

## **What is the Place of Retail in Contemporary Cities?**

Many researchers indicate that retail is increasingly important for the development of the city. It still creates a large resource on the labour market, organizing and impacting urban public space and even creates a new type of social and cultural relations as well as often it becomes a market and marketing symbol of the city. Among the many important functions of trade appears to urban function, which boils down to shaping the spatial structure. Especially in the big urban centres developed chain of retail outlets, in conjunction with the network of commercial and public services creates a kind of urban spine. Shops vary greatly from free-standing kiosks, shops and stalls, inner city after a peripherally located halls and shopping malls. Trading activity may also play a role of "repair" of the urban fabric, contributing to the revitalization of degraded buildings, streets and urban complexes. Currently, towns and cities spatial organisation became a subject of dynamic structural changes, touch its functional, social and economic base, parallel processes of modernization and revitalization further complicated the situation and development of many cities. Many of these changes enhance to modern commerce.

In the past decades, intensive development of modern shopping malls, which invested increasingly in the urban central districts are slowly became a "cities under the roof" and offer a diverse set of deals. Thus become serious competition not only for high streets and shopping areas in the central districts, but also for numerous urban marts. Many users (customers) and visitors of shopping malls treats them as not only new – but also better public spaces and used them for leisure and entertainment, which replaces the traditional functions reserved for downtown, main street, pedestrian zone and its characteristic indicators. In turn, the shopping centres on the outskirts of cities are a comprehensive trade offer, ranging from food products, household chemicals, home appliances, the range of machines and devices for home furnishing, gardening, and furniture and building materials. These objects usually take larger plot, has a large, free parking, convenient access and spacious one-storey buildings. Both the downtown and peripheral shopping centres represent a huge competition for other forms of retailing and its intensive development will not only quantitative changes in retail chains, but also a change of a spatial, social and economic. Traditional downtown loses their function in favour of

commercial, multi-functional and comprehensive gallery and suburban residential districts are monofunctional (i.e. Leeuwen, Rietveld, 2011, Heffner, Twardzik 2013).

Interesting are the components of retail change in large urban centers as well as in medium and small towns, in particular possible explanation of changing patterns of retailing. Important for urban structural change – in every type of the urban centre - is the locational change in retailing. The processes of retail institutional change are also important for location, existence and functioning of retailers and stores in the cities space.

Other aspects of store location seen as being of most importance are that of accessibility. The central part of a city historically is the focus for transport networks and has the highest accessibility. Downtown represents the highest level of attractiveness for commercial, retail and service activities. In consequence land rent and payments are usually the greatest here but each type of retail business values accessibility differently, and are able to pay different amounts for a site. However, changing conditions and possibilities of transport significantly reduced the scope of the availability of the center for residents and users. Also for retailer and services other places in the city, especially in the outer zone, they have become a more attractive location for trade and services. In many towns and cities, both larger and smaller, retail and commerce was shifted outward. Consequently, in the city centers conditions for retailers and services have changed completely, especially in the cities and towns of Central Europe, where the availability of parking and public transport is limited.

An important question today seems to be a role and place of trade in the spatial, social and economic structure of the city? It is especially important in the context of such phenomena as the concentration and consolidation of trade on regional and metropolitan level, integration of commercial enterprises and the development of e-commerce.

The interactions between trade and retail activities and urban economic resilience with a primary focus on the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and particularly in Poland.

Quick and intensive increase of large-scale retail outlets and its impact to the social and economic aspects of existing retail in local, regional and national urban systems have been extensively discussed in the urban economic and planning literature. The answer to the question: What is the future of the

traditional trade and retail in the cities? Is it very actual because the question of survival of retail facilities in a competitive and dynamic urban structure has been discussed less. In particular, the problem of the functioning of retail and trade in small and medium-sized towns as well as in urban agglomerations and cities. Especially important is the adjustment of traditional city-center retail function, disappears and depreciates at a fast pace resulting in numerous deserted main streets and pedestrian areas in many even in the cities and small towns. Many authors believe that this phenomenon is connected to uncontrolled influx of new forms of shopping venues in outer (hypermarkets) and inner (shopping malls) zones of traditional cities and towns. It is a lot of examples, from the practical disappearance of retail in the high streets to the successful revitalization of city centres and their increased role in economic resilience.

Many authors suggest that the modern city has been profoundly shaped by its retail and trade businesses (i.e. Carreras 2006). European city centre and its characteristic structure retail stores located on the high street or pedestrian zone often became an icon of its national or regional primacy and mould everyday life. Important is the evolution of relationships between the cities and towns and its shops, markets and malls.

However, emerging vacated shopping centres, especially in medium and the largest urban agglomerations indicate the need to seek new solutions for the location of retail and trade in the cities and in urban and suburban areas. Still open is the question how to transform historic spaces in the urban centres into contemporary retail locations.

Retailing has always been crucial and important to the function, urban form and identity of the city. The success of the city commerce is seen as sign of urban vitality and good urban policy provided by the key city institutions. The status of retail and commerce show the position of a city or town in the hierarchy of settlement system and to give each place of the city its own special character, in particular the physical appearance of the high streets and types of retailing (e.g. corner shops, market halls, department stores, supermarkets, hypermarkets, shopping malls). Important is the answer to the question why exactly such a set of retail stores and services get together in some cities and towns and how it is change over the longue duree.

Among the main principles of the functioning of commerce in the cities are usually mentioned:

- Ensuring appropriate conditions for historic downtowns and new urban communities to compete with modern malls and suburban shopping centres.
- Promote development of sustainable communities which can give more profits for retail and shopping investment in downtowns and historic cities (Gibbs 2012).
- Guarantee a good level of permanent accessibility to the city centre retail and shopping areas, in particular by pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation network.
- Reinforce retail services and commerce in city centres by locating parking for support walking on downtown public spaces such as a town square (Brunette and Caldarice 2016).

On the other hand, neighbourhood centres and local shopping streets are giving economic, social and cultural identity to many towns and cities, especially in Western and Southern Europe. Their quality lies in a mix of retail, restaurant, services, leisure and cultural offerings. The location of retail shops close to residential areas allows the citizens to make their everyday shopping on foot, by bicycle or using public transport. In Poland widely developed the movement protecting local shops and services and many local activists and politicians considers that tailored and resource-efficient development of local retailers networks as well as social, cultural and transport infrastructure are matched to the demands of urban users and population.