

IMPACT OF SHOPPING MALLS ON THE FUNCTIONAL AND SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF COMMUNES IN THE OUTER METROPOLITAN ZONE

1. Retail use in chosen communes of the outer metropolitan zone

One of the basic aims of the research project was to identify factors which determine the development of the retail use in communes located in the outer metropolitan zone of cities constituting the Upper Silesian Agglomeration. An important objective was to find the answers to two questions: firstly: how does the retail use develop in the territory of a commune? Secondly: what policy is pursued by the commune as far as supporting the development of the retail use is concerned?

Generally, the situation of small towns and rural communes located near metropolitan areas can be assessed in two ways. On the one hand, large shopping malls and stores located in cities of an agglomeration may attract buyers from smaller localities. It will result in a disappearance of traditional forms of trade in small towns and rural communes. On the other hand, an appropriate policy regarding the provision of investment areas may result in shopping malls being located in smaller localities. In the case of studies of such type, it has to be clearly defined who is the beneficiary of particular activities undertaken by local authorities and who bears the costs of their decisions. Potential beneficiaries include, firstly, shopping malls and chains of stores – mainly groceries, and secondly, inhabitants who benefit from a more developed commercial offer. At the same time, the development of new forms of trade constitutes a threat to the existence of shops which have been functioning in particular small towns and rural areas to date.

In order to identify the influence of local governments on the development of the retail use, it was decided to conduct interviews with representatives of local authorities (Commune Mayors, Commune Heads) and persons responsible for spatial planning and development in chosen communes. In the course of the interviews, four basic questions were posed, together with a series of leading questions:

1. How does the retail use develop in the territory of a commune? (*diffusion of modern trends, consumer behaviour, development and disappearance of particular forms of trade*)
2. What positive and negative boosts to the development observed in the commune are related to the creation of shopping malls? (*economic, social, cultural, technical, environmental*)
3. What policy regarding the development of the retail use is pursued by the commune? (*investment areas, incentives attracting investors, instruments protecting local traders*)
4. What opportunities for and threats to the development of the commune result from the fact of being located in the vicinity of a metropolitan area? (*benefits and costs related to the fact of being located in the vicinity of the metropolitan area*)

The study was conducted in 14 communes of the Silesian Voivodeship. Medium-sized towns were: Pszczyna, Wodzisław Śląski, Myszków and Żywiec. Towns were represented by: Kłobuck, Orzesze, Kozięgłowy, Toszek and Imielin. As for rural communes, these were: Gorzyce, Suszec, Chełm Śląski, Ornontowice and Ślemień (Tabs. 24 and 25).

On the basis of the statistical data concerning the number of commercial facilities in particular analysed communes, in the years 2008-2011 it is possible to ob-

Table 24

Basic data regarding analysed communes of the Silesian Voivodeship

Commune	Surface in km ²	Total population in thousand	Status of the commune	Distance in a straight line in km from			
				Katowice	Bielsko-Biała	Częstochowa	Rybnik
Pszczyna	175	51,059	urban and rural	32	20	93	31
Wodzisław Śląski	50	49,353	urban	49	47	102	12
Myszków	74	32,829	urban	40	85	31	76
Żywiec	51	32,431	urban	65	17	125	65
Kłobuck	130	20,721	urban and rural	71	120	16	93
Gorzyce	64	20,556	rural	57	49	109	20
Orzesze	84	19,654	urban	24	37	82	18
Kozięgłowy	160	14,372	urban and rural	39	87	24	71
Suszec	75	11,635	rural	31	30	91	19
Toszek	100	9,546	urban and rural	41	80	58	39
Imielin	28	8,402	urban	18	37	75	46
Chełm Śląski	23	6,060	rural	21	50	79	46
Ornontowice	15	5,822	rural	21	47	74	18
Ślemień	45	3,479	rural	66	26	124	74

Source: Own work on the basis of data from the Statistical Office in Katowice and www.dystans.org.

Table 25

The number of hypermarkets and supermarkets in the analysed communes in the Silesian Voivodeship

Commune	Number of hypermarkets and supermarkets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Pszczyna	7	9	9	9
Wodzisław Śląski	9	11	13	14
Myszków	6	8	6	8
Żywiec	7	8	8	9
Kłobuck	1	1	3	3
Gorzyce	0	1	1	1
Orzesze	1	1	1	2
Koziegłowy	0	0	1	1
Suszec	0	0	0	0
Toszek	0	1	2	2
Imielin	1	1	1	1
Chelm Śląski	0	0	0	0
Ornontowice	0	0	0	0
Ślemień	0	0	0	0

Source: Local Data Bank.

serve, above all, the highest increase in the number of supermarkets. In medium-sized towns, such as Pszczyna, Myszków and Żywiec, there are 7 supermarkets on average. Wodzisław Śląski constitutes an exception, as the number of such facilities in the city in the years 2008-2011 increased from six to thirteen (in addition to one hypermarket). In towns such as Orzesze, Kłobuck, Imielin and Koziegłowy, there are usually 1-2 supermarkets. In the analysed medium-sized towns, despite of capacities related to conditions and trends related to spatial planning of communes and local plans shown in the study, there is a small number of large-area stores (hypermarkets the surface of which exceeds 2000 m²). It results, firstly, from the fact that the Upper Silesian Agglomeration or other large cities, such as Częstochowa, Bielsko-Biała and Rybnik, in which there are shopping centres and malls, are located in the vicinity. Secondly, from the fact that the market capacity is limited. And thirdly, from a conscious policy of local authorities which restrict the development of large commercial facilities (Pszczyna).

Therefore it seems reasonable to analyse the relations between medium-sized towns, small towns and rural communes and large urban centres in terms of diffusion of consumer behaviours and trends in the process of development of the structure of trade and services.

2. Trends in the development of the retail use in chosen communes of the outer metropolitan zone

The attempt to identify factors which have the biggest impact on the development of the retail use in the analysed communes of the Silesian Voivodeship constituting the outer metropolitan zone was founded mainly on the definition of contemporary consumer behaviour penetrating into rural communes and small towns. Changes in attitudes related to the demand have a considerable influence on the transformation of the structure of trade and services. The aim of the study was to determine which forms of trade and services are developing, which of them are disappearing, and what is the cause of such a state of affairs. Evolutionary changes in the retail use aimed towards the development of shopping malls constituted a pretext to pose the question regarding positive and negative boosts to the development connected with this form of trade. Addressing such a question to the representatives of local authorities was justified, as it constituted the starting point for the discussion regarding the objectives of local policy related to the development of the retail use in communes of the outer metropolitan zone. The comprehensiveness of the question concerning the positive and negative impact of shopping malls resulted from the necessity to identify factors in many fields of the development of communes, including the economic, socio-cultural, technical and environmental fields.

Among opinions on the trends in the development of trade, two points of view were mentioned most frequently.

First of all, in the structure of trade remained mainly small shops which were able to offer the assortment other than the one available in shopping malls and small chain supermarkets (71.4% answers among all respondents). The answers indicate that these small shops are usually family businesses with a strong market position from many years or offer specialised goods, often combined with counselling services, *e.g.* shops for fishermen, pigeon fanciers, *etc.*

Second of all, over a half (571%) of utterances mentioned a very visible expansion of small supermarkets, such as *Biedronka*, *Tesco*, *Lidl*, *Netto*, *Aldi* or *Carrefour*, offering mainly a diversified food products. These shops often win the competition with local retailers by offering a wider range of goods and, at the same time, encouraging to shop by means of lower prices. The above mentioned chain stores make comprehensive grocery shopping possible and, thus, contribute to reduce the time spent in the shop. Moreover, an important feature of this type of facilities is the fact that they are self-service stores which, according to the respondents, constitute a standard solution nowadays. That is why family shops which transformed into self-service facilities compete more effectively with chains of discount stores.

A comparison of answers given by representatives of rural communes and urban communes show that in the case of rural communes, the structure and form of trade have not undergone considerable transformations. Small shops offering food

and manufactured goods are dominant, and trade activity is conducted by family businesses. In rural communes, consumer behaviour is traditional, *i.e.* most people buy food products in local stores located near their place of residence. However, it is possible to observe differences between older inhabitants, attitudes of whom does not change much, and young inhabitants who more and more often use the offer of shopping malls located in large cities. As for the majority of small and medium-sized towns, which were the subject of the study, small chain supermarkets developed in the most intensive manner. In some of the towns, supermarkets were created where marketplaces used to function in the past (such situation took place in Żywiec). In medium-sized towns (*e.g.* Wodzisław Śląski, Żywiec) respondents indicated that in recent years shopping centres and malls, constituting also a place to spend free time, had developed, but a relatively small number of stores (supermarkets) related to construction and gardening were created.

In the case of a couple of localities, a significant role is still played by a fair (Orzesze, Żywiec, Kłobuck, Gorzyce – in total 26.8% of answers) It is often highlighted that in such a place not only food products, clothes and household appliances can be bought, but also livestock is sold (Żywiec). In few cases, a part of the traditional marketplace was used to build a supermarket.

According to respondents, it is possible to observe inhabitants – especially at the end of the week – going shopping to large shopping malls located in the neighbourhood. For example, in Orzesze, private transporters offer additional buses that transport customers to shopping malls located in Mikołów and in Żory.



Figure 77. Assessment of trends in the development of the retail use in the analysed communes of the Silesian Voivodeship (% of answers)

Source: Own work (Figs. 77-85).

Another trend observed in the analysed localities is the disappearance of door-to-door selling (not so long ago many people bought food products in such a way in Suszec) and of street trading, which are considered to be very provisional solutions which lose the competition with self-service stores. The survey also indicated a decline of shops and services which were omnipresent in the past and which lost their significance due to the development of the civilisation. That is how shops offering *e.g.* articles for blacksmith disappeared (*e.g.* in Ślemień).

Chain general stores located in towns make it possible to plan the amount of time spent on shopping in a more flexible way. The respondents indicated *e.g.* that such stores offered more convenient opening hours than small shops. Supermarket chains are opened seven days a week, from early morning to late evening.

A relatively small number of answers relate to changes in preferences regarding a virtual shopping place, although it shall be expected that in the future this factor will play an increasingly significant role. The turnover of online shops is growing every year. On the one hand, it is due to the fact that it is more and more easy to enter into transactions, on the other, due to favourable pricing. It is more and more popular among customers to take a look at products in traditional, stationary stores and to buy them on the Internet. Such a phenomenon is called *showrooming* and is particularly common among young people who buy electronic equipment and clothing [Mehra *et al.* 2013; Zimmerman 2012].

All things considered, it has to be stated that the main factor determining changes in the retail sector are variable preferences of customers who appreciate especially comfortable shopping and a wide range of products and services. Local retailers who want to effectively compete with supermarkets are forced to improve the standard of service or to find market niches by offering specialist products and services.

The trends in consumer behaviour discussed above and related to the development of shopping malls may generate, in the opinion of the representatives of local authorities, both positive and negative boosts to the development of a commune.

Above all, it has to be said that the respondents emphasised more the existence of positive boosts. In particular in medium-sized towns in which interviews were conducted (*e.g.* Wodzisław Śląski), it was indicated that the development of shopping centres and malls was inevitable. Therefore, the authorities encourage locating such facilities in the territory of their commune, as otherwise such premises would be created anyway in a neighbouring city.

Among positive boosts to the development related to the construction of shopping malls the respondents enumerated the creation of new jobs in both retail and service sectors (57.1% of answers). It has to be added that in the most cases jobs were created outside the analysed communes, as shopping malls were built in large cities and that is where the inhabitants of smaller localities were hired.

In the case of the development of commercial facilities in the territory of the analysed communes, respondents mentioned also advantages in the form of increased budget revenue in the form of rent for lease and property tax (*e.g.* Imielin, Chełm

Śląski, Orzesze, Pszczyna, Wodzisław Śląski, Żywiec). It was also stated that an investor using an area for commercial activity operates effectively, achieves return on invested capital in a short period of time and, thus, is a low-risk, *i.e.* desired, business entity for the commune.

The next four answers constitute a set related to benefits gained by customers which, as a consequence, contributed to the improvement of the quality of life in a given region. It was often stated that shopping malls which had been created in medium-sized towns and small local centres aspired to be an important place on city maps. The most important aspect mentioned was of course the higher comfort of shopping and a possibility to save time. The element of time appeared also in another context, *i.e.* in relation to opportunities connected with spending leisure time. Restaurants, cafés and other catering establishments, which are often located in malls of even small shopping centres, become a place of traditional meetings. In bigger centres or malls, a multiplex or a bowling alley often offer a couple of hours of fun for entire families [Hubbard 2003].

In the case of localities with sightseeing and recreational qualities, the construction of shopping malls was justified, as it was related to a considerable turnover generated by tourists as well as by households having so-called *secondary residences* in the vicinity [Heffner, Czarnecki 2011]. For example, persons residing in Żywiec during holidays or weekends used to bring many products with them. Today, they shop on the spot, benefiting from a diversified offer of shopping malls and smaller grocery chains.

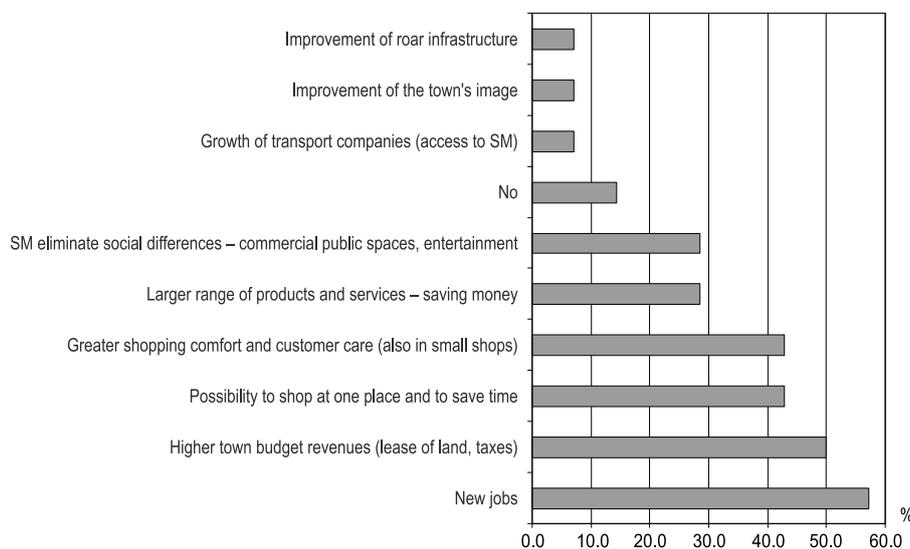


Figure 78. Positive boosts to the development of the commune related to the creation of shopping malls (% of answers)

In the course of the interviews, opinions were presented according to which the development, especially of modern forms of trade, generates positive effects in the form of the improvement of the commune's image and of the quality of transport system, as the construction of facilities is often accompanied by a reconstruction of approach roads, which is beneficial for the customers of shops and for local residents.

In addition to the above mentioned positive boosts, the respondents were asked to indicate negative factors related to the construction of shopping malls. The most common answers (64.3% of respondents) referred to the outflow of customers from small shops and, as a result, their liquidation. In most analysed towns, small shops which have not adapted to modern consumer needs lose the competition with shopping malls and supermarket chains. The comparison of answers concerning positive and negative boosts to the development related to the location of shopping malls in their territory or in the neighbourhood shows an ambivalent attitude of the respondents, in particular as far as the number of jobs is concerned, as new jobs are created thanks to the construction of shopping malls, but at the same time people lose their jobs due to the liquidation of some of the small shops.

Nevertheless, what is important is that in 35.7% of cases the respondents did not see any negative development trends related to the development of new forms of trade. The lack of negative opinions was noted mainly in the following rural communes: Suszec, Ornontowice, Ślemień. Respondents from these communes said that consumer behaviour, as well the structure of trade, had not changed significantly. In these communes, shopping malls were not created, so they do not compete with local retailers. It was stated that their residents can benefit from shopping centres located in large cities, as their offer is complementary and includes mainly products and services which are unavailable in rural communes and small towns.

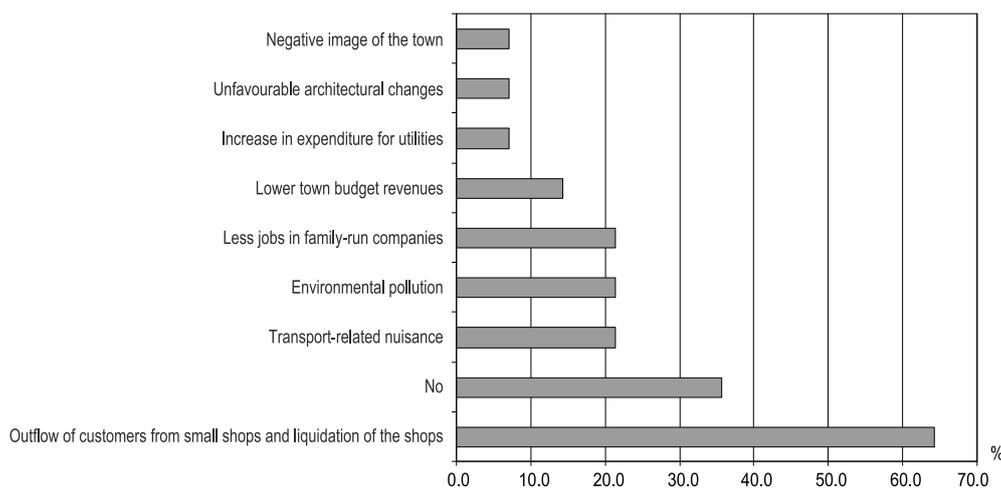


Figure 79. Negative boosts to the development of the commune related to the creation of shopping malls (% of answers)

Factors which were mentioned and should also be considered significant include nuisance associated with excessive traffic near large commercial facilities and environmental pollution (*e.g.* Żywiec, Imielin). More intense traffic causes congestion and problems connected with finding parking spaces (drivers often leave their cars in inappropriate places – lawns, walkways).

Moreover, it has to be noted that factors considered positive by some of the communes were assessed as negative in other places. For example, a representative of the local government of Żywiec said that, in the case of his city, the construction of new commercial premises contributed to the improvement of the city's image, while in the case of Pszczyna it was stated that new facilities had a rather negative impact.

3. Local policy related to the location of the retail use in communes of the outer metropolitan zone

Changes in consumer behaviour penetrating into communes influenced by large urban agglomerations constitute the result of local policy regarding the development of the retail use in towns and rural communes. Firstly, an attempt to determine a set of investment areas, with particular emphasis on areas designated for trade and service purposes, was made. Secondly, opinions of representatives of local authorities concerning the most desired investors, whom the communes are trying to attract taking into account local investment offers, were gathered. The next two questions referred to instruments used by a given commune to attract investors from the retail sector in the one hand, and to protect local retailers on the other. The set was closed by two questions related to both opportunities for and threats to the development of a given commune resulting from the fact of being located in the vicinity of a metropolitan area or of a large urban agglomeration.

The comparison of investment offers of the analysed communes allows to notice relationships between the size of communes and their location. In the case of rural communes, the directions of the development are determined mainly by natural assets. Communes having a potential in the form of mountains, lakes and forests concentrate on the development of the tourist function and investors from this sector are the most desired (*e.g.* Ślemień). In other rural communes, such as Chełm Śląski, Suszec or Ornontowice, good transport connections with towns of the Upper Silesian Agglomeration and, thus, an opportunity for the development of residential areas were highlighted. Most of the areas offered by communes are designated for single-family housing characterised by low-intensity development. In the case of such communes, the development priority is to improve the quality of life and the attractiveness as a residential area. Investments of such communes are focused on the educational and sports infrastructure, as well as on the creation of places to spend leisure time.

In the case of urban communes (medium-sized and small towns) often located in the immediate vicinity of the Upper Silesian Agglomeration, the offer of investment areas is addressed to both investors from the housing sector and companies manufacturing goods. In current spatial development plans, the land for the construction of large-area commercial facilities is often located next to major routes (e.g. in Orzesze, near to the road towards Gliwice), while in city centres it is possible to use areas for the purposes of small commerce and services. In most of the analysed medium-sized towns, the research on conditions and trends related to spatial planning included the possibility to locate commercial facilities the sales area of which exceeded 2,000 m². In Wodzisław Śląski, such premises can be built next to the bus station, in the territory of former National Defence League (LOK) and near the city stadium. In turn, in Żywiec large-area commercial facilities can be created in former manufacturing plants and market hall in the city centre between Wolności Street, Legionów Street and the river Soła. Among medium-sized towns, Pszczyna constitutes an exception, as on the basis of conditions and findings of the research no areas were designated on which commercial objects with sales area of over 2,000 m² could be located.

The answers to the question concerning the most desired investors in the commune clearly show that projects connected with the development of trade are not treated as priority issues. The respondents, who usually were City Mayors, Commune Mayors or Commune Heads, agree that each potential investor deserves attention, but manufacturing companies are most desired. Therefore, communes make efforts to develop industrial zones in their territory (e.g. Wodzisław Śląski, Zawiercie, Ornonowice). Many respondents declared that the most desirable investor would be a company offering many jobs and having a minimal negative impact on the environment. Taking location conditions (immediate vicinity to main routes) into consideration, communes indicated also a possibility of hosting logistics companies in their territory (e.g. Kłobuck)

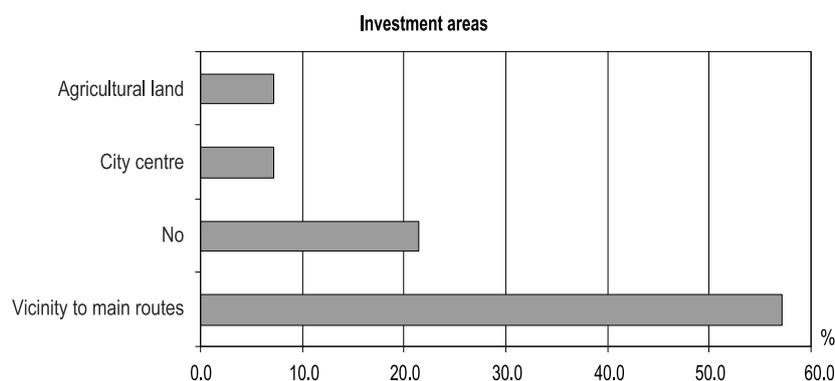


Figure 80. Local policy regarding the development of retail uses – creation of investment areas (% of answers)

In the case of most communes it is difficult to determine any activities aimed at supporting the sector of trade and services. In some cases, reductions in property tax were mentioned (*e.g.* in Imielin exemption from property tax for a two-year period was introduced for entities which decide to invest in the town), as well as specific provisions contained in the local spatial development plans. The typical answer was: “we provide any assistance,” indicating that representatives of local authorities are each time trying, probably by means of negotiations, develop investment conditions in their communes.

Usually, the communes does not use any instruments protecting local retailers. For example, in Orzesze, it was stated that one shopping mall would contribute to the creation of a larger number of jobs and higher budget revenues than a couple of small shops.

The last two questions concerned the opinion regarding opportunities and threats related to the fact being located in the vicinity to large cities of the Upper Silesian Agglomeration. The majority of answers indicated that the proximity of larger cities had positive effects. The closer a given commune was located in relation to the agglomeration, the more positive impact was stated. Persons representing communes located far from urban agglomerations did not mention opportunities nor threats connected to a limited, in their case, availability of metropolitan areas.

As far as positive factors are concerned, respondents highlighted mainly benefits such as the commercial and cultural offer, as well as specialist medical services located in Katowice, Gliwice and other cities of the Upper Silesian Agglomeration. Some of them (*e.g.* from Kłobuck, Ślemień) mentioned, among positive aspects related to the proximity of a metropolitan area, the possibility to observe different human behaviours. In other words, it was stated that a large urban agglomeration is a source of information concerning the contemporary world and visits to the agglomeration may help to establish relations and constitute an inspiration to undertake new actions [Czornik 2012].

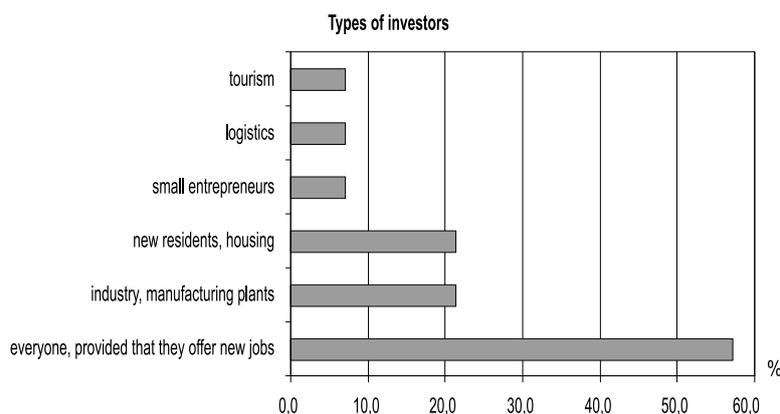


Figure 81. Local policy regarding the development of retail uses – desirable investors (% of answers)

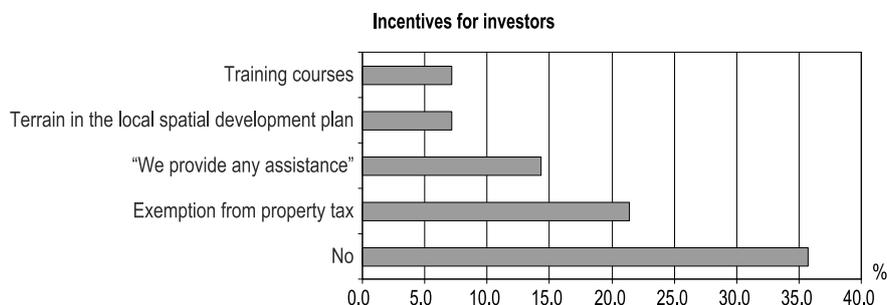


Figure 82. Local policy regarding the development of retail uses – incentives for investors (% of answers)

The proximity of a metropolitan area increases the chance for attracting investors to a given town. It has a positive effect on the situation in the labour market and ensures higher local budget revenues. Authorities of towns and communes consider that the process of suburbanisation and of the “spillage” of cities also provide opportunities. They hope that some agglomeration residents will want to move to more attractive residential areas, created and offered in the territory of towns located around the Upper Silesian Agglomeration (this fact was accentuated *e.g.* in Suszec, Chełm Śląski, Orzesze, Ornontowice).

What is more, 35% of responders does not perceive any threats related to the proximity of a large urban agglomeration. Most of the interlocutors are also aware of the fact that, as far as the competition for potential investors, also big ones from the retail industry, is concerned, towns have little chances for success. In few cases, respondents mentioned a decrease in the level of public safety and an increase in anonymity related to the inflow of new inhabitants to residential areas.

Surveys of those responsible for the management of chosen cities, small towns and rural communes located in the outer metropolitan zone make it possible to for-

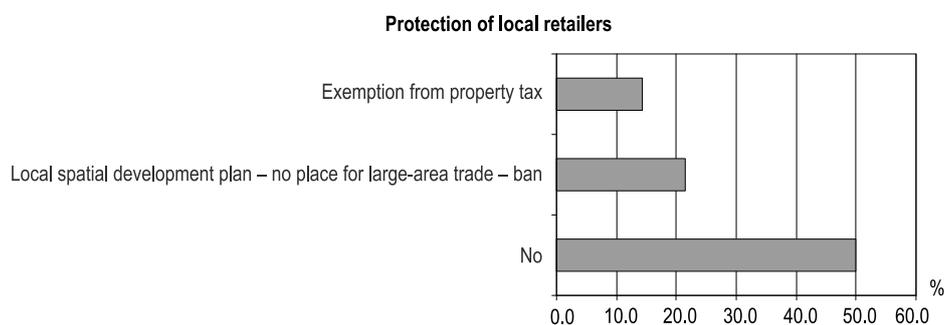


Figure 83. Local policy regarding the development of retail uses – protection of local retailers (% of answers)

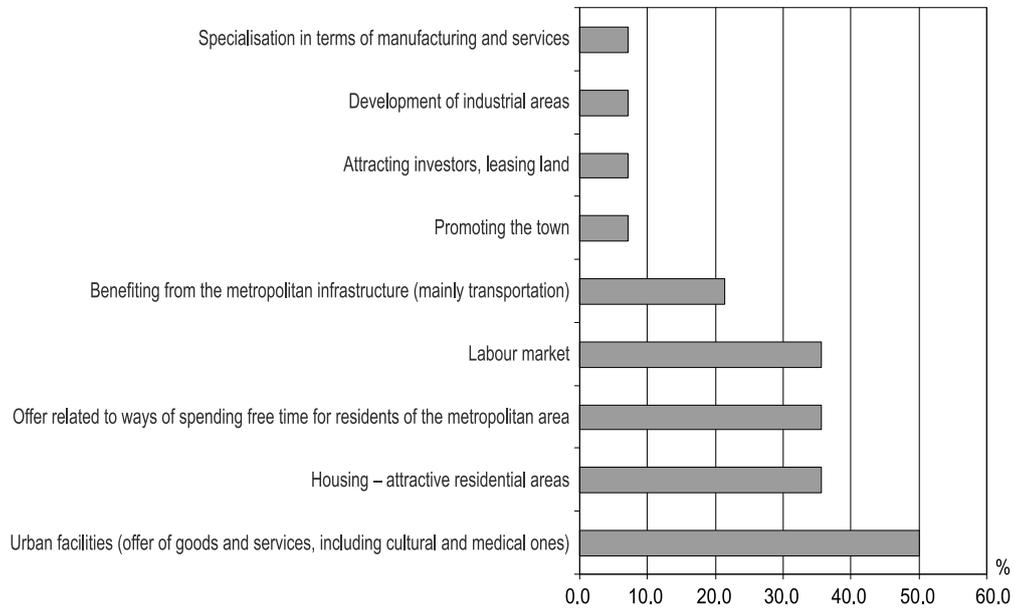


Figure 84. Opportunities for the development of a commune connected with the proximity of a metropolitan area (% of answers)

ulate some general conclusions regarding the impact of shopping malls on the functional and spatial structure of the above mentioned communes.

Firstly, in the territory of small towns and rural communes, progressive and diversified transformations of the structure of trade can be observed, as a result of changes in the consumer behaviour. The intensity of modifications depends on the size of a given commune and its proximity to a metropolitan area. In rural communes, functional and

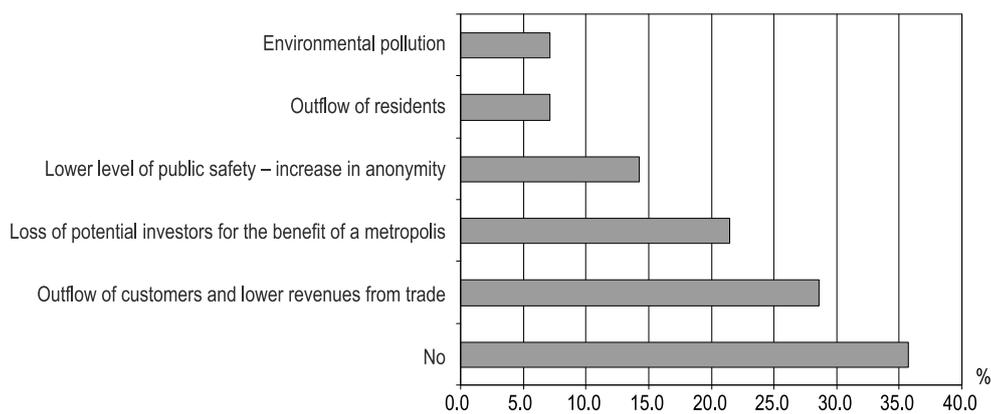


Figure 85. Threats to the development of a commune connected with the proximity of a metropolitan area (% of answers)

spatial transformations related to the retail sector take place at a slower pace (much more considerable changes concern residential areas), while in small and medium-sized towns they result mainly from the expansion of grocery supermarket chains. Despite of restrictions in terms of the diffusion of consumer behaviour trends from metropolises to their outer areas, transformations seem to be inevitable. Modern commerce techniques, such as online sales and group purchases, eliminate barriers associated with distance or economies of scale and make it possible also for residents of the outer metropolitan zone to participate in the entire commercial and service offer.

Secondly, there are more positive aspects connected with the development of the retail use than those which may have a negative impact. It is thought that the location of shopping malls and supermarkets is beneficial both for the commune (revenues from local taxes and charges, new jobs) and for individual customers (more comfortable shopping, wider range of products, possibility to enjoy ways of spending leisure time, which were not available before). Negative changes, consisting mainly in the liquidation of small shops, are considered to be a natural consequence of market gambling.

Thirdly, the sector of trade and services is, from the point of view of local authorities, the main factor in the development. While trying to attract an external investors, local governments focused mainly on manufacturing companies (small and medium-sized towns) or on entrepreneurs from the sector of tourism and recreation, as well as on housing investors (rural communes). As a consequence, there are also no instruments aimed at protecting local retailers.

Fourthly, according to the representatives of local authorities, the proximity of a metropolis generates more positive than negative developmental effects. The location in an the outer metropolitan zone is treated as an opportunity thanks to, above all, the availability of urban facilities (*e.g.* specialist medical services, higher education, culture) and labour market, which contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of people living in rural communes and small towns. Moreover, another opportunity is the possibility to bring in new residents thanks to an attractive offer in terms of single-family housing.