



Special Session Proposal

Structural transformation of retail chains in the outer zones of urban agglomerations. The quantitative changes and new location patterns.

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Abstract

Retail trade and services are becoming the most dynamically developing sector of activity in Polish cities and rural areas. State-owned and cooperative stores have been closed down and they were replaced mostly by private stores. There are more and more commercial outlets of various formats, including supermarket chains, discount stores and integrated chains. Despite growing number of modern retail trade formats, traditional small-format, often referred to as local market is also really important. New trading posts in small towns and rural areas are mainly located in the zones of influence of larger cities. They affect many changes of spatial, social and economic character. Small towns and rural areas surrounding them more and more frequently start to compete for further retail trade investments while noticing lots of benefits and costs of this process. The aim of the article is to show the scale of new retail investment in small towns and rural areas in Poland. Research devoted to this field is important from the point of view of choosing the location of new investments related to discount chains and of the strategy for the development of small towns and rural areas. Identification of consequences of the operation of discount chains in chosen rural areas and in small towns can impact the verification of the policy adopted by local authorities in relation to spatial planning and forming the functional structure. Research devoted to this field is also important from the point of view of choosing the location of new investments related to shopping and of the strategy for the development of cities. Classical theories regarding the location of trade and services do not take into account the specificity of modern retail shops and conditions of their functioning in city space.