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Retailing as a development indicator of cross-border city region – case study of Szczecin in Poland

Retail trade is one of the most dynamic and considerable economic sector. It is inseparable part and one of functioning base of modern cities and agglomerations. Numerous retail types creates various possibilities of forming urban structures, generating new functional connections and new kinds of consumers behaviors and mobility. Retail structure is different on borderlands. Border transformations have huge impact on city and region structure in many dimensions. Abolition of many EU's internal borders opened new possibilities for borderlands. Simplified tourist movement, working and living abroad. Changes also occur in retail structure, not only in localization of shops and its types but also in offered goods.

Retail has an impact on city and even region structure and is its development indicator (Evers D., 2002; Kaczmarek T., 2011; Burger M., Meijers E., Van Oort F.G., 2013; McGreal S., Kupke V., 2014,). This paper refers to retail trade as a city structure development indicator, illustrated by the example of Szczecin. Located in Northern Poland, Szczecin is capital city of West Pomeranian Voivodship. City borders Germany and its extended metropolitan area includes communities in West Pomeranian Voivodeship and German states of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Szczecin is a center of the region and provides services, such as administration, services, trade, education, health care etc. City offers wide range of retail forms. From small convenience stores, most popular supermarkets and hypermarkets, then specialty and departmental stores and few shopping malls. Borderland abounds in marketplaces and bazaars which considers on German consumers or offers German commodities for polish buyers. The question is how it has been changing through years depending on political situation, which affects both mobility of the consumers and possibilities for investors.

This paper examines the area where Szczecin's influence spans considering retail functions. Aim of this study was to define the German share in Polish market. It was reached by: (a) social study – carrying out a survey among 250 consumers (West-Pomeranian residents) about their view of Szczecin's retail structures, most visited facilities and view of foreign consumers and shops improvements for them, (b) field research – conducting statistics of carplates in five polish shopping malls on Szczecin territory and one on German borderland in Schwedt, which enable researchers to create maps of retail interactions, (c) spatial analysis – distribution of shops and shopping malls, inventory of facilities and (d) creating photographic

documentation. Theoretical base embrace Christaller's central place theory and theories about competitiveness of modern cities. It also refers to theories about significance of border and cross-border shopping tourism. The result of this study was a delimitation of Szczecin's regional retail functions impact range on both Polish and German borderlands.

Keywords: retail trade, regional place, shopping centre, marketplace, cross-border region,