Development of the Tertiary Sector and its Land-Use Impact in the Built-up Area. Case-Study: Commercial Services in Romania

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Abstract: The fall of the communist regime and the demise of the bipolar order have led to the development of globalising connections in the urban systems of the Central and East-European states.

The main social impact of this complex phenomenon is the expansion of the diffusion area for the of global consumerist goods, entailing the development and the diversification of commercial services [1, 3]. Their localisation is still a direct consequence of financial segregation; the determining agent of the degree of penetration of global consumer goods at local level is the localisation and dispersion of investments [2].

In this context, the article analyses the strategies of localisation and the dispersion factors of commercial services in the Romanian urban system and in its capital city, in particular [5, 21].

Key words - globalising flows, global consumerism goods, commercial services, hypermarkets, malls, Romania.

I. INTRODUCTION

The downfall of the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe and the abolishment of the ideological barriers has created the premises for closer globalising links within the urban systems from this part of the Continent [17, 26].

On the line of former experience as COMECON members, the first half of the 1990s witnessed, after the dissolution of that organisation, a rise in the volume of trade exchanges, of imports in particular; services and investments were aimed at developing small and medium-sized enterprises [52].

Towns acted as nuclei, polarising and re-directing fluxes in the territory. However, development, as it were, could not compensate for the industrial decline and its demographic and especially social consequences [13, 15]. After over fifty years of forced industrialisation drive associated with hypertrophic development, the Romanian urban system has been experiencing a radical transformation, basically de-urbanisation both as regards town population and town quality, its functional attributes undergoing substantial changes [37]. Thus industry, which was the main factor of urbanisation for almost all of Romania's towns, has been overcome by the tertiary sector, a phenomenon specific to large cities, the capital and the regional metropolises strengthening their co-ordinating positions in the territory [18, 19]. Large cities tend to assume the attributes of cosmopolite cities due to greater ethnical diversity, the development of specialist services and the large-scale assimilation of global consumerist goods, basically products and services which go beyond geo-cultural spaces [9, 12, 35, 47].

Foods and fashion items have the strongest impact on the population. Almost 75-80% of the space allotted to malls is occupied by fashion shops and 10-15% by restaurants [4, 48].

The settlement in Romania of Arab, Turkish, or Chinese nationals engaged in trading or in small industrial businesses, the presence of foreign citizens who have come to study here, of the personnel of diplomatic missions, of multinational firms or NGOs has diversified the services sector (Chinese, Libanese, Italian or Greek restaurants; French or German bakeries; African, Indian or Latin-American artisanal shops, etc.) [39, 41]. Their localisation within commercial centres (malls and hypermarkets) explains the importance of these units for the local diffusion of the products of global consumerist culture (Figure 1) [8, 51]. The potential of the outlet market is a decisive factor in earmarking investments to big commercial units, e.g. *malls* (which gather together a wide range of shops and services units, restaurants, recreation and entertainment areas, cinema-halls, banks, swimming-pools, play-grounds for children, etc.), or *supermarkets*, chains of stores usually set up by transnational companies [10, 11, 22].

II. FINANCIAL & COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS

The logic behind the establishment and diffusion in the territory of these commercial units closely correlates with the location of banks, according to the spatial, income-based segregation of the population [31]. Thus, large commercial units (malls and hyper-markets) are frequently opened up in large cities with macro-regional polarising functions and a positive economic dynamic that ensures an outlet market competitive enough, in terms of both financial and quantitative considerations, so as to guarante profitability [20].

On the other hand, investments in towns that are at the base of the urban hierarchy materialise in supermarkets, but if towns have below 30,000 inhabitants they are considered unprofitable (Table 1) [43].

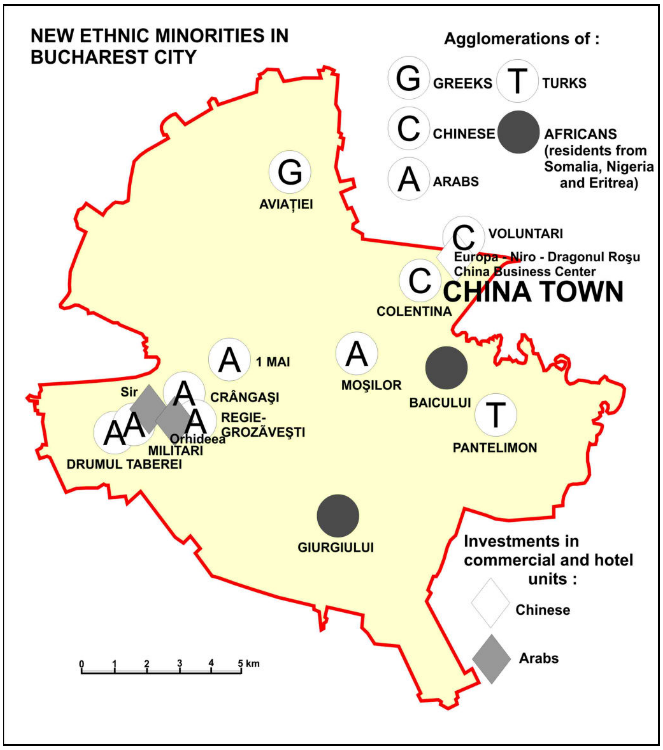

Figure 1 : New Ethnic Minorities in Bucharest City (Left) [41] and their impact on development of commercial services : Arab Commercial Investment (Sir Shopping Center, Top Right) [36, 57]; Chinese Commercial Investment (Red Dragon, Bottom Right) [55].

The same pyramidal distribution observed in the case of financial investments holds also for commercial units, provided that the extent of the investment is directly proportional to the size of the respective town [44].

The east/west financial segregation mirrors the development of commercial services (Table 2), this type of investment being drawn mainly by Bucharest and the large cities from Transylvania and Banat. Thus, the largest *malls* are situated mainly in Bucharest (*Băneasa Shopping City, AFI Palace Cotroceni, Sun Plaza, Plaza Romania, Bucharest Mall, Liberty Center*, etc.) and in four western metropolises: Timişoara, Cluj-Napoca, Arad and Oradea [40, 43].

Table 1 : Distribution of hypermarkets and cash&carry-type investments in Romania (October 1, 2010).

Chain Store	Country of origin	Total Romania	Investments in Bucharest		Investments in other cities	
			No	Locations	No	Locations
General commodities						
Auchan	France	7	2	Militari, Titan.	5	Cluj-Napoca, Piteşti, Suceava, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara.
Carrefour	France	23	7	Băneasa (Freeria), Berceni, Colentina, Orhideea, Militari, Unirea, Vitan (Vitantis).	16	Arad, Braşov, Brăila, Buzău, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Focşani, Iaşi (Felicia), Iaşi (Era), Oradea (Lotus), Oradea (Era), Piteşti, Ploieşti, Sibiu, Suceava.
Cora	Belgium	6	3	Bercei (Sun Plaza), Lujerului, Pantelimon.	3	Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța.
Metro	Germany	27	5	Băneasa, Berceni, Militari, Titan (Pallady), Voluntari.	22	Arad, Bacău, Baia Mare, Braşov (Ghimbav), Braşov (Bucharest Avenue), Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Constanța, Deva, Galați, Iaşi, Piatra Neamț, Oradea, Piatra Neamț, Piteşti, Ploieşti, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Suceava, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara (Şagului), Timişoara (Torontalului).

Real	Germany	25	4	Berceni, Cotroceni (AFI Palace), Titan (Pallady), Vitan.	21	Arad, Bacău, Baia Mare, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa (North), Constanţa (Sud), Craiova, Deva, Galaţi, Oradea (Calea Aradului), Oradea (Episcopia), Piteşti, Ploieşti, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Suceava, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara (East), Timişoara (North), Timişoara (South).
Selgros	Germany	18	4	Băneasa, Berceni, Drumul Taberei (Valea Cascadelor). Pantelimon.	14	Arad, Bacău, Braşov, Brăila, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Constanţa, Galaţi, Iaşi, Oradea, Ploieşti, Suceava, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara.
Specialist stores						
Arabesque	Romania	18	3	Glina, Militari, Otopeni.	15	Bacău, Baia Mare, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, Craiova, Focşani, Galaţi, Iaşi, Oradea, Piatra Neamţ, Piteşti, Ploieşti, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara.
Bricostore	France	14	4	Băneasa, Militari, Orhideea, Pantelimon.	10	Arad, Braşov, Brăila, Călăraşi, Constanţa, Focşani, Oradea, Piteşti, Ploieşti, Suceava.
Dedeman	Romania	23	2	Berceni, Militari.	21	Arad, Bacău, Braşov, Brăila, Botoşani, Bacău (headquarters), Buzău, Comăneşti, Constanţa, Craiova, Focşani, Iaşi (Manta Roşie), Iaşi (Miroslava), Oneşti, Piatra Neamţ, Reşiţa, Roman, Suceava, Târgovişte, Timişoara, Vaslui.
Hornbach	Germany	3	2	Berceni, Militari.	1	Braşov.
IKEA	Sweden	1	1	Băneasa.	-	-
Kika	Austria	1	1	Militari.	-	-
Mr. Bricolage	France	3	1	Vitan.	2	Iaşi, Piteşti.
Obi	Germany	7	2	Berceni, Titan (Pallady).	5	Arad, Oradea, Piteşti, Ploieşti, Sibiu.
Praktiker	Germany	26	3	Militari, Vitan, Voluntari.	23	Arad, Braşov, Bacău, Baia Mare, Brăila, Botoşani, Buzău, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, Craiova, Deva, Focşani, Galaţi, Iaşi (West), Iaşi (South), Oradea, Piatra Neamţ, Piteşti, Ploieşti, Satu Mare, Târgovişte, Târgu Mureş, Timişoara.

Table 2 : The West/East financial and commercial segregation in Romania.

West, Centre : Positive externalities (+)				East : Negative externalities (-)			
City	Population (July 1, 2010)	Bank units (no.) *	Hypermarkets (no.) **	City	Population (July 1, 2010)	Bank units (no.) *	Hypermarkets (no.) **
Timişoara	311 440 inh	179	12	Iaşi	308 663 inh	142	8
Cluj-Napoca	307 215 inh	178	10	Galaţi	290 467 inh	100	6
Oradea	204 880 inh	106	9	Brăila	211 161 inh	65	6
Arad	165 014 inh	87	12	Piatra Neamţ	107 214 inh	48	5
Satu Mare	112 143 inh	59	6	Botoşani	115 751 inh	40	3

Samples analysis : * Banks : Alpha Bank, Bankpost, BCR, BRD-Société Génerale, Banca Carpatica, Banca CR Firenze Romania, Banca Românească, Banca Transilvania, CEC-Bank, City Bank, Credit Europe Bank, Emporiki Bank, Garanti Bank, ING Bank, Leumi Bank, Libra Bank, Marfin-Egnatia Bank, Millenium Bank, OTP Bank, Piraeus Bank, Raiffeisen Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland, Romanian International Bank, Unicredit Ţiriac Bank, Volksbank. ** Hypermarkets : Auchan, Billa, Bricostore, Carrefour, Cora, Dedeman, Hornbach, Kaufland, Metro Cash&Carry; Mr. Bricolage, Obi, Penny Market, Plus, Praktiker, Real and Selgros.

III. STRATEGIES OF PLACING COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS

Bucharest was the first Romanian city in which malls were set up. The *Bucharest Mall* (initial trade area 37,000 m^2) was opened on September 10, 1999. Situated in *Vitan* district, in a dismantled urban area, this mall has rapidly become a point of convergence in the city. As a result it was enlarged up to

99,000 m^2 in 2003 and 2007, hosting 140 stores, most of them subsidiaries of international companies sales units [54]. In 2004, the same investor opened the second mall in the west of Bucharest, between the *Militari* and *Drumul Taberei* districts. This investment, called *Plaza Romania*, was intended to be the largest commercial centre of its kind, with a built-up area of 104,000 m^2 profiled on shopping (over 150 stores), fast foods, entertainment and business (Figure 2).

Figure 2 : Plaza Romania in Bucharest (photo R. Săgeată).

However, its supremacy was short-lived: in 2005 the largest mall at the time was commissioned in Timişoara, a cross-border convergence point of the Danube – Criş – Mureş – Tisa Euroregion; two years later another complex was opened in Cluj-Napoca (November 10, 2007). The same developer opened up Julius Mall in Suceava (September, 2008), overall area 132,000 m^2 (out which 67,500 m^2 built-up spaces and 45,000 m^2 for rent and 150 shops). It was the biggest unit of its knid in Moldavia, and a regional convergence point for the counties of Suceava, Botoşani and Neamț, as well for the cross-border area with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. One year later, on October 29, 2009, the *AFI Palace Cotroceni* (214,000 m^2), investor the *AFI Europe*, Israeli Group, was commissioned [56]. This is the biggest mall-type centre in Romania and in Eastern Europe (Figure 3).

Figure 3 : AFI Palace Cotroceni in Bucharest
(photo R. Săgeată).

The construction, raised on the site of a former factory, houses 300 shops and the "Real" hypermarket, the largest skating-rink and karting track built inside a commercial centre, an escalade wall, a bycicle track, a lake for small electric boats, play-grounds for children, a cinema-hall with 20 screens, the first IMAX (3D) in Romania, two casinos an exhibition hall and many more attractions [53]. Forthcoming is the construction of four offices buildings (cca 12,000 m^2) and a 4-star hotel. The same consortium has scheduled two projects for the near future: in Ploieşti (*AFI Palace Ploieşti*) and in the Bucharest district "Bucureştii Noi" (AFI Bucureşti) [33].

In February 2010, another mall – *Sun Plaza* (210,000 m^2, out of which 80,000 m^2, commercial area) was added to the network. It is a 200 million euro worth investment which houses 150 shops, coffee bars and *Cora Hypermarket*. However, in the conditions of the present economic-financial crisis its profitability is put in question, because the southern city districts (Ferentari and Rahova) are inhabited by lower-income people, have social problems and moreover it has to compete with similar structures recently commissioned (*City Mall*, *Grand Arena* and *Liberty Center*). However, these are drawbacks that might be compensated for by locating Sun Plaza in an convergence area of population fluxes (Piața Sudului) with access to the underground network through a subterranean passage [59].

That this type of investments has a positive dynamic is confirmed by the opening of such poly-functional centres in most country-seats, outstanding among them being: *Iulius Mall* in Iaşi and *Arena City Center* in Bacău (Moldavia), *Tiago Mall* in Oradea, housing an in-door skating-rink, the first in a series of 10 *Tiago* malls to the built in towns with over 200,000 inhabitants; *Atrium Center* in Cluj-Napoca, *City Park Mall* and *Polus Center* in Constanța, *Civis Center* and *Plaza Center* in Timişoara, *Mega Mall* in Braşov, *Promenada Mall* in Sibiu, *Euromall* in Galați and Ploieşti, etc (Figure 4).

In the northern part of Bucharest stands *Băneasa Fashion Center* (85,000 m^2 rentable area, basically twice that of *Plaza Romania* or of *Bucharest Mall*), with over 220 stores, opened on April 18, 2008. It is part of the *Băneasa Sopping Center* complex, a commercial area of hypermarkets (*Metro*, *Carrefour*, *Bricostore* and *IKEA*) with a total built-up area of 250,000 m^2. It offers modern shopping, entertainment and business facilities. Its location was chosen because of transport facilities: *Băneasa* and *Otopeni* airports, *Băneasa* railway station and prospectively a heliport. *Băneasa Shopping Center* holds a singular position as the district it lies in has the highest GDP per capita, remarkable demographic growth and a flourishing built-ap area. This mall alone brought 45 new international brands in the Romanian market [46].

The same distribution in the case of hypermarkets and supermarkets. Positive segregation exists in Bucharest, in some counties from Transylvania, Banat and in Constanța county, strictly correlating with the polarisation of incomes; negative segregation have the counties from the eastern and south-eastern parts of Romania. Thus, according to a study made by the market research company *MEMRB Retail Tracking Services* in October 2006 and October 2007, the counties most likely to be targeted for the expansion of such commercial lines were Sibiu, Constanța and Mureş, while Botoşani, Tulcea, Teleorman and Buzău, featured almost exclusively traditional trading [38].

Spatially, two types of distribution seem to emerge: one going from Bucharest to the major cities (e.g. *Cora*, *Carrefour*, *Metro*, *Auchan*, etc.) and a second one from cities located in the west of the country, especially Timişoara and Cluj-Napoca (e.g. *Selgros*, *Spar*, *Profi*, *Real,* etc.).

There is also spatial complementariness: some companies (*Profi*, *Spar*) prefer Bucharest and the major cities from Transylvania, others opt mostly for the extracarpathian area (*Proges, Mini Max Discount,* etc.).

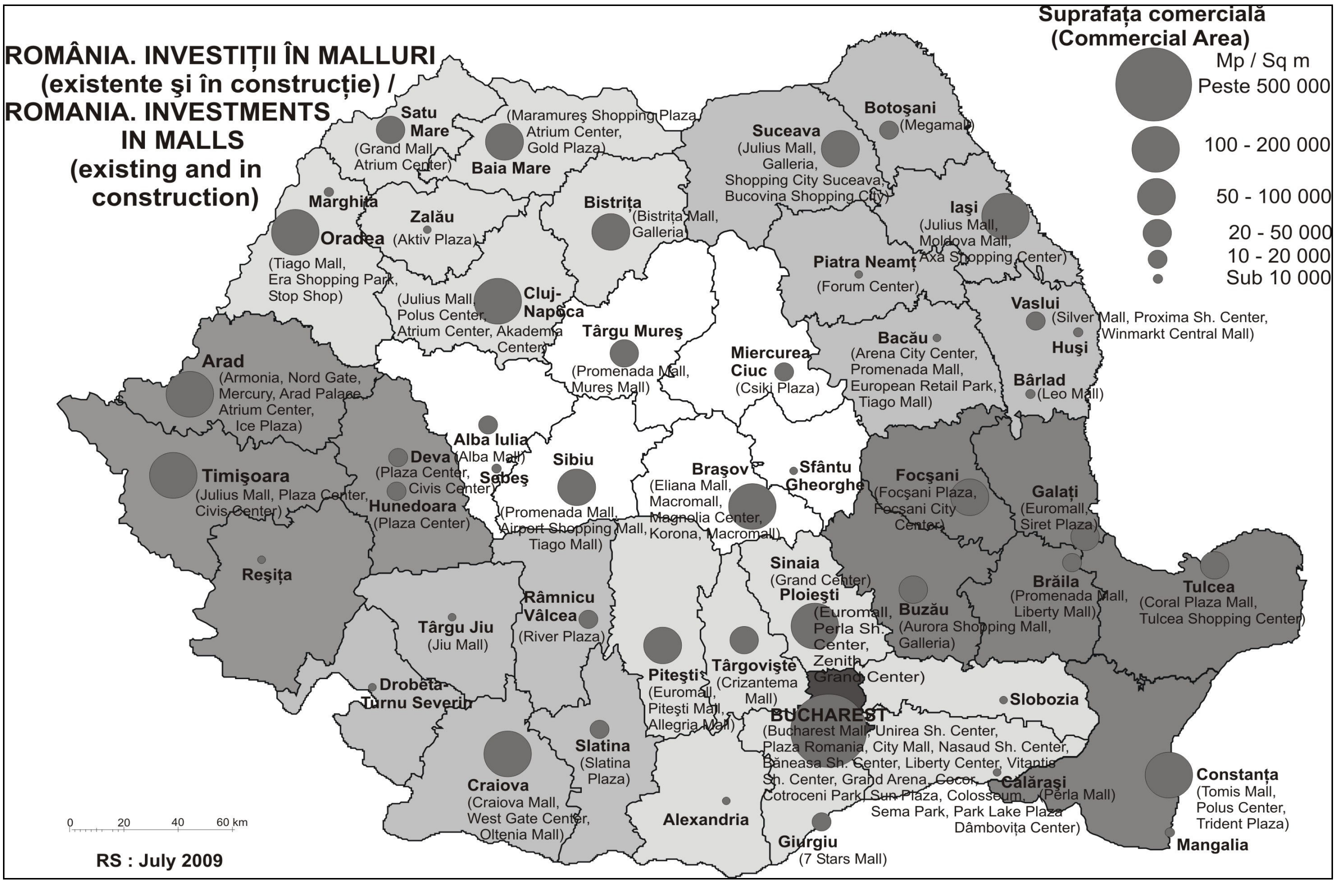

Figure 4 : Romania. Investments in malls (existing and in construction).

Most malls built in Bucharest (*Bucharest Mall, Plaza Romania, City Mall* and *Liberty Center)* have been raised on the site of the unfinished buildings of former food complexes (mockingly, people used to call them "hunger circuses"), whose construction had begun in the 1980s in convergence areas of population flows, subsequently contributing to the development of their neighbourhoods.

The next investments had in view either empty spaces on the outskirts of the city (*Carrefour* and *Metro Militari*, *Cora Pantelimon*), using the rail-and-road infrastructure in place at the margin of Bucharest, or the sites of former industrial units later demolished (e.g. *Cora* Lujerului, built on the site of a dairy factory, could use *Cotroceni* railway station), similarly *AFI Cotroceni* Mall, situated on the premises of the former UMEB plant, had the advantage of a railway infrastructure.

In many situations, there have been preferred, for the localization of the great commercial investments, the administrative territories of certain communes situated in areas that are peri-urban to big cities, due to the lower prices of outside built-over areas [29, 30]. In this category there are registered hypermarkets such as *Real Timişoara-South* (situated on the administrative territory of Giroc commune); *Real-Timişoara-East* (on the territory of Ghiroda commune); *Real-Suceava* (in Schela commune); *Selgros Târgu Mureş* (in Ernei commune); *Selgros Bucureşti-Pantelimon* (on the administrative territory of Pantelimon town); *Carrefour Piteşti* (Blejoi commune); *Dedeman Constanța* (Agigea); *Dedeman Brăila* (in Baldovineşti, to serve both Galați and Brăila towns); *Dedeman Roman* (Cordun commune); *Dedeman Piatra Neamț* (Dumbrava Roşie commune); *Praktiker Bacău* (Nicolae Bălcescu commune); *Praktiker Piteşti* (Bradu commune) etc.

Advantageous locations lead in time to the development of commercial parks: *Băneasa* outside Bucharest on DN1 highway to Ploieşti; *Militari* on A1 to Piteşti and *Dragonul-Roşu* on the highway to Voluntari-Urziceni. A similar commercial park is scheduled to develop in the *Lujerului-Cotroceni* area and encompass also *Cora* Lujerului hypermarket, *Plaza Romania* and *AFI Cotroceni* malls.

Student campuses are considered potential markets for commercial complexes. *Carrefour* Orhideea, placed in the close vicinity of the student campuses *Grozăveşti* and *Regie*, is a typical example of such a strategy. *Iulius Mall* in Iaşi and the new *Iulius Mall* in Cluj-Napoca, located in the *Gheorgheni* district, near the campus of the University of Economic Sciences, follow to the same location logic, besides like in other cases entertainment is complementary to shopping.

Other establishments having in view the same complementariness, combine tourist services with residential environments: *Eliana* Mall in Braşov situated in the *Bartolomeu* commercial district, towards the tourist area of Bran resort; *City Park* on the outskirts of Constanţa (*Tabăcăriei* area), on the road to Mamaia sea-side resort.

Another location strategy is to modernise the large comercial units built before 1989 (the so-called universal stores) and turn them into malls. The most typical example of such a strategy is *Unirea* stores in Bucharest, which was extended and updated into what is now *Unirea Shopping Center*, with a *Carrefour* hypermarket developing in its proximity (Figure 5).

Figure 5 : Location of the main commercial investments in Bucharest [39, 40].

Some hypermarket chains have attracted to their proximity some other commercial investments, usually of the same origin, but with a strictly specialised offer. The hypermarkets of "Bricostore" French chain have been localised in the proximity of "Carrefour" hypermarkets (Bucharest-Orhideea, Bucharest-Băneasa, Arad, Constanţa, Focşani, Ploieşti, Suceava etc.) or "Auchan" (in Piteşti); the hypermarkets of "Praktiker" German chain have evolved in partnership with those of "Metro" chain (Bucharest-Militari, Bucharest-Băneasa, Arad, Constanţa, Piteşti, Ploieşti etc.); and those of "Obi" chain have been localised in the proximity of those of "Real" type (Bucharest-Berceni, Bucharest-Pallady, Arad, Oradea etc.).

Other hypermarkets have been localised in the proximity of malls: Cora Sun Plaza (Bucharest-Berceni); Auchan Cluj-Napoca, Auchan Suceava and Auchan Timişoara (near *Iulius Mall* Shopping Center); Carrefour Lotus-Oradea (near *Lotus* Shopping Center); Carrefour Era (Iaşi & Oradea – near *Era* Shopping Center); Carrefour Polus Cluj-Napoca (in *Polus* Shopping Center); Cora Constanţa (near the "City Park Mall"); Real Cotroceni Bucharest (in "AFI Palace" Shopping Center); Cora Baia Mare (near the "Gold Plaza" Mall) etc.

IV. THE SOCIAL IMPACT

The social impact of these trading centres is worth considering. The concept of "mall" goes beyond the strict commercial function, being associated with luxury and fashion: one goes to a mall to see new trends, socialise, make acquaintances with a certain segment of the population [14, 34].

Therefore, financial segregation combines with social segregation, both being embodied in commercial segregation, and malls are the best way to express it [49]. Not surprisingly, in some commercial centres shopping and business facilities are associated with social facilities (e.g. *Julius Mall* in Timişoara has a register office and a chapel).

Besides fashion clothes, cosmetics, accessories and household appliances shops, malls include fast food restaurants, coffee shops, multiplex cinemas, casinos and games, intended to disseminate global consumerist goods within the Romanian urban society [32, 45]. The social function of malls in the built-up area is visible in the number of visitors to the eleven Bucharest malls.

On the other hand, building some of these commercial centres implies special works to improve the infrastructure, e.g. the construction of *Trident Plaza* in Constanța requires the consolidation of the city's sea cliffs area; other special works imply the rehabilitation and integrations of certain historical buildings into the respective commercial centres (e.g. the former slaughter-house in Timişoara will became part of the future *Civis Center*).

The development and modernisation of trading services is one of the main components of the tertiary sector in Romania. The process has gained in importance after 2000; according to available data only 6% of the consumer goods were sold through store chains in 2000, 27% in 2005 and 50% in 2010 [42]. The dynamics of this process is due to Romania ranking 8 on the preferential trade list of investors, Russia and the Czech Republic heading the list [56].

At the same time, the globalising character of this process is given by the specific consumer goods found in commercial centres and by the fact that over 90% of the modern trade network belongs to international store chains (Table 3) [16, 50].

Table 3 : The Bucharest malls and elements of social impact.

Malls	Commis-sioneg in	Location	Area [m^2]		Investor [Country]	Number of stores	Week-end visitors (estimate)
			Built-up	Commer-cial			
Existing Malls							
AFI Palace Cotroceni	2009	Centre-West : Cotroceni	214,000	170,000	AFI Europe [Israel]	250	60,000 – 70,000 / day
Băneasa Shopping Center (Freeria)	2008	North : Băneasa	170,000	85,000	Băneasa Development [Romania]	220	60,000 – 70,000 / day
Bucharest Mall	1999	Centre-South : Vitan	99,000	37,000	Anchor Group [Turkey]	140	40,000 – 45,000 / day
City Mall	2005	South : Eroii Revoluției	38,000	19,000	Victoria Holding [Australia]	100	18,000 / day
Cocor Department Store	2010	Centre : Unirii Square	25,000	10,000	Retail Group [Romania]	90	30,000 / day
Fashion House – West Park	2008	West : Militari – A1 Motorway	93,000	20,478	Liebrecht & Wood [Belgium]	140	40,000 / day
Grand Arena	2008	South : Berceni	120,000	45,500	Euroinvest Intermed [Switzerland]	180	40,000 – 45,000 / day
Iris Shopping Center	2006	East : Titan	67,650	*	DEGI [Germany]	50	40,000 / day
Jolie Ville Galleria	2004	North : Băneasa – Iancu Nicolae	14,000	5,500	HKS [Egypt]	96	30,000 / day
Liberty Center	2008	South : Rahova	65,650	25,000	Mivan Group [Northern Ireland]	96	30,000 / day
Nasaud Shopping Center	2006	South : Viilor – Heavy Traffic	5,500	4,500	Elbit Medical Imaging [Israel]	*	*
Plaza Romania	2004	West : Militari – Drumul Taberei	104,000	41,335	Anchor Group [Turkey]	150	40,000 – 45,000 / day
Sun Plaza	2010	South : Sudului Square	210,000	80,000	EMCT Romania Sparkassen Immobilien [Austria]	150	40,000 – 45,000 / day
Unirea Shopping Center(over-hauled)	2000	Centre : Unirii Square	83,971	43,760	Adamescu Family [Romania]	*	45,000 / day
Vitantis Shopping Center	2008	South-East : Vitan-Bârzeşti	80,000	33,000	Equest Balkan Properties [UK]	75	10,000 – 15,000 / day

Malls under construction or as project							
Colosseum Shopping Center	2011	North-West : Chitila	600,000	120,000	Nova Imobiliare, NAI Property Partners [RO]	*	*
Dânbovița Center	2011	Centre-West : Rado House	215,000	100,000	Elbit Medical Imaging [Israel]	*	*
Park Lake Plaza	2011	East : Titan	820,000	110,000	Caelum Development Sonae-Sierra [P-UK]	443	*
Sema Park	2010, 2011	West : Politehnica	659,000	154,000	River Invest SA [Romania]	*	*

With the concentration of incomes in the Capital and in the large cities, commodity markets, or specialist services units ended up in big commercial complexes. Their localisations are seemingly the result of increasing *social segregation*, tending to limit the area in which this type of goods and services are likely to be spread, because demand rests with a specific segment of users [6, 28].

Hence, a new type of urban-rural polarisations, directly proportional to social and cultural segregation, is dependent upon the capacity of the Romanian urban system to absorb the globalising fluxes [7, 23, 24].

The severe financial disparities, affecting the urban population in the wake of industrial restructuring, filter the penetration of globalising fluxes [25, 27]. At local level, although the items produced by the culture of consumption are somehow easily penetrating, they are not very accessible. Thus, the combination of global culture with endemic lack of culture grafted on povertry, is a fertile ground for the recrudescence of urban sub-culture and organised crime [39].

V. THE ECONOMIC-FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE COMMERCIAL INVESMENTS

The economic-financial crisis has a powerful impact on trade investments, the market being oversaturated and people's purchasing power fairly low, especially in Bucharest [16, 46]. Thus, ashortage of investors made some projects be abandoned (*Oltenia Mall* in Craiova, *Galleria* in Bucharest, *Siret Plaza* in Galați, *Three Galleria* in Buzău etc.), postponed or their destination changed to offices buildings, e.g. *Axa Shopping Center* in Iaşi, while some hypermarkets (*Pic* in Brăila, Oradea and Călăraşi, *Spar* in Târgu Mureş) have been closed down.

CONCLUSIONS

The main types of location of malls and hypermarkets in Romania are the following [40, 43]:

- On the site of former food complexes that started being built before 1990 (mainly in Bucharest) but were later abandoned: *Bucharest Mall*, *Plaza Romania*, *City Mall* and *Liberty Center*. Sheduled to be built in the unfinished structure of what was to be the "Radio House" is *Dâmbovița Center*;

- In the proximity of some great commercial centers already existent (the hypermarket chains Carrefour, Cora, Auchan, Praktiker, Bricostore, Obi etc.). This type of localization has led to the development of retail and business parks (Bucharest-Băneasa, Bucharest-Militari, Sibiu-Şelimbăr etc.).

- On the site of dismantled industrial units: *AFI Cotroceni* (*UMEB Plant*); *Sema Park* (*Semănătoarea* Plant); *Atrium Center* Cluj-Napoca (*Someşul* Knitwear Mills); *Craiova Mall* (*IRA* Factory); *Plaza Center* Timişoara (*Modern* Footwear Factory); *Civis Center* Timişoara (formerly a *slanghter house*); *Korona* Braşov (*Fartec* Factory); *Gold Plaza* Baia Mare or *Cora Lujerului* in Bucharest (demolished dairy products factories) (Figure 6);

Figure 6 : Cora Lujerului in Bucharest (under extension). (photo R. Săgeată)

- On the major highways, at the city margin: *Commercial Park Băneasa*, on DN 1 Bucharest-Ploieşti, *Militari Commercial Park* on A1 Bucharest-Piteşti, *Dragonul Roşu* on Bucharest-Urziceni Highway; *Euromall Piteşti* on A1 Piteşti-Bucharest (Figure 7); *Şelimbăr-Sibiu Commercial Park* on the highway to Timişoara and Bucharest; *Constanța South-Agigea*, on the road to Mangalia; *West Gate* and *Oltenia Mall* in Craiova on the roads to Filiaşi and Malu Mare, respectively; *Perla Shopping Centre* in Ploieşti on DN1; *Galleria* in Suceava on the road to Fălticeni; *Plaza Center* in Timişoara on the road to Lugoj; *Plaza Center* in Hunedoara on the road to Deva; *Silver Mall* in Vaslui, in the north of the town, on the road to Iaşi, Real and Obi Pallady Bucharest on A2 Constanța Bucharest etc.;

Figure 7 : Euromall in Piteşti [58] (located on A1 Motorway Piteşti-Bucharest).

- On the outskirts of towns, on the road to tourist zones: *Eliana Mall* in Braşov, on the road to Bran-Moeciu, and *Mega Mall* on the road to Predeal; *City Park Mall* in Constanța in *Tăbăcăriei* district, on the road to Mamaia sea-side resort, etc.;
- In the proximity of student campuses: *Iulius Mall* in Cluj-Napoca, *Iulius Mall* in Iaşi, *Crizantema Mall* in Târgovişte, *Carrefour Orhideea* in Bucharest, etc.;
- On the site of former stadiums: *Mercury* in Arad *(Strungul* Stadium);
- In central areas, using local urban polarising nuclei: *Alba Mall* in Alba Iulia, *Bistrița Mall* in Bistrița, *Forum Center* in Piatra Neamț, *Grand Mall* and *Atrium Center* in Satu Mare, *Aktiv Plaza* in Zalău, *Winmarkt Central Mall* in Vaslui, *River Plaza* in Râmnicu Vâlcea, *Grand Center* in Sinaia;
- On the site of universal stores overhauled and turned into malls: *Unirea Shopping Center* in Bucharest, *Tomis Mall* in Constanța, *Mureş Mall* in Târgu Mureş, *Moldova Mall* in Iaşi, *Winmarkt Shopping Centre* in Galați (Figure 8), *Maramureş Shopping Center* in Baia Mare etc.;

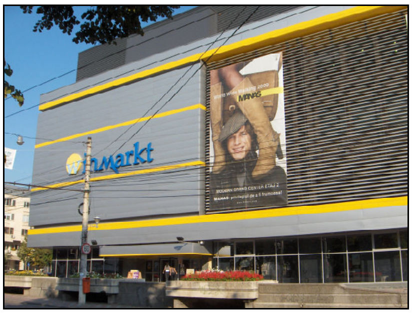

Figure 8 : Winmarkt Shopping Center in Galați
(former "Modern" Shoppig Center)
(photo R. Săgeată).

- In the proximity of parks associated with recreation and other functions (trade, business): *Park Lake Plaza* under construction near *Titan* Park, or *Galleria* Bucharest (still a project because no investors have come forward) in *Plumbuita* Park.

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