

## COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN SUCEAVA. HISTORY, EVOLUTION AND PERSPECTIVES OF TOURISTIC CAPITALIZATION

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### Abstract

*This research aims to highlight the evolution of commerce activity in Suceava city. It should be noted that for this town, the commerce is a historical legacy because since from its documentary attestation (the fourteenth century) Suceava was one of the largest commercial centers of the Moldavian Principality. Today, after the period of the communist regime characterized by a strong industrialization, Suceava has become a powerful trade center. The paper presents the transition of Suceava from a commercial dimension perpetuated since medieval times until the late nineteenth - early twentieth century to an industrial dimension started timidly in the early twentieth century and continued into an advanced form after the Second World War, during the communist regime. The paper also presents the return to a commercial dimension, after the communist regime.*

*Our research does not hesitate to present the economy transformation in a mainly tertiary one, in terms of changing the functionality of some areas in the city that once represented some strong industrial areas. Although in the North-East Region and, therefore, in Suceava, the salary level was one of the lowest nationally, the area became attractive to shopping centers developers, which started in 2002 to invest in opening of large stores instead of former industrial enterprises. In a short time, the area of modern retail space per thousand people became the largest in the country.*

*Given the historical and current context in which commerce prevails in the local economy, we chose to make a series of proposals for the expansion of tourism in Suceava in correlation with the activity of shopping centers from the local market.*

**Key words:** *commerce, Suceava, retail space, malls, shopping tourism.*

**JEL Classification:** *E24, F14, F16, F18, L81*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Suceava was, is and probably will remain a cradle of history and culture and is, moreover, a carrier of a precious heritage. Due to its geographical position, Suceava was gradually transformed from a predominantly rural core in an urban core, particularly favorable to trade and exchange of goods.

In a slavic record from the twelfth century, *Voskrenskaia Letopis*, appears the name „Socăva” (Suceava), important place on the European commerce route from Krakow through Galicia, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Siret, southward to the Danube (Cărăbuș, [www.istorielocala.ro](http://www.istorielocala.ro)).

We thus learn that Suceava has been favored by the location in the vicinity of the river with the same name and at the intersection of three major trade routes with international significance:

- The Road of Suceava or The Big Road, coming from Campulung and Bistrita;
- The Road of Lemberg or The Road of Lviv, coming from Chernivtsi;
- The Moldavian Road, linking Suceava and Țara Românească, known today as E85 Road.

Due to its location, Suceava was for more than two centuries, the favorite place of residence for Moldavian rulers. The proof is that the period between the XIV and XVI centuries, Suceava had an important economic role through the trade conducted here, and also an important role in terms of cultural, religious and politically aspects.

The commerce activity has grown quite a lot in the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. For example, in the area near the church of St. Dumitru, were many slums with very large stone cellars that belonging to the merchants. The advantage provided by its geographic position gave chance to Suceava to have an important role in the exchange trading of Moldova and on transit trade, because here passed merchants from many European countries, especially Armenians, Italians, Jewish, German, Polish, French and Turkish (Cultural Development Strategy of Suceava, 2016).

The rulers of the time were aimed to develop internal and external commerce, but at the same time, there were concerns for protecting local traders against foreign competition. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, there are also the same concerns as today, to promote local products. The main commerce acts were based on

local craftsman products or other ones obtained from the processing of milk, wool and meat (Cultural Development Strategy of Suceava, 2016).

Since the second half of the sixteenth century, the role of Suceava as economic and administrative entity decreased, because the capital of Moldavian Principality was moved to Iasi, during the reign of Alexandru Lapusneanu (1552-1561, 1564-1568), at the behest of the Ottoman Empire. However, after the reign of Alexandru Lapusneanu, the new ruler of the country, Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) preferred to live in Suceava for political reasons until the end of the seventeenth century. During this period, he contributed to the development of Suceava. Archaeological excavations have revealed that Vasile Lupu encouraged economic life contributing to the development of commerce in the area (Cultural Development Strategy of Suceava, 2016).

The period between 1650 and 1775 was characterized by stagnation or even regression, because the Suceava area suffered greatly from the Cossacks attacks and successive occupations of Polish armies who tried constantly the partial annexation of Moldavia, without success due opposition of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire.

Since 1775, Suceava lands came for a century and a half under the rule of the Habsburg Empire which later became the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This period was marked by a revival and urban recovery. Suceava was elevated to free commercial city, which meant that the city was able to enjoy a broad autonomy and numerous privileges.

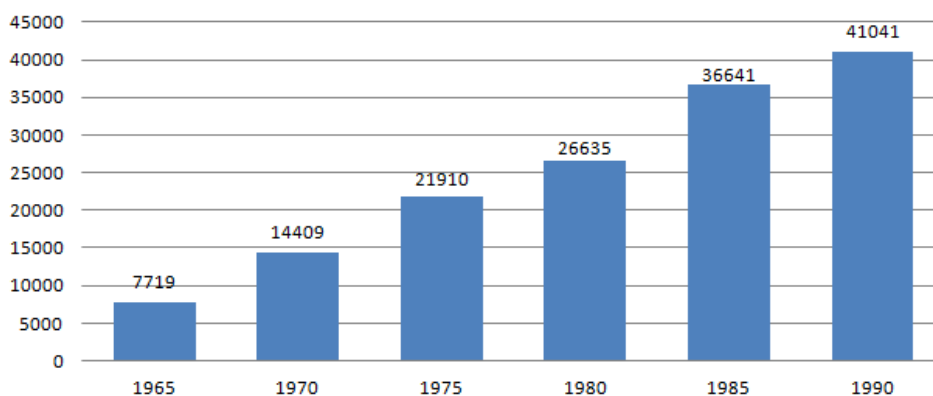
Since the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the old medieval Suceava was transformed into an important city, the economic life being fulfilled by the appearance of arts and crafts workshops and small factories in the food or textiles domain (Emandi, 1996). Although small factories already had emerged, we still could not speak about industry in the true sense of the word because the city development was still quite slow.

A new qualitative leap in local economic development was felt in the interwar period, when Bucovina was returned to Romania. This period was marked by the emergence of new businesses in the food domain. Thanks to this local economic development, Suceava population grew from 11,000 inhabitants registered in the early twentieth century to about 20,000 inhabitants (www.istoria.md).

## II. THE GOLDEN AGE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

After the Second World War the communist regime was imposed in Romania and started a strong industrialization of the country, including Suceava (Ianoş, 1987, p.73). Basically, in the period after 1945 Suceava changed its economic profile, from one focused on services to another one based on industrial services in the period between 1959 and 1965 and then, until 1990, Suceava was developed as an important industrial center.

The direct effect of industrialization was an increasing number of employees in industry in the period 1965-1990 (Figure 1).



**Figure 1 – Evolution of the average number of employees in industry in the period 1965-1990**

Source: Adaptation based on Chirileasa (Dediță), I.C. – Suceava city and its new economic coordinates, SEA - Practical Application of Science Volume I, Issue 2 (4) /2014

Free commerce has disappeared, its place being taken by state enterprises and thus by strongly centralized commerce (Dabija and Alt, 2012). The challenge of industrialization has been achieved since in Suceava appeared more and more factories that were part of various industrial sites. For example, one of the largest industrial sites was called "Valley of Suceava" („Valea Sucevei”). It was positioned in the southern part of the Burdujeni neighborhood, between Suceava River (south) and CFR railway route Bucharest-Suceava (north), with an extension in the southeast (towards Ploeni). "Valley of Suceava" included:

**Wood Processing Factory (Combinatul de Prelucrare a Lemnului - CPL, opened in 1959)**

In the county, CPL was the fourth unit by the size of industrial production and this factory was producing a wide range of furniture, plywood, fibreboard etc. During the peak of activity here worked approximately 3,000 people. On its place was built a huge shopping center – Shopping City Suceava.

**Cellulose and Paper Factory (Combinatul de Celuloză și Hârtie, CCH, opened in 1962)**

Known today as Ambro Factory, it held the second position in the country in the cellulose production, and the first position in the country, in the paper production. CCH's activity increased further by establishing a corrugated board factory, operated from June 1, 1974.

After 1990, with the fall of the communist regime, CCH productivity has declined. In 1996, the French company Rossmann bought the factory. The number of employees decreased during the time from 3000 people to around 400 people. Even though it was and still is a profitable business, the Rossmann company began the demolition of several buildings and plant facilities that are spread over an area of 30,000 square meters. All buildings and installations are no longer used for years, most since 2007, when the plant has restricted its activities (adevarul.ro).

In 2015, Ambro called for an urbanism certificate, in order to set one of the most important pieces of land from the main street. The goal? Construction of a new hypermarket in the area - Lidl.

Both CPL and CCH have completely changed the way the industry was perceived to Suceava. Until the setting up of these two factories, in this area was only an old meat processing factory (which operated in Burdujeni since 1911), a factory for milk collection and industrialization (ICIL), a cannery and a shoe factory (Străduința) (www.monitorulsv.ro).

**Factory for Machinery and Spare Parts (Întreprinderea de Utilaje și Piese de Schimb - IUPS) – transformed in ROMUPS.** It was totally demolished in 2008 in order to sell the land to build a housing estate. The land remained for years at the state of vacant. Finally, about half of the land was purchased by Adrian and Dragos Paval, the owners of Dedeman. Important to note is the fact that at IUPS worked over 2500 people, and the wall of the building had one of the most beautiful parietal mosaics in the county, with an area of 456 square meters.

**Machine Tools Factory (Întreprinderea de Mașini Unelte - IMUS)**

In 1962/1963 was established the Regional Enterprise for Maintenance Suceava (IRIS) because CPL and CCH and other production units needed repairs. In 1964 the company was readjusted on making steel construction becoming the Mechanical Enterprise of Suceava, and then IMUS (Machine Tools Factory). The activity of this plant was developed very much that the number of employees has reached approx. 4400.

After the visit in 1977 of Nicolae Ceausescu, the IMUS integrated the Factory of Measuring and Control Devices (Fabrica de Aparate de Măsură și Control - FAMC), which should operate separately. FAMC operates today, but at a fairly low capacity, the number of employees is around 30. In 1991 the name of IMUS, acquired in 1980, was replaced by MES (Machinery, Rquipment, Dervices) SA Suceava. MES bankruptcy has given rise to huge scandals about company ruining. In the heyday of the company there have been working about 4000 employees.

**Vehicles Repair Enterprise (Întreprinderea de Reparații Auto - IRA)**

IRA was established due to the need to repair cars, especially trucks, whose number was increasing year by year, due to economic development. The organization has grown continually, that in 1967 had 2,035 employees - the peak reached in the almost 30 years of existence. Today, from the old company remained only the main building, near the Bazaar of Suceava, which was transformed into the current Bethesda Polyclinic.

**Artificial Fibers Factory (Întreprinderea de Fibre Artificiale - IFA) – the factory tower (called IFA tower) with a height of 200m and with the role of gas dispersion, was and remains the highest building in the area.** The plant went into operation in 1984, but the work was interrupted in early 1990 as the manufacturing process was very pollutant. The rest of the giant company crashed itself because of its own weight and wrong site. During the period of operation 2,000 employees worked here. The land and the remains of the former factory were purchased in 2006 by the Iulius Mall group, and there was built the largest shopping center in the city.

**An oxygen factory**

**Thermal power station (TERMICA - recently bankrupt), city sewage plant etc.**

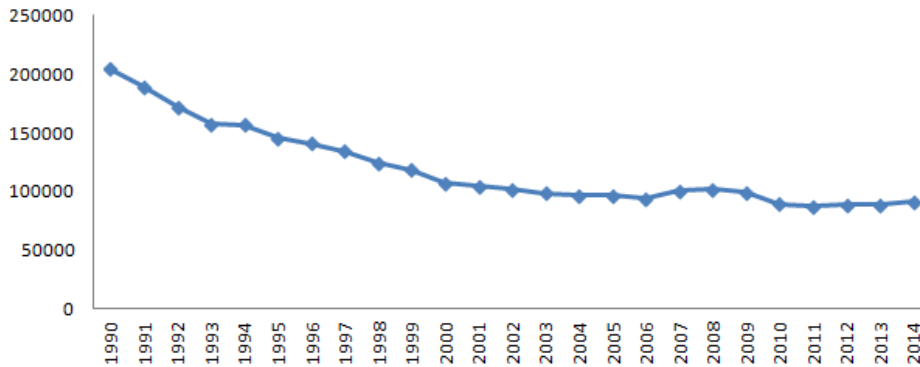
Industrial platform "Suceava Valley" is located near the industrial platform "Traian Vuia" which stretches along the street of the same name, on the right bank of the Suceava river. This is a former industrial area that included several factories: Integrated Wool, Glass Factory, the Local Public Transportation Company garages, a bread factory etc.

During the communist regime it was founded another high-performance business – Zimbrul Knitwear Factory (Fabrica de Tricotaje „Zimbrul”). This factory was the largest in the country at that time, and in the '80s it had about 3,000 employees. In 1997, massive layoffs led to the collapse of the factory. Today, in the place of the former knitwear factory is the Kaufland hypermarket and another shopping center that still retains the name „Zimbrul” (The Aurochs).

**III. SUCEAVA AS COMMERCIAL CENTER**

The period after the fall of communism brought new changes: the industry experienced a major setback, a situation encountered in other national urban centers (Săgeată, 2014, p.92). The industrial component was replaced again with one focused on trade and services (Ileanu, Goschin et al., 2014).

Today in Suceava, there are several commercial and administrative areas than production plants. The average number of employees in the county decreased in the last 24-25 years, from 204418 in 1990 to 91710 in 2014. (Figure 2).



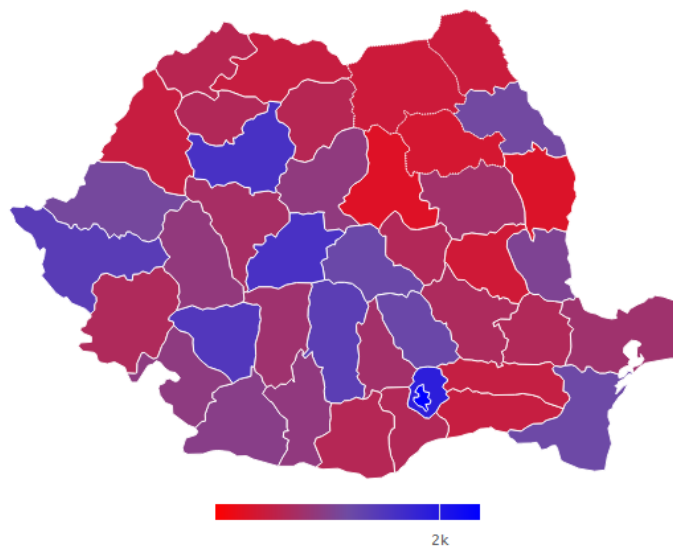
**Figure 2 – The average number of employees in Suceava, in the period 1990-2014**

Source: author, according to data from the National Statistics Institute

In the years after the establishment of democracy and market economy, Suceava was developed in a concentric manner. On the one hand, the city has developed a residential area, which began to take shape in the green landscape, an issue approached by Istrate in his research, which shows that in recent years there has been a city expansion, although the total population is declining (Istrate, 2015, p.43). On the other hand, there is a well established commercial structure that gives the pace of new businesses and investments.

Local commercial development contributed directly to the regeneration of urban areas and to the city's image changing. In other words, the dynamics of socio-economic activities, through the filter of their adaptation to the new market economy and to the new local development demands has enabled some conversion and reconversion processes of urban space (Chiriță, Lupchian and Dondea, 2015).

Today, in Suceava city, the structure of employees by economic activities highlights three main branches in the absorption of local labor force: services, industry and commerce. The services sector provides employment to approx. 41% of employees in Suceava, while industry, dominated by the processing industry branch, has a 35.8% of the total employees. Regarding commerce, it provides 21.9% of employment (Local Plan for Sustainable Urban Mobility of Suceava Municipality, 2014). What is worth mentioning is that the wage level recorded in Suceava County is one of the lowest; the average net salary in the period 2006-2013 is 1154 lei (Figure 3).



**Figure 3 – The average net salary in lei, by counties, in the period 2006-2013**

Source: National Institute of Statistics, graphic by Economic Zoom ([www.economiczoom.ro](http://www.economiczoom.ro))

Despite the fact that the salary level is low compared to other areas in Romania, Suceava became very attractive to major retailers from the country and from the European Union. They decided to invest in opening new supermarkets/shopping centers in the place of former industrial enterprises, in order to attract not only people from Suceava county, but also the people from Botosani, Neamt, Moldova and Ukraine (Figure 4). From North-East Region most people have gone to work abroad. They do not move there permanently, but most often, they leave their families at home sending them money regularly. Therefore, for many families, the remittances from their relatives are a more important source of income than wages earned in Romania. Thus, the population of this area has a higher purchasing power than that recorded in official statistics. This aspect has been speculated, most likely, by the shopping centers that have chosen to expand their business here.



**Figure 4 – The transformation of Suceava from a mainly industrial area into a commercial zone**

Source: author

Apart from shopping centers that already existed (Bucovina Shopping Centre and Zimbrul Shopping Centre), we can say that the explosion of commercial activity in Suceava began with the investment in the retail sector that took place in 2002, with the opening of Universe'all Hypermarket. Subsequently, in October 2003, METRO decided to open in Suceava one of the first stores inaugurated after its entry on the Romanian market in 1997 (the first store was opened in Bucharest) (Javorcik and Li, 2013).

Three years later, in August 2006, Kaufland, one of the largest retail companies in Europe, opened in Suceava the 12th hiperpermarket from its portfolio. The total investment has reached about 8.5 million euro.

The most important moments in the evolution of commercial activity in Suceava are presented in the following table:

**Table 1 – Major shopping centers opened in Suceava**

No.	Name	Opening year	Observations
1.	Bucovina Shopping Center	1971	
2.	Bazaar of Suceava	1990	
3.	Zimbrul Shopping Center		In the place of former knitwear factory - Zimbrul
4.	Universe'all Supermarket	2002	Closed in 2006
5.	Metro Cash&Carry Hypermarket	2003	
6.	Dedeman 1 DIY Hypermarket	2003	Closed in 2015
7.	Kaufland Hypermarket	2006	In the place of former knitwear factory - Zimbrul
8.	Selgros Hypermarket	2007	
9.	Mall - Shopping City Suceava	2008	In the place of the former Wood Processing Factory (CPL). The main tenants: Carrefour, BauMax replaced by Leroy Merlin in 2016, Mobexpert, Media Galaxy
10.	Iulius Mall Suceava	2008	In the place of the former Artificial Fibers Factory. The main tenants: Auchan, Bricostore replaced in 2015 by BricoDepot.

11.	Billa Supermarket	2008	Closed in 2010
12.	Real Hypermarket	2008	
13.	Galleria Mall	2009	Closed in 2013
14.	Lidl 1 Supermarket	2011	
15.	Lidl 2 Supermarket Near – Bazaar of Suceava	2015	In the place of the former Cellulose and Paper Factory (CCH), today’s AMBRO
16.	Dedeman 2 DIY Hypermarket	2015	In the place of the former Factory for Machinery and Spare Parts (IUPS)
17.	Lidl 3 – Burdujeni Supermarket	2015	

Source: author

Observation: the table captures only the largest shopping centers in Suceava apart from smaller shops such as Penny Market (situated Burdujeni district) or Profi/Profi City.

As we can see, it did not take long for Suceava to become one of the most important commercial centers in Romania. The most important infusion of shops occurred in 2008, with the opening of Iulius Mall and Shopping City Suceava, the largest projects of local retail, with a total rentable area of 100,000 square meters and a total of approximately 270 stores.

According to a study by real estate consultancy Cushman & Wakefield in 2009, Suceava has the largest agglomeration of retail space in the local market, with a ratio of one square meter of retail per capita ([www.cushmanwakefield.com](http://www.cushmanwakefield.com)).

In 2013, the average of the first 15 cities in Romania regarding the stock of modern retail space per 1,000 inhabitants was 548 square meters. This ranking was led by ([www.dailybusiness.ro](http://www.dailybusiness.ro)):

- Suceava (1.118 square meters/ 1.000 inhabitants)
- Pitești (771 square meters /1 .000 inhabitants)
- Oradea (664 square meters/1.000 inhabitants)
- Sibiu (609 square meters/1.000 inhabitants)
- Târgu Mureș (563 square meters/ 1.000 inhabitants)
- Bucharest on 12th position, with an average of 411 square meters/ 1.000 inhabitants.

In 2015, Suceava remains the city with the highest density of retail space per thousand people, according to a survey by Knight Frank, the flagship company in international real estate consultancy (Figure 5).

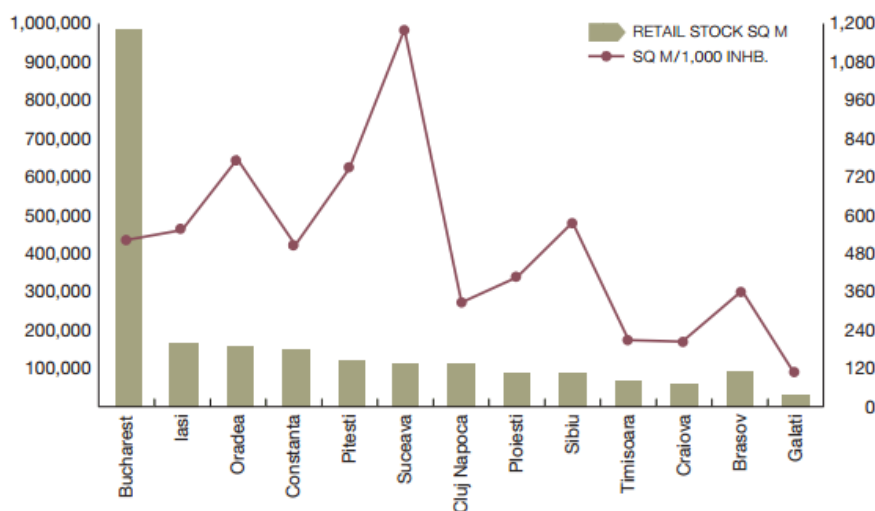
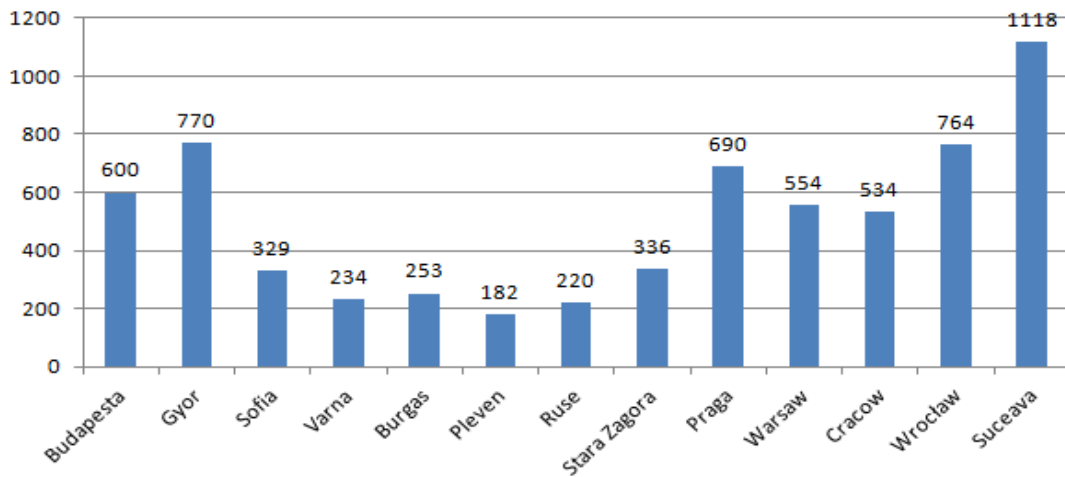


Figure 5 – Stock of retail and density per thousand people in different cities in Romania

Source: Knight Frank, <http://www.knightfrank.com.ro/resources/romania-market-overview-h1-2015.pdf>

It is interesting that in Suceava, the volume of retail space equals or exceeds the level in European capitals such as Budapest, Prague or Warsaw, cities where the purchasing power of residents is superior (Figure 6).

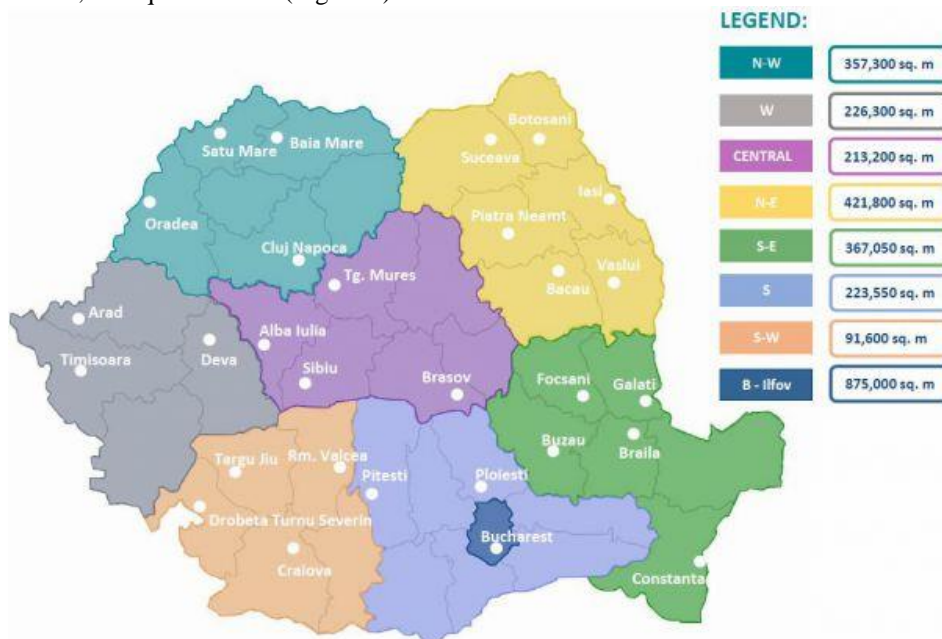


**Figure 6 – The density of retail space per thousand inhabitants**

Source: author according data provided by DTZ Echinox (Hungary), CBRE (Bulgaria), JLL (Czech Republic) și Polish Council of Shopping Centers (Poland)

Suceava has the highest density of retail space per thousand inhabitants of all cities, but it should be noted that the situation is more balanced at the county level, the county having a population mostly concentrated outside the city.

The situation at national level for the year 2014 shows that Nord-Est Region hold the largest stock of modern retail space (421.800 sqm), at the opposite pole is the South-West Region with a total stock of modern retail space of about 92,000 square meters (Figure 7).



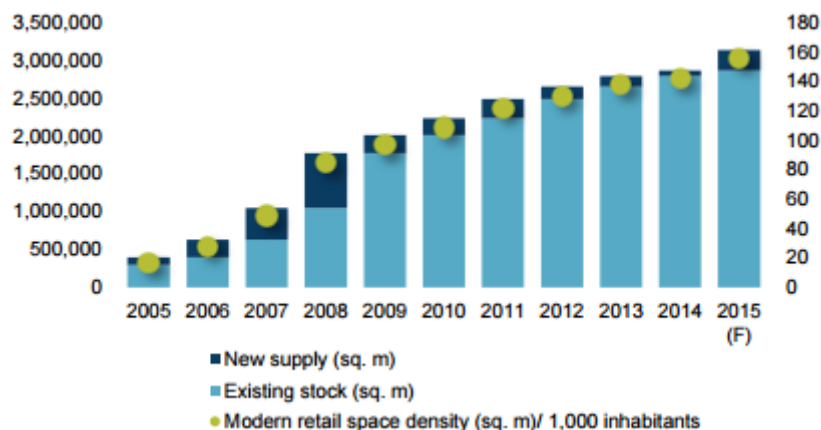
**Figure 7 – Map of modern retail space in Romania, 2014**

Source: capital.ro, <http://www.capital.ro/harta-mallurilor-din-romania.html>

North East Region is in the top for 2015 in terms of modern retail space - 423,000 sqm, although in five of those counties the purchasing power is below the national average, according to the study named Romania Regional Cities Retail Market in 2015 conducted by DTZ Echinox. The average monthly salary at the regional level is the lowest in the country: only 301 euro / month, compared to 359 euro / month recorded in the West Region.

Currently, Romania has about 3 million square meters of commercial space (Ziarul Financiar, [www.zfcorporate.ro](http://www.zfcorporate.ro)). Bucharest has one third, the rest is divided between major cities. With approximately 150 sqm of modern retail / thousand inhabitants (Figure 8), Romania continues to be after the most important countries in Central and Eastern Europe in terms of the average stock of modern retail / thousand inhabitants in regional cities: Hungary – 346sqm, Poland - 300sqm, and Czech – 290sqm.

A study conducted by CBRE shows that Romania ranks 22 of 67 countries surveyed in terms of attractiveness and future development plans of the largest retailers in the international market (www.ziucacargo.ro).



**Figure 8 – Stock of modern retail space and density per thousand people, Romania**

Source: DTZ Echinox Research, <http://www.dtzresearch.ro/property-times-romania-retail-h1-2015-111.html>

Although in Suceava the retail area is quite large relative to the number of inhabitants and their purchasing power, Lidl & Schwarz was not discouraged to develop two new Lidl stores in Suceava. Most likely, the turnover from stores already located in this area has led Lidl to enter the local market. For example, in 2013, Suceava was on the 7th place in a national ranking of the turnover achieved by the large shopping centers in Romania (Table 2). Obviously, this is not necessarily an index to characterize the standard of living in the area. Unlike other major cities in the rankings (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Constanta, Timisoara, Pitesti), Suceava has a lower population. The position of Suceava in such a placement is honorable. That also means that the two malls in the city were well placed (in terms of commercial position, not from the urban point of view) and serve customers who come from the entire county or neighboring counties.

**Table 2 – The biggest turnover achieved by the shopping centers/malls in Romania**

City	No. SC/Malls	Turnover 2013 (mil. euro)
Bucharest	14	168,2
Cluj	2	29,2
Iași	5	26,7
Constanța	4	24,6
Timișoara	1	18,4
Pitești	3	12,4
Suceava	2*	11,4
Oradea	3	10,9
Bacău	2	8,1
Târgu Mureș	2	8
Brăila	1	8

Source: author according data provided by Ziarul Financiar

<http://www.zf.ro/business-construct/de-unde-vin-cei-mai-multi-bani-pentru-proprietarii-de-malluri-orasele-din-care-scot-330-mil-euro-12739244>

\* the result ignores the turnover from the Galleria Mall Suceava until its closure

**IV. TOURISTIC CAPITALIZATION OF COMMERCE**

One of the particularities of Suceava is the potential for developing most types of tourism: cultural, religious, rural tourism and agrotourism, ecotourism, spa and business tourism. Moreover, in the local development strategies, these forms of tourism are presented as already practiced or having a high potential to be applied successfully in the area.

What can be noted is that, despite the fulminant development of commercial activity in recent years, in the strategy of tourism development at the county or municipal level, there is not any idea regarding the touristic capitalization of local commercial basis. Moreover, the local strategies ignore the area's commercial history.



Given the historical context and the current one, in which commerce predominates the whole general economic activity, we believe that tourism development of Suceava county must be articulated around some new branches and other forms of tourism, such as shopping tourism. Besides numerous monuments of cultural and historical value, Suceava should also serve as tourist attraction for shopping enthusiasts. Moreover, shopping trips started to become an increasingly popular practice for a growing segment of tourists.

The development of this type of tourism can be made only with sustained efforts from all stakeholders from Suceava: City Hall, the County Council, the Prefecture, existing shopping centers (malls, hypermarkets etc.), local, national and international travel agencies, Local Public Transport Company etc.

In the context of limited funds, public-private partnership is a modern and efficient instrument for development of Suceava as a destination for shopping tourism. Specifically, the partnership should be organized around the following ideas regarding the development of shopping tourism in Suceava:

- Including Suceava in the tours offer of local agencies / national / foreign agencies which organize tours in Romania and promoting special tourism packages to emphasize that Suceava is one of the cities with the highest density of retail space per capita in Europe (Suceava Shopping Tour/Shopping in Suceava);
- Capitalization of the strategic position of Suceava county at the EU border and trying to attract tourists from Ukraine and Moldova to the Suceava Municipality, as a destination for shopping;
- Capitalizing the opportunities offered by "Stefan cel Mare" International Airport reopening, which plays a vital and unique role in linking Suceava with other European cities which can result in major basins of tourism demand;
- Capitalization of partnership protocols signed with the city of Chernivtsi / Ukraine, in order to develop tourism programs that include both cities as shopping destinations for European tourists and not only.

Besides the development of shopping tourism, the commerce areas in Suceava can be integrated into the tourism activity by:

- Developing (inside the malls) of souvenir shops;
- Establishing a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in the parking of one of the two existing malls in the city;
- Promoting Bucovina as tourist destination through brochures, flyers offered for free under the newly created TIC or through advertising stands that can be placed in malls;
- Organising events/festival with national or international impact (rock festivals, jazz, electronic music, etc.). This may cause a periodicity of visits in Suceava by the enthusiasts of such events.

Finally, we consider necessary the establishment of a new museum, called Suceava City Museum, showing the history of the city and its evolution from a predominantly commercial area to a heavily industrialized area, followed by a comeback to commerce, after the fall of communism. The location of such a museum must have very much to do with the old industrial area of Suceava and current shopping district. Therefore, a possible location could be in the Post Office building 3 - Desk 1 (near Shopping City Suceava), or in the place of one of the former disused buildings remained on the IFA field (near Iulius Mall).

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

For Suceava, commerce activity is a historical legacy, since its documentary attestation when Suceava was one of the largest shopping centers of the Moldavian Principality. Today, after a period of the communist regime marked by a strong industrialization, Suceava has become a powerful commerce center nationally. Despite the fact that in the last 10-15 years, the salary level was rather low compared to other areas in Romania, Suceava became still very attractive to major retailers in the country and the EU, who have decided to invest in opening new stores in the place of the former industrial enterprises.

Currently, Suceava became one of the most important commercial centers in the country and ranks first nationally in terms of area in sqm of modern retail space per capita. In Suceava, the volume of modern retail space is equal or exceeds the level in European capitals such as Budapest, Prague and Warsaw.

Given the historical context and the current one, in which commercial activity prevails in the economy, we believe that local tourism development should focus on some alternative forms of tourism. One proposal is shopping tourism, which can attract shopping lovers from the entire country and from abroad. We also believe that local tourism activity can be developed through public-private partnerships concluded between local authorities and private entities in the retail (malls, hypermarkets).

In conclusion, we affirm that Suceava city should be promoted nationally and internationally to capitalize the history and the present anchored in the commerce activity. This task must be one of the priorities of the local authorities, but also of other stakeholders directly involved in the tourism phenomenon.

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