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ADVERTISING MATTERS: THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BRANDS ADVERTISED IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

Abstract: A form of mass communication, advertising has been regarded as an influential medium of cultural transfer among developed and underdeveloped nations. Both social and economic aspects of advertising explain its role as an inevitable channel through which foreign cultures, values, and behavioral patterns may be promoted abroad to become locally adopted in exposed societies. While critics may see advertising as an intrusive phenomenon allowing "cultural invasion" through the promotion of different consumption patterns and behaviors, its proponents advocate the positive role of advertising in the economic development and modernization of societies through cultural transfer initiated by foreign brands. Following the latter standpoint, we build upon the positive role of advertising, focusing on its contribution to the development and modernization of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the interwar period. The main aim of the paper is to analyze and discuss European and American cultural influence through advertising messages of foreign brands in the most influential national daily papers of the period. To achieve that, we compared print ads published in *Politika* (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), *Le Figaro* (France), and *The Times* (UK). The primary focus is on international brands and their advertising approaches based on Anglo-American cultural values and consumption patterns. We analyze a set of selected ads to assess the direct transfer of foreign culture or its subtle adaptation to the local context f to gauge the overall influence of ads on socioeconomic development and modernization. Our findings show that advertising substantially developed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia over the analyzed period, following the pattern of more developed countries such as France and the UK. This is supported by the appearance of new types of products and services advertised and the changes in advertising formats and creative ideas bringing liberal advertising appeals directed at diverse target groups. Thus, we conclude that cultural transfer through foreign brands that advertised their products and services in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia contributed to the adoption of novel consumption patterns and the overall economic development and modernization of the country in the first half of the 20th century.

Keywords: advertising, foreign brands, economic development, modernization, consumerism

Introduction

The relationship between culture and advertising has been well-documented in marketing research in recent decades[1]. Advertising spe-

1 Richard W. Pollay, "Measuring the Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising," *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 6, no. 1 (1983), 71–92; Jing Zhang and Sharon Shavitt. "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-genera-

cifically reflects the culture in which it exists and is dependent on it for the meaning of images and words[2]. Advertising must be culturally congruent, or, in other words, it should reflect the cultural values of the target group.

However, although these economic aspects of advertising have been widely researched, there is also an increasing stream of research in various areas of the social sciences focusing on other (non-economic) aspects of the cultural impact of consumption and advertising[3]. This branch of research is particularly important for modern and postmodern sociological theoretical and empirical studies concerned with the nature of social order and values. In this respect, the concept of cultural transfer[4] deals with the very important issue of (mainly "Western") cultural influences on social and cultural changes (in our case, of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia).

In light of our main topic, the question arises: what happens in cross-cultural marketing interactions, i.e., in situations where foreign brands are advertised in non-native cultures? In what ways can such ads impact diverse target audiences if foreign cultural values and social norms are incorporated into their creative messages? The most important historical example of the cultural influence of advertising is undoubtedly the influence of American and Western European brands on the rest of the world. Generally, the processes of industrialization and modernization have largely shaped the global economic, political, and general social landscape in recent centuries[5].

This paper focuses on the cultural influence of European and American brands in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It examines a selected sample of print advertisements in daily newspapers in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (*Politika*), France (*Le Figaro*), and the UK (*The Times*).

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tion: Promoting Modernity and Individualism," *Journal of Advertising*, 31, no. 1 (2003), 23–33; Douglas E. Haynes, "Advertising and the History of South Asia, 1880–1950," *History Compass*, 13, no. 8 (2015), 361–374.

2 Barbara Czarnecka, Ross Brennan, Serap Keles, "Cultural Meaning, Advertising, and National Culture: A Four-Country Study," *Journal of Global Marketing*, 31, no. 1 (2018), 4.

3 Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures.* London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1970; Viviana Zalizer, "Culture and Consumption." In *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Second edition, edited by Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg, 331–354. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

4 Wolfgang Schmale, "What is Cultural Transfer?" In *Cultural Transfer Europe-Serbia: Methodological Issues and Challenges*, edited by Slobodan G. Markovich, 13–31. Belgrade: Faculty of Political Sciences: Dosije Studio, 2023.

5 Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton, *Sociology*. Eighth edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017.

Cultural influence of advertising

Has the cultural influence of advertising been overestimated in recent theory and research? How does advertising compare in this respect to other "supportive" institutions, such as the family, the church, the military, the legal system, educational institutions (especially universities), etc.? According to Pollay[6], "advertising is the only institution that plays a major role in the mass media and gives it a far more universal influence." And while other institutions usually preserve and protect the long-established order and cultural values, advertising often challenges the existing state of affairs and appeals to new and alternative values and behavior patterns. This becomes most apparent when analyzing the traditional-modern dichotomy (in terms of values, behavioral patterns, and consequently, the nature of social systems).

Most studies on the cultural impact of advertising focus on cultural values as one of the most important prescriptive determinants of human behavior. The most common definition sees values "as beliefs that a particular mode of behaviour or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of behaviour or end-states of existence."[7]

The shift from traditional to modern values and behavior patterns was unprecedented in history. Modern industrial societies (with technological development and industrial production) introduced novel and radically different social relations (including their cultural foundations). Never before in the history of human societies had technological progress brought about such a change in institutions and relationships between individuals and social groups. In just two or three centuries (a fraction of the time since the dawn of humanity), human social life was "uprooted" from the social order in which people had lived thousands of years before[8].

The term modernity refers to the totality of historical processes that have changed the traditional order and includes the rise of the nation-state, capitalism, bureaucratization, urbanization, and secularization[9]. The 20th century brought a further acceleration of technological and economic development. Consumer goods became available to a wider population (a process encouraged and supported by the increasing presence and importance of advertising in the mass media, which was also growing rapidly).

6 R. W. Pollay, "Measuring the Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising," 73.

7 Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values.* New York: The Free Press, 1973, 160.

8 A. Giddens, P. W. Sutton, *Sociology*, 120.

9 Jeffrey C. Alexander, Keneth Thompson, Laura Desfor Edles, and Moshoula Capous-Desyllas, *Contemporary Introduction to Sociology: Culture and Society in Transition*. (New York and London: Routlegde, 2018), 17.

Why is consumption so important in modern (and postmodern) societies? For Jean Baudrillard[10], the essence of consumption lies not in (material) products but in signs, i.e., in the meanings of these products. How do we know what the meaning of these signs is? According to this author, we all understand the code and are under its control. The code is the system of rules that allows us to understand signs and how they relate to each other. Consumption relies on others understanding the meanings of the products (and services) we consume the same way we do. This leads to the conclusion that while we consume, we are in a process of self-determination. Categories of products (and services) define categories of individuals and groups. What we spend determines our status in the social order. Baudrillard emphasizes that consumption can be explained by the concept of difference. We spend in order to distinguish ourselves from other people. The products we spend and the services we use (including how we spend or use them) define these differences[11].

Anthropologists also understand consumption as a social process. According to Douglas and Isherwood[12], the consumer's choice is the result of a social process. It is determined (and mediated) by one's position in the social structure. This position is characterized by different forms of sociability, which manifest themselves in specific lifestyles, ways of thinking, and practices.

They are all culturally rooted in values. Values are an integral part of advertising content, which aims to convey an effective message to its target audience. In great part, our analysis focuses on values communicated through Western advertising, thus documenting three key dichotomies in the selected set of print advertisements concerning differences between traditional and modern values: collectivism vs. individualism, authoritarianism vs. liberalism, and patriarchy vs. equality[13].

Advertising as a medium of cultural transfer between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the West

Since its beginnings, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) included regions at very different levels of socio-economic and cultural development. The most glar-

10 J. Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures.* London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1970.

11 George Ritzer, *Savremena sociološka teorija i njeni klasični koreni* [Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classic Roots]. Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2009, 363

12 Mary Douglas, and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods. Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

13 Jelena Pešić, "Persistence of Traditionalist Value Orientations in Serbia," *Sociologija,* 48, no. 4 (2006), 289–307.

ing divide was (roughly) the gap between modern and traditional cultural patterns. According to Rihtman-Auguštin[14], history in Yugoslavia has drawn a divide between Eastern (predominantly traditional) and Western (predominantly modern) cultural characteristics, reflected in very different regional cultural patterns.

In addition to the uneven regional development, the urban-rural divide also shaped the processes of modernization and Europeanization in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (especially in Serbia)[15]. This divide reinforced the entrenchment of collectivist and egalitarian values and formed a strong cultural barrier to capitalist-oriented modernization[16].

The implementation of the new (capitalist) social order was very slow and uneven. However, some social classes in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia experienced social advancement: the political and economic elite and the upper middle class. They mainly lived in urban areas and were the main target group of advertising in the print media.

Against such a backdrop, we selected a set of ads promoting famous European and American brands between 1919 and 1939. These ads are analyzed here to help us understand the cultural transfer between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (primarily its eastern part) and the West. As print advertising was most prevalent in the observed period, the selected ads included those published in the three most prominent quality dailies, namely *Politika* (Yugoslavia), *Le Figaro* (France), and *The Times* (United Kingdom)[17]. *Politika* ranks among the oldest national daily broadsheets still in existence in the Republic of Serbia. In the observed period (1919–1939), it gradually reached a broader audience from diverse regional cultural contexts. However, since it was printed in Cyrillic, ethnic Serbs made up the bulk of its readership[18]. Both *Le Figaro* and *The Times* also have a long tradition

14 Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, *Struktura tradicijskog mišljenja* [The Structure of Traditional Thought]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1984.

15 Slobodan G. Markovich, "European Cultural Transfer in 19th-century Serbia and How to analyse the Europeanisation of Serbia?" In *Cultural Transfer Europe-Serbia: Methodological Issues and Challenges*, edited by Slobodan G. Markovich, 45–91. Belgrade: Faculty of Political Sciences: Dosije Studio, 2023, 84.

16 Jelena Pešić, *Promena vrednosnih orijentacija u postsocijalističkim društvima Srbije i Hrvatske: političke i ekonomski liberalizam* [Change in Value Orientations in the Postsocialist Societies of Serbia and Croatia. Political and Economic Liberalism]. Belgrade: Univerzitet u Beogradu – Filozofski fakultet, Institut za sociološka istraživanja, 2017, 77.

17 The used newspaper archives include Digital NBS (Periodicals), Gale Primary Sources – The Times Digital Archive, and BnF Gallica for all issues of *Politika*, *The Times*, and *Le Figaro* from 1919 to 1939, respectively.

18 The year 1919 was selected as the starting point of this analysis because the publication of print media after the Great War fully consolidated in the last

in print publishing and can reach broad target groups, which, like *Politika*, makes them particularly attractive to advertisers.

European and American cultural influences through advertising in the observed period show the emergence and transfer of modern cultural values between the developed West and the traditional Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as well as the reconstruction of traditional behavioral patterns, particularly regarding consumption. Advertising messages promoting foreign brands contributed to the development of consumerism and boosted consumer needs and wants for novel products and services. Moreover, they also brought to light the changing gender roles and new lifestyles practiced in the West.

Foreign brands as transmitters of cultural change in 1919–1920

After the Great War, advertisements in the 1919 issues of *Politika* were rare and predominantly sponsored by local entrepreneurs and traders[19]. A few foreign brands did feature, including Fiat and Nestlé. In the beginning, foreign brand names and advertising were usually localized. Textual messages were translated, with foreign brand names routinely transcribed into the Cyrillic script[20]. For example, an advertisement for Nestlé pow-

months of 1918, whereas *Politika* was not relaunched until September 1919. With advertising intensity traditionally peaking in December and January, most of the observed ads (with a few exceptions) have been selected from the numerous issues of *Politika, Le Figaro*, and *The Times* published in December 1919 and January 2020.

19 Advertising was already well-established practice in the regions covered by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia throughout the 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. Both local and foreign brands were advertised in numerous illustrated periodicals published particularly in North-Western regions belonging to Austro-Hungary as well as in some cities, including Belgrade. *Politika*, quality daily published in Belgrade also included advertisements since its establishment in 1904 until 1915 when the publication was interrupted to be restarted after the Great War, as of 1919. For more details about history of print advertising in Serbia consult: Zagorka Janc, *Oglasi u staroj srpskoj štampi 1834–1915.* [Advertisements in the Old Serbian Press 1834–1915]. Beograd, 1978. Achieving a rather high circulation in the interwar period *Politika* has substainally developed its advertising department, selling advertising space to the biggest industrial producers and international trade companies of the time. Dragoljub Milivojević, *Politika. Svedok našeg doba.* [Politika. A Witness of our time]. Beograd: Politika, 1984, 113.

20 Politika had always had a status of a national daily, reaching broad population throughout the Western and Eastern regions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, it was published in Serbian Cyrillic alphabet which was only partially familiar to the population in the Western part (nowadays Croatia and Slovenia).

der milk (baby formula)[21] used very simple wording with no illustrations or graphic symbols. The message targeted mothers with a straightforward instruction: "Feed your children with Nestle's powder milk," with "Nestlé's" transcribed into Cyrillic ("Nestle-ovo"). Before that, the Nestlé brand had placed another ad in *Politika*[22], which, in addition to the Cyrillic transcription, included the original brand name in the Latin script ("Nestles"). Both messages were informative and educational, primarily aimed at developing a demand for baby milk powder and educating local consumers on the importance of the brand as a guarantee of product quality. As a more practical alternative (baby milk powder), the advertised product per se fostered a change in traditional consumption patterns.

In the same period, Nestlé intensively advertised in France and the UK. An ad in *Le Figaro*[23] used a more advanced format, bringing state-of-the-art graphic design standards. In an ad in *The Times*,[24] Nestlé told UK consumers to "Insist on Nestlé's Milk," providing them with more detailed information about the difference in quality between Nestlé and "inferior" (i.e., competing) brands. As a result of cultural impact, such persuasive and competitive types of ads were featured in *Politika* after further expansion of foreign brand advertising in the ensuing period.

In the beginning, most foreign brands promoted in *Politika* appeared in ads sponsored by local traders. Yet, these were also valuable examples of cultural transfer between the West and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. There was an abundance of advertisements for diverse consumer goods sold in local shops, department stores, and drugstores, such as the famous English soap brand "Pears,"[25] the French cosmetic product for women "Crème Tocalon,"[26] and Swiss brands like "Chocolat Suchard"[27] or the footwear company "Goodyear."[28] Interestingly, local merchants did not use transcription for foreign brand names. Typically, these ads kept the original names and texts in foreign languages. This practice likely had to do with their intention to emphasize the foreign origin of the advertised product and capitalize on it. In most of these ads, local sellers underlined

Still, the local advertisers encountered in *Politika* included those from big cities other than Belgrade (e.g. Zagreb, Ljubljana), and the ads were targeting their population no matter if presented in Cyrillic or in combination with Latin alphabet.

21 *Politika*, January 6th, 1920, 4

22 *Politika*, December 4th, 1919, 4

23 *Le Figaro*, December 4th, 1919, 3

24 *The Times*, December 4th, 1919, 7

25 *Politika*, January 1st, 1920, 4

26 *Politika*, December 7th, 1919, 3

27 *Politika*, December 3rd, 1919, 3

28 *Politika*, July 21st, 1920, 3

Politika, *December 7, 1919, p. 3.*

the country of origin, explicitly mentioning *French* fabric or cosmetics, *English* textiles, *Dutch* paints, or *Swiss* shoes, but without highlighting the specific brand name. As such, these ads obviously communicated with internationally oriented customers, offering them products that symbolically encapsulated their identification with the cultural context from which the product had come.

Commercial ads in *Politika* were grouped in a special section (non-editorial pages) at the end of the newspaper. However, these were graphically rather simple, with standard frames differentiating from other announcements (classified ads). Apart from text-based formats, a few ads promoting foreign brands included illustrations albeit in a simplified format (e.g., an ad for "Crème Tocalon"[29]). In the same period, in French (*Le Figaro*) and British press (*The Times*), ads were already elaborately illustrated, and advanced graphic design allowed using different fonts and frames. The increasing spread of foreign advertisers in *Politika* from the early 1920s began to close this gap and substantially contributed to cultural transfer.

Foreign influence in advertising was particularly apparent in the improved graphic design and growing advertising creativity. An ad for the French cologne brand "Parfums Driay,"[30] sponsored by a wholesaler based in Ljubljana (now the capital of the Republic of Slovenia), combined different typefaces and modern graphic design. Additionally, the original French brand name was kept, with more than 50% of the text also in French. This advertising format indicates cultural transfer between

29 *Politika*, December 7th, 1919, 3

30 *Politika*, July 2nd, 1920, 3

Politika, *July 2, 1920, p. 3.*

the two countries, stemming from the emphasized product origin, thereby implicitly promoting French culture and (Parisian) lifestyle. An alternative reason for leaving half of the ad in French could have been to target the Francophile local population because France had been Serbia's principal ally during the Great War.

Politika, *July 3, 1920. p. 3.*

Closing the gap between local advertising standards and those of Western Europe was particularly evident in the ad for the American footwear brand "Walk-Over."[31] The ad's format and style were significantly different from that of the mainly textual ads commonly found in *Politika*. The ad focused on an illustration showing an elegant man dressed in a Western-style suit, straddling a big shoe and standing firmly with both hands in his pockets. His nonverbal behavior reflected American creative standards, drawing attention to the advertised message. The brand name was in English, which, combined with the non-verbal content, conveyed the image of an assertive (even rebellious) man standing out and firmly heading forward. As such, the ad seems highly relevant for understanding cultural transfer from the West. Reflecting American cultural values, this advertisement strongly communicated the modern cultural values of individualism and liberalism to the targeted population in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Modern cultural values in advertising 1928–1929

A decade after the end of the Great War, a significant shift in many aspects of advertising in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, including its intensity, creative design, purpose, and cultural impact became apparent. Both local and foreign advertisers grew in numbers. The number of ads sponsored by foreign companies substantially increased, offering a plethora of new products and services to broad audiences. Brand advertising entered the editorial pages, much like it had done in the foreign press (*Le Figaro*, *The Times*), and was no longer limited to the classifieds. The format of advertising messages became larger; illustrations started to dominate their design, and the text grew simpler and shorter. The foreign ads in *Politika* were mainly sponsored by advertisers from the USA, France, Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. Foreign brands, including Nestlé, Goodyear, Dunlop, Gillette, Lindt, Ford, Chrysler, Dodge, Citroën, Renault, Colgate, Bata, Continental, Philips, Packard, Mercedes, Bourjois, Buick, Pirelli, Opel, L'Oreal, Bayer, and many more dominated the advertising space in the observed period.

Besides improvements in graphic design standards and an increase in advertising space and the total number of ads, foreign brands also brought significant changes in their creative execution based on novel promotional appeals and verbal and sensory advertising cues. The original names of foreign brands were kept, and original logos were commonly used, too. In their textual parts, the ads often combined Latin and Cyrillic scripts, but

31 *Politika*, July 3rd, 1920, 3

Politika, *December 23, 1928, p. 20.*

some ads were in the Latin script only. Foreign ads brought many new products and services not encountered in *Politika* in the previous period, although these were already intensively advertised in *The Times* and *Le Figaro*. Examples include ads for men's apparel, cosmetics for men and women, cars, and medication. For example, while ads displaying women's cosmetic products (particularly facial creams) sporadically appeared in *Politika* at the beginning of the 1920s, men's cosmetics were rarely featured in advertising. By 1919, cosmetic products for men were already well-represented in Western. An ad in *The Times*[32] encouraged men to use hair products to keep their hair tidy. Two more ads[33] suggested that women should consider the *Gillette* safety razor as a perfect gift for a man because "it will always give happy thoughts of the giver" and "it is just the thing he wants." Similar offerings appeared in *Politika* in 1928, owing to Gillette's awareness of the market potential for its safety razor in local target groups. The brand appeared in an ad[34] quite similar to those encountered in *The Times*. It appealed directly to female customers to "give 'him' the joy of shaving" by choosing the Gillette safety razor as a present for a man in their life.

32 *The Times*, December 4th, 1919, 16; *The Times*, December 11th, 1919, 10.

33 *The Times*, December 4th, 1919, 6.

34 *Politika*, December 23rd, 1928, 20.

In the observed decade, the selected advertisements indicated that brands' communication with potential consumers contributed to a shift in cultural values and norms while developing novel behavioral patterns (gift-giving, making practical choices, showing emotions). However, compared to the *Gillette* ad for British consumers, the emotions between a gift-giving woman and a gift-receiving man in the one published in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were only implicit and subtle. The role of women continued to evolve, with a few ads (e.g., for Nivea sun cream[35] and Zeiss Umbral sunglasses[36]) bringing illustrations of the female body and presenting them in then unorthodox situations (e.g., sunbathing). Advertisements for novel personal care and beauty products, such as hair dye for women (e.g., L'Oreal[37]), helped change not only consumer needs but also the acquired social norms. Similarly, products for faster hair growth and covering gray hair for men appeared, introducing new consumer trends and rising demand for products opposing cultural stereotypes related to the personal appearance of women and men.

By the end of 1928 and the beginning of 1929, promotional appeals to buy holiday gifts became very common. Advertisers invited local consumers to buy gifts all through December and January for various religious holidays celebrated both in the West (Christmas on December 25th) and the East (the feast day of St. Nicholas, commonly revered as a family patron saint; Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Children's Day, all associated with religious feasts in the Serbian milieu; and Orthodox Christmas, observed on January 7th by most Orthodox Christians). Christmas shopping and gift-giving became very dominant in the British press and advertisements immediately after the Great War, unlike the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, where it was introduced through foreign and local advertisers, transferring consumption patterns from abroad. Thus, advertisers apparently not only introduced changes in consumer behavior but also altered the traditional way of celebrating religious feasts by promoting consumption-based gift-giving among family members, friends, and romantic partners. An ad for *Bata* footwear featured a large illustration of Santa suggesting that (*Bata*) shoes could be gifts for the whole family for St. Nicholas Day.[38] In an ad titled "A Christmas gift from Nestlé," Nestlé promoted a contest that promised valuable prizes to participating consumers.[39] The ad reveals that in the observed period, sales promotions became available to customers in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Foreign marketing practices prompted

35 *Politika*, July 29th, 1929, 19.
36 *Politika*, July 27th, 1929, 15.
37 *Politika*, December 23rd, 1928, 19.
38 *Politika*, December 4th, 1928, 18.
39 *Politika,* December 13th, 1928, 20.

Politika, *January 7, 1929, p. 47.*

local merchants and department store owners to resort to advertising to promote their seasonal discounts, which, according to the print ads of the time, were already standard practice in the West in the early 1920s.

Promotions specifically addressed to women and men alike became particularly apparent at the end of the 1920s. For example, the above-mentioned brand *Bata*[40] used numerous ads to promote men's and women's shoes. Many of their ads showed women and men in modern clothing, reflecting the fashion trends in the West.

An ad for the famous American brand *Colgate*[41] introduced quite a modern approach to persuading potential consumers. It is particularly interesting for its unisex approach and the combined use of both rational and emotional appeals. The ad appealed to both female and male customers, promoting various personal care and cosmetic products, such as toothpaste and mouthwash, shaving cream, various types of soaps, face powder and cream, and "many other *toiletry staples* for ladies and gentlemen." Its verbal and visual cues differed from the common creative prac-

40 Expanding its production and sale of footwear throughout Europe (including Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, etc.), *Bata* was one of the biggest advertisers in the observed period. The company was established in 1894 in Zlin in Austro-Hungary (now The Czech Republic).

41 *Politika,* January 7th, 1929, 47.

tice. The verbal message was simple and in the local language, covering a small part of the ad and focusing the recipient's attention on the list of diverse products for male and female customers. Moreover, the ad invited consumers to ask for free samples from local sellers, a typical example of a rational appeal through sales promotion. Visual cues dominated: the ad was elaborately illustrated, with pictures of products in their original packaging and the brand's mascot – a smiling cactus. The ad documents that cultural transfer through advertising in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia introduced new creative solutions already in practice in the West (e.g., *Michelin* had used a cool-looking mascot with a lit cigar, recommending red rubber tubes in an ad published in *The Times* in 1919[42]). Rather than stopping at providing information and educating consumers about their products, the purpose was to create a visual identity of the brand and foster emotional connections between the brand and potential consumers.

From 1919 onward, cars and related equipment (e.g., motor oil, car tires) dominated the advertising space in the foreign press (particularly British and French), with the American automotive industry leading the promotional efforts. By 1928–1929, car advertisements were also heavily featured in the press of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Most ads used rational appeals, highlighting the technical characteristics of the vehicle and its price (e.g., Mercedes – the cheapest and safest, Citroën – big cars for little money, Packard – comfortable and affordable, Buick – speed and distinctiveness). A few other (mostly American) brands focused on emotions, such as the joy of driving (e.g., Ford), personal achievement (e.g., Chevrolet), and family attachment (Chrysler). However, car advertisements that made no distinction between the West and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia primarily targeted male consumers. A handful of ads highlighted the female influence on men's decisions to buy a car. The most explicit examples were found in *The Times*, including an ad for Fiat[43] with an illustration of a well-dressed lady looking through the backseat window, or two ads sponsored by Crosley[44] and Dodge Brothers[45], both showing attractive women standing in front of the car. On a symbolic level, by including female and male figures and their non-verbal emotions and relations, these ads implicitly communicated masculinity and prestige. In *Le Figaro*,[46] an ad for Peugeot showing a female hand holding the purchase order (*bon de commande*) to be signed by a male hand holding a pen also symbolically represented the "significant other's" role in a man's decision to purchase

42 *The Times*, December 3rd, 9.

43 *The Times*, January 22nd, 1929, 9.

44 *The Times*, January 10th, 1929, 9.

45 *The Times*, December 6th, 1928, 15.

46 *Le Figaro*, December 29th, 1928, 6.

a car. At the time, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, only a handful of ads rather timidly showed female figures in car ads (e.g., an ad for Chevrolet Six[47] and another for Renault[48]). However, an example of the ongoing cultural transfer through Western advertising was evident in an ad for Chrysler[49] published on January 5th, 1929, in *Politika*, a month after the same ad appeared in *The Times*[50]. The advertiser used the identical design with the same illustration, but the slogan ("When streets are wet and crowded") and the textual sales pitch were translated into Serbian (Kad su ulice mokre, a po njima puno sveta), and the brand name was transcribed into the Cyrillic script (Krajzler).

New product categories, such as medication (e.g., Aspirin by Bayer), nutritional supplements for infants (e.g., Virol), and functional food products (e.g., Ovomaltine/Ovaltine), already broadly advertised in the West, appeared in *Politika* by the end of the 1920s. For example, an ad for Aspirin in a December 1928 issue of *Politika*[51] used a similar promotional approach as the ads in the December 1919 and January 1929 issues of *Le Figaro*[52].

British cultural influence can be seen in an ad for the famous British brand Virol published in *Politika* in December 1928[53]. The half-page ad presents a still photograph of a nude male child named Lionel Barnett, accompanied with a story about "the most beautiful and healthy child." The ad is an example of a testimonial by the child's mother about how she included Virol in her son's diet from the very first day of life. Using still photography, which was still uncommon in print ads in *Politika*, and by literally translating the promotional appeal created for English customers, this ad helped foster novel consumption patterns. Complying with the English health and beauty standards and the maternal responsibility for raising children, the ad emphasized the prominent role of women in consumer decision-making. An ad of the same type, featuring a still photograph of a baby girl, with her name and her mother's testimonial on how she included Virol in the baby's diet, was published in *The Times* in 1919[54].

Ovomaltine (Ovaltine in the British market) was another well-known (Swiss) brand aggressively advertised in *The Times*, *Le Figaro*, and *Politika*. The ads in *Politika* targeted both women and men, albeit mainly based on stereotypes. For example, an ad targeting men highlighted the effective-

47 *Politika*, July 13th, 1929, 14.
48 *Politika*, January 7th, 1929, 50.
49 *Politika*, January 5th, 1929, 15.
50 *The Times*, December 5th, 1928, 19.
51 *Politika*, December, 3rd, 1928, 15.
52 *Le Figaro*, December, 2nd, 1919, 4; *Le Figaro*, January 30th, 1929, 4.
53 *Politika*, December, 4th, 1928, 20.
54 *The Times*, December 1st, 1919, 6.

ness of this milk-flavored product for their mental efforts at work[55] while another ad targeting women[56] promised relief from nervous exhaustion and insomnia.

Consolidation of Western cultural influence in 1938–1939

By 1939, *Politika* increased the number of editorial pages, adding new sections to cover topics dedicated to women's issues, children, and sports. Reflecting this shift, the number of advertisements sponsored by both local and foreign advertisers also increased. European and American companies continually transferred their advertising creative styles and promotional appeals enrooted in Western cultural values. The inclusion of the original graphic design of their logos (e.g., Renault, Shell Motor Oil, Max Factor Hollywood), typefaces, and symbols (e.g., Lyons Tea) became a rule rather than an exception like in the previous periods, illustrated ads prevailed, and the use of still photography intensified.

The cultural influence of French and American manufacturers of skincare and haircare products, make-up, and other cosmetic products was plain to see. These ads educated local women on the importance of personal grooming and encouraged them to take care of their appearance at any age. In December 1939, L'Oreal announced in their ad[57] that "gray hair was unfair," showing a big portrait of an attractive elderly lady (or, more specifically, what would have been considered elderly at the time). The text argued that women had the right to stay young as long as they wanted, although their hair might become gray already in their thirties. This one and similar ads for beauty products upheld individualism, one of the core Western cultural values. Ads and the developing movie industry promoted attractiveness, rejuvenation, and seduction as women's personal goals. In *Politika*, the American company Max Factor advertised professional makeup for women, promising to make them as attractive as Hollywood stars[58]. Similarly, Pond's (an American brand of makeup and beauty products) claimed in an ad[59] that "almost all world-known film stars were already using Pond's powder."

Apart from the increased representation of attractive women in illustrations and still photographs as an integral part of creative messages, representations of female-male emotional relations not present before

55 *Politika*, January, 31st, 1929, 15.
56 *Politika*, December, 13th, 1928, 18.
57 *Politika*, December, 18th, 1938, 30.
58 *Politika*, December, 4th, 1938, 19.
59 *Politika*, December 3rd, 1938, 22.

Politika, *January 1, 1939, p. 5.*

also started to appear here and there in ads by the end of the 1930s. An example of affection between a man and a woman was an ad for *Bijoux de Paris* published in *Politika* in January 1939.[60]

Similar creative solutions rooted in Western liberalism were already common in American brands' advertising in *The Times* and *Le Figaro* in the 1920s and 1930s. Similar advertising messages in *Politika* at the end of the 1930s helped liberalize a patriarchal society and counterbalance culturally acquired authoritarian sentiments. Per the traditional cultural values, women were expected to stand behind their men, not show affection or take any initiative, and not openly contribute to various social interactions, including family– or purchase-related decision-making. The well-known American brand of car oil Moto-Penn, in a half-page ad published in December 1938 in *Politika*,[61] was among the first to break those cultural stereotypes, showing a woman driving a cabriolet with a man in the passenger seat. The woman's dominant position was also emphasized by her strongly suggestive non-verbal gesture: a lifted arm pointing at the advertised product to communicate her right to choose and her important role in purchase decision-making.

At the time, many ads, including some for foreign brands (e.g., Shell, Zenith), supported the stereotypical role of women as housewives responsible for bringing up children, meal preparation, and taking care of other family members. However, Shell Gas made a step forward in an ad[62] en-

60 *Politika*, January 1st, 1939, 5.

61 *Politika*, December, 13th, 1938, 22.

62 *Politika*, December, 3rd, 1938, 20.

Politika, *December 13, 1938, p. 22.*

couraging women to make their own consumer decisions. In another ad of the same brand,[63] local stereotypes were shaken by showing a male cook promoting the use of Shell Gas in the home.

Changing consumer preferences and the emergence of new consumption patterns are also apparent in the increasingly widespread ads for novel products offered to various target groups. Some product categories, already broadly advertised in Europe and USA, included tobacco (Craven "A" cigarettes in *The Times* in 1928[64], Davros cigarettes in *Le Figaro* in 1928[65]) and alcohol (e.g., White Horse Whiskey in *The Times* in 1919[66]), were almost non-existent in *Politika* throughout the 1920s. More importantly, the ads for both product categories published in *The Times* and *Le Figaro* targeted not only male consumers but also women, explicitly communicating gender equality.

In contrast, in the same period (late 1920s), only small wine producers placed purely informative (exclusively textual) ads in *Politika*. However, ten years later, advertisements for spirits (produced by foreign brands) ap-

63 *Politika*, January, 24th, 1939, 20.

64 *The Times*, December, 21st, 1928, 5.

65 *Le Figaro*, December, 12th, 1928, 6.

66 *The Times*, December, 8th, 1919, 6.

Le Figaro*, December 12, 1928, p. 6.*

peared in *Politika*. Some even targeted women, but less openly than in their counterparts in *The Times* and *Le Figaro*. For example, a print ad for Cointreau[67] ("the finest French liqueur") in *Politika* included an illustration of a lady, suggesting that the product was also consumed by women.

While advertising alcohol and tobacco products reached its peak in the Western press before World War II, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, ads for these product categories remained sporadic (spirits) or even nonexistent (tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes). Moreover, in the late 1930s, Western advertising practices went even further, driven by flourishing tourism and a growing number of ads placed by famous hotels and resorts in the French Riviera, Monte Carlo, New York, ski resorts, and sports equipment companies in *The Times* and *Le Figaro*.[68] Interestingly, an ad in *The Times*[69] targeted female skiers. The illustration showing an attractive woman enjoying skiing in Germany symbolically suggested women's freedom and emancipation. Similar advertisements did not appear in *Politika* until the end of the observed period.

67 *Politika*, December, 2nd, 1938, 21.

68 E.g. *The Times*, January 4th, 1929, 17–18; *Le Figaro*, December 8th, 1938, 6.

69 *The Times*, January 10th, 1939, 16.

In sum, the cultural influence of European and American brands advertised in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is evident in the observed changes in advertising intensity and format, including the use of illustrations, human models, and verbal appeals in local and foreign languages. While in many instances the recognized cultural influence may be regarded as direct and explicitly noticeable in the observed advertisements, some examples employed a more subtle approach by adapting advertisements launched by foreign brands in other markets to better fit into the local cultural context. However, whether open or hidden, the influence of foreign brands' advertising on the changing consumer needs, wants, and habits should not be overlooked. Foreign brands appearing in the ads in *Politika* from 1919 to 1939 heavily contributed to the promotion of many novel products, the development of consumer demand, changing local stereotypes in gender roles, and particularly the role of women in consumption and broader social contexts. Their creative messages often clashed with traditional cultural values, nurturing individualism, liberalism, and equality. This cumulative effect contributed to the economic development of the country and the modernization of society.

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