

# THE FOOD DESERTS ISSUE – THE CASE STUDY OF ZLÍN

## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to provide an introduction to the ‘food deserts’ theme by outlining how the problem of access to food for households has become an increasingly important issue in the transforming Czech retail market.

The first part reviews the development of new types of retail space in the Czech Republic in the past two decades. The emphasis is principally on the growth of new formats of food retailing – supermarkets, hypermarkets and discount stores – which to a greater or lesser extent have affected every local market and supported spatial restructuring of the Czech retailing. On the other hand, it has also changed the pattern of traditional shopping facilities, which in turn have often experienced decline.

The second part of this work describes the retail change in Zlín and analyses the local distribution of food retail stores. It takes both quantitative and qualitative approach to define areas with relatively poor access to adequate food provision. There, it particularly focuses on consumers with lower mobility who are thus more restricted in their grocery choice.

The last section includes conclusions, mainly the discussion of resulting policy responses, possibilities of prevention of this phenomenon, as well as implications for initiatives that might at least tackle its negative impacts.

The whole work also includes a review of existing literature and critical assessment of the food deserts definition, which has remained conceptual rather than being operational term by which geographical areas can be identified.

**Keywords:** food desert, retail, retail change, Zlín