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**IDENTITY WITH A PRICE:
CONSUMPTION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MACEDONIA**

Abstract: As the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia took place, the overarching 'Yugoslavian' identity ceased to exist for most people within the Macedonian Republic. Identity soon was based on the access to consumer goods. From this a powerful transformation took place, transforming daily life and webs of meaning. 'Identity' redefined internal and external boundaries. This article illuminates the local dynamics and global forces of the disintegration of Yugoslavia on a group of young female engineers in Macedonia in the context of historical, political and economic processes. The research on which this article is based ranges from 1988 to 1996.

Key words: identity, political economy, consumption, Macedonia

In the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia the small Republic of Macedonia declared its independence in 1991. Its fundamental existence contested by neighboring Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, with an Albanian minority within its borders seeking a reunion with neighboring Albanian and no own military defense Macedonia is striving. Especially Skopje, the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia, is a modern city today with international agencies, international military and NGO personnel coloring the scene. Within this world a young generation experiences new perceptions and interactions, a generation that has been brought up in Socialist Yugoslavia and that have become adolescent during the vital changes of a new country. My research that spans from 1988 in Yugoslavia to 1996 in independent Macedonia looks in particular at a group of young female engineers that entered university in Yugoslavia and live today in a world that presents them with many new unanticipated rules. I infer that this specific group is a key indicator of the changes that have occurred. They represent the young urban socialist elite that will or will not have great influence in the making of their new country. As Macedonia is forming the interesting question arises what this new Macedonia is going to look like. Far from trying to be a seer I would like to point out some determinants that have become predominant during my research. As such, I am going to argue in this article that the whole process of transformation in Macedonia is, for the younger generation, largely defined by the introduction of consumer culture. To a great extent their understanding of themselves is enacted through their relationship to Western objects.

Consuming 'Western' goods

Consumer culture in Skopje, Macedonia, present itself as a silent relationship, in that it is a relationship that is defined as 'normal,' as normal as it is in any other Western country. Rausing notes for Estonia: "The dissolution of the Soviet Union means that the national discourse of future goals has shifted from a Utopian state, to a Western-identified 'normality.' The confines of being defined as Western within the Soviet context, however, means that the changes in material culture are greeted with less of the surprise, enthusiasm, or confusion, than might be expected: the 'normal' or optimal reaction to the new things is a silent appropriation, redefining the objects as already taken for granted" (Rausing, 1998: 190). My friends, in identifying Western goods as normal and not exotic, appropriate those objects¹ in the same manner as the Estonians appropriate Western goods, as something that has 'naturally' belonged to them. However, this natural relationship for them derives, not from a historical connection with Western Europe as for example Slovenia or Croatia could claim, but through claims derived from their Yugoslav past, as a 'Western' socialist country. In some ways this causes a perplexing contrast of thought in which Macedonia cannot be readily compared to other post-socialist countries, certainly not in the eyes of the people I came to know. For my friends, Yugoslavia would have lead 'naturally' into the integration of Macedonia into the Western world. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia this 'right' is seen as being questioned by the European community, which today demands visas for Macedonian citizens even though they once granted them free access. Access to 'western' goods and their appropriation as 'normal' then gains a high political importance. It is not the access to 'Western' consumer goods, but the recontextualisation of these objects, which allows my young friends to develop a very specific meaning, one that has evolved from their particular memories and aspirations. Just as a person's movement around the city determines that person's place in society², a person is also determined by the consumer objects s/he purchases and uses.

'Western demands' as identity

What value do Western objects have for my friends? Simmel insists that value is never an inherent property of objects, but is instead a judgement about objects by subjects, and that these objects are valuable because they resist our desire to possess them (Simmel, 1978: 67-73). As such I would like to follow Appadurai's suggestion that looking at consumption should focus not only on the

¹ Most of these consumer 'objects' had previously been brought in by guest workers or by people traveling. However, in the new Macedonia these items gain a 'new' meaning since the access to the countries that produce these objects has become very difficult.

² For example, teenagers are in some ways defined by the fact that they frequent different areas than their parents do.

aspect of sending social messages but also on receiving them and that demand thus conceals two different relationships between consumption and production. Demand is determined by social and economic forces just as it is manipulating, within limits, these social and economic forces (Appadurai, 1986: 31). As my friends are receiving the social messages of the new consumer goods imported to Macedonia, the demand for these objects creates a new aspect of their identities for them, that has social and economic implications. Consumer objects bring with them images, stories and ways of living from 'outside.' Sometimes these images become more real than 'real life' in Macedonia; these images are creating a reality.

Often my friends referred to the world outside Macedonia as what 'should be' and the world in Macedonia as a circus mirror that obscures. These consumer objects and their associated images become directly linked to people's lives. The criteria of what matters have become extremely volatile and as a result people are left with an uncomfortable ambivalence in directing their own actions. Humphrey (1995), in discussing the consumer culture in Moscow, has pointed out the uncertainties that may arise which make it virtually impossible for her informants to know what one should or should not care about. In the same manner, Rausings' Estonians struggle to construct themselves as 'naturally' Western in order to guard themselves from the ambivalence between their Soviet identity and their wish to be recognized as 'Western.' In Skopje, people's relationship to their surroundings and to the people around them changes slowly as the direction they take is towards the images of Western television. Friction arises if these images do not coincide with life as it is experienced in the 'real' world. The lives of my friend's parents do not correspond to these images which cause friction, between the real and an imagined world, which, in turn, causes turbulence in Macedonian society and the fluctuation, which results in transformation. However, to say that a society is undergoing a transformation, only hints at the enormity of the changes this process brings to the individual lives of the people in that society. The transformation will alter personal relationships with one's family, employer and even with strangers. It is a transformation which occurs through the openings of independence of Macedonia, Macedonia's break from socialist Yugoslavia and the embracing of what people understand as new, modern and Western. It is the visibility, the images on television and their enactment in the world of Skopje through the purchase of consumer goods, and the emphasis on a body culture which causes the changes. The rearrangement of such visibility consequently causes a heightened sense of how appearance and self must be created and cultivated. To create a 'self,' my friends are forced to create social relationships which conform to their ideals and dreams. It is in the realm of the family that the first conflict arises.

Many of my friends found that their family expected them to fulfill roles which they felt to be incompatible with their 'new' self. However, at the same time it is the family which, more than ever, gives them support and a sense of

security. Many of my friends have found it far more difficult to find a job than their parents ever did. Those who find jobs do so through *vrski*, family connections. It could be said that Macedonia's economy in Yugoslavia as today, was largely based on this concept of *vrski*. In times when certain goods were not available one had to rely solely on *vrski*. In an economical sense, *vrski* could be described as barter and bribe. In times when the economy of Yugoslavia was stagnating, especially in the 1980's, people needed to rely on family members abroad and in the countryside to supply the world of urban Skopje with both foreign and agricultural goods. Today this system persists, but I argue that the meaning of the goods has changed.

There are goods that can be received through kinship from the countryside, there are household goods that are received through kinship and friendship with people in Germany, Italy or France and there are goods that can be purchased through monetary means. I suggest that the last category creates something beyond *vrski*, it creates an independent 'Western' ideal that stands in direct opposition to *vrski*. This 'Western' world is a world of achievement. However, it is a world that is very difficult to imitate given the economic and political situation of Macedonia in which my young friends must depend more than ever on the family and *vrski*. An additional difficulty for my friends is the impossibility of finding independent housing. It is not possible to get mortgages from banks as they do not offer any of the usual services such as loans or even bank accounts. Bank accounts were closed in 1991, all savings were frozen, and only exist as numbers on pieces of paper. Most people store their money, bundles of Deutsch Marks, in their homes, hidden in an obscure cupboard. When the German bank changed its banknotes and I brought the new money back to Skopje, the mother of a friend fell crying on a chair, shattered, because she believed that all the money she had saved, every Dinar of which she had changed into Marks, was now worthless. It took some time to reassure her that her money was not lost again. In this situation, the modern way of delaying marriage until one is financially secure, is obsolete and meaningless. The desire for independence and individual preferences cannot be considered. It is very difficult for young Macedonians, despite the intensity of their desire, to emulate the lifestyles they see in American television programs which show young people leaving their parents to start an independent life. Only if their parents are wealthy, have some family property, or belong to the new elite of "*bisnes coveks*", business men, is it possible for a son or daughter to move out. If they are most fortunate, they may move to one of the nice apartments in the newly built houses that are appearing everywhere on the Skopje skyline.

The political economy of 'lifestyle'

It has become necessary to stay at home, submit to your role as a son or daughter and hope that you will find yourself a wife or husband who has their own flat. If not, as a woman you might find yourself moving straight into your

husband's parents' house as their daughter-in-law. All of my friends found this situation in direct opposition to the image they aspired to: the image they saw as modern and West European³. This situation, close family links and obedience to one's parents, is common in many societies, but my friends rejected this way of living. They had thought that this way of life, which they associated with their grandparents, was passé, at least in the urban environment of Skopje unless you were Albanian.

My friends believed that this way of life was not meant for them and their desire to recreate themselves as modern citizens of an independent Macedonia, created pressure at home which they sought to escape and possibly negotiate through their love of foreign consumer goods.

There is a distinction between 'liking nice things' and the meaning that is applied to those 'things.' To like and want to have a jumper is one thing; to want it so much that you are prepared to spend a month's salary on it, is another. Not all my friends spent money in this way all the time, but they certainly all felt it was more than acceptable behavior. When I asked about specific purchases, I would often be told that, unlike their situation in Macedonia, it would be easy for me to buy the item in Germany. The explanation given for this inequity would be that there is greater freedom in Germany; it would not be said that Germany is simply a far richer country. Their idea of 'freedom' was contrasted to the lack of freedom they experienced at home where they were not able to do what they wanted to do⁴. What they wanted to do was be like 'everybody else,' that is, like people their own age in England, Germany or America. I was told many times by numerous people: 'All I want is a decent life.' They feel their difference from the young people they see on Western European television. On television young people of their age live by themselves or with friends, manage their own household, have jobs they chose and applied for, have hobbies and a 'lifestyle'. They have their own money with which they can buy whatever they want. They travel and know many interesting people and places. My friends, however, are constantly scared to lose what they have: peace, money through the devaluation of currency, ideals and dreams. Buying expensive consumer goods today gives them a feeling of security about tomorrow. After all, by tomorrow those goods might be out of reach forever. So their shopping gains a certain sense of urgency. This not only affects my young friends, but also their parents. Like their children, their parents want to see their children have 'a decent life.' Their parents see this as being achieved through consumption. The parents themselves, however, rarely buy consumer goods for their children, nor are they necessarily willing or able to deplete household resources in order to buy anything that is beyond necessity. They would for example buy a winter coat for their daughter, but would not be willing to buy a 'Western' designer coat. The

³ Many of the images to which they aspire are from American television. However, the 'ideal' world for them is Western Europe. America is often accused of social Darwinism and seen as only interested in themselves.

⁴ This relates to the different generational meanings of 'freedom'.

daughter however might add her salary to the money her parents put aside to buy the coat she wants.

The images from Western Europe and North America which my friends see on television support them in their quest to control their lives: they want to *become* those images in order to escape to a different world. This world should not be understood as simply an illusion as it indeed exists. It creates a particular reality, a reality that presents my friends with a mixture of old Yugoslavian values with a new meaning inspired through Western consumer goods and images from which my friends create their personhood.

In the years following the fracturing of Yugoslavia, the appearance and practices of people in the street and, accordingly, the appearance and practices of my friends have changed, while social categories have not. This situation was described by a friend as:

"...it is hard to express these thoughts, it seems things changed, but words have not. I do not know what is right or what seems wrong. My parents know things, I know them too, but they do not fit with what is today, but then there is nothing else either, it is not like we have different ideas on things. My words do not express what I think anymore."

In this time of uncertainty, where words are not adequate to convey thoughts, objects and their consumption provide the sought after guidance. In this world, it is not ideology or ideas, but material objects which represent my friend's dreams and fears. It is the valued perfume, sweater or brassiere with an English, French or American label which provides guidance in the search for defining oneself beyond the limited definition of the daughter, beyond the identification bestowed from your village, beyond being an engineer and beyond being Macedonian. Consequently, cargo cults, seen as social movements that intensely centre their symbolism on European goods which are difficult or impossible to attain under current social and economic circumstances⁵, come to mind. The cargo cults function in a symbolic replication of European consumption thereby promising the arrival of 'Europeanness.' The goods that symbolize this 'Europeanness' can be seen as symbols of specific aspects of European life, that is prosperity, power and 'happiness.' As a social practise, consumption is more extensive than what is described in the cargo cults in the South Pacific. The idea of 'cargo cult' is an image in itself and lends itself to us to describe different aspects of global exchange (see Lindstrom, 1993). Consumption in Skopje creates consumption objects that are not defined through their utility within this global exchange but through the role they play in the symbolic system of identity formation.

Food and belonging

Consideration of the issue of food, its consumption and the ambivalence of the younger generation's social practices provides insights. This generation is

⁵ See Peter Worsley, 1968.

altering the social order within the city. On a visit to Berovo where I stayed with grandmother Baba Mare, I began to understand the meaning of the food which I was repeatedly offered on my visits to Macedonian homes. At breakfast, when I ate a combination of eggs, eggplants, garlic, peppers and tomatoes, Baba Mare pinched my cheeks and said, not so much to me but to the other members of the family, 'She is Macedonian. She eats peppers and tomatoes with us, she is one of us.' 'One of us' was a much used and highly significant expression for Macedonians in relation to 'outsiders.' One of the first questions asked of the person introducing me was always, 'Is she one of us?' to which my host replied, 'No, she is not one of us.' On my first visits to people's homes I would, with formality, be offered *slatko*, a sweet, usually young figs, apricots, strawberries or other fruit which had been cooked many times in sugar. Only morsels of *slatko* were eaten at any one time and were followed by a big gulp of water, as *slatko* is extremely sweet. Offering *slatko* is a traditional Macedonian custom⁶ and a sign of great hospitality. It is also a source of immense pride for every *domacinka*, female head of the household, who prepares her own *slatko*. Nevertheless, I was told that offering *slatko* is a Turkish custom and as a Turkish custom, the source of many 'Macedonian' customs, it is a constant reminder of 500 years of 'Ottoman oppression.'⁷ As such, these old traditions have two meanings: they define 'who you are,' but they also identify past oppression. It is felt by my young friends, who are still very proud of their mothers' *slatko*, that an independent Macedonia needs different traditions, so now it is often the case that a formal visitor receives sweets bought in the Duty Free Shop.

When I began to eat regularly in a household, and thus, to regularly eat the staple dish of peppers and tomatoes, I became more like a 'real' Macedonian. The classic pepper and tomato dish is *ajvar*, which is made at harvest time, and is seen as making a true Macedonian. *Ajvar* has come to represent the extended family to the people of urban Skopje who gather once a year to cook it. In jokes referring to the possibility of a Serbian invasion, people loved the idea of every single Macedonian standing up for their country and, due to a lack of any weapons, throwing tomatoes at the Serbian army. Tomatoes and peppers are the staple ingredients in Macedonia today and are, in fact, the country's lifeline. Besides watermelons, grapes, poppies, tobacco and some fruit, agricultural production in Macedonia is based on peppers and tomatoes. The dismantling of Yugoslavia left Macedonia with a very one-sided economy, a situation that, if it is to be changed, will require revolutionary measures.

Rakia, or schnapps, is another strongly codified medium of Macedonian social exchange, the consumption of which turns out to be a statement about gender. Just as the *domacinka* is proud of her home-made *slatko* and the whole family takes pride in its *ajvar*, the *domacin*, male host takes pride in his home-

⁶ Offering of *slatko* is indeed found in most Mediterranean countries, such as Greece, Bulgaria or Turkey.

⁷ No one in Skopje failed to make mention of the Turkish occupation and oppression of Macedonia that resulted.

made *rakia*, made from grapes, plums or potatoes. *Rakia*, 'cleanser of the soul,' is a very strong alcohol and seen as a man's drink - it is never offered to visiting women while wine can be consumed by both sexes, the sweeter ones suitable for women. Today however, the idea of sweetness is associated with excess, indulgence and ottoman rule: very sweet treats such as Turkish delight or *slatko* are associated with the Turkish rule. Instead it is fashionable for the young women today to use 'sweetener' in coffee⁸. Beer is rarely drunk by women.

These gender divides are more rigid in the countryside, where it sometimes is deemed unacceptable for a woman to drink any alcohol except wine. The traditional food and drink create and recreate traditional social relationships in a way that is largely implicit for the participants. The introductions of imported consumer goods, because they arrive unencumbered by tradition, therefore represent a contrast to the social relationships produced by the consumption of traditional food.

Social norms for the consumption of food, are consciously altered by my friends in Skopje who seek a 'more European style of living. 'Even though they understand tomatoes and peppers, *slatko*, *rakia* and coffee as being important, my friends insist on the past tense when referring to them and consider these traditional foods and drinks representative of their childhood, their parents' and their grandparents' generations and Yugoslavia. When Gell notes: "What distinguishes consumption from exchange is not that consumption has a physiological dimension that exchange lacks, but that consumption involves the incorporation of the consumed item into the personal and social identity of the consumer" (Gell, 1986: 112), he stresses the same intense relationship between items consumed and the social identity of the consumer that I wish to stress for my informants. *Slatko*, *rakia* and other traditional foods and drinks are still consumed in Macedonia, but 'Western' consumer goods, food, material objects and images transcend the merely utilitarian aspect of consumption goods, so that they become something more like works of art, charged with personal expression (Gell, 1986: 114). In 1988 I spent many long evenings with a group of female friends in Skopje's cafés, drinking *jupi* or *cokta* instead of sprite or coca cola which, imported from Greece, was only available in a few places. We drank Turkish coffee or Nescafé. Today we order cappuccino, espresso and banana milkshakes. In 1988 we spent many hours at each others homes, eating *kashakaval*, a hard cheese and chickpeas, and had the coffee grains in our cups 'read' by male friends who would look deeply into our eyes when they told us our future. Or we would simply indulge in straightforward *muhabeti*, the Turkish word for socialising and talking sociably⁹. In 1996 we would stand outside Van Gogh listening to loud music, drinking cocktails and 'meeting' people.

In Macedonia, food, what type you eat, how and when, defines your gender, the level of formality in your relationship, youth and old age: it

⁸ The sweetener is used instead of real sugar and is a sign of western life style, neglecting the 'opulence' of sugar.

⁹ See J. Cowan, 1990, p. 68ff, discussing the sociability of drinking coffee.

communicates one's origin and identity. In this context, the change of diet undertaken by many of my friends becomes highly significant as my friends consciously attempt to change their image of themselves through changes in their eating habits. Macedonia has established an interesting compromise, in terms of its identity, between its past as a part of Yugoslavia and its present as an independent country. In the midst of the massive political upheavals my friends are trying to make sense of the constantly changing and conflicting images of what has been, what should come and what is coming.

Europe and America as Ideals

Western television and its associated images have become dominant in Macedonia since the fall of Yugoslavia and are now central to family life. The increase in openness which has occurred in Macedonia since the fall of communism, has lead to a huge increase in the availability of pornography which, in turn, has clearly lead to changes in people's perception of themselves¹⁰.

Pornography is easily accessible to anyone including children who can watch pornographic films at three o'clock in the afternoon. Even though pornography is seen as Western: images of naked women were already found on crossword magazines in Yugoslavia despite party ideology. Today, however, as pornographic films pirated from American satellite programs, can be seen at local cinemas and on television, I suggest that the meaning of those images is deeper than the one immediately assumed. Catherine Portuges refers to pornography in Hungary: "In these and other works in which youthful bodies are exhibitionistically fetishised, the ardently sought free-market economy is both symptom and cause" (Portuges, 1992: 287). I, however, believe that for many of my male and female informants, those images of naked bodies present not so much women as objects, a point that is not easily understood either by male or female informants, but represent a meaning that stands in connection with the act of obtaining those films: pirating.

The act of pirating films from a satellite dish, is gaining access to an objectified area of the world that is 'out there' and unreachable other than through 'pirating:' the 'havenots' stealing from the 'haves.' The women in the films are stereotypical American women by Macedonian standards; these women represent America. To connect to this world is to consume their images in a manner assumed to be 'Western:' detached consumption that objectifies everything, only taking. Watching pornography is more than a symptom and cause of a market economy, more than entertainment; watching pornographic movies is an act of gaining access not to the object of the film itself but to *the act* of watching it. While I lived in Skopje, male friends came to visit me, not for a coffee and chat as I thought, but in order to tune in to the different

¹⁰ Something similar is reported by Sheena Crawford in her thesis *Person and Place in Kalavassos: Perspectives on Social Change in a Greek-Cypriot Village*, 1985.

pornographic movies that were playing. My loud protestations were heeded but not understood. They did not understand why I was upset as their understanding was that I was from Germany and porn was a normal thing for me to watch. Secondly, I was their friend and was not ready to share the freedom of living on my own and my television, when they surely could not watch such films with their parents and little sister at home. I had two things they saw as 'Western:' choice and freedom.

By recreating themselves as modern consumers, my friends are attempting to eradicate the differences between themselves and the West, differences which have become increasingly skewed. Having been raised to be proud of their Yugoslavian identity, the non-aligned nation, Macedonians, citizens of a country which is no longer a 'model', the Switzerland of Eastern Europe, find themselves disenfranchised.

Reaction to Macedonian Independence and the Fall of Yugoslavia

In the four years between 1992 and 1996, consumption became the key feature of the 'new society' of Macedonia. This culture of consumption is centered on the capital city of Skopje and developed at a time when many people in Macedonia had to struggle to survive. Through the process of privatization many people had lost their jobs as companies closed down; they had lost the small amount of foreign currency because of the closure of bank accounts and many people were barely surviving. Most people simply could not afford to buy foreign consumer products. If my friends are working; they are employed in a private company and their work is always related to, or directed towards, Western Europe, the UN or an American aid organization. If they work for the state, they complain about not having enough work, not having enough pay and about widespread inefficiency. All of them, however, embrace the 'New Macedonia' and its revised interpretations of past times and capitalism.

The lives of my friends in 1996 are bound up with the discussion of the 'new people,' those who are envied because they can afford the consumer culture but are judged as stealing from the people. None of my informants would count themselves in this category although they certainly aspired to the same consumption patterns. The idea that earning money is a form of theft is, as Liseta pointed out, an old concept from communist times, when making money for oneself by securing a deal for one's company was seen as 'stealing from the people.' Today, she commented, it is called good business. In fact, the old ideas live alongside the new. The result of these conflicting ideologies, the Yugoslavian ideology versus capitalism which is the true essence of independent Macedonia, is evident in the constant talk of corruption. To steal is 'to be corrupt,' but in today's Macedonia, stealing could just mean good business. Rausing reports a similar concept in Estonia, where, despite the governments commitment to the free market, the people who have been successful in it are often seen as less 'Estonian' in people's imagination; very smart and with

dangerous connections. She says: "They seem already to belong to another imaginary entity that is only partially contained by the entity of Estonia." (Rausing 1998: 195). Similarly, the original Estonia symbolises for Rausing's Estonians what Western Europe signifies for Macedonians: a specific type of person, who has success through achievement and not through intelligent manipulation. The latter is seen as an original Balkan trait.

The *nouveau riche* represent the typical Balkan personality and, in addition, they do not conform with the existing socialist ideology in which this class is seen as stealing from the common people. These two aspects come together and create unfavorable conditions for the *nouveau riche*, thus explaining, the lack of a drastic emergence of the *nouveau riche* as a class in itself as Humphrey (1995) reports for Moscow.

These conflicting ideas about success and business have produced an understanding of a means to success. Whilst previously people pooled their cleverness, nowadays the kind of understanding required to run a business is shared by only a few. For many of my friends, their parents and relatives, the knowledge and experience they have acquired has become meaningless. In this world, a polarization takes place that stands against socialist and 'European' valued ideology, as both are seen as valuing equality in some way. The middle class as 'Western' ideal has disappeared in Skopje before it had been formed. Possibilities and the standard of living rises for a few people while for most people, it declines. For my friends, it is in this world that the struggle of who they want to be and who they *can* be, takes place. Shopping is the locus in which this particular struggle becomes visible. Western television conveys an image of the world where supermarkets predominate, where one just goes and get the things one needs in five minutes.

Conclusion

Though life in Skopje looks very different to what is seen to represent the 'Western World', my friends disregard this disjunction and interact with the outside world *as if* it were actually available to them. It follows that economic activity has intrinsic political and ideological value. If my friends browse through shops in which they will never be able to afford to buy something, they are, nevertheless, making a political statement. This intrinsic political statement is determined by history, in this case the history of socialist Yugoslavia, as well as by Western television and global consumerism. In socialist Yugoslavia it was production that was glorified, whereas on Western television, glamour is produced by speculative gains. Each value condemns the other, but promises the same thing. In Skopje, the world of consumerism arrived because of risky speculation and the contact this produced with the outside world embodies a particular political/moral attitude. Shopping in Skopje is a political statement.

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