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Abstract. In the last 20 years, the functional spaces of the municipality of Arad suffered various physical, economical or mental transformations. The major changes, sometimes unexpected, are often putted into account of the economics/policies in a perpetual transition. The central nucleus knows a paradox expressed by the difference between the crowded city's central boulevard and side-streets, less attractive to investors. The same difference is observed in the renovations, some plans being coherent and sustainable, others, with minimum investment, affecting the heritage buildings. Even more interesting is the dynamic of the commercial function of the city, after the year 2000 being launched a commercial "boom" proved by the large number of investment in this sector that lead to weight reduction of "boutique-sized" in favor of the retail chains, with a more abundant offer. In terms of space, the industry of Arad tends to stabilize outside of the city, in new industrial areas prepared and shaped for this purpose. Although some units have disappeared and some industrial sites have significantly reduced their size, the maintenance of the industry profile can be seen as an indicator of stability for the city of Arad.

Keywords: central core, industrial areas, commercial "boom", investments, tendencies

Cuvinte cheie: nucleu central, zone industriale, "boom" comercial, investiții, tendințe
1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The term “function” is borrowed from physiology, cities being nowadays compared with a living organ. It was introduced in 1891 by F. Ratzel and then it was taken over by geographers and town planners. This success in itself has sometimes led to very different interpretations. Thus, it is necessary to define the concept clearly.

First of all, the concept refers to the activities of the city or of the town as an organ which exerts a function in an assembly, in other words, it refers to extra urban activities. The complex of activities done for the satisfaction of the population, having an internal use, if we can express ourselves in this manner, does not disclose the function of the city.

So, we will only retain as urban functions those functions that justify the existence of the city and its development, which bring the necessary life resources. A lot of these resources come from the region that surrounds the city. A regional function was often brought into discussion; through it we understand the important role played by the city in its own region. Indeed, we do not conceive a city without a certain area of land that surrounds it. Without it, the city could not survive, but in the same time, the city animates and vitalizes that particular region. This fact seems to be so relevant that certain authors include this specific role of the city even in the standard definition of the “city”.¹

The demographic evolution of the cities, in general, and the territorial differences were the result of a series of territorial and sectoral development policies excessively centralized, during the second half of the last century. The structure of the economy of the city during the immediate postwar period reflects in a great extent a historical proportion established between resources, population and infrastructure, mentioning the fact that the state of the last-two mentioned components was influenced by the natural effects of the war.

The nationalization of major industrial companies in 1948 and the subsequent politics for developing the industry, especially the heavy industry, changed the proportion between the most important economic branches for each individual city. The new socialist relationships installed in the economy, in the social life and in politics diminished the territorial functions of the city in the sense of simplifying and restructuring them. If in the interwar period the role of tertiary functions was evident in the urban polarization, this time the industrial function becomes the dominant one, being the result of the development of this type of activities. Naturally, the sudden fall of the totalitarian political regime was not accompanied by a swift change of economic structures, as they are requiring a longer period for adapting, for liquidation or for the creation of new structures.²

The evolution of functional spaces in the municipality of Arad must be regarded in a tight connection to the political-social context of the time. Thus, its position, between the mountains and the plain, on the Mureș shore, at the crossroads of important communication channels, has developed its military function and also its commercial function. Once the city developed the administrative function takes shape, holding on to its importance until nowadays.

² I. Ianoș, 2004, p. 25
Beginning with the second part of the nineteenth century, the city gains an unprecedented industrial function and hence the transport function undergoes also a process of development.

The consistent development entitles Arad a lot of complex functions, divided differently depending on the political situation. Thus, in the interwar period, the agricultural function (due to the recent incorporation of the nearby villages) and the tertiary function were significant, as it is normal for a city that undergoes an organic development process. Anyway, the industrial function of the city is in a continuous expansion, fact proven by the large number of industrial units that are appearing now.

The communist period changes the ideological and value system of society, reflected in the fact that society turns more and more to the industrial function, to the detriment of the tertiary functions.

We can divide the recent changes into two stages, each stage having the duration of approximately a decade. The return to the capitalist society caused an extensive process of restructuring, the unemployed people (for the first time) heading to the rural areas, the exact opposite of the extensive process of urbanization in the socialist period.

During the second stage, after the year 2000, the industrial areas shape themselves in the proximity of Arad, especially because of the tight cooperation between authorities (for the arrangement and improvement of space) and investors, often of foreign origins.

In the same time, a development in the tertiary sector can be noticed, fact proven by the increasing number of banks and bank offices, by the appearance of commercial centers, by the development of the real estate sector, of brokerage etc.

In terms of the expansion of functional spaces, in 2005, from the total of the interior surface (7425.77 hectare), 42 percent represent residential areas, 18.8 percent industrial areas, 13.5 percent areas for communication means and transport, 8.6 percent for public institutions and service, 6.4 percent for green spaces and 10.7 percent for other areas (such as: agricultural-zootechnical units, waters, communal households, etc).

2. THE CENTRAL NUCLEUS

The central nucleus is the place where the development of the city has started. It represents the nodal point as the main traffic lines meet here. This is the region with the most intense tertiary activities, administrative buildings, banks, commercial units, edifices of the public, religious and cultural life, where the land occupancy reaches maximum values.

The center of Arad city is considered to be the area that revolves around the Revoluţiei Boulevard, respectively, Avram Iancu Square (South) to Podgoria Square (North) and from the Mureş banks (East) to the streets adjoining the boulevard (West), including the sum of the elements listed in the definition above.

The recent changes of this area refer primarily to the actions of urban renewal. After 1989, the functional profile of the central nucleus has undergone some changes. In addition

3 S. Pavel, 2007, Dinamismul antreprenorial și capacitatea orașului Arad de a atrage și reține forța de muncă, pp. 139-142.
4 According to data collected from County Statistics Arad, 2009.
5 According to the Urban Plan of the municipality of Arad, 2005.
6 F. Miu, 2007, p. 91.
to existing administrative institutions, a great number of commercial and catering units have been opened at the ground floor of the buildings considered to be historical monuments and the headquarters of the new companies have also been located here. Furthermore, several banking units have opened their headquarters (rented and renovated) on the Revoluției Boulevard (see fig. 1).

As far as the initiative of the local authorities is concerned, the central nucleus of the city has recently entered a rehabilitation process. Thus, in 2008 the sidewalks have been paved, the roads and the technical-urban system have been replaced and a parking system has been developed. The green areas have been redesigned for the purpose of uniformity and in 2009 trees have been planted on the central boulevard. The most important buildings have been highlighted by means of the architectural illumination, thus emphasizing the personality of the entire city.

The recent dysfunctions which occurred in the central nucleus of the city are primarily related to the “lack of space”, the great density of the historical buildings making it impossible to find locations to build new edifices. The investors (from the domain of financial – banking, luxury commerce, and hotels etc.) choose to rent already existing buildings. Thus, the chain of problems continues leading to the need to rehabilitate the rented buildings. The investors are not interested in rehabilitating the entire building but they rather prefer to strictly renovate the surface they use. Therefore, the situations in which the investors do not respect the general urban rules are frequent. They break the rules through the incoherence and lack of professionalism characterizing the respective works.

A further problem of the studied area is the one related to the traffic, especially the road traffic. The central nucleus is the most crowded area of the city. The main communication lines (North-South and East-West) meet in the Podgoria Square, at the Northern limit of the Revoluției Boulevard. This results in exceeding the traffic limit supported by the roads and thus highlighting the lack of parking places. It is also important to mention that these streets are quite narrow (except for the boulevard), thus making it impossible to ease the traffic from North to South. Even though the recent rehabilitations follow the pattern of the Occidental urban trends, no cycling tracks have been traced up to now.

Considering the map above, one can highlight the micro-areas of the central nucleus in which a certain function is dominant. Thus, the political-administrative buildings are predominant at the core of the boulevard. The maximum visibility from the Western side of the boulevard determined the banks to rent most of the buildings from that area, which nowadays host the headquarters of the banks.

Most of the cultural-educational institutions are located in the area stretching from “Ioan Slavici” Theatre to the City-Hall and from the boulevard to the Mureș river. Here, one can find the Cultural Palace, the “Aurel Vlaicu” University, the University Library and other educational institutions with tradition in the educational environment of Arad, a feature which has not changed for decades.

Most of the commercial spaces are located at the ground floor of the buildings which have a street exit, especially on the Revoluției Boulevard where the luxury shops are predominant. In addition, some of the top rated hotels in Arad (privatized after 1989 and renovated in recent years), part of international hotel chains, are located here.
Fig. 1. The functional profile of the central nucleus of Arad city

Profilul funcțional al nucleului central al municipiului Arad


The center of the spiritual life in Arad is located at the extremes of the boulevard (the new orthodox Cathedral from the Podgoria Square – opened in 2009 and the catholic Cathedral from the other side of the boulevard).

The green areas and the recreational areas are situated on both sides of the Mureș river: Europe Park, People’s Park, Neptune Swimming Pool, sports complexes etc. on their old location. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the public swimming pool (2005, 2009) and the building of the first ice rink (in 2007) are two improvements worth mentioning.

Tendencies
The central nucleus seems to preserve its current functional feature. The political-administrative and cultural functions, as well as the commercial and financial-banking functions seem to be stable here. However, some changes may be associated with the decrease of financial-banking units from here at the expense of their location in a potential business neighborhood. The cultural function is bound to gain more ground in the future, since the authorities submit plans for making the central nucleus more dynamic from this perspective (fig. 2).

The first step concerns the building of a pedestrian, walking area, connecting on the West-Eastern line, the fortress of Arad (Cetatea Aradului), the Water Tower (Turnul de Apă) and the Reconciliation Park (Parcul Reconcilierii), crossing the Nicolae Bălcescu street (one of the oldest in Arad), Avram Iancu Square, Meşteiana street and the Cathedral Square (Piaţa Catedralei). Overall, building special places for statues, arranging the green areas with square or esplanade value, improving the street furniture, and modernizing the public illumination are aimed at. It would be possible to create a more quiet area by rethinking the road traffic from this region and building underground parking places in the Avram Iancu Square and the Cathedral Square (Piaţa Catedralei).

Another form of cultural development of the central area is represented by the integration of the fortress of Arad in the civil circuit. This measure has been considered this spring when the local authorities planned a comprehensive project which states that the Universities from the city should be moved in the fortress together with the museums, libraries and catering facilities. The project is worth approx. 200 million Euros and is to be completed until the end of this decade.

The rehabilitation of the old historic center of Arad would also contribute to the development of the cultural specificity of the central nucleus. The project started this year and has a value of approx. 10 million Euros. It focuses on the rehabilitation and sustainable use of the cultural-historic heritage, as well as on the modernization of the related infrastructures. In addition to the great number of streets which have been renovated, the rehabilitation of the Traian Bridge, the Old Theatre and the Preparandiei building are also considered.

The success of the intentions mentioned above would strengthen the cultural character of the central nucleus, decrease the problems related to traffic, provide recreational facilities for the residents and improve the aspects regarding tourism.

3. INDUSTRIAL AREAS: CONTRASTS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SPACES

Arad, a city with ancient industrial traditions, a diverse economy based on the production of numerous goods (from lathes to cars and up to sugar, toys and watches), has finally managed to face the strongly highlighted shock after the year 1989, especially in these branches in Romania. The coherence of the industry in Arad lies in the fact that the industrial profile of the city has not suffered drastic modifications after 1989, focusing on the same branches detained ever since the inter-war period (textile, engineering and wood industry), and thus perpetuating a population specialized in these fields.

7 According to the information received from the Arad City-Hall, 2010.
Fig. 2. The delimitation of the potential cultural nucleus of Arad
Delimitarea posibilului nucleul cultural al orașului Arad


Recent modifications can be noticed by dividing the last 20 years (from 1990 to 2010) into several stages. The first segment overlaps the year 1990 when in the legislative and administrative chaos, the loss of product marketplaces, the interruption of internal cooperation connections and the total valorization of companies were elements that led to creating premises for an accentuated decline of industrial activities. After that, a second stage, also visible in the municipality of Arad, is characterized by the dramatic decrease of industrial production and by the manifestation for the first time of the unemployment phenomenon in post-socialist Romania. In this stage there is also a notable decrease of the city population especially because of the straightening of the unemployed or retired towards the rural areas where they were born.\(^8\)

The segment between 1997 and 2000 can be considered to be a generator of profound economical transformations by changing the proportion between restructuration and privatization, in the sense of accelerating the latter, leaving the restructuration and modernization of companies subsequent. Now, the Chemical Plant from Vladimirescu

\(^8\) I. Ianoș, 2004, p. 97.
cannot be saved, it being out of service, taken to pieces and sold in the year 1999. Still, beginning with this period the first signs of revitalization of the industry sector can be seen. Another important characteristic for the industrial sector is the reduction of company girth, being determined mostly by the modernization of the production process.

3.1 Old industrial spaces – potential chaos vs. potential order.

Ever since the existence of the first signs of industry development in the municipality of Arad, there has been a tendency of locating it in the North and North-West extremities. The core of the hard industry in Arad, which appeared at the end of the 19th century but also later, in the inter-war or socialist period, has formed around the Aurel Vlaicu Path. The areal is part of the West half of the East – West axis of the city, an important passage from the center of the country to the neighbor country, Hungary. It is thus not a coincidence that here the central train station and bus station has also appeared, for two important reasons. One would be that the high number of employees (some of them commuters from nearby villages) could easily get to their working place, without aggravating the city traffic. The second reason is related to end products, easily “mounted” on to the transportation networks. The positioning of the train station is of course related also to the proximity of the central core, this managing to serve to industrial space as well as administrative, commercial and cultural ones, found downtown (see fig. 3, black margins).

The engineering industry and metal processing industry (represented by Astra Train Cars Arad, ARIS S.A. and Feroneria S.A.) was representative for this space. Also representative was the wood processing industry (I.M.A.R. S.A.), and the textile industry (U.T.A.). The number of employees from this area had reached in 1990 11,000 for the Train Car Company, 10,000 for U.T.A. and another thousand for the other factories.9

The past years have lead to the shutting down of Textile Enterprises Arad (UTA), which was demolished completely in 2005. Yet Arad’s textile industry survives from investments made by firms with over 500 employees, placed in other zones of the city: Manitoba Tex (with over 2000 employees), Moda S.R.L. etc. Were the old factory used to be, now an industrial park and residential assembly have been built, both being financed by Ared society (see image 4).

The industrial park UTA 1 consists of approximately 100 industrial halls modulated from 150 to 10000 square meters with a complete infrastructure. This used to host in 2010 approximately 90 societies with diverse profiles (almost 4000 jobs). Along with the spaces used strictly for depositing, the production sector also contains the textile industry and the wood processing industry, replacing thus the old factories U.T.A. and I.M.A.R.

Astra Wagons Arad, another prominent emblem of the industry of Arad, was divided in 1998 by the split from SC Astra Wagons Arad SA of the assets of a newly formed company – SC Astra Passengers Wagons SA. As a result of these changes, Astra Passengers Wagons Arad became a stock company founded exclusively by Romanian investors in the year 2000.

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Fig. 3. Industrial spaces in the municipality of Arad (2010)


The residential assembly Red 1 UTA is also developed where the old factory UTA used to be and consists of 16 blocks of flats with a P+5 and P+8 regimes, building up to a total of 1200 apartments on a total surface of 42,243 square meters. In November 2010, approximately 90% of the apartments were already sold.

Meanwhile, in July 1999, Trinity Industries, one of the biggest names in transport industry and constructions in the United States, bought out 70% of the stock in Arad of SC Astra Passengers Wagons. Now numerous investments that go beyond 80 million dollars are being made in facilities, devices, systems and personnel training. Since August 2006 the Romanian company International Railway Systems, which is based in Luxembourg and

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10 Source of data: www.ared.ro, official site, accessed at 05.11.2010.
is also a leading player in the European market, bought SC Passengers Wagons Arad Sa from Trinity Industries.

![Fig. 4. New investments on the former site of the UTA factory](www.bing.com/maps; accessed on the 12th of May 2010, modified)

Noi investiții pe locul fostei fabrici U.T.A.


SC Passengers Wagons Arad had a turnover of 463,855,316.36 lei in 2009, and a number of 1700 employees the following year, setting as its goal to deliver 1500 railway carriages and 3000 bogies.\(^{11}\)

At the moment SC Astra Passengers Wagons Arad occupies approximately 32 hectares in the pericentral area of the city, land which was estimated at around 80 million dollars in 2007. The company officials announced then that by the year 2013 they will move their headquarters to the outskirts of the city. The decision was made by the IRS management due to an increased demand in cargo wagons and the need to comply to European environmental standards, which forbid industrial activities in urban areas starting from the year 2015.

The new headquarters was going to occupy between 20 and 25 hectares, and the entire investment would have been between 60 and 80 million euros. The recent economic crisis brought a downfall in real estate prices, which, combined with the instability of European and world markets made them abandon the idea for the time being.\(^{12}\)

The Furniture Company Arad (IMAR) is part of the same perimeter with UTA and Astra. The accumulation of debt as time passed made the production to drop and the number of employees to be diminished down to 450 (from over 5000 in the 80’s) in the year 2007. This was the year when the factory sold 80% of the land on which its facilities were built on (8 hectares) for 14,5 million euros.\(^{13}\)

The idea of demolishing the factory and selling the terrain was well planned; an ample process of retechnologization was thought of once new locations were to be built at the outskirts of town. The financial crisis, however, changed the plans of the company, which for the moment no longer exists.

\(^{11}\) Source: Astra Vagoane S.A., 2010.

\(^{12}\) Ibidem.

\(^{13}\) Source: Ziarul Financiar, [www.zf.ro](http://www.zf.ro), accessed at 03.11.2009.
The factory was situated in an area where urban restoration was taking place, with access to two main arteries and being in the proximity of the train station, bus terminals and other areas which were turned into service providers or where commerce was taking place. Its former location was also very close to the city square and the main institutions of general interest, the place having all the qualities required for a residential complex, shopping or business area. Again due to recession, the site is yet to be converted into any of the above following the demolition of the factory (fig. 5).

![Fig. 5. A comparison between investment plans for the terrain formerly occupied by the old IMAR factory and the situation as it is now.](Source: Arad City Hall, 2009; www.afi-europe.eu/ro, accessed on the 23rd of March 2010; Al. Dragan, 2010)

Comparison between planurile de investiții pe terenul fostei fabrici IMAR și situația actuală

All the changes and investments made in this old industrial area seem to change its functional profile for the near future into one that is based on commercial activities, services and/or residential area. For that matter, we do not consider hazardous the prediction that in this space a “Central Business District”, the first of its kinds in Arad for now, has a chance of becoming reality.

3.2 New Industrial Areas.

Starting with the year 1998, the old industrial areas of the city have been considered propitious to the development of commercial, business or residential functions. This led to the idea to relocate the industry to the outskirts or extremities of the town, on former agricultural terrains, cheaper than those within the town. (see fig. 3).

Zona Industrială Arad-Vest (The West Arad Industrial Area) was created in 1998, at the initiative of local authorities, spanning 150 hectares. It was situated at the exit
towards Nadlac, and it has access to the beltway and to all the utilities required in order to make good progress according to today’s standards. It is also a part of the much larger Arad Economic Development Area, which includes the Cargo Terminal of the International Airport of Arad, the Curtici-Arad Free Area and the Arad International Fair.

In the year 2008, the West Industrial Area was already entirely occupied by approximately 34 businesses, encompassing over 5000 workplaces in the fields of light industry, storage, automobile parts production, industrial and electric components production, ceramic industry, and so on.\textsuperscript{14}

The East Industrial Area, inaugurated in 2002, occupies a much smaller area of 20 hectares. Even so, it is being sought by more and more investors from the fields of services, industry, storage, tourism and hotel services, automobile traders and so on. This made more than 1000 jobs available. And because it is situated at the exit of the town to Deva, large commercial centers and residential areas have also started to emerge.

The North Industrial Area and the South Industrial Area (Zadareni) were both founded in 2004 on areas larger than 100 hectares. Both are at the moment at the stage of urban equipment, waiting to receive new investors. In the year 2009 there were rumors about a new commercial center and a new county hospital at the exit of the city leading to Zadareni. The financial, crisis, however, put a stop to these investments.\textsuperscript{15}

Tendencies

The city’s industrial spaces have the tendency to get relocated at the outskirts because of the centrifugal force represented by the sector of commerce and services, which will occupy the former locations. In the future, it is likely that more and more industrial units will sell their properties within the city and invest the money in modern production units, thus leading to a considerable technological upgrade of the industry of Arad. The fact that the population is specialised in textile and automotive industry may lead to the stabilization of these industries in the city of Arad in the future.

It is also likely that the northern and southern industrial areas will expand due to the existence of enough vacant space for new investments in this sector. The evolution of the Teba factory, situated in the Dragasani neighbourhood on the West bank of the Mures, is interesting to follow because the area is ideal for the development of real estate projects and not for maintaining an industrial plant.

4. THE COMMERCIAL BOOM: SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS, FAILED PROJECTS

Since 1990, the liberalization of the market has led to the creation of numerous small shops, with a wide range of commercialized products (known as ABC's). The quality of the products was not always of the highest standards, the low purchasing power generating the appearance on the market of cheap goods.

The number of traders in Arad has increased steadily, often explosively, especially in the mid 90s (1973 traders registered in 1994) and after 2003 (over 2000 traders registered annually from 2003-2006). In recent years, there has been an increase in company size, through the appearance of micro-neighborhood stores, supermarkets,
hypermarkets and commercial centers such as malls because of which many small shops have been forced to cease trading. This explains the downward curve of the number of companies listed after 2007. Moreover, the financial crisis deepened further the problems of small businesses, and they often entered bankruptcy (fig. 6).

The commercial spaces in the city have undergone, especially in recent years, changes, both in terms of expansion and growth of investment (fig. 7).

The central core has always been a space of intense trade relations. Changes in recent years capture the disappearance of grocery stores on the central avenue of the city at the expense of luxury shops and banking premises. The cause is both the growth of the price of the rented areas and the development of large shopping centers in the outskirts of the city. This changes the landscape of the oldest commercial streets of the city (Closca, Crisan, Meianu, Union etc.). The only notable commercial unity here remains the complex Ziridava, renovated and renamed “Ziridava Shopping Center”.

The latest changes in the structure of functional spaces

At the exits of the cities, along the major roads, hypermarkets have made their way. At the exit to Deva, Selgros (2005), Real and Obi (2008-2009) have appeared, and the exit to Oradea was occupied by Metro and Praktiker (both in 2005).

The mall-type shopping centers have been developed in the city ever since 2007, when Armonia Shopping Center appeared, at the exit to Nădlac, after an investment of 50 million euros that also includes a DIY store, a Carrefour hypermarket, a furniture store, a store of electronic and home appliances, a store of sports items Intersport and other 55 brand stores. Another shopping center that seems to be a success is Atrium Center, developed in the old industrial area of the town (presented in the previous chapter) on a surface of 2.4 ha. The building of the complex started in 2008 and was finished on March 23, 2010, after a total investment of approx. 75 million euros.

In the above figure, it can be noticed the investors’ option to locate their business near the major communication channels. In town, the same trend is maintained, combined...
with the placement of the units in the most densely populated areas (such as Micalaca, and especially Aurel Vlaicu neighborhoods). The continuous flow here, the large number of people and especially the decisions taken by the leaders of former factories here to move their production area was quickly speculated by investors primarily in the commercial sector. Many such projects have proven to be successful. Others didn't manage to keep up with the competition and failed.

If in the beginning of 2008 seven major mall-type projects had been announced, nowadays only two are completed and in operation. Another one is under construction, the other four (West Gate, North Gate Plaza and Ice AFI) putting an end to the building process. It's interesting to look at what will happen to the lands remaining free here, as the market already seems saturated, requiring investments in another profile.

In this moment, the city has ten micro-neighborhood stores, two supermarkets, five hypermarkets and two malls. With this balance, the city is ranked on the first places in the country at the volume of investments determined not by the number of population (only 166,000 in 2008), but by the positional potential of the town, located at the intersection of important communication routes.

**Trends**

Commercial spaces have recorded after 2000 an unprecedented growth, in inverse proportion to the demographic situation, both in terms of areas occupied by them and the number of employees, amount of investment and turnover.

In the future, because of the decrease in the number of the population in Arad, fueled by the construction of new highways (due which the transit in the city which will be reduced), it is expected that some commercial assemblies will not be able to face competition. Only those who benefit from the best ford will probably win, respectively the assemblies located not far from major shopping areas and main means of transport.

Furthermore, small ABC stores will not able to compete with large commercial complexes that offer customers, in addition to the wide range of products and services, recreational facilities and cutting edge services (eg bank transfer).

Particular attention should be paid to the pressure being put on Aurel Vlaicu neighborhood by increasing traffic, and, with it, air and noise pollution. The risk results from the "suppression" of the neighborhood by two highly developed areas from an industrial and commercial point of view. Thus, in the Western part of the neighborhood, the West Industrial Area and the new shopping centers, and in the East, likewise, the new shopping center plus Astra Wagons may create irreversible imbalances in the structure of the neighborhood. One solution would be filling vacant land with new residential complexes, to keep a state of balance. The continuation and diversification of investments creates all the prerequisites for the emergence of a Central Business District in the old Northern industrial area of the town.

Recent changes in the structure of the functional areas of Arad can and must be observed from different perspectives and levels. The first one is that of the collective mentality: how do citizens relate to their town? What elements bring their contribution to their attachment to this place? Then, how do authorities try to manage the functional areas of the city? And last but not least, how is it seen from the outside the functional complex, especially from investors' perspective? Overall, they capture the intention of the town to develop in a free trade way, of expansion and competition, in the spirit of which it was born.
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