became the central focus of the association.⁹⁹⁵

In addition to these federal activities, the exchange of know-how between Yugoslav and foreign department stores was another important task of the PURKJ. The association organized yearly study visits to department stores in countries “of the East and the West” in order to explore their business operations.⁹⁹⁶ As the cases of RK Beograd and Na-Ma earlier showed, relations with Western Europe were based primarily on acquiring foreign expertise, know-how, and technology, while those with Eastern Europe were also business partnerships, mainly focused on the exchange of consumer goods. For example, in 1974, the PURKJ signed a

⁹⁹³ The PURKJ operated within RK Beograd until 1965, after which it became an independent association until 1992. See “The Analysis of the Economic Justification for the Existence of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores,” box 3, folder 694, AJ.

⁹⁹⁴ Franjo Balen, “Poslovno udruženje robnih kuća,” *Na-Ma* 3, 1963; “The Minutes of Meeting of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores, September 16, 1962,” box 3, folder 694, AY.

⁹⁹⁵ “The Analysis of the Economic Justification for the Existence of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores,” box 3, folder 694, AJ.

⁹⁹⁶ “The Analysis of the Economic Justification for the Existence of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores,” box 3, folder 694, AJ.

contract with the Polish state department store chain Centrum to exchange goods with a value of two million dollars, and a similar agreement already existed with Romania.⁹⁹⁷

Once the PURKJ joined MOSU in 1978 these activities intensified, but RK Beograd, as the largest Yugoslav department store chain, had by that point already been a member since 1968. While other MOSU chains were state and cooperative retail enterprises, the Yugoslav system of decentralized and liberalized market socialism with independent enterprises allowed for the membership of a single department store chain.⁹⁹⁸ RK Beograd hosted a MOSU meeting in September 1969, during which the members discussed options for cooperation. As in the case of the PURKJ, the exchange of consumer goods became the most popular activity. The meeting also included a visit to RK Beograd's stores in Terazije and Zemun, as well as a meeting with Belgrade's mayor Branko Pešić, while the newspaper coverage of the event showed its importance for Yugoslav international cooperation in retail.⁹⁹⁹ The activities in MOSU became even more significant after the mid-1970s, when foreign trade relations with Eastern European countries in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), primarily the Soviet Union, increased.¹⁰⁰⁰

The political and economic relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union went up and down throughout the Cold War period, and Yugoslavia always retained associate member status in Comecon. A period of stable relations from the mid-1960s, however, resulted in the biggest increase in trading between the two countries.¹⁰⁰¹ Furthermore, the closer relations under Brezhnev in the early 1970s brought to life a particular economic project, the construction

⁹⁹⁷ "The Analysis of the Economic Justification for the Existence of the Business Association of Yugoslav Department Stores," box 3, folder 694, AJ; "Business Report for 1974," box 3, folder 694, AY.

⁹⁹⁸ In 1987, the members of MOSU were Skála and Centrum from Hungary, Centrum and Konzument from the GDR, Centrum and Społem from Poland, GUM from Bulgaria, the Romanian state department store chain, GUM from the Soviet Union, and Prior from Czechoslovakia. See "Monograph: 20 Years of Successful Cooperation," box 13, The Activities of the Business Association in MOSU, folder 694, AJ.

⁹⁹⁹ "Sastanak internacionalnog udruženja socijalističkih robnih kuća," *Beograd: preduzeće robnih kuća* 10, 1969.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Tatjana Globokar, "Foreign Trade between Yugoslavia and the European countries of CMEA," *Soviet and Eastern European Foreign Trade* 19, no. 2 (1983): 100–102.

¹⁰⁰¹ Miljković, "Kitchen Without the Debate," 120–121.

of the first Yugoslav department store in the Soviet Union. The department store Jadran (the Adriatic) was opened on Profsoyuznaya Street on the outskirts of Moscow in September 1974 by the retail enterprise Koteks from Split (Figures 58 and 59).¹⁰⁰²

The building, a low-level modernist construction glazed with storefronts, had a 700m² sales area, where it sold twenty million dinars worth of consumer goods produced in Yugoslavia: these included clothing, houseware, cosmetics, vinyl records, sports and leather goods, alcohol, and cigarettes.¹⁰⁰³ In 1980, the residents of Moscow, who often queued for many of these products, could also find toys of Misha the bear, mascot of the Moscow Olympics, which was produced by another enterprise from Split, Jugoplastika.¹⁰⁰⁴ Indeed, Jadran was one of the many stores opened in Moscow by enterprises from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and even India.¹⁰⁰⁵ While a list of products exchanged between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1980 shows a predominance of oil and petroleum products, machinery, equipment, and transport materials rather than consumer goods, the existence of Jadran and other department stores in Moscow demonstrated that retail spaces were more attractive as public symbols of the political and socio-economic successes of European state-socialist countries.¹⁰⁰⁶ Simultaneously, the products on offer, and the queues of consumers in Jadran, inevitably exposed the superiority of Yugoslav retail and light industry in comparison to the Soviet Union, although the two countries continued their cooperation in MOSU until the collapse of both states in the 1990s.

¹⁰⁰² “Redovi Moskovljana u robnoj kući Jadran,” *Supermarket* 3, 1978. Koteks was a retail enterprise established in Split in 1947. The enterprise is most famous for opening one of the first Yugoslav shopping malls in 1981, the sports and commerce complex Koteks Gripe in Split. See Matijević Barčot, “Svi putevi vode u Koteks,” 188.

¹⁰⁰³ “Jugoslavenska robna kuća,” *Na-Ma* 1, 1974; “Redovi Moskovljana u robnoj kući Jadran,” *Supermarket* 3, 1978.

¹⁰⁰⁴ “Redovi Moskovljana u robnoj kući Jadran.”

¹⁰⁰⁵ Olga Zhukova, “‘Vanda-Leyptsig-Yadran’: chto mozhno bylo kupit' v magazinakh stran sotslagerya v epokhu total'nogo defitsita,” *new-retail.ru*, January 24, 2023, https://new-retail.ru/magaziny/istoriya/vanda_leyptsig_yadran_chto_mozhno_bylo_kupit_v_magazinakh_stran_sotslagerya_v_epokhu_totalnogo_defit121211/.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Globokar, “Foreign Trade between Yugoslavia and the European countries of CMEA,” 104.



Figure 57. Jadran department store, Moscow, 1974.

From: "Yadran: chto pokupali v samom populyarnom magazine sovetskoy Moskvy," dzen.ru, <https://dzen.ru/a/ZVjHohnpV0UxuSUn> (accessed October 5, 2024)

The display in the foreground shows the Medusa lamps designed in the 1970s by the Italian designer Harvey Guzzini for the Slovenian furniture enterprise Meblo.



Figure 58. Jadran department store, Moscow, 1974.

. Soviet consumers queuing in front of the Yugoslav department store Jadran.

From: Olga Zhukova, "'Vanda-Leyptsig-Yadran': chto mozžno bylo kupit' v magazinakh stran sotslagerya v epokhu total'nogo defitsita," wew-retail.ru, <https://new-retail.ru/> (accessed October 5, 2024).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed that, in contrast to scholarship that largely portrays the period from the late 1960s to the late 1970s as a time of prosperity—albeit one that was based on the increasing indebtedness of the government and its citizens—for the retail sector, the early 1970s were already very difficult years of limited opportunities and decline.

The first half of the 1970s was a whirlwind period for Yugoslav department store chains. Stimulated by their incredible growth during the 1960s, the management of Na-Ma and RK Beograd envisioned an even more intense expansion for the chains in the 1970s. Their plans, however, were soon crushed by the austerity measures of economic stabilization, which the Yugoslav government introduced to tackle the negative impact of the global economic crisis on Yugoslavia's foreign trade deficit and inflation. Since these measures aimed at curbing investments and purchasing power, Na-Ma and RK Beograd were forced to give up most of their development plans and deal with the increasing difficulty of maintaining profitable business operations.

Despite these unexpected challenges, I also demonstrated that thanks to the intense growth of the 1960s, the department store chains had enough power to utilize whatever means disposable to expand their business operations. The trajectories of expansion, as I argued, took a different course from the early 1970s. This course encompassed three major aspects: innovations in retailing and technology, the opening of new stores in smaller towns and rural areas, and an intensification of the chains' international activity. Increases in the variety and number of consumer goods, numerous additional services, unlimited access to consumption, and the overflow of the physicality of retail spaces from contained modernist cubes into underground infrastructures and high-rises demonstrated that the development of Yugoslav retail could still go further than previously imaginable. In this way, the institutionalization of

retail spaces in the 1960s served as a springboard for Yugoslav retailers to explore and consequently offer even more possibilities to Yugoslav consumers. Since the proliferation of the chains' business operations made them impossible to manage manually, the cyberneticians and technologists employed by the chains—in a period when cybernetics was an influential global phenomenon—introduced computer technology to automate the processing of ever-growing amounts of data.

The enlargement of chains in the 1960s also served as a foundation for overcoming the closedness of Yugoslav retail within its territorial limits. From the early 1970s, the modernization of retail expanded from capital cities and large urban centers into small urban and rural areas throughout Yugoslavia. While modern department stores, built either by chains from the capitals or by regional enterprises, had a positive impact on local consumption and standards of living, they were not always initially welcomed by the local community. Consequently, the planning and construction of stores had to be incorporated into their local environments, whether through architectural design, cooperation with local enterprises, the employment of a local workforce, or symbolic connections with the history of an area. In contrast to Croatia or Serbia, the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina also showed that modern department stores could initially appear in towns other than the capital thanks to the economic capacities and initiative of regional enterprises.

Finally, the transnational activities that Yugoslav department store chains initiated throughout the 1960s were, from the mid-1970s, more intensely accompanied by their international participation on the world market, primarily through membership in MOSU. Imagined as a support network for commercial and expert exchange, MOSU became a hub where initially RK Beograd, and from the late 1970s the PURKJ, could engage in the sale of consumer goods with other department store chains in European state-socialist countries. In

many ways, the opening of the department store Jadran in Moscow was a symbol of these newly ignited relations between Yugoslavia and the countries in Comecon.

The year 1975 arguably constituted a turning point for major retail enterprises and department store chains in Yugoslavia. The economic difficulties and stabilization measures on the one hand, and the new constitutional and legal requirements on the other, forced the chains to reflect more critically on their own practices. Steered by new leadership, either elected or imposed, Na-Ma and RK Beograd set out on a fresh course, while Unima decided to transform exclusively into a department store chain. Despite the economic hardship of the first half of the decade, the chains' directors, always thinking in the logic of the Five-Year Plan, optimistically looked toward the end of the decade. Although the turnover of the enterprises decreased, the retail space and workforce were increasing. While the new Five-Year Plans were more modest than before, they still proclaimed the future, in the words of Na-Ma's new director Ivo Raić, as the years of expansion.¹⁰⁰⁷ While Yugoslav retailers were positive about the successes of their enterprises, retail experts did not necessarily share the same view. The editors of the journal *Supermarket*, a new publication established in 1976 to deal with the crisis in the Yugoslav retail sector, had a more sober view on the situation, and called the development plans until 1980 "optimism without justification."¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁷ "Ekspanzija na osnovi udruživanja," *Na-Ma* 11, 1975.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Josip Gavran, "Najkonkretnija pomoć našoj trgovini," *Supermarket* 1, 1976; V. G., "Optimizam bez pokrića," *Supermarket* 4, 1976.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored the development of department stores and the modernization of retail in Yugoslav urban environments from the 1950s to the mid-1970s by asking what department stores as retail spaces and urban institutions can tell us about the experts and professionals involved in their operations, the urban and social environments they occupied, the socio-economic and political system they emerged in and transformed, and the global setting Yugoslavia was embedded in during the Cold War. My aim was to understand urban retail in Yugoslavia as an economic sector, social activity and knowledge system that has so far received little attention in scholarship on Socialist Yugoslavia and other European state-socialist regimes.

To answer these research questions, I analyzed the discourses and activities of experts and professionals in four groups—retail and trade, architecture and urban planning, urban

administration, and home economics—who imagined, planned and constructed Yugoslav department stores from 1950 to 1975. From the hundreds of department stores in Yugoslavia, I explored as my case studies RK Beograd and Na-Ma, which were two largest Yugoslav department store chains and retail enterprises. I have primarily analyzed their activities in Belgrade and Zagreb, the capital cities they were based in, as well as in Kumrovec and Svetozarevo, two examples of rural and industrial locations where the chains expanded. Comparatively, I have also investigated the establishment of department stores in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically in Sarajevo and Mostar, where the modernization of retail took a different turn, powered by regional retail enterprises, such as Unima, UPI, Razvitak and HIT.

In order to encompass the different experts, professionals, enterprises and urban environments, I employed a polycentric analytical approach, by moving the focus from the local to the national, federal, and transnational levels. This approach was particularly important in order to gauge the complexities of Yugoslavia as a federation, whose main foundations were set by the self-management system and its non-aligned position in the Cold War. For this reason, I placed a particular emphasis on mapping in detail the geographies and usages of the transnational and international movements of Yugoslav experts and professionals engaged in the modernization of the retail sector. In addition to contextual and disciplinary similarities and differences between the experts and professionals, I was also sensitive to the gendered dimension of expertise, by investigating how modernization of retail was shaped by women experts with specific gendered political and social agendas. For this polycentric analysis, I utilized an array of primary sources, such as archival documents, publications, periodicals, and visual materials like architectural drawings, blueprints, photographs and postcards, from institutions in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the United States.

My thesis brings forward three main empirical findings. The first is that from the early 1950s, when retail became an independent economic sector following the decentralization and

liberalization of the country after the split with the Soviet Union, Yugoslav retail experts and retailers increasingly engaged in its development with the aim to improve its economic and political standing but also its social and cultural use for the Yugoslav society. They promoted a holistic approach to retail modernization as a development in industrial production, technology, architectural design, labor power, social exchange, and the self-management system, which would impact various socio-economic and cultural facets of urban life.

As the Yugoslav government continued the decentralization and liberalization of the Yugoslav economy and the governing-administrative apparatus, in which retail was supposed to play an important role as the main economic sector in neighborhoods, retail experts and retailers utilized the increasing availability of Western know-how—initially from the US and later from West Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, and Austria—to propose a new course for the modernization of Yugoslav retail. From the late 1950s, retail experts and retailers promoted the introduction of the self-service system and its implementation in large retail spaces such as department stores as the most efficient way to modernize and expand Yugoslav urban retail networks. This proposal remained the foundation of retail modernization throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to retail experts and retailers, from the late 1950s, when the Yugoslav government officialized its socio-economic emphasis on increasing personal consumption and the living standard, other experts like architects and urban planners, urban administrators, and home economists also engaged in retail modernization with their own particular interests and agendas.

The 1950s were a period of trial and error for the Yugoslav retail sector, but from the end of the decade various experts and professionals intensified both the knowledge production on modern retail and the construction of first supermarkets and self-service department stores. During the 1960s, these processes intensified as retail enterprises like RK Beograd and Na-Ma transformed themselves into chains by opening new department stores in capital cities like

Belgrade and Zagreb. In addition to external expansion, these chains also internally developed by improving and diversifying their retailing practices, advancing technological possibilities and professionalizing the workforce. The external expansion of these chains largely contributed to the creation of urban retail networks in Yugoslav capitals, which from the early 1970s also spread to other urban and even rural centers in the federation, as I have shown on the examples of Mostar, Svetozarevo and Kumrovec.

The early 1970s were a period of economic and political crises, but despite the decline in investments and curbing of development plans, RK Beograd and Na-Ma opened new and unique department stores, innovated their retailing know-how and practices, started employing computer technology to manage their data, and intensified their transnational and international activities. Ever since the early 1950s, various Yugoslav experts and professional groups actively engaged in the transnational acquisition and exchange of expert knowledge and technology, which played a major role in retail modernization by being consciously and transparently adapted to the Yugoslav political and socio-economic system.

The second finding is that the growth of cities in Yugoslavia from the early 1960s was significantly impacted by the construction of department stores and the incorporation of retail spaces into Yugoslav urban environments. Yugoslav retail experts, retailers, architects, urban planners and urban administrators always understood retail as a spatial activity—they believed that whereas department stores' success depended on the appropriate design of the interior and exteriors space, these stores could also significantly shape the material, social and cultural dimensions of the urban environments they were located in. While retail experts, retailers often clashed with architects, urban planners and urban administrators in their priorities in planning department stores and urban retail networks, what brought them together was an understanding of the importance of retail for urban development.

Yugoslav architects, urban planners, and urban administrators extensively produced knowledge on architectural design and urban placement of department stores as well as on the socio-economic and cultural role of retail in Yugoslav cities. Employed at urban planning institutes and architecture offices, they were also active in planning and construction of new stores, which from the early 1960s increasingly populated Yugoslav cities, especially in new neighborhoods. The expansion of Na-Ma and RK Beograd in Zagreb and Belgrade showed that in contrast to department stores from the prewar period and the 1950s, which were located in the city center, those built in the 1960s powered the decentralization of capital cities. Although the construction of stores and the expansion of retail networks always remained uneven processes, burdened with financial and administrative problems, with department stores appearing either years before or after an urban plan was made for a particular area, they nevertheless in almost every case defined the centers of new neighborhoods. Their central position, moreover, enhanced their socio-economic and cultural impact on the living standard and quality of everyday life in Yugoslav urban centers, from capital cities in the 1960s to smaller towns and even rural areas in the 1970s. Just like retailers and retail experts, architects and urban planners were transnationally active, and extensively participated in contemporary debates on designing modern retail spaces and incorporating them into existing and new urban environments. These debates, as I showed on the case of architect Lidiya Podbregar-Vasle took place in a global effort to design and build new urban environments in the period of postwar reconstruction, which was particularly prevalent in European welfare states and state-socialist regimes. Unlike in the case of retail, where Yugoslavs were more equally engaged with their colleagues from European state-socialist retail enterprises, Yugoslav architects and urban planners were often hosts for their Western counterparts, like architects Jacob Bakema and Victor Guren, who were interested in architecture and urban planning under Yugoslav self-management.

The third finding highlights the role of retail in the Yugoslav self-management system in several ways. Firstly, the decentralized administration and governance of the self-management system served as the framework for interactions between experts employed at expert and social institutions and social organizations, and professionals at enterprises. Although there was a difference between those who produced and disseminated knowledge and those who implemented it, often certain individuals, particularly in high-ranking positions, held several expert, professional as well as political roles, and were active on local, national and federal levels. While the decentralized self-management system had a positive impact on retail modernization by providing different sources of finances and by fostering exchange between different parts of the federation, conflicts and misunderstandings between various stakeholders, organizations, and institutions could also prevent the realization of new projects.

Secondly, from the early 1950s to the early 1960s, retail modernization played an important role in the development of the social self-management system, which referred to the self-governance of Yugoslav citizens in their neighborhoods. On the one side, retail experts and urban administrators perceived retail as the main economic activity in housing and local communities and required them to administratively and financially support the development of retail networks. On the other side, members of Yugoslav women's organizations and home economists promoted housing and local communities as administrative frameworks where retail could be modernized as a part of a broader agenda to modernize and socialize household work. By perceiving consumption as a form of household work, these women experts and activists also initiated the earliest forms of popular participation of consumers in retail, with the aim to improve both the retail sector and the position of women as main consumers in the Yugoslav society. The result of their activities in the mid-1950s was the establishment of consumer councils as self-managing organs of Yugoslav citizens in their role as consumers.

In this thesis, I demonstrated that Yugoslav experts and professionals were educated and highly engaged individuals, who actively participated in their institutes and enterprises, in the political life of their cities, in federal associations and assemblies, and in conferences, study trips, or business negotiations abroad. Those who were in leadership positions, especially in enterprises, but also in expert institutions in the 1960s, usually actively participated in the war on the communist side, and after the war continued to advance in their career and education. While some experts and professionals stayed within their disciplinary or institutional borders, many others, like RK Beograd's first director Čedomir Jelenić, fulfilled various expert, professional and political roles. Governing bodies, conferences and publications were places where experts and professionals from different disciplines could interact with each other and exchange local and foreign expert know-how. The volume of their activities, however, often depended on the economic and financial possibilities of republics and cities, which were, as the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina showed, not equal throughout Yugoslavia.

The polycentric focus of this thesis contributes to several historiographical fields. While historical scholarship has paid extensive attention to Yugoslav industrial production from the perspective of industrial, labor, and business history, this thesis for the first time illustrates the development of the Yugoslav retail sector from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s. By examining the external and internal expansion of large Yugoslav department store chains and retail enterprises, this thesis contributes to the business history of European socialist enterprises as well as to the history of socio-economic and technological development in Yugoslavia, East-Central and Southeastern Europe in the period after the Second World War. Rather than seeing department stores just as spaces of consumption, in which socialist regimes either succeeded or failed to compete with their capitalist neighbors in the Cold War, this thesis shows the centrality of the retail sector and its modernization for the political, socio-economic and cultural development of Yugoslav self-managed socialism.

The examination of retail as a particular socio-economic activity with extensive urban forms and practices also brings together the history of architectural design and urban planning with social and urban history of European state-socialist countries. Although for disciplinary reasons, these approaches often remain underdeveloped or detached from one another, this thesis demonstrates the fruitfulness of exploring a deeper connection between social and economic processes—both planned and realized—and activities of architects and urban planners in shaping urban space under state-socialism. An important role in this approach is played by an emphasis on architects and urban planners as a particular expert group. By moving away from the usual suspects in histories of expertise, such as social or natural scientists, the focus on architects, urban planners, urban administrators, and home economists expands the analytical field of scholarship on state-socialist and non-state socialist experts. The emphasis on experts and professionals and the multiple levels of their activities, from the local to the federal and transnational, produces a pan-Yugoslav study strongly embedded in the transnational dynamics of the Cold War, and contributes to the social and global history of Yugoslavia, Western and Eastern Europe in the Cold War.

The exploration of department stores as institutions that interconnected developments in retail, urban environments, expertise and governance is based on the main theoretical proposal of this thesis, which is that retail as an economic and social practice has a significant spatial dimension. In fact, I propose that retail cannot be understood without taking into consideration its spatial character, because only in this case is it possible to grasp the relationships between retail as an economic sector, professional activity and knowledge system, and the physical, political and social space that it occupies and shapes. The institutionalization of department stores in Yugoslavia, which I argue took place in the 1960s, encompassed not just the expansion of these stores in urban spaces, but also in social structures, everyday life, and cultural representations. The growing number of department stores made them ubiquitous,

everyday occurrences in Yugoslav urban environments, but their planning and construction were far from mundane or neutral processes. Rather, they were conscious and planned efforts of various stakeholders and groups wanting to improve Yugoslav economy, society and self-managed socialism.

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