

The IKEA Factor

Driving elements of the development of shopping centres at the edges of European metropolitan regions

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Consumers choice

A house and a garden in the suburb, a car for each adult and a TV set with minidish. On weekdays mum and dad work, the children go to school or kindergarten. On Saturdays (or Sundays) the family goes shopping to the shopping centre, where they buy what they need, have a cheap meal and can see a film or just pass the time. That seems to be the way of life for a typical middle class family in the so-called western world, or at least what sitcoms, comics, adverts and films make people believe what it normally should be.

That propagated way of living strongly influences people's and especially consumers' behavioural patterns and consequently spatial developments, which are the present challenges for urban and regional planners.

1.2 Commercial enterprises - the drivers of developments

Large multi-nationals and global players – like IKEA or McDonalds – try to influence consumer's behaviour, because like-minded consumers around the world increase competitiveness against regional and local acting enterprises, due to economies of scale. So companies design world-wide labels, images and brands, they also establish a world-wide site-selection policy. Their development follows certain similar rules:

- The site has to be situated within a city region to cover a large number of potential consumers within the catchment area.
- The site must have a strong association with major road links and motorway junctions or at least near access to a motorway.
- The plot of land has to be big enough to erect a building with a large shopping floor and a large car-park.
- The building and especially its' large sign has to be visible from the main road. Therefore local and regional building regulations should be relatively lax or adaptable to the company's demands.

Hence, international big players prefer – very simplified – green field sites near motorways with minimal building restrictions. This results in the development of large, car-oriented shopping malls and retail parks including entertainment centres at the edge of the cities.

1.3 Politicians and planning systems

On the one hand the offer of a big player seems to be irresistible to regional and local authorities: They promise jobs, increased tax revenues and the image of a prosperous city. On the other hand the negative effects caused by such developments are very similar all over the world:

- As shopping malls on green field sites are mainly car-oriented, additional car-traffic is generated – chiefly in already highly stressed city regions and suburbs. This can result in severe consequences to the environment, e.g. noise and air pollution.
- Because malls are constructed at a maximum height of two levels and need large car parks, they increase land consumption.
- As shopping centres have a generic design world wide, they often do not fit in with the natural scenery and have negative effects on landscape conservation.
- Finally shopping malls and outlet centres are strong competitors to shops in the centres of villages and cities, e.g. it is often much cheaper to construct a new building on a green field site than to establish one in the city centre.¹ Often shops in neighbourhoods cannot withstand the competition and have to close down. For people without a car, like the elderly and underprivileged, this is particularly onerous and compounds their problems.

The planning systems that deal with these challenges differ from state to state, since they are based on different legislative processes. They require different methods of coping with investors and different ways of taking decisions.

1.4 The IKEA factor - a definition

Under these conditions, the IKEA-factor can be defined as the strategy of large, often multinational, companies to get through their self-interests in the process of site selection. World wide they are looking for (green field) sites with specific features, such as large catchment areas and direct access to the motorway network. These companies then use their economic muscle to persuade local planning authorities to alter, modify or tweak existing regulations, so they can achieve their desired goals.

¹ IKEA answers rather frankly to the question why IKEA stores are located out of town on its website. They say, "*this is to keep the product prices down. Lower land prices and overheads enable us to pass the savings on to you, the customer*" (<http://www.ikea.co.uk>).

The article compares two different European ways of coping with the site selection of global investors in shopping malls and retail centres through two case studies: The British planning system is shown via the example of the development of the shopping centre **Cribbs Causeway** in the Bristol North Fringe. The Central-European way of planning is discussed via the example of the **Shopping Center Süd**, situated in the environs south of Vienna. The text shows the two developments and their history against the background of the different planning systems, the problems they cause and the solutions planning authorities set up.²



Picture 1, 2: Two shopping centres. Left: “Cribbs Causeway” near Bristol, Right: “Shopping City Süd” near Vienna

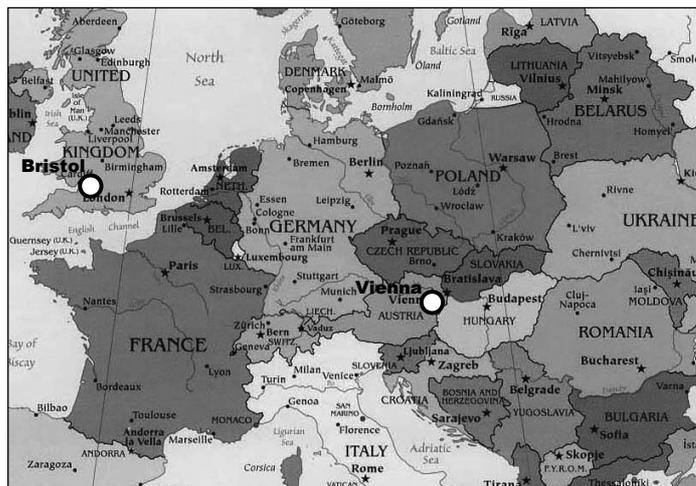
2 CASE STUDY NO 1: BRISTOL “NORTH FRINGE” AND CRIBBS CAUSEWAY

2.1 The “Bristol Region” and Bristol North Fringe

Bristol is a regional centre, located in the west of England, about 200 km west of London. The Bristol Region (the former “Avon Area”) has a population of approx. 1.000.000 and is comprised of four counties of similar size: Bath & North East Somerset (168.000 inhabitants), North Somerset (190.000), South Gloucestershire (244.000) and Bristol City (405.000; National Statistics mid year Estimates 1999). Bristol is a key node on English main road network. The dynamic M4 corridor goes east to west linking London via Bristol with Cardiff, the Capital of Wales. The M5 corridor connects Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol with the south east of England.

In a European context the Avon Area is rather successful. In 1999 the GDP / head of the region Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & North Sommerset was 5.5 % above the European average. Furthermore the employment³ rate is up to 81.1 %, which was the fourth highest in the European Union in 2000 (Commission of the European Communities 2002).

Therein the Bristol North Fringe is a triangular area located just north of the boundary of Bristol City. Physically the area is contiguous to the built-up area of Bristol, but administratively it is part of South Gloucestershire, a municipality that was created in 1996 following reorganisation of local government (Lambert, Smith 2002).



Picture 3: Bristol and Vienna in a European context

² I want to thank the people who supported my research in the Bristol region: Roger Daniels (JSPTU), Peter Jackson (South Gloucestershire Council), Christine Lambert and Angela Hull (University of the West of England) and Stephen Marshall (Bartlett School of Planning, London).

³ Number of employees related to the population aged 15-64. (Region No. one is Inner London with + 141,8 % above the European average.)

2.2 The story of Cribbs Causeway shopping centre

The Cribbs Causeway Development Area is part of the Bristol North Fringe and situated adjacent to junction 17 of the M5 and within four miles of the M4/M5 interchange. Previously it was agricultural land, which accommodated 5 farms and 45 residential properties. During the 1970's the North Fringe was designated for significant growth, but some applications for retail, office and warehousing development were refused by the Secretary of State after a lengthy public inquiry (South Gloucestershire 2002).

In 1987 the Bristol North Fringe Local Plan identified Cribbs Causeway (CC) as an established employment area. Proposals for new industry, warehousing and office developments had to be concentrated within these areas (North Avon District Council 1987). At that time the area north of Bristol was under the control of a local authority widely perceived as pro-development. Hence, local planning policy put very few constraints on an essentially market-led development process (Lambert, Smith 2002).

Consequently several planning applications for retail centres were submitted, but they were opposed especially by the city of Bristol, because of the anticipated effects on the Bristol town centre and the predicted increase in car traffic. After a local inquiry the Secretary of State refused to grant outline planning permission for the proposal in 1988. The local planning authority and the joint applicants both applied to the High Court for the decision to be overturned, but the application was quashed.

Finally in 1989 a second local inquiry about planning permission for a shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway was opened. The Conservative government of that time had adopted a de-regulation agenda at national level, which approved some specific developments. The Secretary of State for the Environment duly gave consent for the out-of-town shopping centre to be constructed in 1991 (Lambert, Smith 2002). The legal basis for the construction of a shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway was now fixed.

The construction of Cribbs Causeway commenced in 1995 and was completed in 1998. Nowadays the shopping mall has a 69,000 square metre floor space and contains 130 retail stores including two anchor stores, Marks and Spencer and John Lewis, that moved to Cribbs Causeway from the Bristol city centre (Cribbs Causeway 2002). In addition to the retail centre there are several entertainment facilities at the site, such as a 12-screen cinema, a leisure building and a health and fitness club (South Gloucestershire 2002).⁴

2.3 Problems

In England the main problem of out of town shopping centres like Cribbs Causeway or IKEA is considered to be the fact that on the one hand their retailing role is similar to that of the city and larger town centres but on the other hand they do not offer the sustainability benefits of these established centres. As the malls are not integrated into the surrounding environment, either visually or physically, movement around the area has to be by car: any other way is simply not attractive. The considerable volumes of traffic attracted to regional shopping centres generate significant congestion within and around the area and on the surrounding motorways. Moreover, the surrounding areas lack an identity and sense of place (South Gloucestershire Council 2002).

So out of town shopping centres compete economically with town centres and jeopardize their vitality and viability but do not produce similar positive effects. They cannot increase public transport use, which helps to minimise car travel or encourage the most efficient use of infrastructure, land and resources (JSPTU 2002). Generally speaking, they are less sustainable than city centres developments in towns.

2.4 Legislative and administrative framework

In the English unitary planning system the national government enacts the planning law and this is applied throughout the country. There are no national or regional land use plans, but several planning guidelines, published by the central government.

Local governments regulate development and formulate local policy instruments, which have to reflect national and regional policy. They enact the structure plan and the local plan (European Commission 2000b):

- The structure plan provides firm strategic guidelines and the strategic framework for local planning for the whole area of a county within a 15-year horizon. It is a written statement with a key diagram that shows the general distribution of new developments.
- The local plan sets up detailed policies and proposals for land use in a map and in guidelines within a 10-year horizon. It is used to guide development control, especially the decisions on planning applications.

The Secretary of State, who has overall responsibility for the planning system, supervises the municipality's planning activities. This includes wide powers to call in any planning applications or plans for inspection, or to act in place of the local planning authority (European Commission 2000b).

2.5 Co-operation between core city and surrounding municipalities

In England it is very usual for neighbouring municipalities to co-operate in enacting the structure plan as the Government demands co-operative planning. In the Avon Area this sub-regional planning is done with the co-operation of the four counties (Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bristol City) within the Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Committee wherein each of them is represented. As decisions have to be made with unanimity, each municipality can veto any decision.

⁴ In Bristol the 18,000 m² IKEA store is not a part of the shopping mall (<http://www.ikea.co.uk>), but situated in a distance of a few kilometres. This development was opposed for 2 years by many hundreds of Bristolians and the citizen action group reproaches IKEA that they "consistently refused to meet local people to discuss their fears of the loss of quality to their lives resulting from the IKEA car-based retailing operation" (<http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk/~rstphen/livingeaston/environment/eastgate.html>).

This decision-making body is supported by the Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Unit (JSPTU). On behalf of the four councils, JSPTU prepares the structure plan and advises the authorities on strategic planning and transportation issues.

The local plan is enacted by each of these four counties. To ensure, that a municipality does not obstruct the common structure plan, the approval of the neighbouring municipalities to the local plan is required. A conflict between two municipalities would be discussed in the so-called public inquiry, a public hearing headed by an independent Planning Inspector, who is exclusively responsible to the Secretary of State. If no agreement could be achieved, it would finally be up to the central government, represented by the Planning Inspector, or by the Secretary of State, to decide on the case.

Although the municipalities are co-operating (e.g. according the number of new dwellings), there are conflicts and often strong competition between them (e.g. concerning housing, shopping centres etc.), even though there are no tax revenues related to the number of jobs, a municipality provides.

2.6 How they tackle the problems

By the end of the 1990s there was a change of the English policy at the central government level, which placed greater emphasis on new forms of urban development that contributed to reducing travel by car, rather than on developments on green field sites. Furthermore following re-organisation of local government in the area of the Bristol region, a new South Gloucestershire district was created that was under the control of the Liberal Democrat party. Their aim was to resist further developments that cause unacceptable environmental impact, particularly in transport terms (Lambert, Smith 2002).

First of all they set up rules to avoid any further development of shopping centres out of town that would generate a similar impact to Cribbs Causeway. According to the structure plan of the Avon region, the development of factory outlet centres or new regional shopping centres outside existing centres will not be allowed any more in principal. Other forms of retail development, including extensions to existing facilities outside these centres will only be permitted if they meet identified needs and where; (Policy 40, JSPTU 2002):

- There are no suitable sites to meet these needs at existing centres;
- There are no unacceptable implications for regeneration and the strategy of the structure plan, and for the vitality and viability of existing centres and
- The development serves to minimise travel demand and to facilitate access by public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and those with special needs.

Furthermore there are plans to construct a network of tramways within the Bristol region to encourage public transport and to reduce car traffic. This network is a co-operation of the four counties of the Avon Region and should be financed by PPP. Line No. 1 will link Bristol city centre with Cribbs Causeway.

Finally the local plan of South Gloucestershire set up the vision of a physical and visual integration of the retail centre in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Cribbs Causeway should be enhanced as city centre of the existing local communities. Therefore its orientation should turn away from the motorway and towards the local communities, both to improve the overall appearance and identity of the area and to encourage internal non-car circulation between existing and new developments. Furthermore some typical city centre services should be established in the shopping centre, such as a bank and a post office. Furthermore the existing leisure centre with restaurants and entertainment facilities should be improved.

3 CASE STUDY NO 2: “SÜDRAUM VIENNA” AND SHOPPING CITY SÜD

3.1 Metropolitan Region Vienna and “Südraum Vienna”

The metropolitan region Vienna is situated in the eastern part of Austria. As a result of the suburbanisation processes of the last forty years the city of Vienna has developed close mutual contacts and networks with its environs, especially with the municipalities situated within a radius of approx. 40 to 50 km around the federal capital (Urban Planning Bureau Vienna 2000).⁵ So the Vienna Region includes the city of Vienna with a population of 1.55m inhabitants and the 185 surrounding municipalities with a total of about 0.62m inhabitants (Statistik Austria 2002). In just four municipalities the population is larger than 1% of the Viennese population, but none of them achieves more then 2 % of the population of the City.

The region is home to two important Trans-European Corridors and a Trans-European Network node. The east-west going Danube Corridor links Bucharest, Budapest, Vienna, Munich, and goes further to Paris. The Pontebbana Corridor, one of the alpine transversals, connects Poland to Italy going from Warsaw through Vienna and Venice to Milan.

In a European context Vienna is an economically very successful region. The GDP / head was 50.8 % above average of the European Union. In 1999 Vienna was the sixth most productive region in Europe. The employment-rate⁶ of 68 % is 4.2 % above the EU-average (Commission of the European Communities 2002).

In Austria the development leading from Vienna to the south with lots of suburbs, villages, industries, enterprises and retail centres is called “Südraum Vienna” (and sometimes “Nördliches Industrieviertel”) Physically and functionally the area is strongly linked with the city of Vienna, many commuters travel into the city and many shoppers come from the city to the shopping centres and retail

⁵ Sometimes the name “Vienna Region” is used for the European Region Vienna - Bratislava, but the definition of Vienna Region as Vienna + environs is similar to the Avon Area in Bristol Region.

⁶ Number of employees related to the population aged 15-64.

centres in the region. Administratively the Südraum Vienna is divided into the city of Vienna, which also has the status of an Austrian state, and many smaller municipalities, which are part of the Austrian state of Lower Austria. So there is an important administrative border dividing this region.

3.2 The story of the Shopping City Süd

The Shopping City Süd (SCS) is situated in the “Südraum Vienna” 3 km south of Vienna. The site maintains direct access to the A2 motorway that is part of the Pontebbana Corridor and the B17 main road.

In the 1970's the owner of the SCS wanted to build a shopping centre in the south of Vienna. But because of different opinions about this development within the city borders of Vienna between the developer and Vienna's municipal administration, he was looking for a site out of town and found it in Vösendorf, a small village south of Vienna, near the A2 motorway. The site was fallow land with lots of ponds, the result of clay extraction undertaken previously (Karhan 1991).

As the local planning authority of the formerly agricultural dominated municipality Vösendorf aimed new jobs for the people in its area, it supported and welcomed the development of enterprises and retail centres (Marktgemeinde Vösendorf 1996). In those days development control was based on a simplified land-use plan. The change of the land use plan was based on a layout plan of the proposed development. The land use plan modification was a freehand line, drawn with a red felt pen. A definition of the proposed land use was missing (Karhan 1991).

Initially, a part of the Mall, an Ikea-store and a food-supermarket were built, to act as magnets. This still-existing core was opened in 1976. About ten years later direct link to the A2 motorway was constructed, to improve the access to the high capacity road network. Step by step the SCS was extended. Additional buildings were erected: the so called Motor city, the so called “Blaue Lagune” (“Blue Lagoon”), a shopping centre for prefabricated houses, and the Multiplexx-Centre a cinema with nine screens and about 2.200 seats and several restaurants. So there is an almost perfect mixture between shopping and entertainment on the SCS-ground.

Nowadays the SCS is one of Europe's largest shopping centres with a total of about 100.000m² shop-floor space for 300 shops and parking space for 10.000 cars. The Mall draws on a catchment that includes Vienna City, the eastern part of Lower Austria, the northern part of Burgenland and western parts of Hungary and Slovakia (Jung 1999).

All these developments were possible without any severe opposition. In the 1970's no traffic problems were expected and just one note of protest was recognized (Seiss 1999). However, nowadays several citizen action groups exist that oppose any further development of the Shopping City Süd.

3.3 Problems

The shadows of this development are visible. In the “Südraum Vienna” about 45 % of the municipalities face difficulties caused by a lack of shops (Silberbauer 2001) and the main shopping streets of Vienna have severe economic problems (Seiss 1999). A survey in the nearest district capital, Mödling, showed that about ¾ of the shop owners feel economically threatened by the Shopping City Süd (Jung 1999).

Furthermore the SCS and similar developments cause severe traffic problems. About 60.000 visitors a day, which means about 32.000 cars, are visiting the SCS (Jung 1999). So the SCS increases the risk of traffic congestion in this already highly stressed area.

Moreover the region suffers from negative impacts on the environment. In 1/3 of the municipalities south of Vienna the quality of life is affected by noise and in 1/4 it is affected by air pollution, both primarily caused by the increase in road traffic. Additional land consumption, effects of heavy rain induced by soil sealing (17 % of the municipalities) and negative effects on the landscape scenery are the main regional problems (Silberbauer 2001).

3.4 Legislative and administrative framework

As Austria is a federal republic, the responsibility to enact laws, is divided between the federal state and the nine Austrian states (“Länder”). As per the constitution, legislation and execution of spatial planning is in the autonomous responsibility of the states. The states enact spatial planning laws and they are responsible for planning on a regional level. So in principle in Austria, there exist nine spatial planning laws, one in each state. They regulate the procedure of the enactment of spatial plans and they set up the goals and the main guidelines of spatial planning policy and regional development (European Commission 2000a). Co-operation between the states in border regions is voluntary and cannot be forced.

As per the constitution, local planning lies within the autonomous competence of the municipalities. The municipal council has the power (and the duty) to enact the local development scheme (Örtliches Entwicklungskonzept) and the land use plan (Flächenwidmungsplan), the mayor has the responsibility to control land use.

- The local development scheme (Örtliches Entwicklungskonzept) lays down the long term of the municipality at a general stage within a 10-year horizon.
- The land use plan (Flächenwidmungsplan) determines the permissible use of land and divides the municipality's territory into zones designated to specific purposes, i.e. building land, green land and traffic areas and is legally binding to site owners. They must not create any building that does not accord with the zone of the plot.

These plans must accord to the state's spatial planning law and the existing regional plans. This is verified by the state's supervisory authority on the municipalities. All in all, local government has great autonomy, as far as it acts within the limits set by the higher planning authorities.

3.5 Co-operation between core city and surrounding municipalities

The three states in the eastern part of Austria (Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland) work together in the “Planungsgemeinschaft Ost” (PGO). This co-operation is based on a gentlemen’s agreement and a treaty, but this co-operation has no significant influence on site selection policy.

Besides the PGO there is no further general co-operation between Vienna and its surrounding municipalities, although the municipalities co-operate in special fields. However, strong competition exists to attract investors, especially since the more jobs a community provides, the more tax revenues (“Kommunalsteuer” - communal taxes) a municipality can raise.

3.6 How problems are tackled

Just recently the spatial planning law of the state of Lower Austria was changed to avoid negative impacts of shopping centres in the future. Nowadays a new shopping centre may only be built at a site that is zoned especially for that purpose by the land use plan. Precondition for a modification of the land use plan is the evaluation of the effects of a proposed shopping centre on regional development by a spatial impact assessment. Furthermore the site has to be physically linked to an already existing settlement (NÖ Raumordnungsgesetz § 17).

In case of the SCS two strategies were explored to handle the increasing risk of congestion. Initially a monorail that would link the SCS with the underground-railway network in Vienna was discussed. But, as the city of Vienna expected a further outflow of buying power to the SCS and as there was no arrangement about the project’s funding, the idea was postponed indefinitely. Instead, new roads were constructed. The A2 motorway got an additional traffic lane and south of Vienna a new dual carriageway (the S1, the former B301) was constructed, although its success to reduce car traffic and gridlock is doubted, especially by several citizen action groups.

4 COMPARISON OF THE TWO CASES

4.1 The developments

On the one hand the cases of Cribbs Causeway (CC) near Bristol and the Shopping City Süd (SCS) near Vienna are not properly comparable. The Metropolitan Region Vienna is about twice as large as the Bristol Region. As the SCS was found in 1976 and CC is a very recent development, planning regulation in Austria was in its infancy while in England there was a well-developed planning system at that time.

Comparison of Cribbs Causeway near Bristol and Shopping City Süd near Vienna		
	Region Bristol, Cribbs Causeway	Region Vienna, Shopping City Süd
The regions		
Area	approx. 1.340 km ²	approx. 1.820 km ²
Population	1.008.000 (1999)	2.170.000 (2001)
GDP per head	5.5 % above EU average (1999)	50.8 % above EU average (1999)
employment	17,3 % above EU average (1999)	4.2 % above EU average (1999)
Number of municipalities	4	186
Largest municipality	Bristol City, 405.000 inhabitants (1999)	Vienna, 1.550.000 inhabitants (2001)
Smallest municipality	Bath & North East Somerset 168.000 (1999)	Großhofen, 92 inhabitants (2001)
The retail developments		
Permission	1991 (planning permission)	1973 (building permission)
Opening year	1998	1976
Floor space	66.000 m ²	100.000 m ²
Parking space	7.000 cars	10.000 cars
Number of shops	130	300
Cinema	12 screens	9 Screens and 2.200 seats
Number of visitors a day	10.000 on an average day	50.000 - 60.000 on an average day
Turnover	about 540.000 € a year	about 950.000 € in 1997
Magnets	John Lewis, Marks and Spencer	Ikea, Eurospar (food-supermarket)
Previous use of the site	5 farms, 45 residential properties	fallow land with lost of ponds
<i>Sources: Commission of the European Communities 2002, Cribbs Causeway 2002, Karhan 1991, JSPTU 2002, Jung 1999, South Gloucestershire Council 2002, Statistik Austria 2002 data-juxtaposition: Dallhammer 2003</i>		

Table 1: Comparison of Cribbs Causeway near Bristol and Shopping City Süd near Vienna

On the other hand the cases are very similar. The regions are economically prosperous – both are above the European average. Both shopping centres are car-oriented developments in the environs of a large and economically dynamic city. The investors looked for a large site with a good access to the main road network. The developments are accepted by the consumers and consequently economically very successful. Nevertheless the problems and challenges are very similar, too: traffic congestion, pollution and the threat to the development of the city centres in the towns within the catchment area.

4.2 Legislation and co-operation

Whereas in England a unitary planning system with the Secretary of States' right to intervene in almost every planning decision exists, in the federal system of Austria spatial planning is mainly in the jurisdiction of the nine states (Bundesländer) and the municipalities have broad autonomy on local planning and development control. Therefore co-operation between municipalities can be forced in England, where in Austria it is largely based on voluntary agreements. But in spite of the different planning systems the developments are very similar. Therefore discussions about how the planning systems are more top-down or more bottom-up are not the main issue.

The local planning authorities act somewhat like the prisoners in the "prisoner's dilemma" (Rapoport, Chammah 1965): If they compete, they have the chance to gain an individual optimum, but there may be overall unwanted developments (increasing car-traffic, pollution etc.), whereas co-operation can reduce the negative impacts of such developments and increase the common benefits. But, if they decide to co-operate, how can they be sure, that the neighbouring municipalities will frankly co-operate, too?

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 How to tackle the problems

The ways to deal with shopping centres on green field sites out of town are very similar:

- The planning authorities try to avoid new out of town developments on green field sites through more efficient legislation - in England as well as in Austria. But as we all know, large companies always try to find a way to bypass such regulations: in England possibly by lobbying the Secretary of State, in Austria by lobbying local and regional politicians.
- Measures should be taken to integrate pre-existing shopping centres to existing settlements. They should become a part of the town by providing public services for the population in the neighbourhood. The buildings should be visually perceptible as a part of the town, so that the shopping centres can be psychologically seen as part of the town and not as separate developments.
- To reduce motor vehicle traffic, shopping centres should be linked to the cities' public transport net. To finance a better public transport system in England treaties are established that oblige the developers to fund public transport, whereas in Austria this system is still rather uncommon.

5.2 Issues that support or prevent co-operation

In principal the above shown measures are the main themes of how to tackle problems caused by retail centres on green field sites out of town. But if a significant investor knocks on the door of a municipality - who can really resist? Co-operation is needed to achieve a better development regionally, and to gain the best solution within the prisoner's dilemma. The case studies show some factors that support co-operation and some factors that obstruct it.

- First of all it must be said that co-operation between independent authorities can hardly be forced, but, like in the prisoner's dilemma, some pressure could help. Principally, the municipalities must be aware that co-operation can help to improve their own situation, at least theoretically. This can be reached, if the problems are so evident that there is an electoral pressure (e.g. from the residents) to take measures. Similarly, some slight pressure from a higher planning authority could help as well. But the awareness about the problems is certainly more important than pressure from outside.
- Second, communal tax revenues seem not to be the core factors that make municipalities compete for business and enterprise developments. This is because communal taxes are not dependent on the number of jobs in a municipality in England. Nevertheless there exists a competition between municipalities for enterprises and jobs. Nevertheless, it could be a more psychological factor in the game of trust and mistrust.
- Third, a unitary planning system can help to reduce administrative obstacles. Different legal systems and strong administrative borders can complicate co-operation and make it more difficult. However similar policies, especially similar aims of spatial development can help to overcome these difficulties. Municipalities that are governed by different parties have not only to deal with different positions in a region but also with different policies to solve them.
- Fourth, it seems very important that the actors that co-operate are of similar size and power. Imbalances of power, as in the case of Vienna and the municipalities in its environs, can easily increase distrust and make co-operation more difficult.
- Fifth, possibly a kind of arbitrator or ombudsman in case of disputes about planning decisions would be helpful.

5.3 Concluding result

As a result, it must be said that on the one hand according to the IKEA-factor, large enterprises act similarly. They are looking for specific sites that cause very similar spatial problems. Their nature is to play the local authorities off against each other. On the other hand the answers to these challenges are very similar, too, although the legislative and administrative frameworks are different in

England and in Austria. The most important point is to free the local authorities from the “prisoner’s dilemma”, to make it clear that co-operation between them can generate a visible surplus value for the communities.

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