

American University of Central Asia

Sociology Department

**City Space and Consumption. Comparison of 2 trade centers in
Bishkek**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to identify the effect of the geographical location of the trade center on the level of consumption and the number of visitors. As the field of the study, Beta Stores 1 and Beta Stores 2 are chosen. The study includes the comparison of the functions of both trade centers, their social and cultural roles in the urban surrounding. The research method includes the survey of employees and visitors of trade centers, and observations. The next phase includes the analysis of the collected data using SPSS; and the final phase is about analyzing the results through the chosen theories: functionalist theory, and several urban sociology theories. This research will contribute into both marketing and sociology.

Introduction

Urban studies are gaining popularity: as the percentage of urban population is expanding drastically, the cities grow and become more and more complex. Further, the phenomenon of consumption went beyond the boundaries of a simple economic action. Current trade centers offer the visitors and consumers a wide range of activities and entertainment. They serve not only as the primary sources of trade actions, but also as the social spaces: they carry social functions, manifest and hidden ones. There are plenty of trade centers in Bishkek spread among the city, almost in each district: Bishkek Park, Caravan and Beta Stores in the city center, Bishkek City in the eastern part of the city, Rahat Palace in the western part, Taatan in the north of the city, and Beta Stores 2 in southern micro districts. Some of them, like Taatan, provide only furniture and household goods; others, like Bishkek Park, include playgrounds and cinemas. This research is focused on Beta Stores situated in the city center (Chui avenue), and Beta Stores 2 (Junusalieva street).

The aim of the research is to investigate how the geographical location of the trade center affects the level of consumption and the number of visitors. The study includes the comparison of the functions of both trade centers, their social and cultural roles in the urban surroundings. The significance of the investigation and the importance will be described further. The concepts such as consumption spaces, consumer society, manifest and latent functions of the trade centers, and related literature on the issue will be discussed in the following paper.

The academic value and significance of this research lies in the fact that this study is applicable both for marketing and sociology. In the sense of marketing, it is useful for the practical business issues usage: the results can be considered by the businessmen, going to build the new trade center. Regarding the sociology, this research will make its impact in the sociological urban studies, especially in the studies of distribution of objects in the city. In

addition, the city administrative officials may consider the results of the research while planning the urban space of Bishkek and distributing the city space objects for better efficiency. Several researches were conducted on the topic of proving that the location and the distribution of objects in the space either social (Ullman, E., (1941). *A Theory of Location for Cities*), or strictly economic (Feldman, A.S., and Tilly C. (1960) *The Interaction of Social and Physical Space*. American Sociological Review) economic and spatial meaning; but they lack quantitative data, and opinion of the space consumers.

This type of research was never conducted (or is not cannot be accessed by the general public) before in Bishkek. Therefore, I am going to be the first one in Bishkek to explore this topic. The review findings will help identify the actuality of the topic; find out the results and challenges of the previous researches; to know more about who, when, how, for what has studied this topic before; and to determine the significance of the study. Actually, the sociological urban studies have been significantly modernized and changed within the development of capitalism, and emergence and progression of so-called “consumer society”: nowadays the trade centers become the significant and serious objects of research in social sciences and social spaces.

As the unit of the research analysis, I have chosen persons. Precisely, there are two categories of people: consumers of 2 trade centers and the staff of these trade centers.

There are two research hypothesis designed:

1. The location of the trade center determines the number of its consumers and visitors.

Here the urban studies theories are applicable: Ullman, E., (1941) in *A Theory of Location for Cities*, proves that the location and the distribution of objects in the space carry the social and cultural meaning, thus, affecting the number of the visitors and consumers. Aborvalova, O., (2011). *Shopping centers in social continuum of urban space*, is focused on the issue of location and distribution of shopping centers in the urban space, and the differences, caused by the geographical location.

2. The level of consumption and the number of visitors is higher in the city center, as the majority of businesses, private, and municipal offices are distributed in the center of Bishkek. Thus, as more people work in this area, the more likely they will consume there, regardless of their places of residence. Here the study of Mullins, P., Natalier, K., Smith, P., Smeaton, B., (2006). *Cities and Consumption Spaces* states that the consumption spaces were mostly located in the business district.

The survey is represented by a semi-structured questionnaire. There are 2 questionnaires: one is for consumers, the second is for staff. Both contain the personal information section (age, employment and gender of the respondent); and the questions related to the research interest: 20 for consumers and 11 for staff. The pilot testing of the questionnaire is to be conducted before the data gathering. The whole sample size is 100 people: 50 for both trade centers.

Literature Review

There are 3 practical articles focusing on the issue of location and distribution of shopping centers in the urban space, and the differences, caused by the geographical location:

one of them was conducted in the country, which has a mutual past with Kyrgyzstan, as a part of the former Soviet Union: Aborvalova, O., (2011). *Shopping centers in social continuum of urban space*. ISOM, 2011. Vol. 5. pp.149-152. The article *Shopping centers in social continuum of urban space* makes sense because of the peculiarities that probably only ex-Soviet cities have: the trade centers located in the city center. This is a very useful point for my research because the Western sources provide the discourse of trade centers located in the suburbs. This research is more about the issues, and somehow lacks the theoretical framework. The second one is *Cities and Consumption Spaces* by Mullins, Natalier, Smith, and Smeaton, viewing the trade centers as development mechanisms of the city space. This way, both researches are useful for my senior thesis, because the transformation of the city space in the area of the trade center takes place (parking, paving stones, benches, etc.). This transformation is also the evidence of the latent functions of the trade centers. The next literature source is [Crewe, L.](#), [Beaverstock, J.](#), *Fashioning the city: Cultures of consumption in contemporary urban spaces*, which is also good in the empirical data sense, is more oriented to the “role of cultural production and consumption in contemporary urban regeneration”.

As the part of my research, I am going to explore through the questionnaire the relationship between the location of households and so-called consumption spaces, as Mullins, P., Natalier, K., Smith, P., Smeaton, B. did in the *Cities and Consumption Spaces*. The study was conducted in the Australian city of Brisbane, where the consumption spaces were mostly located in the business district. This district could be described as the residence of the quite homogeneous social class in the sense of ethnicity and high economic status. I have chosen the *Cities and Consumption Spaces* because I research particularly the topic of the distribution of the trade centers within the Bishkek city. It is less applicable for Bishkek, as in our city the residences of the homogenous class populations are not developed yet.

As Xavier, C., *Spaces of Consumption*. as Wynne, D., O'Connor, J., *Consumption and the postmodern city* both are focused on the city space and city life in the transition and changeable

world. These articles suit because they describes the society in transition, and this is what Bishkek (my area of study) is. They somehow lack the theoretical framework, but as the first article, they are good in the sense of practice. Here the processes of the city space changes, the dynamics of the urban development are connected to the issue of the consumption. In this sense, the *Spaces of Consumption* differ from two previous works, where the processes of dynamics and development of the city are not viewed as important points. This work is more about the transition process, than the previous two, and it is useful for me in the sense of the city concept. Finally, this article fits my Senior Thesis topic because the concept of “consumption of places and spaces” may be useful to expand the concept of the city adding the context of cultural and trade globalization. As it was mentioned above, the *Spaces of Consumption* is used in my research mainly as the theoretical and conceptual framework. Also, it provides a good perspective on the future development of trade and globalization processes in Kyrgyzstan, which may be useful for the further development of my research.

Lunt, P. K., Livingstone, S., in the *Mass consumption and personal identity: everyday economic experience* state that shopping is no more about buying necessities- it has a social and cultural meaning, and the space of consumption, the design of the shopping place plays a huge role in it. Here the ideas of the latent and manifest functions of the trade center are supported. In this way, it is similar to The Evans, G's. *Hard-branding the cultural city – from Prado to Prada* view of the city processes (globalization, post-modern changes of the city functions) “from above”. Also, the author focuses on the shapes- how the physical form of the city objects (buildings, street, houses and shops) is influencing on the meaning and functions of them. *Mass consumption and personal identity: everyday economic experience* is focused mainly on the personal decisions, a micro-level. Thus, it is giving me the view on the cultural and social meaning of the shopping process.

A Theory of Location for Cities, authored by Ullman, E., provides the classical theory of how the cities and other settlements are emerged and distributed within the space. This gives me

a macro-level view on the city, which is useful for my senior thesis topic. *A Theory of Location for Cities* is written for the people familiar with the sociological terminology and basic theories.

Concluding the overview of the literature sources with the mentioned above *The Interaction of Social and Physical Space*, I want to state that the differences in research findings are also caused by the differences in the cultural, geographic, and time issues (as it was stated in the article), and each research mainly explains the situation in its geographical location. Of course, theories give an objective framework, explanations, and perspectives, but also may differ according to the situation. Also, Fogle in his *Social Space and Physical Space: Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory as a Model for the Social Dynamics of the Built Environment* gives a very interesting interdisciplinary approach: it deals with philosophical and sociological theories and methods. This approach is reviewing Pierre Bourdieu's view on the social dynamics in the social and physical space. In other words, the author is researching the effect the physical space effects the social relations and movements.

Conceptualization. As I am researching the level of consumption, the term “consumer society” should be described- “A society in which the buying and selling of goods and services is the most important social and economic activity”. Oxford Dictionary.

“Consumption spaces” according to as Mullins, P., Natalier, K., Smith, P., Smeaton, B. did in the *Cities and Consumption Spaces* are the “places specially built or redeveloped for people who visit to buy and consume within these locations the fun goods and services on sale”. This term stands for the different functions of the trade centers, which are more than utilities nowadays. The trade centers nowadays carry deeper and broader social functions. Starting from the function of socialization (people walking around the areas of trade centers, meeting each other there); to the “manifest consumerism”, or status approval- people buying luxury goods not only for the practical usage, but rather for sharing and demonstrating their status and wealth.

The term “latent and manifest functions”, introduced by Robert K. Merton, stands for distinction between manifest and real, or latent aims of any actions, concepts, or concepts. Here it is going to be applied to the latent and manifest functions of trade centers. The manifest function is shopping; the latent is entertainment (cafe).

“Consumption of places and spaces”, introduced Xavier, C., in the *Spaces of Consumption*, stands for an ongoing process in the context of globalizing trade and culture.

Theoretical framework. *A Theory of Location for Cities* as a classic urban sociology study, states that the “entertainment” places in the city are to be placed in the areas remote from the residential and business areas. Such strict distribution is about to separate the building with different designs for different purposes. In this paper, this theory is not to be taken for granted and as the main one, because the postmodern era requires different concept of the urban space, which is considered less structured. The decrease of strictness of structuralization within the city stands for the rapid change and instability of the city life nowadays.

According to the *Urban Sociology in 21st Century*, there are 2 major shifts, or differences regarding the urban studies in the last 2 decades: the first one is the consequence of the rapid technological achievements (e.g. “Silicon Valley”). The fact of the rapid technology growth has a straight influence on the urban studies. The last 2 decades experienced a drastic transformation; due to the development of technologies some professions and occupations vanished, some emerged (the Social Media Management for example, became very popular). All of the above changes crucially influenced on the physical and social features on the modern cities, even in Kyrgyzstan, despite it is not as technologically progressive, as developed countries. The main thing here is that cities become the complex locations. The second shift is closely connected to the first one- the globalization and development of cross-boundary processes. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the trade sector is very dependent on the transnational relationships: according to the National Statistics Committee in January-July 2013, the imported goods in Kyrgyzstan exceeded

the exported goods 4 times, and this number tends to grow. This statistics show how Kyrgyzstan is dependent on the global economics. On one hand, it has a positive meaning, as market of Kyrgyzstan is taking part in the global trade, becomes more diverse and competitive; on the other hand, as the exports are significantly lower than imports, the producers of local goods are not strong and reliable enough for the international market. More, the issue of globalization has an impact on the design and functions of trade centers- they become more unified and standardized, the new global features and functions are imported as well as the goods.

Methodology

This research, as it was mentioned above, has a topic that has never been discussed before among scholars of Kyrgyzstan.

Therefore, trying to be more focused on the narrow issues, I still had plenty of research question. Some of them are highly connected each to other, some are concerning very different issues.

Here are the main goals of the study:

1. To find the main functions of 2 trade centers- Beta Stores in the center of the city and Beta Stores 2 and compare them each to other.
2. To see, whether or not there is difference between the numbers of visitors in 2 trade centers, caused by the different geographical location.
3. To explore, does the location within the city affect the level of consumption.
4. To understand whether or not there is a difference between the levels of consumption in 2 trade centers, caused by the different geographical location.
5. To compare and contrast gender and age differences of sellers of both trade centers.
6. To explain the gender and age differences of sellers of both trade centers, if there are any.

In order to make my goals more structures, and to avoid being too broad, I have designed the following research questions:

1. What are the functions of 2 trade centers? Do they differ each from other?
2. What are the differences in the number of visitors between 2 trade centers?
3. What are the differences in the level of consumption between 2 trade centers?
4. How the geographical location affects the number of visitors?
5. How the geographical location affects the level of consumption?
6. If there is any difference in the number of visitors during weekdays and weekends?
7. If there is any difference in the level of consumption during weekdays and weekends?
8. If there is any gender and age differences of sellers of both trade centers?
9. If there are gender and age differences of sellers of both trade centers, then why?

The research is quantitative. As well as the survey, it includes the observations.

The survey and observation are to be conducted in both Beta 1 and Beta 2. In order to avoid the volunteer biases and to be as precise as it is possible, I decided to make a plan of fieldworks and to follow it. The plan of the fieldworks is the same for the both trade centers.

So, the surveys and observation are going to be conducted in weekdays (Monday-Friday) in the morning (from 8 am to 10 am); in weekdays' lunch time (11 am-14 pm), and in so called "rush hours", which coincide with the end of the workday (17 pm-20 pm). Both the survey and observation are going to be conducted on all floors.

On weekends (Saturday and Sunday), I am going to make surveys and observations in the same time periods, as during the weekdays.

The unit of my research analysis is person. Precisely, there are 2 types of people: consumers of Beta Stores in the city center, and Beta Stores 2 in the micro district, trade centers and staff of these trade centers.

As it was mentioned above, 2 research hypotheses are designed for my senior thesis:

1. The location of the trade center determines the number of its consumers and visitors. Here the urban studies theories are applicable: Ullman, E., (1941) in *A Theory of Location for Cities*, proves that the location and the distribution of objects in the space carry the social and cultural meaning, thus, affecting the number of the visitors and consumers. Aborvalova, O., (2011). *Shopping centers in social continuum of urban space*, is focused on the issue of location and distribution of shopping centers in the urban space, and the differences, caused by the geographical location.
2. The level of consumption and number of visitors is higher in the city center, as the majority of business, private, and municipal offices are distributed in the center of Bishkek. Thus, as more people work in this area, the more likely they will consume there, regardless of their places of residence. Here the study of Mullins, P., Natalier, K., Smith, P., Smeaton, B., (2006). *Cities and Consumption Spaces* states that the consumption spaces were mostly located in the business district.

I am going to conduct the survey- semi-structured questionnaire. There are 2 questionnaires one is for consumers, the second is for staff. Both contain the personal information section (age, employment and gender of the respondent); and the questions related to the research interest: 20 for consumers and 11 for staff. The questionnaire for consumers contains the questions regarding employment and income of the respondent as well. The series of pilot testing of the questionnaire are to be conducted before the data gathering. The whole sample size is 100 people: 50 for both trade centers.

The sampling method chosen is convenience sampling method, as the other sampling methods are not possible in my situation: the consumers of the trade centers are available only at the moment.

This exact sampling method was chosen because it fits my aims- to understand the large number of people, and to have a common picture, and that is why I have chosen the quantitative research methodology.

The questionnaires are to be analyzed using SPSS program, calculating and finding correlations; also I am going to make a crosstab analysis.

The first step of the analysis, as I mentioned before, is the entrance of the collected data to the SPSS.

The next step is about making cross tabulation analysis, and interpreting data through setting dependent and independent variables. The independent variable is the location of the trade center. Dependent- number of consumers and visitors.

The final step is interpreting the data in the sense of theories (especially theories of urban space) and comparing my research results to the similar works.

My research is focused on 2 categories of respondents. They are- sellers of the trade centers and the consumers. Both groups are taking part in the survey, but numerically the consumers are represented more than sellers.

Findings and analysis

In Beta Stores located in the city center, there were 50 people participating in the survey: 10 staff and 40 consumers.

Outcomes for the Beta Stores in the city center consumers' personal section:

	Frequency	Percent
16-25	14	35,0
26-35	11	27,5
36-45	9	22,5
46-60	3	7,5
61 and above	3	7,5
overall	40	100,0

From the table above shows than the majority of Beta consumers are either people of student age, or people of the so-called economically active age. This outcome was not surprising for me,

as first, people of the younger age, according to the *Urban Sociology in 21st Century*, have grown up with the globalization process, which means that the younger the one is, the easier for this one is to adapt to the social changes.

The age categories of Beta Stores 2 consumers are pretty similar:

	Frequency	Percentage
16-25	15	36,6
26-35	12	29,3
36-45	7	17,1
46-60	6	14,6
61 and above	1	2,4
Overall	41	100,0

Also, despite the fact that socialization process is ongoing and lifelong, the younger people tend to have more diverse social relations, which causes the more intense and saturated process of socialization, more they are more likely to build and to be the part of the majority of social institutions. Being briefer, they tend to be more inclusive in the social processes.

The majority (55%) of Beta consumers are females. This part can be explained by the fact that in Kyrgyzstan mainly females are supposed to be in charge of household activities, regardless their employment status. This is an issue of a “double burden”, or a “second shift” is precisely discussed in Arlie Hochschild’s book of the same name. In married couples where both partners have paid jobs, women often spend significantly more time on household chores and caring work, such as childrearing or caring for the ill people and elderly, than men. This outcome is determined in large part by traditional gender roles that have been just taken for granted by society over time and space. Labor market constraints also play a role in determining who does the bulk of unpaid work. What is unjust, due to this double burden, the females are considered to

be “too busy” for the paid, visible labor activities, and as a result, the men are more likely to be hired on the job just because of their gender.

Due to an increase in the number of women participating in the labor market, efforts have been made to document the effects of this double burden on couples placed in such situations. Plenty of economic and gender studies have been done tracing the effects of the gendered division of labor and in most cases there was a notable difference between the time men and women contribute to unpaid labor.

Next, the survey discovered the following correlation between the satisfaction within the location of the trade center and the way the consumers get there. The level of consumers’ satisfaction within the Beta 1 location tends to be rather positive than negative.

		How do you usually get to the trade center?			overall
		on foot	public transport	personal transport	
are you satisfied with the location of the trade center?	absolutely satisfied	4	6	3	13
	almost satisfied	4	8	8	20
	scarcely satisfied	1	3	3	7
overall		9	17	14	40

So, as the majority of the consumers are almost satisfied with the location of the trade center, they prefer to get to the trade center by public transport. According to the urban studies, the distribution of the public transportation within the city is unequal: in *A Theory of Location for Cities* it is stated that the more remote area is, the less convenient the public transportation will be. Applying this finding to my research, the level of satisfaction of Beta Stores in the city center consumers may be explained this way. In addition, as the city center of Bishkek does not serve as the pure business district, it also serves as the residential area. But the living houses in the city

center (especially in the area of Beta Stores) have a lower density: there is more space between them, and as a consequence, the Bishkek population density in the city center is lower than on the micro districts.

For the majority of the Beta Stores in the center of Bishkek consumers the location of the trade center is important:

	is the location of the trade center significant for you?		overall
	yes	no	
its near my home	9	1	10
its near my jobplace	8	5	13
its convenient for me to get there	7	5	12
its far from my home	2	1	3
its far from my jobplave	1	0	1
its not convenient to get there	1	0	1
overall	28	12	40

This finding may be explained again by the quality of the public transportation and traffic situation in general. As the majority of Beta stores consumers get to the trade center either by public transport, or on personal vehicles, majority of them somehow complained on the traffic jam and bad roads. “It is impossible to get to get anywhere quickly without risk”, - said one of my respondent, a 45-year old employed woman. Thus, my respondents were mainly not satisfied with the quality of public transportation in the city of Bishkek.

As it was stated before, that the center of Bishkek almost equally serves as the business center (job place location), as the residential area. So, the second hypothesis (“The level of

consumption and the number of visitors are higher in the city center, as the majority of business, private and municipal are distributed in the center of Bishkek”) has been proven.

This outcome supports the *Cities and Consumption Spaces*, which was conducted in Australia, where the majority of trade center were located in the business district. This fact somehow “pushed” the process of consumption the following way: as the people are physically located in the certain area, they are starting to behave the way that would be considered as “proper”. In current situation, people being in the area surrounded by the consumption spaces, start to behave the way they are expected to: to buy. Thus, the mechanism of high consumerism is performed. Repeating, on the other hand, the center of Bishkek city cannot be considered as the pure business district, because it is represented with residential areas as well. Therefore, there is difference between residential areas in the center and micro districts of Bishkek: the ones in the micro districts have a higher population density; and the houses of the city center often have shops, business and municipal offices on the ground floor.

Moving forward to the functions of the beta Stores trade center. The research question was about what for do people mostly visit the trade center. And as I stated before, I defined 2 types of Beta Stores functions: the latent and the manifest one. The manifest function was the shopping, and the hidden function is entertainment (Beta Gourmet cafes in both trade centers). Someone may argue that the café can not be considered as the latent one, as it was not unintended. But in this case it is fist, not as advertised, as shopping, second, if you have a look at the physical distribution of the objects in both trade centers, you notice that both cafes are situated somewhere in the corner, are they are designed to grab as much attention as shopping boutiques do.

Here are the result for the question: What for do you usually go there?

Beta Stores, city center	Frequency	Percentage
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entertainment	10	25,0
shopping	30	75,0
Overall	40	100,0

The survey shows that the vast majority of Beta Stores visitors and consumers go there for shopping.

Beta Stores 2	Frequency	Percentage
entertainment	7	17,1
shopping	34	82,9
overall	41	100,0

The majority of Beta Stores 2 consumers and visitors go there for shopping as well.

Concluding this issue, there is no difference between the functions of the trade centers based on their geographical location. The geographical location, or the distribution of the physical objects within the city, carries a social meaning as well: the business districts, especially the areas if the consumption spaces, are designed the way that they encourage people to buy more and more.

Going further to the question of the difference between the numbers of visitors:

The question to the staff of the trade center was “How many consumers do you have per day in average?”

Beta Stores in the center	Frequency	Percentage
less than 10	2	20,0
10-30	5	50,0
31-50	2	20,0
more than 81	1	10,0
Overall	10	100,0

As we can see from the results, 50% of the sellers has from 10 to 30 buyers per day in average.

Beta Stores 2	frequency	percentage
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less than 10	4	44,4
10-30	3	33,3
31-50	1	11,1
51-80	1	11,1
Overall	9	100,0

The outcomes for the Beta stores 2 located in the residential area of Bishkek, show that in average Beta 2 sellers have less buyers per day, from 0 to 10. This finding supports my first research hypothesis, which states that the level of consumption depends on the location of the trade center.

Supporting the listed above scholars and researches, this difference occurs not just because of the different physical location of the trade centers: the physical distribution of objects within the space itself does not cause any sense.

The main thing here is that the different urban places are designed for different purposes, and despite the population density is higher in the area of Beta 2 location, the level of consumption there is lower. It does not mean that the smaller number of people living in the city center consumes more goods, that means that people who are working, or studying in the city center tend to buy there, even if they live far.

As I was comparing the amounts of money people spend in the trade centers, I asked the buyers, what amount of money they usually spend:

Beta Stores, center	frequency	percentage
<999 soms	20	50,0
1000-2999	13	32,5
3000-4999	5	12,5
5000-9999	2	5,0
Overall	40	100,0

And for the Beta Stores 2:

Beta Stores 2	frequency	percentage

<999 soms	31	75,6
1000-2999	7	17,1
3000-4999	3	7,3
overall	41	100,0

It is observable, that there is a difference in amounts of money people spending in trade centers. Hence, it supports the assumption that the objects in the consumption spaces are given more than simply utilitarian meaning. That they are carrying the social message as well. As the city center is claimed to the area of high consumption, due to the large number of private and public enterprises, and municipal offices, the people, who are present there, are becoming the part of the consumer society.

Next, there are outcomes, comparisons and analysis of the gender of beta Stores and Seta Stores 2 employees. In the both trade centers, females are prevailing over males drastically. Both trade centers are represented by the younger (16-35 years old) employees. So, there is no difference between the gender issue caused by the different locations of the trade centers.

Further, I started to think of reason why the sellers are mostly females. And as a result, I found out that according to the economic justice studies, like *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap (2014)*, conducted by C. Hill, the females are paid less than males for the same tasks. So, it is more profitable for the employers to hire female staff. Actually, despite the salary and wage gap between males and females decreased, it is still significant. Although it does not have a direct connection to the interest of my research area, some studies show the perception of the gendered occupation. By the gendered occupation, I mean traditionally perceived “male” and “female” jobs. What is interesting, the “female” jobs are mostly low paid, unprestigious and executive. On contrary, the “male” jobs are well paid, prestigious, and administrative. As a result, we have an ongoing and reproducing stereotypes of females in labor market: as I stated earlier, regarding the double burden issue, women are traditionally perceived as housekeepers regardless their employment. The females are mostly engaged in economic activities that they are paid for, and the household and carrying activities, which require time and efforts, but they

are unpaid. Nevertheless, the males are more attractive subjects on the labor market, and tend to be set on the higher positions.

Concerning the age, I also noticed some kind of a discrimination. As the majority of the employees are represented by the younger generation, I concluded that the younger employees are preferable because they are mostly current students or recent alumni, and their work experience and demands are lower.

As the result, they are preferable on the labor market, but for the low paid, unprestigious, and low skilled jobs.

There are also some unintended findings.

I did not include them neither to my research questions and aims, nor to the hypothesis, but the results of the survey seem to be interesting for me, so I decided to include them in the final paper and analyze them.

In the questionnaire for sellers, I had a question “Why did you choose to work in this particular trade center?” Here are the outcomes both for Beta Stores in the city center and for Beta Stores 2:

Beta Stores, center	Frequency	Percentage
i did not choose, I was appointed here	2	20,0
my friend/relative helped me to get a job here	5	50,0
it was the only place I could find a job	3	30,0
Overall	10	100,0

Beta Stores 2	Frequency	Percentage
i did not choose, I was appointed here	3	33,3

my friend/relative helped me to get a job here	5	55,6
it was the only place I could find a job	1	11,1
Overall	9	100,0

The majority of staff in both trade centers was helped by their friends or relatives with the employment process. This could be interpreted as the Bishkek, and Kyrgyzstan in general, society represents the mechanical solidarity in the sense of highly intensive social ties and interdependency. According to Durkheim, in *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), there are 2 types of solidarities (social relations): mechanical and organic. The first one is based on kinship, the second one- on the interdependence that comes from specialization and place of work and the relationships between people- a development which occurs in "modern" and "industrial" societies.

Concluding everything written above- the manifest functions of both trade centers dominate above latent; the level of consumption is higher in the city center (even the people living in other districts, are becoming the part consumption spaces of the city center); the gender inequality exists in the sphere of household chores, and in the labor market division.

Conclusion, limitations, recommendations

This research developed the relationship between the geographical location of the trade center and the level of consumption and the number of visitors. For the study 2 trade centers were chosen: Beta Stores in the city center, located on the Chuy avenue, and Beta Stores 2, which is situated in the southern part of Bishkek, in micro district. Next, the study focused on the comparison between the latent and manifest function of Beta Stores in the city center and Beta 2, and their roles in the context of urban lifestyle.

The paper introduced and explained such concepts as consumption spaces, consumer society, manifest and latent functions of the trade centers. More, this senior thesis presented and explained the related literature on the issue, the way this literature was applied to the research, and how it helped me in conceptualization and analysis.

The strengths of the study include its applicability both to marketing and to sociology. In the marketing perspective, the results of the research can be taken into consideration by the businesspersons. In the sociological perspective, the issue of the location of the physical objects within the city is discussed. More, the social meaning of the physical objects, and their latent and manifest functions are discussed as well. The fact that I am the first Bishkek researcher of trade centers in the context of urban space, makes this senior thesis more valuable.

The research hypothesis state that: first, that the number of consumers and visitors of the trade center is determined by the location of the trade center within the city. This is the consequence of different attitude and perception, applied to the object, in the context of cultural and social urban surroundings. Second research hypothesis states that the level of consumption and the number of visitors is higher in the city center, as the majority of businesses, private, and municipal offices are concentrated in that area.

The research findings show that visitors and consumers of Beta Stores in the city center and Beta Stores 2 have preferences in the spaces for consumption and entertainment, based on the location of the trade center. The preferences are not simply determined by the inhabitation of respondents; there are such significant factors as the job place, and how convenient it is to get to the trade center. Thus, both research hypothesis were proven.

The limitation of the research include time limit, volunteer bias- sample of volunteers is not representative of the general population, interviewer bias- an interviewer's expectations or insignificant gestures (for example, frowning or smiling) may influence a subject's responses one way or the other.

I would like to continue and look deeper to the gender issues findings. So I recommend to focus more on the gender of employees of the trade centers and their reasons of choosing this particular job. Next, I am curious about the distribution of household activities in the families of Bishkek, where the females are economically active.

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Annex

Hello!

I am student-sociologist of American University in Central Asia. I am conducting a survey for writing the senior thesis seminar on the topic "City Space and Consumption. Comparison of 2

trade centers". The aim of this research is to find the difference between the level of consumption in 2 trade centers based on their location. I understand that you spend your time for answering my questions and I will be glad for your contribution in the research and for your sincere answers.

Questionnaire for consumer

Personal section

1. Age of the respondent

16-25 26-35
 36-45 46-60
 61+

2. Employment

Student employed unemployed retired

3. Gender

Male female

Consumption

1. How often do you go to this particular trade center?

>1 a month 1-3 times a month 3 and>

2. What for do you usually visit it (you can choose only one option)? Можно выбрать несколько?

1. Entertainment(cafeterias, cinema)
2. shopping
3. other(please specify)_____
3. If shopping- which kind of?

Food clothes and other goods

4. At what amount of money most often?

>1000 1000-3000 3000-5000 5-10000 10000-16000 16000 and more

5. Are you satisfied with the location of the trade center?

Absolutely satisfied almost satisfied scarcely satisfied not
satisfied

6. Why?

It is near my home it is near my jobplace it is convenient for me to get here
it is far from my home it is far from my jobplace it is inconvenient for me to get here

7. Is the location of the trade center significant for you?

Yes no

8. How do you usually get to the TC?

On foot the public transportation on the personal vehicles

9. Do you have the discount?

Yes no

10. Are you usually satisfied with the quality of goods?

Yes no

11. Do you shop here for any special goods?

Yes (specify) no

12. Which discounts and sales are attractive for you?

13. Do you go there purposefully or between the case?

Purposefully btc

14. Do salesmen provide qualified assistance when choosing a product?

Yes, always from time to time scarcely no

15. Have you ever participated in advertising action?

Yes no

16. Do you have preferences in the case of trade centers?

Yes no

17. If yes, are they determined by the location of the trade center?

Yes no

18. Do you live/work in the area of this trade center?

Yes no

19. When do you usually go to the trade center?

Weekdays weekends does not matter

20. What is your average monthly income? (\$)

0 1-299 300-499 500-699 700-999 above 1000

Questionnaire for staff

Personal section

1. Age of the respondent

16-25 26-35

36-45 46-60

2. Gender

Male female

Professional questions

1. In which section are you working?

Food clothes, lingerie, and shoes toys consumer electronics and mobile phones

2. How many costumers per day do you have in average?

>10 10-30 31-50 51-80 81+

3. What is your work experience in this trade center?

Less than year 1-3 years 3+

4. Which section, in your opinion, is the most visited during weekdays?

Food clothes, lingerie, and shoes toys consumer electronics and mobile phones

5. Which section, in your opinion, is the most visited during weekends?

Food clothes, lingerie, and shoes toys consumer electronics and mobile phones

6. When the trade center is the most visited?

During weekdays weekends does not matter

7. At which time do you have the majority of customers during weekdays?

Before 12 12-15 16-18 18 and later

8. At which time do you have the majority of customers during weekends?

Before 12 12-15 16-18 18 and later

9. Why did you choose to work in this particular market?

10. Do you have an experience in working in another market?

Yes no

11. Does the workplace location matter to you?

Yes no

12. If yes, why?

It is near my home it is near my jobplace it is convenient for me to get here