

Article

Transformation and Sustainable Development of Shopping Centers: Case of Czech and Slovak Cities

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to critically evaluate the similarities and differences in the development of the temporal and spatial structure of shopping centers in the Czech and Slovak republics. We focused on the retail transformation and sustainable manifestations of the location and construction of shopping centers. We classified shopping centers according to their genesis, location in the city, and size of the gross leasable area. To analyze migration trends and geographic distribution characteristics of shopping centers in the capital cities of both countries (local level of analysis), we used spatial gravity and standard deviational ellipse. Generally, there is an analogous trend in the development of shopping centers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with a particular two- to four-year lag in Slovakia (west–east gradient). Despite this, we still perceive the demand for shopping centers in both countries as above average, and it is not declining. The construction of shopping centers, mainly in small towns, also indicates this trend. In Prague and Bratislava, the pattern of spatial expansion of shopping centers differs. Prague probably represents a more advanced phase of shopping center agglomeration. However, neither country has reached the state of clustering.

Keywords: shopping centers; sustainable development; classification; urban environment; Czech Republic; Slovakia



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1. Introduction

Retail has become an inseparable part of urban residents' everyday lives. Retail activities and consumers constitute an important element of the spatial organization of urban spaces [1]. Nowadays, it is almost impossible to imagine a city without a shopping zone, usually in the form of a shopping center. The shopping center phenomenon currently belongs to one of the most significant manifestations of urban retail globalization not only in post-socialist Europe, but also in many other countries of the world. The point is not just in the specific appearance of shopping centers, but mainly in the economic, social, and cultural impact they have on the city and society [2]. One of the most fundamental impacts that the existence of shopping centers has is their influence over the change of long-term patterns of shopping behavior and shopping habits with most population groups [3–7].

The term “shopping center” has been developing since the middle of the 20th century and it has often been linked with the USA. A wide range of diverse definitions for shopping center has evolved, frequently reflecting changes within this sector. In a simplified way, a shopping center may be defined as a building containing many outlets yet run as a single piece of real estate. Shopping centers have gradually developed into complex units (in terms of their size, type, function, and so forth), contributing to a fundamental modification of their original concept and identity [8]. A shopping center may be regarded as a certain spatial pattern of homogenous and heterogenous retailers who cluster together in one locality. On the one hand, it is a highly organized retail complex within a building or