

# EVALUATION OF LOCALIZATION OF BRATISLAVA OF STORES WITHIN URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EUROPEAN POLICY OF TERRITORIAL COHESION

Jaroslav Kita<sup>1</sup> - Marta Grossmanová<sup>2</sup> - Pavol Kita<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** *Polycentric and balanced territorial development of the European Union is a key element for reaching territorial cohesion. The dynamics of development of trade in the territory of Bratislava in the course of the last two decades requires monitoring, the results of which serve as indicators of the needs for development of the Bratislava urban region. The article in three parts provides information on retail network, which can be a challenge for territorial plan of town development in improving the conditions of life of inhabitants and thus navigate the economic prosperity towards sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Territorial development of the European Union, European policy of territorial cohesion, urban development, retail network, food deserts.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The article deals with evaluating localization of retail units within urban development of Bratislava in the context of strengthening the role of towns, which are of key importance in reaching territorial growth and stability in the strategy Europe 2020. The article consists of five parts. The first part characterized by the theme and structure of the article. In the second part the article pays attention to the basic aspects of the European policy of territorial cohesion and the status of the town Bratislava within the functional town region. In the third part it deals with the conditions of localization of retail units within the town of Bratislava. The four part presents the results of research. The five part presents the main tendencies of development of Bratislava within the polycentric and balanced territorial development of the European Union.

## 2 BASIC ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN POLICY OF TERRITORIAL COHESION AND THE POSITION OF THE TOWN BRATISLAVA WITHIN THE FUNCTIONAL TOWN REGION.

More than two thirds of the inhabitants of Europe live in towns and villages and this share is increasing. Therefore the development of towns – economic, social and environmental – is the basis of regional policy of the EU. An integrated approach, which will ensure the towns to excel in these three spheres will also help reach the aim of the strategy Europe 2020 – „intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth“. Moreover, the development of towns, which is also sustainable, will not only urge the competitiveness of the European Union in the recent changing world, but it will also provide for high quality

of life for all European citizens – now as well as in the future.

In this context the Slovak Republic emphasises great importance of urban functional spheres, which strengthen creation of mechanisms to solve the relations the town – the outskirts and the town – the country. Integrated programmes of urban functional spheres should reflect the specifics and needs of these territories and should be the basis for an integrated operational programme. Strengthening of competitiveness and attractiveness of the Bratislava territorial sphere by the year 2020 is connected with foreseeing the economic and social changes including the changes connected with opening the market by means of innovations and support of knowledge society, business, protection and improving the living environment and development of labour markets on the principle of social inclusion. Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic, is a seat of the government and numerous organizations and institutions of nationwide significance [3]. With regard to the location of the town, the whole Bratislava region has an important role in strengthening the cross-border cooperation with Hungary and Austria by means of the common local and regional initiatives and in strengthening the multinational cooperation by means of activities contributing to an integrated regional development. In the town region there live more than 628,686 inhabitants and the density of inhabitants is 298.5 inhabitants per square kilometre. It consists of 80 districts and 73 villages. In spite of high development of industry and agriculture, the Bratislava region is the first region of Slovakia, where trade and services are starting to prevail over industrial production. Its advantageous location has helped the Bratislava region build a position of economically most important region within the whole Slovakia. Its further advantages are qualified labour force, a number of universities and

financial institutions. Unemployment was constantly decreasing with an increase since the year 2008 due to the financial crisis. In the year 2011 the unemployment reached 5.41 %. According to the preliminary data in the year 2010 the direct foreign investments reached 25,706 mil. EUR. which represents 68.3% of total direct foreign investments in Slovakia. In this region besides Slovak enterprises operate also large enterprises from France, the USA, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, Hungary, Denmark, Holland, Spain and Sweden.

Bratislava with links to the regions of Vienna, Brno, Győr and Budapest has large potential of getting the whole Slovakia involved in participation in the pan-European flow of capital, goods and services and in the scientific-research and cultural-social international cooperation [1]. This makes it possible to size up the development of the whole Slovakia and its individual regions. The master plan makes it possible to build regional development poles in the north-west, south and south-west directions, where it suggests the possibilities for new economic activities as well as sports-recreational centres of international importance [8]. The master plan respects the requirements of protection of natural values of European importance – large-space protected territories, biocorridors, localities belonging to the Ramsar Convention.

### **3 CONDITIONS OF LOCALIZATION OF RETAIL UNITS WITHIN THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF BRATISLAVA**

The town Bratislava itself as a capital of Slovakia includes 5 territorial districts. It is a momentum of smart, sustainable and inclusive development and an attractive place for life, work, visits and investment. It is of key importance for reaching the territorial growth and stability and development of cooperation between urban parts, outskirts and rural areas. Retail trade is an important representative in the field of home trade, which, having more than one third share in the total number of business units, significantly contributes mainly to creation of total as well as regional Gross National Product and creation of new job opportunities. Moreover the development of retail trade in the case of Bratislava, with regard to its geographical position, is influenced by retail network of Hungary and Austria – the countries directly bordering with Bratislava.

In the research of territorial aspects of retail activity the attention must be paid to space mobility of inhabitants. Localization of some attractive sales units in specific places in the town causes transfer of inhabitants from their residences to the stores located in other district of the town Bratislava.

Researches of space mobility of inhabitants for services make it possible to recognize the processes which are taking place in the town and which are a classical example of creating modal socio-economic town parts on the basis of so called attendance centres operating on the attendance principle. It is a creation of service centres, the layout of which minimizes the

number of journeys of consumers to get retail services [2]. Localization and selection of the attendance centre in a specific town is judged on the principle of the data and values of capacity of retail network, size of space, number of retail units and their density and values of individual macroeconomic indicators. Then different levels of facilities and accessibility of retail network give information about the local, territorial or regional character of retail trade.

### **4 RESULTS OF RESEARCH**

The dynamics of development of trade in the territory of Bratislava in the course of the last two decades requires monitoring, the results of which serve as indicators of the needs for development of the Bratislava urban region. Scientific-research project VEGA No. 1/0039/11 of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic „Geographical Information System as a Source of Strategic Innovation of Enterprise“ responds to these actual challenges. Within this research in the years 2011-2013 a research of retail network in Bratislava was made, which made it possible to get information about further possibilities of influencing retail network in the town by means of the only existing instrument, i.e. master plan of the town Bratislava. The research was a unique one and means a contribution to the long-term monitoring of development of the Bratislava retail trade. The specific information on the position, number, size and lay-out of stores was reached. Some outputs were supplemented by research of purchasing behaviour of consumers.

The research was made in 17 town parts divided into 263 urban districts. 4,089 retail units were mapped. The problem of retail trade within the town Bratislava is subject to the time as well as structural changes. Substitution of small family grocery stores by supermarkets has become a general phenomenon. For this reason intraurban accessibility of this type of stores for all households has become one of the thematic parts of the research made. The aim of this problem was to know if the less favourable accessibility of large-space food stores for the low income groups of inhabitants, who do not own automobile, leads to purchases of groceries in smaller local operations, which often offer smaller variability of groceries at higher prices, which leads to creating space disparities and to disrupting the concept of space justice. In connection with accessibility of large-space food stores the problem of food deserts which are related to the territory, the inhabitants of which have greatly limited access to adequate retail sources of healthy and price accessible foodstuffs due to the lack of large-space stores, is often dealt with in the geography of retail trade [6].

The analysis of the research shows that new consumer models of purchasing behaviour of end users are being created, whilst the space, which similarly to social and cultural aspects of buying has gained a new dimension, has become the key aspect. New dimensions mainly of large-space operational units and buying centres have caused the decrease of interest in

traditional forms of sale. From this point of view the research of relations between purchasing behaviour and space structure of retail trade environment can be regarded as purposeful and incentive [9].

Measuring the accessibility of stores on the basis of application of the rate based on the opportunities in the traffic network (it is quantified by the number of stores accessible within a defined distance – time of transport from a specific traffic intersection) is considered to be a key task. It is necessary to say that the time accessibility is given not only by the distance itself, but also by the way of covering the distance and other factors. In general the Bratislava consumers (i.e. almost 41% of respondents) claim that they prefer a personal automobile as a means of transfer to the store, 30 % use traffic and 28 % visit retail stores on foot. The results of analysis [7] of accessibility in large-space stores (supermarkets and hypermarkets) by means of application of the rate based on opportunities in the traffic network confirm, that by the distance of 30 minutes only ten out of 11 urban districts, which correspond to the criteria of supermarket or hypermarket, can be reached. These urban districts are located in the outskirts of the town, whilst the least favourable accessibility of the given stores was measured in the case of the territorial districts Pri Šajbách (3), Horné Šajby (4), Záhorská Bystrica (4). The highest number (7) of the given category is located in the town part Rača, which proves an underdimension of this town part by the stores of large format.

The districts belonging to the category of 11 to 20 stores accessible by 30 minutes can be localized in two more significant regions. The first of them is the north-western part of the town (Devínska Nová Ves, Dúbravka, Devín) and the second one is the eastern part of the town (Vrakuňa, Podunajské Biskupice). Even though there are several stores in many urban districts of this group, the inhabitants have to travel to larger formats to other town parts. Besides the stated districts this category also includes the outskirts Rusovce or Vajnory.

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Better accessibility of supermarkets and hypermarkets (category of 21 to 30 stores) is characteristic for 17 urban districts (13%) localized closer to the town centre. These territorial districts create a rim, the perimeter of which is narrowing in the case of the category 31 to 40 stores. In spite of a peripheral character of a part of individual town parts (Ružinov, Petržalka, Nové Mesto), there are more monitored operations concentrated here, or the

accessibility to the centre for other operations does not exceed a given limit of travelling time (30 minutes).

The best accessibility of the analysed stores is characteristic for the most numerous group of districts (39.7 % of urban districts), in which the highest number of inhabitants of the town (39.0 %) is living. In these urban districts the number of the given accessible stores is the highest (over 40 % of stores). From the point of view of location, it is a wider centre of the town (the town parts Staré mesto and Nové Mesto) and other town parts (Petržalka, Ružinov) in connection with the layout of supermarkets and hypermarkets in the vicinity of important traffic communications. The best accessibility of the analyzed stores was identified in the case of the districts of the town part Nové Mesto (Unitas – 58 stores, Jiskrova Street – 56 stores, Pokrok – 55 stores). In all cases the responsibility for these numbers lies in the existence of the transit node Račianske myto, from where numerous lines lead to the monitored operations in several town parts.

Even though the town Bratislava itself as a supra-regional business centre disposes with above the average trading facilities, the retail network of the Bratislava town region is highly heterogeneous [5].

Significant contrasts can be seen in the urban and rural environments. Whilst the north of the Bratislava region is highly undersized in the number of large-space operations, the majority of supermarkets can be found along the main traffic communications towards the east or south-east of the capital. The reasons of this layout of retail units are influenced by two groups of factors: the first group are the nature conditions in the region, some of which can be considered to be barriers to development of services. They are the mountains Little Carpathians, which separate two geomorphological units [10], specifically the Danube Lowland and the Záhorie Lowland. Another group is represented by the rivers Danube and Morava. Extreme unfavourable values were read in the villages on the right bank of the Danube after the waterworks Gabčíkovo (Dobrohošť, Vojka nad Dunajom and Bodíky). The inhabitants of these villages spend almost one hour of travelling time to the nearest large-space store in the region [8]. Great differences in the density of supermarkets and hypermarkets can also be connected with the suburban tendencies in a wider background of Bratislava. A significant wave of residential suburbanisation coming from the capital requires development of retail trade in the diadetic villages. Specific lifestyle of the suburban inhabitants is connected with specific consumer behaviour as well as with rise of shopping centres in the outskirts of Bratislava within the meaning of commercial suburbanization, which also results in a better accessibility of large-space food stores [4].

## 5 CONCLUSION

Polycentric and balanced territorial development of the European Union is a key element for reaching territorial cohesion. The most developed towns have to cooperate within the polycentric system.

Under these conditions they contribute to the development of their wider regions. In this respect they have an important role of a politician of the town development of Bratislava. The results of the realized survey provide wide knowledge about the retail network and they can be a challenge for territorial plan of town development in improving the conditions of life of inhabitants and thus navigate the economic prosperity towards sustainable development. In the case of Bratislava this problem is an actual at the macro-regional, regional and cross-border levels. The territorial plan of the town region should prevent great regional differences within the functional town region by solving the obstacles preventing the growth in accordance with the strategy Europe 2020.

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## AUTHORS ADDRESSES

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Ing. Jaroslav Kita, CSc.  
University of economics in Bratislava  
Faculty of business management  
Dolnozemska cesta 1  
852 35 Bratislava

E-mail: jaroslav.kita@euba.sk

<sup>2</sup> Doc. PHDr. Marta Grossmanová, PhD.  
University of economics in Bratislava  
Faculty of applied languages  
Dolnozemska cesta 1  
852 35 Bratislava

E-mail: marta.grossmanova@euba.sk

<sup>3</sup> Doc. Ing. Pavol Kita, PhD.  
University of economics in Bratislava  
Faculty of business management  
Dolnozemska cesta 1  
852 35 Bratislava

E-mail: pavol.kita@euba.sk