

ABSTRACT

Intensive spatial processes taking place around metropolitan areas leads to many economic, structural and social changes in their surroundings. The small towns and rural areas located in the outer zone of metropolitan areas are most affected by this functional changes. In the outer zone of a big urban centres appears a lot of new competing possibilities on the labour market and a comprehensive commercial, service and cultural offer to smaller centres. One of the most competitive advantage of the metropolitan zones becomes modern shopping centres being established in the most accessible places, providing a comprehensive shopping-services and even cultural-recreational offer.

As in other parts of Europe, small towns, and other local centers in rural areas in Poland, which so far perform residential functions (commuting) and the retail trade and services, systematically lose their importance in the field of providing products and services to local community.

Key words: Around metropolitan areas, the outer metropolitan zones, province of Silesia, shopping centres, shopping malls, small towns, spatial processes, rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

Experiences of countries of the Western Europe, including Great Britain, indicate permanent changes in the outer metropolitan zones caused by the creation and operation of shopping malls in the 1980s. Their development in characteristic locations in urban areas, in particular in the outer metropolitan zones of large cities, results in numerous changes in architecture, urban planning, transport and economy, changes in the labour market, spatial planning and in the patterns of commercial service provision to residents. However, these changes consist, above all, in the disappearance of foundations of the functioning of small towns, including current service and retail uses exercised in respect of rural areas surrounding urban agglomerations. The creation of shopping malls transforms the spatial and social structure of the outer metropolitan zones by changing the directions of gravity and traffic flows (on the local, supra-local and sometimes even regional scale) [Otto 2009]. The space and development of these areas becomes more and more monofunctional, decentralised and non-hierarchical. Classical theories of location of trade and services (*i.a.* Christaller, Lösch, Isard) practically do not take the specificity of modern shopping malls and conditions of their functioning in space into consideration.

It is therefore necessary to analyse and examine these phenomena in Poland in more detail, in order to be able to determine forms of coexistence of both ways used to satisfy the needs of inhabitants in the outer metropolitan zones. Nowadays, shopping malls effectively deprive small towns of their current function consisting in supporting local markets. Research devoted to this field is also important from the point of view of choosing the location of new investments related to shopping malls and of the strategy for the development of small towns and rural areas located within these spheres. Classical theories regarding the location of trade and services do not take into account the specificity of modern shopping malls and conditions of their functioning in space. The recognition of the impact of shopping malls located in the outer metropolitan zones on the development of their surroundings complements in a significant way theories related to the local and regional development which consider large-area shopping centres (including shopping malls) to be one of the outer factors and depreciate their direct influence on development processes.

First shopping malls were established in the 1930s in the United States. In Western Europe, they appeared in the 1950s, and in Poland – in the 1990s. The creation of shopping malls resulted from suburbanisation processes, development of satellite systems around large cities, growing transport difficulties connected with getting to downtown centres, as well as with an increasing number of motorist and diversification of consumer needs. First facilities were of service and commercial character, but

during their evolution next generations of malls have been developed (from the 1st to the 5th)¹. Modern malls provide additional services related to recreational, entertaining, cultural, residential, administrative, office and educational purposes.

First shopping malls were located on the outskirts of large cities next to main access or transit routes. Further generations of malls were established in different parts of cities (usually of the biggest agglomerations), but also beyond their administrative area. From the beginning of the 21st century, shopping malls appear also in medium-sized and small towns.

In Poland, there are over 380 malls, and in the Silesian Voivodeship there are 52 facilities (2012). The pace of development of shopping malls in Poland is characterised by the most dynamic growth observed among European countries. It is probably related to limited legal regulations restricting this domain and a considerable interest from investors. Like in the case of countries of the Western Europe, it is possible to notice a trend of increasing sales area of the malls, enriching the offer by adding new functions (entertaining, residential, office purposes) and changing preferences related to their location (from peripheral areas to city centres).

The development of shopping malls in Poland is a stage of qualitative transformation of trade resulting from the needs of the market, its evolving infrastructure, changes in the character of consumption and lifestyle of Polish consumers. It is also an effect of an increasing interest of the financial market, including foreign concerns and capital groups, in implementing best practices related to the organisation of large-area trade into the Polish reality [Maleszyk 2000]. Although shopping malls are present in Polish urban areas since twenty years and although their structural form has evolved, there is a visible gap in terms of identifying the impact of malls on the local development, especially in the outer metropolitan zones – in rural areas and in small towns. Shopping malls significantly influence their surroundings, both in positive and negative ways. Changes are observed in the field of labour market, local entrepreneurship, transport system and functional structure of settlements and local real estate market, as well as in relation to revitalisation of degraded areas and natural environment.

The aim of the research was to identify the impact of shopping malls on the spatial, functional and socio-economic field in the vicinity of large cities. The research was devoted to the outer areas of urban agglomerations in the Silesian Voivodeship. Many studies highlight that it is a significant research and practical problem [Amcoff *et al.* 2011, p. 129; Leeuwen, Rietveld, 2011, p. 1107; Lukić, Jakovčić, 2004, pp. 39-54; Powe, Shaw 2004, p. 405; Sić 2007, pp. 5-15].

¹ Further development stages (generations) of shopping malls are determined by their structural layout. Malls which combine trade with service activities constitute generation I, trade with service and entertainment activities – generation II, trade with service, entertainment and recreational activities – generation III, while malls combining trade and service, entertainment, recreational, cultural activities with residential and office offer represent generations IV and V.

Attention was paid to the impact of shopping malls on small towns and rural areas located in the outer area of Upper Silesian Agglomeration and in the sphere of influence of Bielsko-Biała, Rybnik and Częstochowa. The result of the implementation of the project is an identification of consequences of the functioning of shopping malls in the outer metropolitan zones as well as their assessment from the perspective of their impact on spatial planning, economy, local communities and development of rural areas.

The project was focused on the verification of the following research hypotheses:

- Shopping malls located in the outer metropolitan zones result in more negative than positive boosts to the development.
- Shopping malls cause leaching of city-forming functions from small towns located in the outer metropolitan zones and creation of monofunctional settlement structures (especially residential ones).
- Shopping malls located in the outer metropolitan zones significantly change the functional structure of these territories.
- The way in which a shopping mall influences rural areas depends on its type and specific context of its location in space.

Contemporary theories regarding local and regional development consider large-area trade (including shopping malls) to be one of ambient factors and depreciate its direct impact on development processes [*i.a.* Colin *et al.* 2002; Juan 2004]. Identification of consequences of the operation of shopping malls in chosen the outer metropolitan zones (in 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 of the space. It will result in more conscious (rational) decisions in terms of localising new shopping malls, which will reduce the number of local conflicts related to the location of such facilities.

The present publication is a monograph composed of seven parts in which the extent and scale of the impact of shopping malls on the outer metropolitan zone is analysed. The study is illustrated with the example of the Silesian Voivodeship. It presents a synthetic assessment of social influence of shopping malls, the impact they have on business activity conducted in the outer area as well as on the functional and spatial structure.

The work is of theoretical and empirical character. In the first part, the outer metropolitan zone is described (K. Heffner). Chapter II presents a definition of shopping mall, as well as its characteristics (M. Twardzik). In Chapter III, the functioning of malls in Poland is explained (M. Twardzik), while the subsequent part describes the development of shopping malls in the Silesian Voivodeship (P. Gibas). The empirical part presents synthetic assessments of the impact of shopping malls on the social (M. Twardzik), economic (A. Halama) as well as functional and spatial (A. Polko) spheres.

The conducted research, theoretical identification and their use to forecast potential consequences of existing development trends of the phenomenon indicate that

it will be an interesting issue also in the future, as far as the economy and spatial planning in the rural surroundings of urban agglomerations are concerned. Therefore, there is no doubt that the question of consequences of the creation and operation of shopping malls in the outer metropolitan zones requires further analysis and scientific interpretations.

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