

## Specialization in Wholesaling

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### Abstract

Wholesaling is that part of the service sector that distributes goods from importers or manufacturers to retailers. This map shows the difference between the actual employment in wholesaling and the expected level, based on the city's population and income. Some of the most intensely specialized wholesale locations are smaller places that are close to Toronto or Montréal. The map also contrasts the cities of the Prairie provinces, which have extensive service areas and therefore significant wholesale roles, with the industrial cities of Ontario and Quebec, which have smaller service areas and therefore less wholesaling.

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Wholesaling, defined as the distribution of goods from importers or manufacturers to retailers, has traditionally depended on access to trade (market) areas outside the city. During the last century, railway lines determined the location of wholesalers; today, however, major highways are the important factor. In general, wholesale activity is associated with larger cities and higher incomes (for example, Vancouver).



Photograph of a facility for retail distribution, Ottawa, Ontario

### Geographical Description

On this map, the size of the circles is proportional to the population of the cities, while the degree of specialization is shown by the colour in the legend. The old ports (for example, Halifax) and rail centres (for example, Winnipeg) remain specialized in wholesaling, whereas new clusters of wholesale distribution centres have developed in locations with high road access around both Toronto and Montréal. Specialized cities in the Prairie provinces with extensive trade (market) areas contrast with the lower levels of specialization found in the industrial centres of Ontario and Quebec. Within each region, the most accessible locations tend to be most specialized in wholesale and the most isolated or peripheral centres are deficient. Around the larger cities, some smaller urban areas specialize in wholesale services, while others

are largely residential. This pattern is evident in two smaller centres near Vancouver: Duncan (primarily residential) and Maple Ridge (highly specialized in wholesaling). Rural (low) and urban (high) differences in wholesale specialization are also very strong due to the absence in rural areas of the dense transportation network required to transport goods.

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

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## Definition of underlined term

**Market:** The potential for sales in a defined area.

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## Map Sources

### Specialization in Wholesaling

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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](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.casca.ryerson.ca/>

Queen Street: The Dreams of the City  
<http://www.rbebout.com/queen/2pworld.htm>

The Atlas of Canadian Commercial Structure  
<http://www.casca.ryerson.ca/research/jim/CommercialAtlasCanada.html>

