

Specialization in Retailing

Abstract

Retailing is the most familiar service of all: goods are brought together, displayed and sold directly to consumers. This map shows the difference between the actual employment in retail and the expected level, based on the city's population and income. Retail activity is usually divided into two categories: the provision of convenience goods, such as food, drugs and gasoline, that are purchased on a daily or weekly basis — usually from the nearest outlet — and the provision of shopping goods, such as clothes, furniture or new cars. Customers prefer to compare several stores before buying shopping goods. The specialization in retailing is evident throughout western Canada, including British Columbia, wherever cities serve extensive trade (market) areas. There is a corresponding deficiency of retail facilities in the cities of Ontario and Quebec, especially in and around the largest cities where trade areas are smaller.

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Photograph of a convenience store, Ottawa, Ontario

Geographical Description

This map is composed of three thematic map layers that show retail specialization in terms of overall retail activity (initial map view), retail convenience and retail

shopping. The size of the circles is proportional to the population of the cities and the degree of specialization is shown by the colour in the legend. Specialization in retailing is evident throughout western Canada and wherever cities serve extensive market areas (for example, Calgary and Edmonton). There is a corresponding lack of facilities in Ontario and Quebec, especially in and around the largest cities. Retail convenience specialization shows a similar pattern. Retail shopping goods provide products that consumers buy less frequently, the kind of goods that may require some research and comparison among several stores (for example, fashion or furniture). People will travel farther in order to have a greater choice, as illustrated in central and eastern Canada, where a series of urban centres acts as regional centres (for example, North Bay, London, Barrie and Belleville, Ontario). Very large cities are so attractive to shoppers that nearby places may appear to be deficient in these activities. Rural and urban differences in retail shopping activity are very strong, as are the differences between the smaller urban centres and their nearby, larger, consolidated metropolitan regions (for example, Toronto and Montréal). Some of these urban centres have large shopping centres (for example, Joliette, Quebec); others are largely residential (for example, Orangeville, Ontario).

To properly interpret this map, please consult the document "6th_Data and Mapping Notes on Service Industries".

Map Sources

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Simmons, J., S. Simmons, and D. Tenenbaum. 2000. Clusters of Commercial Locations in Canada: A Multivariate Analysis by FSA. Research Report 2000-8. Toronto: Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity, Ryerson Polytechnic University.

Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

Industry Canada. Strategis. Canada's Business and Consumer Site

http://www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/ic_wp-pa.htm

Strategis is produced by Industry Canada a department of the Federal government which employs over 5,500 people across Canada. The department's mission is to work with Canadians to build a growing competitive, knowledge-based economy.

Statistics Canada. 1996 Census Dictionary

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/92-351-u/4064723-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. 1996 Census of Population

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/info/census96.cfm>

Other

Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity

<http://www.cscs.ryerson.ca/>

Queen Street: The Dreams of the City

<http://www.rbebout.com/queen/2pworld.htm>

The Atlas of Canadian Commercial Structure

<http://www.cscs.ryerson.ca/research/jim/CommercialAtlasCanada.html>

