

**RETAIL VITALITY AND SPECIALIZATION  
IN THE COUNTRYSIDE:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR SMALL TOWNS AND THEIR ROLE  
WITHIN REGIONAL SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS**

By

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## **Abstract**

Small town retail vitality and specialization and its impact on the structure and functioning of regional settlement systems are explored in this research. Using a methodology established by Dahms (1980a), outsized functions (used to index retail specialization) are identified in the Counties of Huron, Perth, and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada on a decennial basis from 1901 to 1991. Historical evidence of the region's retail structure reveals that specialization has been a persistent, varied, and geographically widespread phenomenon. Outsized functions have existed throughout the twentieth century among diverse retail types, in a variety of rural and urbanizing small towns. For the most part, specialization conforms to a hierarchical arrangement, with outsized function numbers and types being associated with the settlement population. This association breaks down among mid-sized towns in the rural countryside of Huron County.

Contemporary analyses of consumer behaviour obtained from a sample of households located within portions of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and Huron County also reveal the presence of outsized functions and of retail specialization. Consumers living in an urbanizing portion of the countryside (Wilmot Township) adjacent to the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo overwhelmingly utilize the cities for the majority of goods and services. The availability of choice, in terms of the number of different stores present in the metropolitan area and of the in-store stock available, act to draw consumers from all over Wilmot Township. Generally speaking, local small towns are bypassed except for the most basic of goods and services. Consequently, very little evidence of outsized functions is found outside of Kitchener-Waterloo although a popular clothing store exists in the Township's largest settlement of New Hamburg.

Much more evidence of outsized functions exists in the rural countryside (Morris and Hullett Townships, Huron County). Like Wilmot consumers, Morris and Hullett consumers shop locally. Unlike Wilmot consumers, rural shoppers rely on several different surrounding towns and villages. While towns maintain exclusive market areas for several goods, many towns contain at least one business that is able to attract consumers from all over the two townships. Many consumers visit Clinton to purchase appliances, Blyth to watch a theatrical play, Clinton to use medical services, Westfield to have their automobile serviced, and Walton to acquire farming supplies.

The findings suggest that many urbanizing small towns have had their retail role usurped by expanding cities while rural small towns show much more evidence of retail vitality. Evidence of retail specialization is also found in the rural countryside, suggesting that these settlements exist in what may be termed a 'dispersed city in the countryside.' However, elements of other systems, most notably central place systems, also manifest themselves. The result is the coexistence of two, complementary systems in the rural countryside.

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**Chapter 1**  
**Introduction:**  
**Retail Vitality and Specialization in the Countryside:**  
**Implications for Small Towns and their**  
**Role Within Regional Settlement Systems**

**1.1 Introduction**

The Canadian countryside has experienced tremendous change throughout the twentieth century. All sectors of its economy and its population have been influenced by a myriad of demographic, technological, institutional, and economic forces, operating on a number of geographic scales (Furuseth and Lapping, 1999; Hart, 1998; Halseth, 1995; Stabler and Olfert, 1994; Bollman, 1992; Bowles et. al., 1992; Stabler et. al., 1992; Beesley, 1991; Wilkinson and Murray, 1991; Brierly and Todd, 1990; Coppack et. al., 1988; Hodge, 1987; Dahms, 1995, 1991, 1988a, 1988b, 1984; 1980a; Bunce and Troughton, 1984; Hodge and Qadeer, 1983). The end result has been a profound transformation of a once predominantly homogenous, locally-oriented, agriculturally-based, isolated environment into a highly diversified landscape, intimately tied to and engaged with all aspects of the global economy. The result has been a fundamental transformation in not just the physical appearance and functional role of the countryside, but also of the many small towns<sup>1</sup> scattered throughout.

At the onset of the twentieth century, Canada was a predominantly rural<sup>2</sup> nation heavily reliant on agriculture. In 1911, wheat was Canada's prime export and over one-third of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Small towns' are regarded as those having populations less than 10,000. This population level has been considered by others, such as Hodge and Qadeer's (1983), to differentiate towns from cities.

<sup>2</sup> According to Statistics Canada, the term 'rural' constitutes those areas and/or settlements that have a population less than 1,000 and a population density of less than 400/km<sup>2</sup>.

Canadian population earned its livelihood directly from the land (Statistics Canada, 1999a). By the end of the twentieth century, however, the situation had completely reversed, with Canada being one of the most urbanized and industrialized nations in the world. Accordingly, the importance of agriculture to the national economy and, ultimately to the countryside, has greatly diminished. For example, by 1998, exports of industrial and consumer goods totalled \$230 billion: more than nine times the value of farm exports (Statistics Canada, 1999a).

Several factors have combined to induce this transformation. Innovations in agricultural production (i.e. mechanization, hybrid seeds, animal husbandry, improved animal breeds, fertilizers, and irrigation) have allowed for incredible increases in agricultural production (Troughton, 1995; Rounds and Shamanski, 1993; Stabler et. al., 1992). The substitution of capital for labour has resulted in fewer and fewer people being engaged in agriculture (Break, 1988; Rasmussen and Bowers, 1988; Brunn, 1968; Anderson, 1961). This, in turn, has resulted in the collapse of agricultural labour markets and a general outmigration from rural areas. Another outcome promoted by increased levels of capital associated with agriculture has been the development of agri-business which, in turn, has resulted not only in progressively larger farms, but also in greater vertical integration in the agriculture sector (Schulz, 1994; Dollman and Egrensaft, 1988; Fitzsimmons, 1986; Wallace and Smith, 1985). The result here is that locally-oriented family farms, which were commonplace at the beginning of the twentieth century, have become fewer in number.

While the agricultural base of the countryside has undergone dramatic change over the past one hundred years, so too have other facets of its economy. Manufacturing activity, although rarely constituting a dominant role in the economy of the countryside, is now becoming an important feature within selected small towns (Malecki, 1992; Barkley, 1988; Hart, 1988;

Kale and Lonsdale. 1987). Continual improvements in transportation (i.e., rail, auto, and air travel, hard surface and all-weather roads) and communication technologies (i.e., fax and email) have combined to greatly increase levels of accessibility among rural areas (Rounds and Shamanski. 1993; Stabler et. al., 1992; Johansen and Fuguitt. 1990; Break, 1988; Dahms. 1984; 1980a; 1980b; Meredith. 1975; Zimmerman and Moneo. 1971; Folse and Riffe, 1969). This, in turn, has made the countryside surrounding urban centres a very attractive location for manufacturers who are able to capitalize on cheaper labour and land costs, while still being able to successfully distribute their goods to large markets (Malecki. 1992; Heenan. 1991; Hart. 1988; Kale and Lonsdale. 1987).

The retailing environment, which many argue to be the *raison d'être* of small towns, has also experienced monumental change. In 1900, many small towns and villages existed, with the vast majority of them acting as centres servicing the surrounding, predominantly farming, population. Today, there are considerably fewer small towns that play any role in the retailing system. Many towns have completely lost all retailing functions<sup>3</sup>, while even more suffer from constant store closures (Stabler, et. al., 1992; Lukermann, et. al., 1991; Johnson, 1982; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1981; Hodge, 1966). Nevertheless, some small towns have reversed their fortunes and are expanding and diversifying their retailing base (Pavy and Wagner, 1993; Dahms, 1991; Hodge and Qadeer, 1983). Different types of retail have replaced the offerings of the past (Brown, 1992; Coppack, 1988; Dahms, 1981; Thomas, 1978). Some have been able to rejuvenate their downtowns while others now house 'big box' stores such as 'Walmart' or 'The

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<sup>3</sup> Retailing functions refer to the different types of goods and services that can be purchased. Examples of retailing functions include furniture stores, hair salons, or food provision.

Home Depot' on their outskirts. Other retailers now exist not just to serve the local population, but instead rely on urban tourists, who are now not just physically able, but actively choose, to visit the countryside with considerable enthusiasm.

The economic basis of the countryside has changed in a variety of ways. So too has its population base. Many areas of the countryside, particularly remote areas, have been subject to continual population loss (Fuguitt, 1994; Chan, 1988; Grafton, 1982; Todd, 1980). Its abandonment has resulted in the degeneration of some communities into literal ghost towns devoid of any life. Many more rural areas continue to experience continual population decline with some small towns now only being identifiable by a handful of occupied homes clustered together. Meanwhile, some parcels of the countryside have seemingly changed their fortunes and are currently receiving new migrants (Champion, 1990; Cross, 1990; Weekley, 1988; Stabler, 1987; Perry et. al., 1986). This can be evidenced by the construction of new estate homes in the open countryside and from the erection of more modest living accommodation on the outskirts of already established small towns.

Not only have population numbers fluctuated over time, so too has the demographic structure of the countryside's population. Once acting as a springboard for young emigrants in search of employment, the countryside and its small towns are now acting as vestibules for migrants, both young and old (Dahms, 1996; Glasgow, 1995; Johnson and Beale, 1994; Davies, 1991; Li and MacLean, 1989; Krout, 1988; Walker, 1987). Newly established families are now moving to selected areas of the countryside while 'retirement villages' are springing up in others.

The behaviours of those living in the countryside are also much different today than they were 100 years ago. As already mentioned, the adoption and eventual widespread use of the automobile has allowed for much improved levels of personal mobility. The result has been

increased levels of interdependence, not only between the countryside and large cities, but also within the countryside itself. Much of the countryside now lies within the ever-expanding spheres of influence of large metropolitan centers (Atkinson, 1995; Mitchelson and Fisher, 1987; Fisher and Mitchelson, 1981; Taaffe, et. al., 1980). The result is that many new countryside residents may now continue to work and shop in large cities, completely passing over what is offered locally. Likewise, those already living in the countryside can now bypass local stores for larger, seemingly more attractive, shopping destinations.

The Canadian countryside is thus a dynamic dichotomy. It is a place where economic growth and decline exist side by side. It is a place long forgotten yet recently rediscovered. It is a place where populations come and go on a temporary and permanent basis. It is a place of young and old. It is a place of urbanites and ruralites. It is a destination for recreationalists and of workers. To some it means little while to others, much.

As this introduction has shown, much about the countryside has already been discussed. Much, however, still needs to be known. Many research avenues exist. This dissertation travels down one of these many paths by investigating a potential outcome of countryside change: specialization.

Small town specialization can manifest itself in several different ways. The preceding introduction, in mentioning the many changes experienced by small towns over the course of the twentieth century, has already alluded to some of the many ways in which small towns may become specialized. Today, for example, 'retirement,' 'single-industry,' 'tourist,' and 'dormitory' towns exist. That is, small towns may be specialized with respect to who lives in them as well as by the economic activities located within them.

This dissertation isolates one type of specialization; retailing. At issue is whether or not the retail sector of small towns in the countryside has become specialized and, if so, how has this specialization altered the role that these settlements play within the larger settlement system? What follows is an attempt to answer this question.

### **1.2 Small Town Retail Specialization**

Small town retail specialization has a long, although somewhat overlooked history. Mention of it was first made in the late 1920s, with the work of American sociologists John Kolb and Edmund de Brunner (see for example, Kolb, 1959; Brunner and Lorge, 1937; Brunner and Kolb, 1933; Brunner, 1927). These researchers believed that small towns were differentiating themselves according to the types of goods and services that they provided, in addition to who patronized them. Thus, not only was the retailing structure being altered, so too were the relationships that existed between towns and their market areas.

Later, geographers such as Johansen and Fuguitt (1990, 1984), Brierly and Todd (1990), Break (1988), Dahms (1984, 1980a), Hodge and Qadeer (1983), McGranahan (1980), and Harman (1978), postulated that small towns were changing their predominant roles as central places for other, more specialized roles. It was believed that small towns were ceasing to be singular focal points for their surrounding populations. Instead, many were dedicated to the provision of only one or two retailing functions. The result was that traditional (e.g., hierarchical) interdependencies existing among towns, as well as among towns and their hinterlands, were breaking down. In their place arose new trading relationships.

While the early sociological studies laid the groundwork for accepting the idea of small town retail specialization, they lacked any theoretical consideration of the implications of such specialization. It eventually came to be argued that existing settlement system constructs, most

notably Christaller's Central Place Theory (1933; Baskin trans., 1966), failed to accommodate the trend towards small town retail specialization. This was hotly contested by those such as Berry (1967) who argued that such specialization could be explained by static central place theory models. Other theories began to emerge, however, that also attempted to describe the changing retailing circumstances of small towns in the countryside. These included Hart et. al.'s (1968) dispersed city in the countryside and Persson and Westholm's (1993) arena society. In these cases, however, retail specialization was suggested as representing something other than central place systems.

### **1.3 Research Goals and Objectives**

Have small towns become specialized in their retail offerings and, if so, how has such specialization impacted the structure and functioning of settlement systems? Moreover, do existing settlement system theories sufficiently capture the complexities of such specialization? These are the questions that guide this research.

The contention made here is that small towns *have* become specialized. No longer do they act solely as central places for a surrounding hinterland but, rather, strive to excel in the offering of only a narrow range of goods and services. One of the objectives of this research, therefore, is to trace the evolution of small town retail specialization. Is specialization a recent phenomenon (as argued by Dahms, 1984, 1980a) or has it existed throughout the twentieth century (as observed by those such as Kolb, 1959)? A second objective of this research is to report on the distribution of specialized retailers within the settlement system. Is specialization confined solely to large metropolitan centers or have these retailers chosen to locate in only a specific type of small town? The final objective of this research is to describe the geography of small town specialization. Does specialization occur in the urbanizing countryside (as argued by

Berry and Parr, 1988) or in those portions removed from metropolitan influences (as argued by Hart et. all, 1968)? Achieving each of these objectives is paramount in ascertaining the theoretical implications of small town retail specialization on the larger settlement system.

To address these objectives, a time-series analysis on a geographically large area of southwestern Ontario is conducted. Under study are the contiguous counties of Huron and Perth, as well as the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (formerly Waterloo County) from 1901 to the present. The choice of this extensive area not only provides the necessary space needed to trace the spatial evolution of retail specialization but also affords the opportunity to conduct comparative analyses that are needed to determine its implications on several settlement system constructs that accommodate retail specialization within them.

In addition to the historical survey, a contemporary picture of the linkages existing within the countryside is produced. Consumer behaviour patterns are determined for a sample of countryside households. This is an essential component of the research as the historical analysis can only test for evidence of specialization through analyses of the system's structure. Settlement systems have both form and function. Analysis of both, therefore, is needed to make strong statements regarding the implications of retail specialization on current settlement system constructs.

As this brief introduction outlines, several questions remain unanswered regarding retail specialization in the countryside. This research attempts to fill the gap in the geographic literature by tracing the evolution of retail specialization occurring within settlement systems, by ascertaining the locational attributes of specialized retailers, and by determining economic interdependencies. In completing these tasks a more informed judgement may be made regarding the implications of small town retail specialization on the larger settlement system.

## **1.4 An Overview**

Because of the extensiveness of the project, this dissertation has been divided into several chapters so that all relevant information may be given in an orderly fashion. This chapter briefly introduced the reader to the belief that small towns have become specialized, the support such an idea currently enjoys, and the theoretical constructs that have been used to defend such a notion. It also pointed out many of the issues currently lacking clarity in the geographic literature.

Chapter 2 addresses the latter matter through an extensive review of past research dealing with small town retail specialization. Both empirical and theoretical issues are explored, including those works identifying small town retail specialization, as well as those constructs explicitly dealing with the phenomenon of specialization. Specific mention is thus made of central place theory, the urban field, the arena society, and both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan variants of the dispersed city. Chapter 3 then describes the methodologies employed for this particular study as well as a brief description of the area under analysis. In this section, previous methodologies used to identify retail specialization are explained and refinements, where appropriate, are pointed out. Meanwhile, mention of the study area is made primarily as a justification of its appropriateness in assessing the implications of small town retail specialization on contemporary settlement systems.

While the first three chapters set the proverbial 'stage' from which the current research is to be conducted, it is in the subsequent chapters that the 'performance' takes place. It is here where the reader is exposed to the findings and potential implications of the research. The results of this study are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the time-series analysis. The emphasis of this chapter is to present evidence of small town retail specialization and to show the spatial and temporal dynamic of such specialization. Chapter 5

discloses the shopping behaviour results obtained from 348 questionnaires, distributed to households located within urbanizing and more rural regions in the aforementioned study area. Chapter 5 thus presents evidence of small town retail specialization, but does so from a behavioural perspective.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes and synthesizes the findings of both analyses. Evidence is specifically evaluated with reference to the three questions guiding this research. How long has retail specialization been apparent? Within what types of settlements has it occurred? And, in what types of countryside environments (differentiated by the degree of urban influence) is specialization most pronounced? Only after these questions have been answered are conclusions drawn regarding the implications of such a phenomenon on the larger settlement system.

Chapter 6 also not only formally states the conclusions derived from the study, but identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the research and suggests future research directions. The latter is included for two reasons. The first is to reflect upon and reassess various aspects of the conducted research. The second is to suggest what research avenues may lead to an even greater understanding of small town retail specialization. It is believed that the inclusion of this section will not only allow this author to better his own future research endeavours, but will also act to stimulate others to consider taking up this particular area of investigation.

3

**Chapter 2**  
**Literature Review:**  
**Retail Specialization in Regional Settlement Systems**

**2.1 Introduction**

The primary aim of this study is to understand the relationship between small town retail specialization and the structures of regional settlement systems. Much has been written on the topic and the purpose of this chapter is to review some of the important research that has been conducted. This is necessary because a comprehensive knowledge of this body of work provides the needed philosophical, theoretical, methodological, and empirical contexts out of which the current investigation emerged. It is only with an understanding of previous and current states of knowledge, that logical advances in contemporary theory can be made.

A review of the literature indicates several regional settlement system constructs accept retail specialization as an important feature of the countryside. These include central place theory, the urban field, the arena society, the dispersed city, and the dispersed city in the countryside. This chapter first discusses each concept in isolation, highlighting both theoretical and empirical contributions made by each. In so doing, it brings to the forefront the often disparate findings that have emerged from past research. The chapter then concludes by differentiating each concept with respect to two factors; retail specialization and geographic location. This is of critical importance to this particular research because it is concerned, in part, with identifying signs of retail specialization as well as determining the implications of such specializations on the regional space economy.

## **2.2 Central Place Theory**

### **2.2.1 The Theory**

Central place theory is one of human geography's most well known regional settlement system constructs. Its development by Walter Christaller in 1933 was largely ignored by North American geographers until the mid 1960s, when it was translated into English by Baskin (1966). Immediately after, central place theory was embraced as a panacea for a discipline seriously lacking in theory. However, over the past thirty-five years, it has also received its fair share of malignment. Regardless of one's position on the theory's merits, its persistence in the literature is a testament to its importance and continuing influence. It seems appropriate, therefore, to begin any discussion of settlement systems with a description (and critique) of central place theory.

Central place theory attempts to describe the size, spacing, and distribution of settlements. It is a partial theory in that it is solely concerned with the role of settlements as 'central places:' as providers of retail goods and services to their surrounding populations. It is deductively derived and describes a system that should exist, given a number of critical assumptions. The assumptions are those associated with many other normative models and address phenomena ranging from the distribution and behaviour of the population to the physical landscape.

Central place theory describes a hierarchically structured settlement system, whereby settlements depend, or are dependant, on other settlements in the system. Each settlement, therefore, by definition possesses some level of 'importance' within that system. Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) differentiates the importance of a central place into an internal and external component. Such components are a reflection of the source of demand for goods and

services. The internal component takes into consideration demand from the central place's inhabitants, while the external component deals with demand for goods and services from those living within the complementary region (i.e., trading area) of that central place. This external importance, termed 'centrality' is, in essence, a measure of a central place's importance relative to other central places in the system. The combined importance (i.e., demand from local inhabitants and the complementary region), is termed the central place's 'nodality.'

Because central place theory is concerned with the role of settlements as central places (i.e. as centers of trade for their rural surroundings), Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) stresses that it is centrality that properly reflects the true nature of central place importance. In other words, the hierarchical structure is a product of the external importance of central places within the urban system. This, as will be shown, has been an important oversight of many 'central place' studies.

Centrality is built upon the concepts of 'threshold' and 'range.' Threshold refers to the minimum population needed to sustain the offering of a central good or service. The range, meanwhile, refers to the maximum distance the dispersed population will travel to acquire a central good or service. This outer extent is a function of both the time (defined in economic terms) it takes for one to travel to obtain the good and of the actual market price of the good. The range, in essence, is a reflection of the centrality of goods and services (and ultimately of the central place itself) for it signifies the distance to which a consumer is willing to travel, given competition from other locations.

Although thresholds and ranges vary by type of good and/or service, they may be broadly differentiated into several categories. While specific taxonomies may differ<sup>4</sup> Christaller uses the terms low, middle, and high-order to distinguish between goods and services with incrementally

higher thresholds and ranges. Businesses offering high-order goods require very large thresholds and ranges to remain economically viable. In other words, high-order goods need a very large population base from which to draw. Given the assumption of an evenly distributed population, this means that high-order goods draw customers from a very large market area. Conversely, businesses providing low-order goods require very small thresholds and ranges to survive. This characteristic, combined with the assumptions related to the physical landscape (e.g. isotropic surface) and human behaviour (e.g. utility-maximization), produces a system of settlements whereby these differently-ordered goods and services locate in different 'groupings' of central places. This system can best be described as a stepped, nested hierarchical arrangement of central places and market areas (refer to Figures 1 and 2).

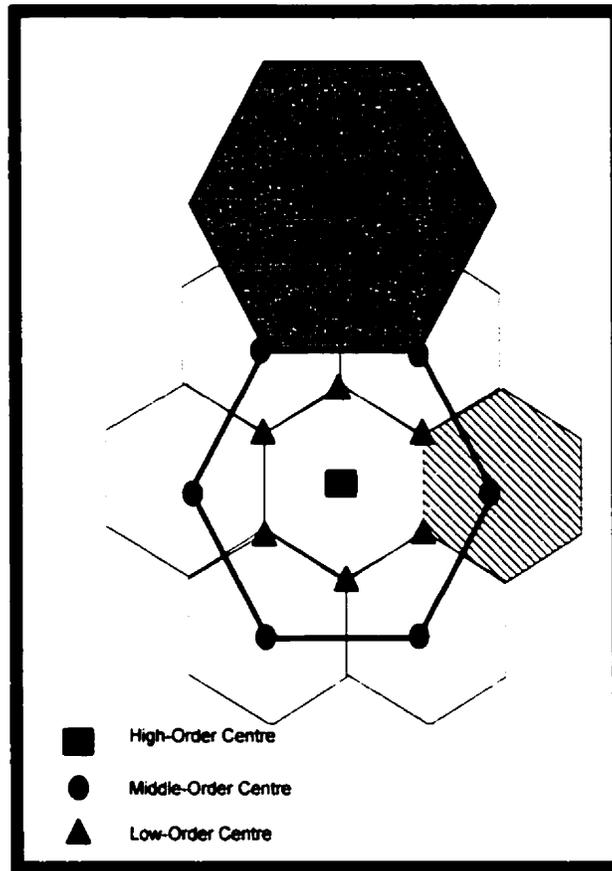
Central place theory undoubtedly emphasizes the development of a hierarchical structure of central places. In spite of this, Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) points out that there may be instances where retail specialization may exist within a central place system. This is accommodated through the existence of 'sister cities' and the establishment of a 'mixed hierarchical' system (refer to Figures 3 and 4).

'Sister cities' are high-order central places that are spatially proximate. The closeness of these two centers results in a coalescence of once individual market areas. Sharing one common market area requires that the provision of high order goods among both central places alters from its original pattern. In a traditional hierarchy, goods of similar orders are offered from every similarly-ordered central place. But given the geographic peculiarities of sister cities and the

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<sup>4</sup> Researchers such as Murphy and Enis (1986), Holbrook and Howard (1977), Bucklin (1963) and Holton (1958) use specialty vs. comparison vs. convenience items to distinguish between goods.

**Figure 1:**  
**Distribution of Central Places and Respective Complementary Areas<sup>(a)</sup>**

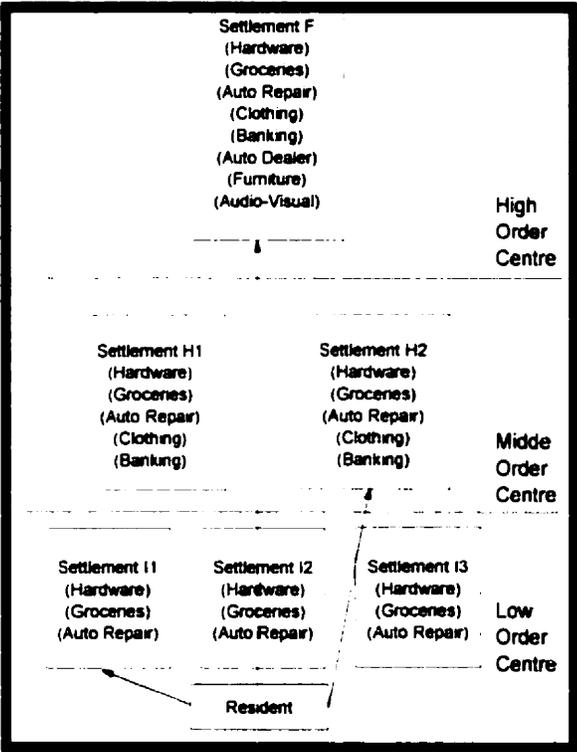


<sup>(a)</sup> Diagram represents Christaller's K=3 (marketing principle) model.

resulting interpenetration of once exclusive market areas, the threshold requirements needed to sustain establishments offering these goods cannot be met. This results in a form of retail specialization whereby a subset of these similarly-ordered goods are now only offered from one location. In this way, threshold requirements are satisfied. Christaller argues that this arrangement will be most prevalent among establishments that offer higher-ordered goods because they require larger thresholds (and ranges) in order to remain viable. Unless the degree of geographic proximity approaches geographic adjacency, the distribution of lower-ordered

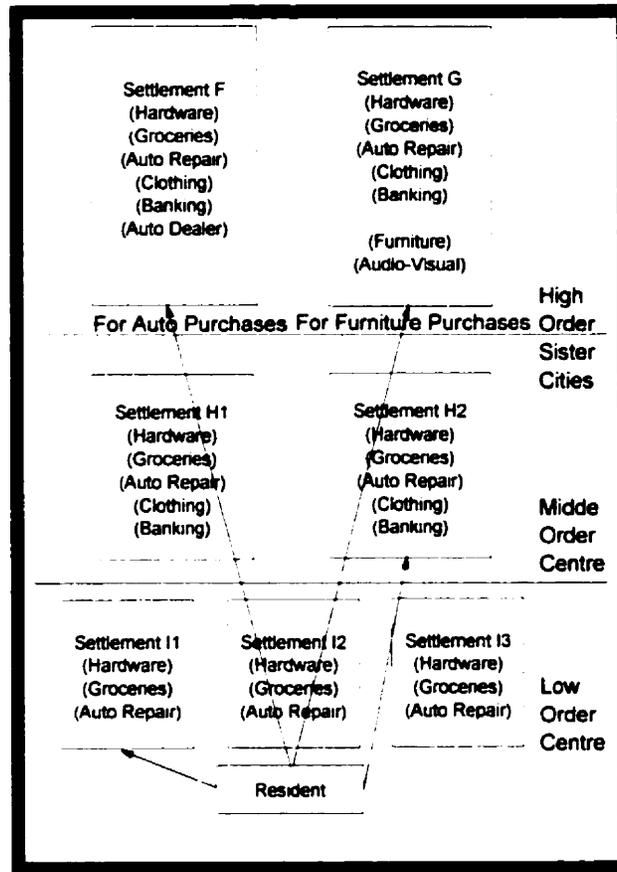
goods will not be altered from the traditional hierarchical arrangement because the ranges such goods require will not exceed the distance separating the two central places.

**Figure 2:**  
**Consumer Behaviour in a Classic Central Place Hierarchy**



While the idea of sister cities is based on the situation that could exist in border regions (i.e. where two administratively different regions come into contact), the same situation may also come about through dynamic processes. Thus changes in the system (e.g. improvements in transportation, population shifts, personal behaviour, etc.) could produce a system that simulates the effects created by sister cities. Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) recognizes that at any given point in time, different organizing principles<sup>5</sup> manifest themselves to varying degrees on the system. It is this competition that results in the less rigid, mixed hierarchical system.

**Figure 3:  
Consumer Behaviour in a Sister City System**



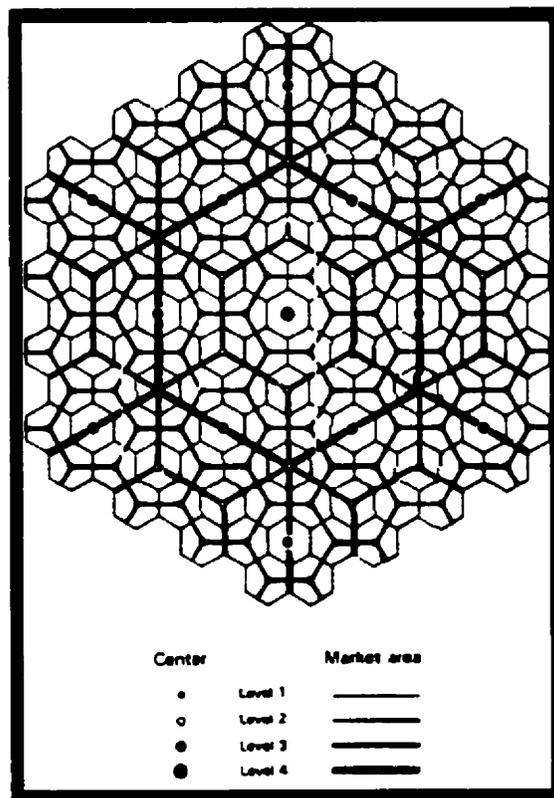
Although the term 'mixed' hierarchy is used, the system still maintains the nested, stepped hierarchy present in the classic system. That is, market areas of progressively lower ordered goods continue to be nested within the larger market areas of higher ordered goods. What changes is the distribution of selected goods within the system. The nested hierarchy remains intact because only the distribution of a particular bundle of goods becomes altered.

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<sup>5</sup> In his development of classic central place theory, Christaller develops three different spatial models that are the products of individual organizing principles; the marketing principle, the administrative principle, and the transportation principle.

Effectively, a new level in the hierarchy is created. The process involves central places being demoted from their previous status (because they no longer offer the full breadth of goods they once did) but still overshadowing existing lower-ordered centers (because they continue to offer all that progressively lower-ordered centers offer). This particular group of central places, therefore, occupy an intermediate level in the hierarchy, below their previous hierarchical status but still above that of lower-ordered centers.

**Figure 4:**  
**Distribution of Central Places and Complementary Areas**  
**in a Mixed Hierarchical Central Place System**



Source: (Berry and Parr, 1988; 90).

### **2.2.2 Empirical Evidence**

It was not until Baskin's (1966) translation of Christaller's original work thirty-three years later that much empirical research by North American academics was conducted to test central place theory postulates. Since this time, however, volumes of work have been produced.<sup>6</sup> Much of the work attempts to establish the existence of the rigid hierarchical system. Very little has addressed the idea of a mixed hierarchy, with the concept only being addressed as a theoretical exercise or as a by-product of selected empirical works (see, for example, Parr, 1995; 1987; 1981; 1978, Mulligan, 1984a; 1984b, Rushton, 1971; 1969, or Woldenberg, 1968). Helping to hinder the association among retail specialization and central place theory is the widespread belief that the two are incompatible with one another.

Whether or not settlements exist within a hierarchical system has been a contentious issue. The debate exists, in part, because of a growing body of literature that identifies the existence of non (or weakly structured) hierarchical systems (Dahms, 1998; 1986a; Rounds and Shamanski, 1993; Johansen and Fuguitt; 1990; 1984; 1973; Hart et. al., 1968; Fuguitt, 1963). This has, in part, led to alternate regional settlement system constructs being developed. But the debate is compounded because a large number of studies fail to capture the essence of classic central place theory. This is the case because many indicators used to identify the central place hierarchy may be inappropriate. As a result, remarkably little may be known about the static or dynamic characteristics of real-world central place systems.

Davies (1966) disaggregates the techniques used to identify central place hierarchies into

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<sup>6</sup> Several texts extensively deal with central place theory or offer bibliographies of publications written about the theory. These include those by Berry and Parr (1988), King (1984), Beavon (1977), Berry (1967), and Berry and Pred (1961).

one of four types, ranging from direct measurement (Bracey, 1962; Brush, 1953; Smailes, 1944), indirect measurement (Preston, 1979; Christaller, 1933), sophisticated measurement (Berry et. al., 1962; Berry and Garrison, 1958), to indices of potential functional status (Marshall, 1989; Davies and Gyuse, 1975; Reynolds, 1963). While the techniques may vary, the variables used in these techniques have tended to remain the same. In numerous studies, central place systems and their hierarchical nature have been identified through differences in either population, number of retail establishments, number of retail functions, total retail sales, or number of retail employees (Rounds and Shamanski, 1993; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1990; 1984, 1979, 1973; Johnson, 1985; 1982; Clements, 1977; Carter et. al., 1970; Stafford, 1963; Burton, 1959; Berry and Garrison, 1958). In almost all of these studies, very high correlations have been found among many, if not all, of these variables.

While many would argue that this is proof of the existence of central place systems, others, particularly Preston (1993; 1979; 1975; 1971) challenge such conclusions. Preston has repeatedly argued that such studies misinterpret the true nature of central places and of central place systems. It must be remembered that the elemental role of a central place is to "act as a source of goods and services for an area larger than itself" (Preston, 1975; 178). High-order central places provide for relatively large areas while low-order central places provide for only a small surrounding area. Differences in a central place's importance, therefore, should be based on the external or 'non-local' demand for the central place's goods and services. Those studies that utilize variables such as total population, total number of retail establishments, etc... do not necessarily identify this. What these studies measure is nodality, or the total importance of a settlement. What should be measured is centrality, or the importance of a settlement to its surrounding populace.

Nevertheless, 'nodality' or 'trade center' studies (as Preston (1975) refers to them) may be used to infer central place structures. Indeed, even though Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966: 17) warns that a settlement's population does not "very precisely express the meaning of the importance of a town," he himself makes note of typical population sizes in his study of central places in southern Germany. This suggests that while population size, or any other measure of nodality, should not act as a surrogate for identifying relative importance, some sort of relationship does exist between the two elements. In spite of this, Preston (1975) has shown that measures of centrality and nodality do not always reveal analogous results. In fact, as settlement size decreases, the ability of these nodality measures to properly assess central place structures noticeably diminishes. This finding carries with it important implications for those wishing to study the countryside for this is the environment where settlements with small populations are located. In the end, evidence of a settlement or trade center hierarchy may exist (as measured through nodality studies), but evidence of a central place hierarchy may be lacking.

The discrepancy between nodality and centrality studies is further significant because 'anomalies' in nodality studies (e.g., those settlements that do not display high correlations among population size and/or number of retail establishments or functions, etc...) have been used as justification for alternate settlement structures, like the dispersed city (see, for example, Burton, 1959). Given the breakdown in the central place explanatory power of such variables as one moves down the settlement hierarchy, it is just as plausible that such findings may reinforce or may be accommodated within classic central place theory. For instance, it may be that distortions in nodality measures are brought about as a result of elevated local (internal) importance. If this were the case, then centers exhibiting different levels of nodality may still

**Tables 1a, 1b:  
Selected Functional Hierarchies**

Retailing Function	Functional Class		
	Hamlet	Village	Town
General Store	**	**	**
Tavern		**	**
Gas Station		**	**
Auto Dealer		**	**
Hardware Store		**	**
Appliance Store		**	**
Lumber Yard		**	**
Food Store		**	**
Restaurant			**
Drugstore			**
Department Store			**
Shoe Store			**
Florist			**
Furniture Store			**
Jewelry Store			**

Source: (Brush, 1953).

Retailing Function	Functional Class		
	Hamlet	Village	Town
General Store	**	**	**
Gas Station	**	**	**
Auto Dealer		**	**
Auto Repairs		**	**
Bakery		**	**
Drugstore		**	**
Grocery Store		**	**
Hardware Store		**	**
Jewelry Store		**	**
Camera Store			**
Florist			**
Clothing Store			**
Tavern			**
Movie Theater			**
Department Store			**

\*\* Indicates function is present.

Source: (Marshall, 1989).

exhibit similar levels of centrality. Thus, anomalies in nodality measures may not indicate a fundamentally different type of spatial organization.

Studies that differentiate the mix of retail establishments and/or functions present in settlements, rather than counting their total numbers, move one step closer to satisfying what is required of central place theory. Recall that high-order goods require large thresholds and ranges. In other words, many consumers, willing to travel long distances, are required to support establishments offering such goods. Fundamentally, every good has a discrete range but studies have shown that particular bundles of functions possess similar ranges (Berry and Parr, 1988; Clark, 1968; Berry et. al., 1962; Brush, 1953). Thus, in the absence of empirically determining the extent of market areas, identification of the mix (bundle) of functions present in each settlement should allow researchers to draw conclusions concerning the nature of real-world, central place systems.

Numerous studies do show that settlements may be functionally differentiated, particularly with respect to the types of retail/service functions that they offer (Stabler and Olfert, 1996, 1994; Stabler et. al., 1992; Borchert and Adams, 1963; Berry and Garrison, 1958; Brush, 1953). Such studies have been used as evidence of central place structures. Repeatedly, these studies have shown that, in general, low-order central places provide only low-order functions, middle-order central places house both middle and low-order functions, and that high-order central places offer a mix of high, middle, and low-order retailing functions (refer to Tables 1a and 1b). Such findings give credence to central place postulates.

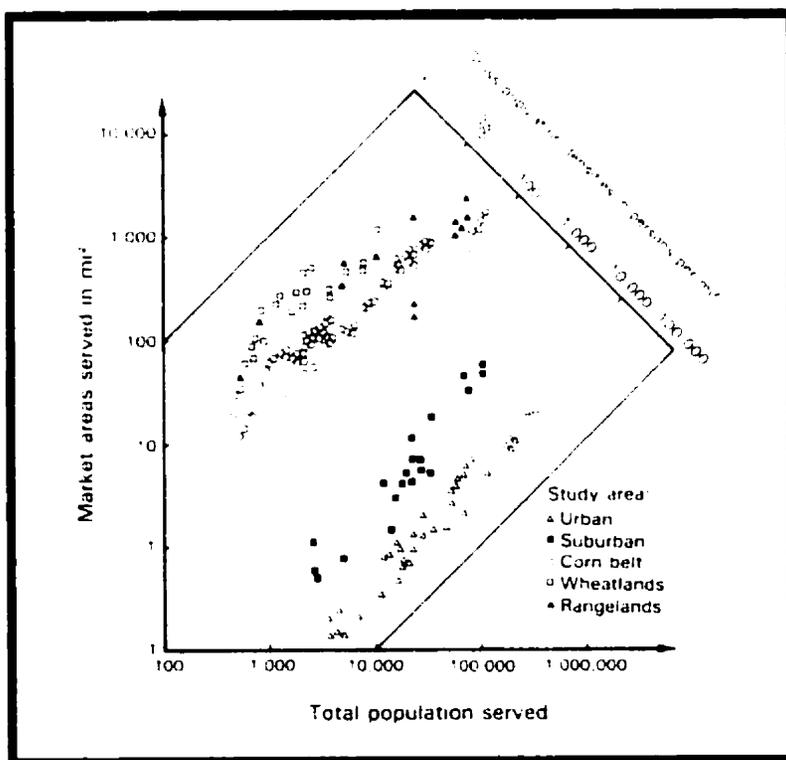
While it is recognized that there is general consistency in this hierarchical pattern, the nature of the hierarchy varies according to the geography of the system. Berry and Parr (1988), for example, illustrate that as one travels from urban to rural areas (i.e. moves farther away from

a metropolitan center), characteristics of the hierarchy, such as population density, population size, market area served, and the baskets of goods provided, may change. As Figure 5 illustrates, it was found that as population density decreased, settlements' market areas would increase (although at a disproportionately slower rate). Because of this,

the populations that are served within the range of centers of each level of the hierarchy decrease systematically. Correspondingly, functions with the greatest threshold requirements have to move up a level in the hierarchy to be able to reach a population of sufficient size to guarantee economic survival. As a result, populations of central places fall because the economic base of market towns is eroded by loss of higher-threshold stores to larger centers, and there are therefore fewer jobs to support the center populations.

(Berry and Parr, 1988: 30).

**Figure 5:**  
**Expansion of Market Areas in Relation to Changing Population Densities**



Source: (Berry and Parr, 1988: 29).

In other words, although central place systems were identified in both urban and rural environments, in the rural countryside, central places were smaller (in comparison to those countrysides in close proximity to large urban centers) and served fewer consumers, although they attracted consumers from a larger geographic area.. As a result, the breadth of goods offered among rural central places was less when compared with their more 'urban' counterparts. In spite of these differences, coherent central place systems were concluded to exist. They simply show the differences that exist in central place systems across space.

There have been incidences, however, where the mix of goods has not been consistent among settlements thought to exist within the same hierarchical order, existing within the same central place system (McGranahan, 1980; Dahms, 1980a; Hodge, 1965). While such findings could be used to infer the presence of a mixed hierarchical system, the spatial arrangement of functions within the system suggests otherwise. For example, in a study of the Canadian Prairie settlement system, Stabler and Olfert (1996; 14) conclude that the 500 communities occupying the lowest level of the hierarchy:

as a group, no longer perform a coherent role in the trade-center network. There is no single function that can be counted on to be present in these places. While the average minimum convenience center contains approximately four consumer outlets, they consist of an eclectic combination of functions that vary from place to place.

Just as research on the structure of central place systems has produced discordant results, so too have studies investigating the behaviours of populations residing in such a hypothesized system. Perhaps the most debated assumption is what has been termed the 'nearest neighbour hypothesis.' This assumption is born out of the spatial organization of the hierarchy (i.e., the mutual exclusiveness of complementary regions for central places of an identical order and the nested organization of complementary regions of central places of different orders). This occurs

because of the economic utility maximizing behaviour of consumers. As stated earlier, the 'real' price of a good is a function of its ticket price plus the cost of transportation involved in obtaining the good. As the ticket prices of identical goods (i.e. all automobiles or all loaves of bread) do not vary, the only variable cost is that which is associated with transportation. In short, the farther one travels, the more one ultimately pays. Consumers attempting to minimize their incurred cost, therefore, visit the closest central place offering the desired good. Since central places of the same hierarchical level offer identical bundles of goods and services, the market areas of such central places become mutually exclusive. Moreover, since higher-ordered goods can only be obtained in higher-ordered central places, the market areas of lower-ordered central places become 'nested' within the larger complementary region of the higher-ordered central place.

While studies such as those by Buursink (1981) and Berry et. al. (1962) document that consumer behaviour complies to this hierarchical pattern, others such as Johnston and Rimmer, (1967) Rushton et. al. (1967), Golledge et. al. (1966), and Thomas et. al. (1962) do not. In these cases, central place theory is not being challenged per se but its contemporary appropriateness is. While consumer shopping behaviour may have previously conformed to this assumption, "it may not fit the spatial expenditure patterns of rural consumers in North America at the present time" (Rushton et. al., 1967: 390). Despite the seemingly incongruous findings, Clark (1968) suggests that order does exist in the spatial behaviour of consumers. It is suggested that the postulate simply needs refinement away from the economic emphasis placed on it, towards some other measure of 'attractiveness' of a central place or business.

### **2.2.3 Evaluation**

Central place theory carries with it many implications for small towns in the countryside. It tells us something of their functional complexity and of the interrelationships that exist between them and their rural hinterlands, as well as among larger, more functionally complex, higher-ordered settlements. This researcher, with an interest in the countryside, is therefore obligated to discuss central place theory. However, it is not the intent to outline all of the theory's merits and shortcomings. This dissertation is generally concerned with small town retail specialization and its implications for regional settlement systems. It is, therefore, concerned with the ability of the theory to accommodate this particular small town trait.

A form of retail specialization is identified in central place theory. Sister cities and mixed hierarchies are examples of this. Sister cities describe the situation that may arise among high-order centers. However, for the most part, settlements in the countryside do not exist as such entities. The notion of mixed hierarchies potentially carries with it implications for small towns in the countryside. But, as stated, the retail specialization that occurs here is of a particular type: one that is fundamentally different from the types of retail specialization existing in other regional settlement system constructs. Specifically, in all of the mixed hierarchical arrangements that have been developed, retail specialization exists in a systematic fashion. That is, there is never one settlement that contains a unique bundle of goods in relation to others. In short, in a mixed hierarchy, functional similarity exists; just not to the same degree as in the classic models. It is in this manner that the nested market areas continue to exist. In fact, the nested, hierarchical arrangement of market areas is a defining characteristic of the classic system and of the many modern variants that have been developed since the 1930s.

Although central place theory does address the idea of retail specialization among small towns in the countryside, the issue of whether or not the theory is an appropriate framework to describe contemporary small towns must also be addressed. Many Canadian geographers, particularly Fred Dahms and Gerald Hodge, have stated that small towns no longer act as central places. The question that must be asked then is "what have they become?" One may take the premise underlying the creation of a mixed hierarchical system to address this question.

As previously stated, many forces, operating on numerous geographic scales, have the ability to influence change. In his discussion of dynamic process (see Christaller, 1933; Baskin trans., pages 84 - 132), Christaller acknowledges that more than one organizing principle could be operating within a region. In the process of integration of organizing principles, the system changes accordingly. The transition from one organizing principle to another results in a 'mixed hierarchical' organization of centers.

However, it is possible that it is not a mixed hierarchical system that emerges. Instead, some new system may dominate, suppressing or existing concomitantly with central place principles. That this may now be the case must be entertained. Recall that Preston (1975) found high degrees of association between nodality and centrality measures, particularly at the higher levels of the central place hierarchy. But as settlement size decreased, the associations became considerably weaker. Recall also that many researchers have found that the associations among multiple nodality measures have been nonexistent among smaller settlements. Therefore, it may be argued that towns and villages in the contemporary countryside no longer act as predicted by Christaller. The following section highlights how the roles of small towns may have changed.

## **2.3 The Urban Field - Arena Society**

### **2.3.1 The Urban Field -- The Theory**

The urban field construct (Friedmann and Miller, 1965) was not developed as an alternative to central place theory, but rather as a critique of established definitions of the 'city.' Nevertheless, the concept carries with it several implications for central place systems since it incorporates much geographic space. Consequently, it also carries several important implications for small towns (as well as their potential for economic specialization) located in the countryside.

Previously, the 'city' had been defined strictly from an administrative (being delineated according to political boundaries) or a physical (being delineated according to the spatial extent of the built-up area) perspective. But the urban field, along with many other 'city' concepts such as Berry's (1973) daily urban system, Russwurm's (1976) regional city, and Fox and Kumar's (1965) functional economic area, incorporated functional criteria into the definition of the city. The city was not just confined to being an agglomeration of buildings, but was a place where people worked, shopped, and played. By adding this functional element to the definition, the boundary of the city expanded and, in so doing, altered how the city was viewed; not as an individual, localized phenomenon but rather as one node within an interconnected system. What the urban field did, then, was describe a city-system.

The concept divorced itself from many other urban-oriented constructs in that it described a polycentric organization of centers. In the afore-mentioned concepts, metropolitan dominance was made explicit. In the urban field, core dominance is considerably weakened. The urban field, therefore, represents a new 'ecological unit,' described as a

vast multi-centred region having relatively low density, whose form evolves a finely articulated network of social and economic linkages. Its many centers are set in large areas of open space of which much is given over to agriculture and recreation use.

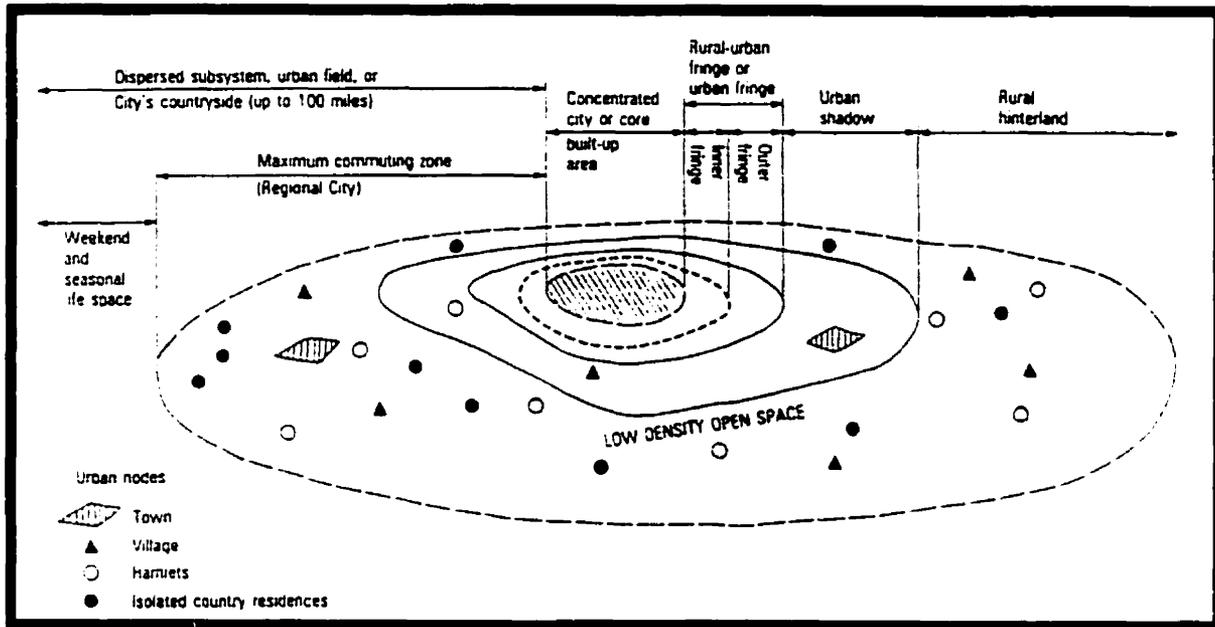
(Friedmann, 1973; 42).

As alluded to in the above quotation, the urban field extends a considerable distance around an urban core, with a minimum population of 300,000<sup>7</sup>. No stringent distance is attached to the outer extent of the urban field because its limits are defined by the extent of the linkages (e.g. people, information, money flows), which are subject to change over time. The urban field is, therefore, an amorphous entity, changing in accordance with the forces that shape it. Despite this, its spatial extent is believed to extend as far as a two-hour drive from the urban core, marking the extent of seasonal recreational use by the core's inhabitants (refer to Figure 6). This translates into a distance of approximately 160km. This distance essentially marks the farthest extent that urban fields yield any significant influence. The urban field, therefore, marks a shift in how large urban centers are perceived, extending beyond the physical built up environment and past its daily commutershed. The extensive spatial reach of urban fields means that large tracts of the countryside are intimately tied to urban cores. Consequently, the linkages that exist between the core and the countryside, or what Friedmann and Miller (1965) call the 'intermetropolitan periphery,' have considerable implications for small towns located within the urban field's sphere of influence.

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<sup>7</sup> Although 300,000 was the minimum core size described by Friedmann and Miller (1965), others such as Simmons (1974; 1979) and Bryant et. al. (1982) have proposed populations as small as 10,000.

**Figure 6:  
The Urban Field**



Source: Adapted from (Bryant et. al., 1982).

Economic specialization is a defining feature of the urban field. Friedmann (1973: 42) goes on to state that “the core city from which the urban field evolved is beginning to lose its traditional dominance: it is becoming merely one of many specialized centres in a region.” Although the urban field incorporates much more than retailing, this statement implies that retailing functions may be dispersing throughout the urban field, thereby promoting the specialization of the core. However, as the urban core is believed to become specialized, so too can the city’s countryside.

**2.3.2 The Urban Field – Empirical Evidence**

Considerable work exists showing the potential influence of expanding spheres of metropolitan influence on small towns and villages in the countryside. Much of it has shown a

tendency for small towns to become specialized (Dahms, 1980a; Berry, 1967). Other studies (Coppack and Preston, 1988; Coppack, 1985) have shown that the development of the urban field may help reestablish central place structures in the countryside. Such findings are born out of studies investigating the structure of the retailing system as well as from the behaviours that help create the structure.

Even before the concept of the urban field began to circulate in the North American geographic literature, other geographers had identified the impacts of expanding metropolises on their immediate peripheries. Berry (1960), for example, identifies an unbalanced relationship in the established relationship observed to exist between a settlement's population and the number of retail functions (the P:F ratio) it offers.<sup>8</sup>

Those centers displaying large populations in relation to the number of economic functions offered are interpreted by Berry to exist as important administrative, tourist, or dormitory centers. Berry takes this as representing a form of economic specialization among settlements. The commonality existing among centers displaying this type of 'anomolous' relationship is that they are located in close proximity to a large metropolitan center (Seattle). It is argued that competition from the metropolis siphons consumers residing in such locations away from local areas, resulting in diminished retailing functions in the small towns located adjacent to the metropolis.

While settlements close to metropolitan cores display high P:F ratio, those lying in more remote locations (i.e.. beyond their daily sphere of influence) tend to display much greater P:F

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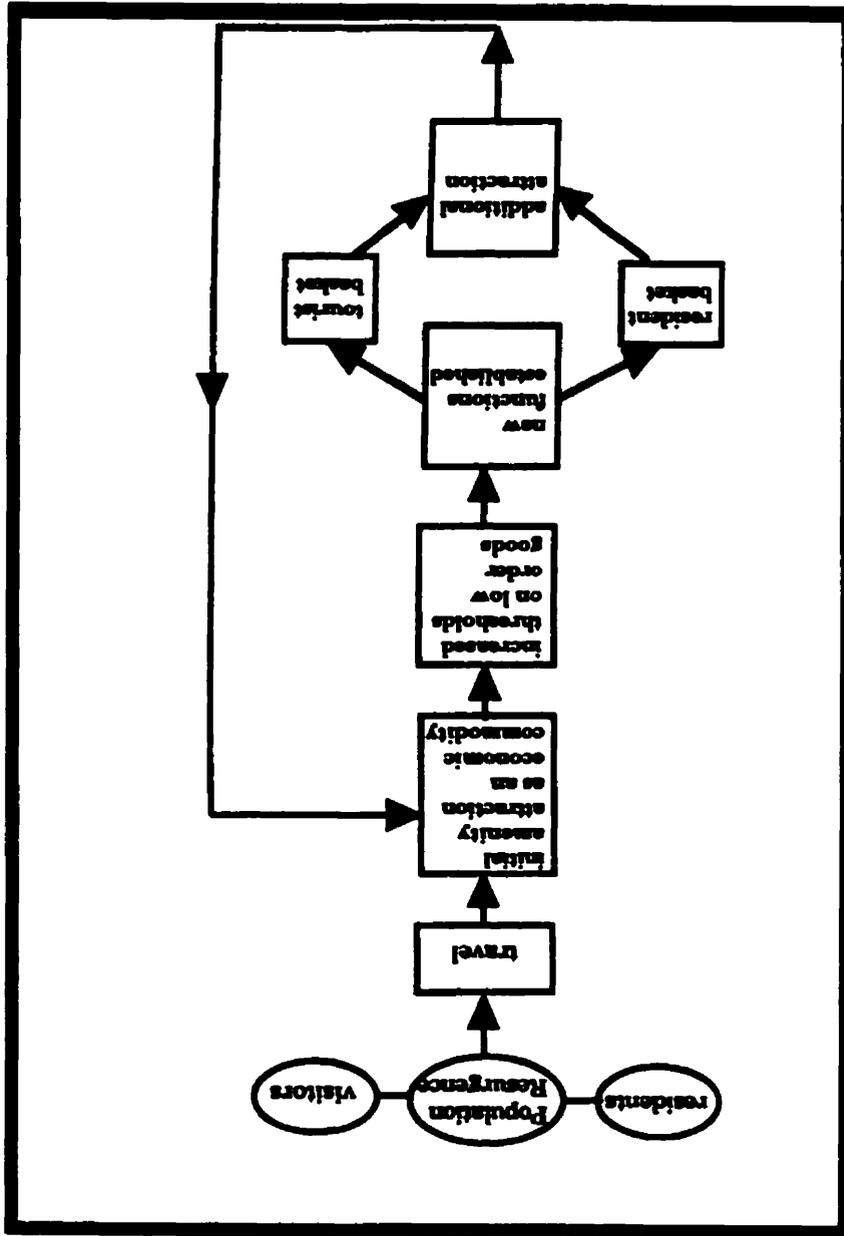
<sup>8</sup> Studies by Rounds and Shamanski (1993), Johansen and Fuguitt (1979), Clements (1977), Berry and Garrison (1958), and others have shown very strong associations between population and number of retail establishments and/or functions

ratios. As a corollary to the previous argument, it is believed that places further removed from the metropolis do not suffer from competition and, consequently, can viably offer more retailing functions relative to their more urban, small town counterparts.

While many have identified the same type of pattern, Coppack and Preston (1988) hypothesize that increasing levels of urban influence may result in re-establishing once decimated central place structures in the countryside. They develop a descriptive, four stage evolutionary model of central place and urban field development, generally based on changing migration patterns. Initially, countryside settlements exist within a classic central place system. Rural to urban migration results in decreased rural thresholds, which detrimentally impact local retailers, in turn resulting in a degeneration of central place structures. This migration stream reverses itself as the urban field continues to develop, restoring required thresholds, ultimately re-establishing the central place system. Using the Toronto urban field as an example, they show that population growth and retail function growth follow a wave-like pattern outward from the core over time. They use this evidence to support the spatial pattern suggested in the stage model. Centrality measures further reinforce the outcomes depicted by the model. Using a centrality measure based on retail sales volumes, the proportion of income people spend on items, and of settlement population, Coppack and Preston show that areas increasing their populations, also increased their centrality values.

While improvements in centrality values tend to follow a distance-decay pattern outward from the urban core, there is evidence of deviation. Specifically, it was found that settlements located in 'amenity landscapes' located in the outer reaches of Toronto's urban field were also experiencing growth in their levels of centrality. It was hypothesized that the role of amenity was a powerful agent linking both central place and urban field studies.

Figure 7:  
The Linkage Role of Amenity and Central Place Functions



Source: (Coppack, 1990; 95).

In several works, Coppack (1990; 1988; 1985) has investigated this relationship further. He has developed a model to accommodate increased central place activity as well as retail

specialization among small towns in the city's countryside possessing this amenity attribute. Amenity, defined as "the attractivity invested in a place or area by virtue of its perceived pleasant characteristics, particularly those of an intangible nature which primarily satisfy psychological needs rather than physical needs," (Coppack, 1988; 42) is the factor believed to drive urban field development. It is this pursuit of amenity environments (e.g., those areas possessing attributes such as scenery, rural sentiment, historicity, etc.) that has resulted in the repopulation and increased levels of visitation of the countryside.

The model is based on the idea of circular and cumulative causation, whereby tendencies for economic growth are self-reinforcing (refer to Figure 7). In this case, amenity is likened to a high-order good, drawing people from very large market areas. Portions of the countryside imbued with amenity and located within the urban field have much market potential. It is the linkage generated between urban-based tourism and amenity countrysides that promotes economic specialization through the development of 'tourist-type' ventures such as restaurants, gift shops, antique stores, or other establishments that cater to such a clientele. The higher visibility brought about by increased visits may subsequently result in permanent movements of urbanites to these regions. This, in turn, generates higher thresholds necessary to establish lower-ordered functions that cater to the local populace. Thus, economic specialization is eventually complemented by increased numbers of lower-ordered central place functions.

While Coppack's work may tell us something about tourist consumerism, it describes little of local shopping patterns. It has been hypothesized that increased populations generally result in increased retailing activity but empirical validation of this claim has not been unanimous. Several researchers have shown settlements recording population gains but retailing

losses and vice versa (Rounds and Shamanski, 1993; Dahms, 1995; 1986; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1990; Hodge and Qadeer, 1983).

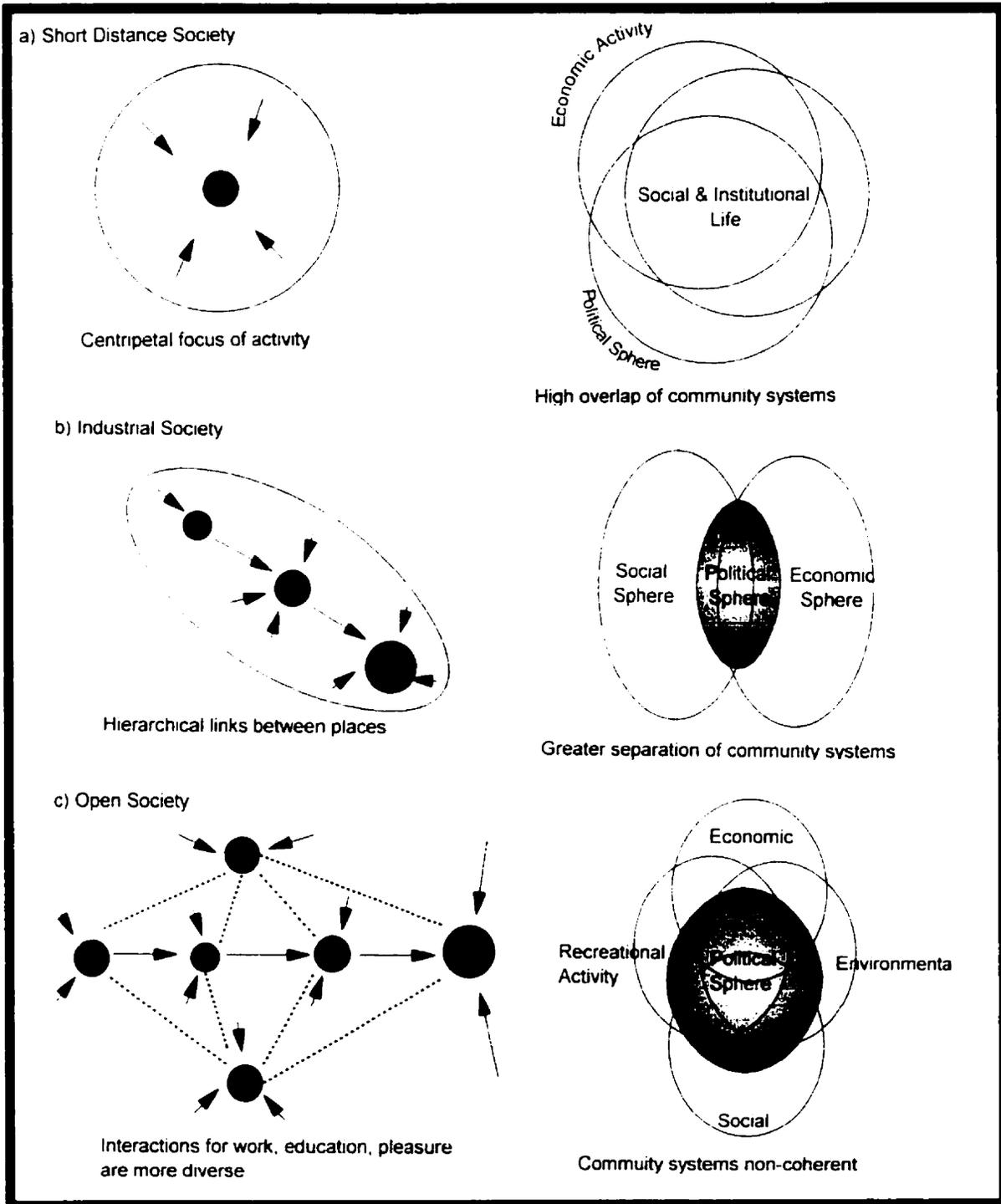
Closer analysis of actual consumer behaviour patterns reveals a more complex picture. Although most studies isolate consumer patterns of urbanites visiting countryside locales (Coppack et. al., 1988; Dahms, 1986b; 1985; Moss, 1978; Coates, 1977), studies like those of Thomson and Mitchell (1998), Pinkerton et. al. (1995), and Dahms (1980a) focus on local consumer patterns. These studies show evidence of establishment differentiation, with countryside consumers patronizing particular retailers for either one or a multitude of items. Thomson and Mitchell (1998), for example, identify a popular clothing store that is visited by a large number of countryside consumers, in spite of the presence of a nearby metropolis providing multiple clothing outlets. Likewise, Dahms (1980a) points out that countryside consumers patronize a group of retail establishments, located in multiple settlements that, collectively, offer a multitude of goods and services that may be required.

However, classic studies by Johnston and Rimmer (1967), Berry et. al., (1962), and Brush (1953), show little sign of the type of retail specialization observed by Thomson and Mitchell (1998) or Dahms (1980a). Rather, they note a continuing hierarchical pattern with respect to shopping behaviour. Convenience items such as gasoline or groceries are purchased in nearby, low-order settlements. Meanwhile, the majority of less frequently purchased items such as clothing or automobiles are obtained in higher-ordered, more distant centers.

### **2.3.3 The Arena Society – The Theory**

While the concept of the urban field incorporates elements of small town evolution within the system, work on the topic has maintained a largely metropolitan-dominated focus. In other words, the countryside is seen as an environment organized by and for urban (and exurban)

**Figure 8:  
The Arena Society**



Source: Adapted from (Fuller, 1997; 8).

residents. One promising concept that re-directs attention away from the urban field's core towards the settlements existing within its influence is the recently introduced 'arena' society (Persson et. al., 1997; Fuller, 1994; Persson and Westholm, 1993).

The arena society describes the complex web of interconnectedness that has come to exist within the urbanizing countryside of the urban field. It is a three-tier construct that describes the evolution of this landscape as it transforms from a predominantly rural to urban environment (refer to Figure 8). It, therefore, represents a landscape that is subject to an amalgam of historical and contemporary organizing principles and processes. Because of the fusion, the city's countryside is an extremely complex, diversified, and dynamic environment.

These three stages are: 'Short-Distance Society,' 'Industrial Society,' and 'Open Society.' In the Canadian context, short-distance society describes the situation existing during the late 18th and 19th centuries. During this time, settlement was strictly agrarian in nature and was structured to service the farming community as well as the staples economy. The system was also organized by the dominant mode of transport (the horse-drawn carriage). Because travel was limited (both by the lack of transport systems and the speed by which travel could occur), the countryside during this time was very insular in nature (hence the term 'short-distance' society). Thus most, if not all, activity (e.g., shopping, employment, social) took place either on the farm or at the closest trade center (i.e., central place).

The nodal focus characteristic of short-distance society was intensified (though on a somewhat larger geographic scale) in the 'industrial society' phase. In this stage, which took place during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canada, society transformed from an agrarian to an industrial one. Wage labour and the factory system became dominant attributes of this era. These two factors combined, in part, to separate home and employment

spheres as well as to create a distinct hierarchical arrangement of settlements. Transportation improvements (such as the railway and eventually the automobile) facilitated this transformed, expanded system of settlements.

The current stage, 'open society,' continues to expand the spatial boundaries imposed on society. It is argued that the almost universal adoption of the automobile has allowed people to travel much greater distances than ever before. In addition, the almost instantaneous transmission and reception of information has further weakened the confining nature of physical distance. The result has been a deterioration of the hierarchical nature of the settlement system, as more and more 'horizontal' linkages are established among settlements.

With the 'introduction' of each new society, space is transformed and reoriented. Each new society does not replace the one preceding it, but rather is imposed upon it. Thus, within each era there are remnants of the previous society. But despite the current trend towards establishing horizontal linkages among small settlements in the urban field, historical hierarchical structures continue to exist. It is in this way that the city's countryside, as described by the arena society, is believed to be organized.

It is only within the open society phase that retail specialization exists within the arena society. Prior to this phase, rigid hierarchical structures, akin to those described in central place theory, are maintained throughout the countryside. In open society, however, horizontal linkages, indicative of the breakdown in the hierarchy, come about as towns and villages transform from once acting predominantly as central places to specialized retail centers.

#### **2.3.4 The Arena Society – Empirical Evidence**

Although a diverse literature looks at the evolutionary nature of small towns in the city's countryside (see, for example, Lukermann et. al., 1991; Dahms, 1991b; Russwurm and Bryant,

1984; Richardson and Larson, 1976; Folse and Riffe, 1969; Salisbury and Rushton, 1963), few have used the arena society as a guiding theoretical framework. This is certainly due, in part, to the newness of the concept. To date, only cursory examinations pertaining to the concept's applicability have been conducted.

Although the arena society incorporates all types of interactions among small towns, existing studies have tended to predominantly focus on labour market and commuting dynamics. Only minor attention has been paid to retailing structure. These studies isolate two trends. First, the city's countryside now acts as a receptacle for urban populations. Secondly, new forms of behaviour are established once these populations inhabit or visit this environment. These trends have promoted a change in the retailing environment of small towns.

Each study (Dahms, 1998; Fuller, 1994) shows that the countrysides surrounding urban centers has experienced development. This development has manifested itself not just in the form of permanent populations or increased tourism (i.e. temporary populations), but also from the establishment of new retailing and manufacturing enterprises. These findings are presented to establish the extended reach and flexibility of individuals and firms, indicative of the open society phase of the arena society.

Labour market analysis shows that the city's countryside is experiencing growth in employment, particularly in secondary and tertiary activities. The combination of enlarged population and economic bases has resulted in a large number of recently arriving newcomers breaking their ties with the metropolis from which they moved. Alternatively, they establish new, shorter-distance bonds with surrounding small towns. Dahms' (1998) study of the southern Georgian Bay region in central Ontario shows that the majority of work trips were less than 50km in length, precluding them from ending up in any metropolitan core. These findings echo

his (1988a) and others' (Fuguitt, 1991; Hodge and Qadeer; 1983) earlier studies that show that areas on the fringes of metropolitan urban fields maintain minimal ties with the urban core.

While commuting patterns are short distance in nature, recreational patterns are not. Thus, while small towns may show tremendous internal cohesion with respect to employment fields, they are, nevertheless, encompassed within the recreational field of contemporary urban fields. Those possessing high values of amenity, therefore, are receptacles for urban-based tourism. It is this aspect of open society that has brought retail specialization to selected towns and villages in the countryside. Using the tourist town of Thornbury, Ontario as an example, Dahms (1998) shows that many of its main street shops cater to the large tourist base. Other examples of small towns capitalizing on the urban tourist market exist within the literature. Well known towns such as Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Jacobs, Ontario to lesser known towns such as Elora and Collingwood all now possess many retail shops that cater to expanding numbers of tourists (Mitchell et al., 2001; Mitchell, 1998; Coppack et. al., 1995; Dahms, 1991a).

### **2.3.5 The Urban Field – Arena Society – Evaluation**

Dahms (1998) interprets the arena society as being something of a "mirror image" of the urban field. He notes that both concepts are built around the idea of increased mobility and that expanded geographic interaction has developed a new type of spatial organization among smaller settlements. But whereas the urban field concept focuses on the ties between the metropolitan core and the periphery, the arena society focuses on the ties that exist largely within the periphery. The arena society, therefore, maintains a small town focus while the urban field concept relies on a more metropolitan focus. Stated differently, the arena society or, more appropriately, the open phase of the arena society, exists as the rural component of the urban field.

Evidence of the functional interdependencies existing among settlements in open society, however, raises issues with respect to the existence and the orientation of retail specialization among small towns. It must be remembered that economic specialization in the context of the arena society incorporates all types of economic activity. Since it is more comprehensive in scope than central place theory, economic specialization manifests itself differently. In central place theory, specialization is set in the context of retailing and consumer behaviour. In the arena society, specialization accommodates consumer, as well as, commuting, and recreation behaviours. Thus, small towns may become specialized either in terms of the stores, employment, or recreational facilities that they provide.

But if evidence from analyses of commuting flows is any indication, specialization maintains a hierarchical structure. Although Dahms maintains that commuting trips are short-distance, the tendency was "to journey to the next closest center up the local settlement hierarchy (Dahms, 1998: 310). Thus, similar to the retailing situation presented in a mixed hierarchical system where exclusive market areas are maintained, the open society phase of the arena society appears to be based on the existence of exclusive, albeit local, commuting zones. This finding is somewhat ironic given the long distance, non-hierarchical interactions that define open society.

It is curious to note why Dahms chooses this particular area to study. Research has shown that the pace of urban development follows a distinct distance-decay pattern, declining as one travels farther from the metropolitan core. The southern Georgian Bay region lies on the outer fringes of the urban field, beyond the daily commutershed of the Greater Toronto Area. Therefore, Dahms is choosing a portion of the countryside that, theoretically, should not be experiencing high degrees of urban influence. Its choice as a study area is therefore surprising

given that the emphasis for the system's development is clearly placed on the influence of urbanites. But its justification comes from the belief that this region of south-central Ontario possesses very high amenity values. As the discussion of the urban field has shown, this quality is a prime determinant in fostering urban development. It may be, then, that the area chosen represents a niche system within the larger urban field.

That urban growth in the countryside tends to be geographically selective, combined with the belief that the open phase of the arena society is driven by urban-induced change, potentially means that not all areas of the countryside exist within this milieu. Therefore, do areas of the city's countryside that are not heavily incorporated into the city's sphere of influence exist under different organizing principles than those areas more heavily influenced by it? If this is the case, then it is plausible that the city's countryside displays not just a mixing of hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures, but independent coexistences of both systems. This factor has yet to be addressed by the arena society.

Because work on the city's countryside has produced similar results, one must question the need to introduce yet another collection of terms into the literature. Granted, the arena society incorporates historical components within it, but the research conducted so far has focused on contemporary patterns and processes influencing the development of the countryside. This is what the urban field concept was designed to address. Dahms (1998; 305) is correct when he states that the urban field and arena society describe "either side of the same coin." But no matter how you flip that coin, you are still going to end up with the same denomination. If the arena society is to garner acceptance in the literature, the concept must be further developed so that it sets itself apart from the urban field; something that has not yet been done.

## **2.4 The Dispersed City**

The term 'dispersed city' was first introduced by Beimfohr (1953) and was used to describe a more 'metropolitan-oriented' system of settlements. Later, Hart et. al. (1968) adapted the term to describe the economic situation existing among small towns in the countryside. In this case, these researchers used the term 'dispersed city in the countryside.' There may be immediate confusion, therefore, when one uses the vernacular, for the term can refer to two similarly functioning, but fundamentally different settlement system concepts. In other words, both are built around the idea that settlements have become functionally specialized with respect to the types of goods and services that individual settlements provide. What results are systems devoid of any rigid functional hierarchy, thereby acting as alternatives to the system of settlements developed by Christaller.

### **2.4.1 The Theory**

As stated, Beimfohr (1953) was the first to coin the term 'dispersed city.' This entity refers to not one, but rather a group of cities that operate together as a single unit. Generally speaking, the functional interdependencies among settlements in the system can constitute the entire activity space of an individual. That is, the dispersed city concept incorporates employment, social, and retailing activities of the population.

Although the dispersed city concept is much more comprehensive in scope than the more established central place theory, work to date has primarily addressed the retailing aspect of the system and it is within this context that comparisons between the two have been made. From a retailing perspective, what the dispersed city represents is a system not organized nor dependent upon, one (traditional) large, high-order central place, but rather a collection of several smaller, middle-order centers. Essentially, many middle-order centres take over the retailing role

formerly assumed by one higher-order settlement. Thus, in terms of conventional central place theory, the term 'dispersed city' can be described as a 'truncated hierarchy' whereby the "functions of the absent regional centre [are], in part, taken over by the next lower group of centers in the hierarchy, and in part captured by more distant regional centers occupying higher levels in the hierarchy" (Burton, 1963; 286).

Not only does this collection of centres now 'share' the importance once possessed by one high-order central place, but each holds a unique place within the settlement system. This is because the dispersed city concept is based on the idea of co-operation among settlements rather than that of competition. Instead of discrete market areas among similarly-ordered central places, market areas become 'shared' among settlements. This occurs because in the scattering of businesses, each settlement now houses different combinations of each. In other words, no one centre offers an equivalent assortment of goods and services. Settlements thus become 'specialized' in that each offers a unique bundle of goods. The result is a "group of politically discrete cities which, although separated by tracts of agricultural land, function[ed] together economically as a single urban unit" (Burton, 1963; 285).

Beimfohr's concept was soon advanced by Burton (1963, 1959) who, among other contributors, offers reasons as to why such a system could emerge. The primary factor contributing to its development is believed to be increased levels of accessibility, brought about by the combination of spatial proximity of settlements and improvements in transportation technology. What Burton hypothesizes is that the hierarchical arrangement of centres is subject to collapse as settlements become increasingly accessible to one another. With improved levels of accessibility, market areas among settlements are subject to overlap. As a result, the possibility emerges of establishing 'cooperative' market areas. Thus, what once could only be

offered in a traditional high-order central place, can now effectively be offered from one (or more) middle-order centre because it is able to meet the goods' (or service's) threshold requirements.

Spatial proximity of similarly sized settlements, as well as improved transportation technology, are agreed upon factors that are necessary for the dispersed city's development. Changes in both population and economic bases are also believed to play a role. With respect to these factors, however, it is uncertain whether increases or declines in either trait promote the dispersed city's development. Hayes (1976), for example, hypothesizes that population and/or economic decline are important ingredients in creating a dispersed city system. This latter postulate, however, has been challenged in the literature (Bunting and Filion, 1996). Nevertheless, as Hayes (1976) notes, many areas believed to display dispersed city characteristics also have been dependent on a declining local resource base. It is believed that economic decay forces communities to change their economic role if they are to survive. Local specialization in higher-ordered goods and services may be the result of this quest for survival.

#### **2.4.2 Empirical Evidence**

The prevailing contention that the dispersed city represents a predominantly urban (or rather, quasi-urban) oriented system is illustrated largely by the study areas chosen by geographers investigating the phenomenon. Burton (1959) studies the same area as did Beinfuhr six years earlier (a four-county area in Southern Illinois home to over 157,000 people) and predicts that the dispersed city also may exist among the settlements of Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire, U.K., the Salzgitter area of Germany, the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and the upper Grand River region in southern Ontario. The connection among these places is that they all contain spatially proximate urban centres of similar size. Subsequent

works by Bunting and Filion (1996), Clements (1977), Hayes (1976), Davies and Gyuse (1975), and Ginsburg (1961) reinforce this belief by choosing areas such as the urban complexes of the Grand River basin (Canada), Piedmont (United States), Calgary (Canada), and the Okayama Plain (Japan), respectively. What should be noted is that despite the acceptance of the term in the academic literature, and in the recent resurgent interest devoted to the subject, differences of opinion still exist on the dispersed city's existence. At present, therefore, the validity that the dispersed city represents a relatively 'new' form of regional organization remains in doubt.

The dispersed city concept incorporates employment, social, and retailing environments. Previous work, however, has focused on the retailing environment with emphasis being directed towards the retail make-up of the system with only minor attention being paid to actual shopping patterns of the local populace. Burton (1959), for example, argues that settlements in a dispersed city should exhibit a noticeably higher or lower prevalence of varying retailing functions than what would be expected in a 'normal' settlement hierarchy. This occurs because of the specialization of centres. Such specialization is accounted for by comparing the retail sales of the cities believed to be part of a dispersed city with their respective population ranks. In a hierarchically structured system, the level of retail sales should be directly proportional to the population of the settlement, with the largest centres receiving the most sales, while the smallest centres garner the least amount of retail sales. Within the area of southern Illinois, believed by Burton (1959) to be a dispersed city system, this proportional relationship is absent. Moreover, when retail sales are disaggregated according to different retail types, it is found that some of the settlements attract more trade than what would be expected given their population rank within the system. For instance, with respect to furniture sales, the largest centre has lower sales than the second and third largest centres, but higher sales than the rest of the settlements in the region.

Burton interprets this lack of proportionality as evidence of retail specialization among settlements.

Berry (1967), takes a different approach in his comparative studies of the Chicago Metropolitan area, sections of southwestern Iowa, and southern Dakota. He concludes that the 'dispersed city' could best be described as a 'phase shift' between more rural and urban environments. Using scattergrams that compare settlements' trade areas with both population served and population density, Berry finds that the (expected) constant relationship is maintained with respect to the population/function (P/F) ratio in both extremely urban (Chicago) and rural (southwest Iowa) locales. But between these two areas, the relationship seems to break down. Berry likens the two environments to different 'states' and alludes that as rural places become incorporated into the metropolitan sphere of influence that the 'phase shift' can be recognized. Thus, it may be where metropolitan influences are just beginning to be felt that the traditional settlement hierarchy temporarily breaks down and the dispersed city system emerges.

Clements (1977) later refutes both Burton's (1959) and Berry's (1967) findings. In a comparative analysis of the same 'urban' area studied by Burton (1959) and Beimfohr (1953) with a more 'rural' environment, Clements finds no evidence of a dispersed city system. By correlating population and retail sales, he finds a very high degree of association between the two variables. Moreover, this high correlation is maintained over the course of a decade and is consistently higher in the area believed to be a dispersed city, than in the more rural setting.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Clements (1977) differentiates the 'urban' location identified by Beimfohr (1953) from his 'rural' locations (incorporating the counties of Schuyler, Brown, Scott, Pike, Green, Jersey and Macoupin) which were chosen to "minimize metropolitan dominance and influence" (Clements, 1977; 28).

Even when disaggregated by retail type, the same high correlation levels are maintained except for the case of the 'household, radio, and furniture group.' Clements does concede that individual, specialized shops may exist in both urban and rural settings but the consistently high correlation indices as measured between place population and sales, denotes that it is not likely that such businesses substantially contribute to the overall retail environment.

Research of retail specialization, and the degree to which it occurs, has yielded discordant results. Study of the functional interdependencies existing within the dispersed city system also has produced contradictory findings. Theoretically, the consensus is that within a dispersed city system, higher levels of intra- and inter-regional travel should exist than what would be expected in a traditional central place system. Both characteristics are a result of businesses being dispersed among several (rather than one) centers. Retail decentralization obviously necessitates increased levels of intra-regional traffic but external (inter-regional) traffic also rises because local retail specialization "[does] not completely replace the attraction of downtown shopping districts" (Burton, 1959: 149).

Burton (1959), reporting on the results of an earlier study (1957), describes the situation existing within West Frankfurt (the largest city in the southern Illinois dispersed city). Specifically, a very high proportion (68%) of West Frankfurt's population regularly visit a different settlement when purchasing goods and services. Four times out of five, this 'other' centre is located within the dispersed city. But large, external centres also seem to draw residents of West Frankfurt, with one-sixth of them habitually travelling to either St. Louis (14.1%) or Chicago (2.5%).

Despite the logic behind Burton's argument (and his empirical proof), evidence also suggests the dispersed city maintains a very insular interdependency pattern. Hayes (1976), for

example, shows that it is not uncommon for residents surrounding Piedmont, N.C. to visit up to four or five 'alternate, local' centers for shopping purposes. But even with evidence of considerable internal cross-commuting, Hayes points out that such patterns are "seldom at odds with distance friction" (Hayes, 1976; 28). Thus, it would seem that even within a dispersed city system, 'remnants' of central place, behavioural assumptions remain.

### **2.4.3 Evaluation**

The dispersed city concept incorporates employment, social, and retailing environments of a settlement system. It is, therefore, a much broader theory in scope than is central place theory. Aside from this difference however, the two theories are remarkably similar, particularly when compared with the mixed hierarchical variant of classical central place theory. From the empirical evidence presented, dispersed city identification has not necessarily discredited central place principles. The concept of a dispersed city is, therefore, in doubt.

When comparing the theories of mixed hierarchical central place systems and the dispersed city, considerable similarity exists. Christaller (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) and others have openly recognized that several factors promote change in central place systems. Indeed, the mixed hierarchy, urban field, and arena society all represent hypothesized outcomes of such a process. In the case of the dispersed city, several factors are hypothesized to have contributed to the system's formation. These include spatial proximity among centers, improved transportation technology, and shifts in population. Christaller's sister cities concept addresses the potential outcome of such a scenario and it has already been shown how changes in transportation technology may impact a system of settlements.

The dispersed city fails to further set itself apart from the mixed hierarchical concept because of the uncertainty surrounding the dispersal of retail functions within the system.

Granted, the dispersed city predicts that retail establishments become 'shared' among lower-ordered settlements but the functional complexities of the sharing arrangement lacks clarity. If the dispersal of retail functions is systematic in the sense that it is the same bundle of functions that becomes dispersed, then what is being witnessed is a mixed hierarchical system. Only when centers approach functional uniqueness (in the sense that each specializes in the provision of a retail function that is not present in any other potentially competing center) can a dispersed city system be said to exist.

Empirical work has neither confirmed nor discredited that central place principles may continue to operate within settlements believed to exist within a dispersed city system. Again, the concepts of nodality and centrality play a role in this confusion. Most work to date has identified the dispersed city through the anomalous results obtained from nodality studies. Burton (1953) found a lack of association among retail sales volumes and population size while Berry (1960) found deviating associations among the number of functions present and population size. As Preston (1975) argues, such studies may show that the trade center system lacks a hierarchical structure and that retail specialization may be present, but it does not necessarily show that a central place system does not exist.

It is not until one looks at the work of Hayes (1976) that evidence is presented to support the mixed hierarchical system of Christaller. Unlike Burton (1953) and Berry (1967), Hayes approaches the problem from a behavioural perspective, researching the shopping patterns of those living in what is believed to be the dispersed city of Piedmont, N.C.. Perhaps the most revealing finding is that consumer patterns validate the nearest neighbour hypothesis. Residents did visit multiple centers (indicating that retail functions had become dispersed among several settlements) but the patterns were such that people continued to visit the closest center providing

the desired good. What this suggests is that the mutual exclusiveness of market areas is maintained. Therefore, the hierarchical (or more appropriately, mixed hierarchy) arrangement of market centers continues to dominate the settlement system.

While empirical work on the dispersed city may not prove its existence, the work does raise a very interesting issue. This is related to the geographical context within which the dispersed city is believed to exist. As mentioned, Berry (1967) states that characteristics (specifically, the disharmony among population and number of business establishments) of the dispersed city seem to manifest themselves in areas situated between suburban and rural environs. If we now place this location within the spatial context of the urban field, this would situate the dispersed city somewhere within the rural-urban fringe and urban shadow; areas where urban influences in the countryside are first beginning to be felt. It may be hypothesized, therefore, that increasing urban influences may somehow 'trigger' retail specialization as countrysides transform from more rural to urban environments.

But the areas identified as potentially being dispersed cities only partially supports this contention. The area of southern Illinois studied by Clements (1977), Burton (1959), and Beimfohr (1953) is located approximately 150km southeast of St. Louis, Missouri, placing it at the outer reaches of its urban field. Hayes' (1976) study area, meanwhile, is adjacent to the Piedmont Triad Region, an area made up of the cities of Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point. These three cities, with a combined population (1999) of over 1.2 million people, is large enough to generate an urban field effect.

Related to the geographic location within urban fields is the opposing population trends believed to promote dispersed city development. Hayes (1976) believes that population decline may promote dispersed city development. But Berry's placement of the dispersed city within a

rural-urban fringe environment makes it highly unlikely that these two hypotheses can coexist. It has been consistently shown (Atkinson, 1995; Beale, 1992; Gordon, 1979; Hodge, 1966) that those places most influenced by a metropolitan centre are least likely to suffer from persistent population decline. Such a condition is more common in more rural environments; those areas beyond any metropolitan influence.

Work on the dispersed city has provided evidence of retail specialization. But, as with the case of the dispersed city and arena society, it is a particular type of retail specialization. Specifically, researchers investigating the dispersed city have tended to look at the retailing system en masse. While acknowledging that individual, specialized retail establishments probably exist, they are deemed "unimportant" when the entire retailing system is considered. Such an opinion may be justified given the breadth of retail categories present in larger settlements, as is the focus of the dispersed city, but such a perspective becomes a serious omission when researching the dispersed city in the countryside. This is because we are now concerned with significantly smaller settlements that often do not contain a wide variety of retail types nor multiple establishments of individual retail types. Consequently, individual retail establishments may be especially important to the economies of small towns and villages.

It has been over forty years since the concept of the dispersed city was first introduced to geographic academia. Today, the term is accepted as representing a system of urban settlements that have become specialized. It is the opinion of this author, however, that the concept needs to be refined theoretically and validated empirically before it should be legitimately accepted into the geographic literature. Too many similarities exist between it and the mixed hierarchical variant of central place theory. By not distinguishing it from other established concepts, our

understanding of the dispersed city and of the retail specialization that exists within it, will be incomplete.

## **2.5 The Dispersed City in the Countryside**

### **2.5.1 The Theory**

Whereas the dispersed city concept has come to be associated with an urban-dominated complex, the term is also used by geographers to describe the interdependencies among much smaller settlements within the countryside (Brierly and Todd, 1990; Dahms, 1988, 1984, 1980a, 1980b; Hodge and Qadeer, 1983; Hodge, 1983; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1984; Hart, 1975; Hart et. al, 1968). Conceptually, the theory remains unaltered. The only difference between the two types of dispersed cities is that the latter envisions, in its purest sense, a truly nonmetropolitan-oriented settlement system. Thus what the 'dispersed city in the countryside' attempts to describe is a phenomenon whereby smaller-sized centres become specialized with respect to the goods and services they offer. No longer do they provide a common range of goods and services, but instead strive to offer a very narrow range. As a result, small towns in the countryside cease to be singular focal points for surrounding populations, operating within the nested hierarchy depicted by central place theory. Instead, they operate as elements of an inter-linked, non-hierarchical system of settlements. People living in the countryside, therefore, patronize establishments in a variety of neighbouring settlements for desired goods and services. For example, a person living in the countryside might visit one town to buy groceries, another to buy an automobile, another to buy gasoline, and yet another to dine out.

The key characteristic of the dispersed city in the countryside (like its metropolitan counterpart) is retail specialization among settlements. However, unlike the 'metropolitan' dispersed city, where cities would specialize in one or two retail categories (i.e. several stores

focusing on fashion or entertainment), small town specialization manifests itself in the presence of highly profitable, individual retail and service establishments (an aspect that Burton (1963) regretted overlooking). Such establishments, labelled 'outsized functions,' are patronized by persons from an enlarged, shared market area arranged around several (rather than one) centres. The resulting system is one where the hierarchical nesting of market areas is absent.

The dispersed city in the countryside is touted as representing a relatively recent phenomenon, brought about through widespread use of the automobile. Ironically, this improvement in transportation technology had initially been credited with "wreaking havoc with the traditional economic functions of small rural service centers" (Hart, et. al., 1968; 343). But many of these centers have managed to survive by adapting to the increased levels of personal mobility afforded by the use of the automobile. Rather than by-passing small settlements in the countryside in favour of visiting larger, more distant centers, small towns have altered their primary role from central places to specialized centers. This retail specialization, combined with the increased use of the automobile, has increased the possibility of greater interaction among neighbouring settlements.

Although the use of the term dispersed city has been 'borrowed' to describe the interdependencies among small towns in the countryside, its adoption does provide the discipline with one of the few, alternative conceptual frameworks for those interested in the role small towns play within the modern space economy. As alluded to earlier, much research studying small town retail evolution, adhering to the logic of central place theory, argues that the small town is 'dying.' Studies, dating from the 1930s to the present (Dahms, 1991b; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1990, 1981; Folse and Riffe, 1969; Hodge, 1965), have documented widespread population and/or economic decline. Although few would dispute these findings, their

interpretation has been open to much debate. Some argue that these findings inaccurately place all settlements in the countryside in a dispassionate light. Ample evidence exists to show that not all small towns in the countryside experience population and/or retail loss (Dahms, 1995; Crihfield, 1991; Coppack, 1990; Hudson, 1989; Dale, 1988; Johnson, 1985; Carter et. al., 1970; Hart, 1961). Moreover, there are also those who believe that even though data show population and/or retail loss, this does not necessarily mean that such towns are dying, but rather are 'metamorphosizing' (Rounds and Shamanski, 1993; Lukermann et. al., 1991; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1984; Dahms, 1981a, 1980c; McGranahan, 1980; Fuguitt, 1963). The concept of the dispersed city in the countryside acts as a theoretical basis for this 'alternative' interpretation of small town fortunes.

### **2.5.2 Empirical Evidence**

Since the onset of the use of the 'dispersed city in the countryside' in 1968, the term has garnered much support from several North American researchers (Brierly and Todd, 1990; Dahms, 1988b, 1984, 1980a, 1980b; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1984; Hodge and Qadeer, 1983; Hodge, 1983). Unfortunately, very little empirical research has actually been conducted to either verify its existence, ascertain if it truly represents a viable nonmetropolitan system of settlements, to determine if it is a recent manifestation on the landscape, or if it represents a system other than a mixed hierarchy of central places.

In its 'conversion' from the metropolitan to nonmetropolitan landscape, the dispersed city came to be investigated in a somewhat different way than it had been previously. In fact, the idea that retail specialization could manifest itself either on a macro (settlement) or micro (establishment) scale was heeded by researchers investigating this type of system in a nonmetropolitan setting. The addition of this 'new' approach may not have been only in

response to the warnings of Burton (1963) but also may have been necessitated by the fact that the broad range of goods and services available in higher-ordered centres was absent among settlements occupying the lowest echelons of the settlement hierarchy. Little insight into the macro retail specializations of settlements can be offered if such settlements only house an already limited range of goods and services. Thus, research to date on the dispersed city in the countryside emphasizes the micro-scale approach through the identification of 'outsized functions.'

The studies by Hart et. al. (1968) and Dahms (1980a) may, for all intents and purposes, be considered to be the only two papers that empirically study the phenomenon of the dispersed city in the countryside. Both approach the phenomenon from the supply side in that it is through the identification of outsized functions that the dispersed city in the countryside is recognized. Although Hart et. al. and Dahms use somewhat different data sources, each conducts a location quotient analysis with economic performance of retail/service establishments as the qualifying characteristic.

Hart et. al. (1968), looking at small towns in the vicinity of Kankanee, Illinois, uses sales tax records (standardized on a per capita basis) for nine different retail categories. These categories include eating/drinking establishments, lumber, hardware, food, apparel, furniture, general merchandise, auto dealers, and filling stations. The researchers conclude that many of the small towns are dominated by one single type of retail offering. When looked at in its totality, these small towns seem to be in a state of retail demise, for in two-thirds of them, sales tax payments per capita are below the state average. However, when the data are broken down by the different retail categories, a very different picture emerges. Specifically, three-quarters of the small towns exceed the state average per capita sales tax receipts in at least one of the nine

kinds of business categories examined. Moreover, in one-seventh of the small towns, a single retail category accounts for at least 60 percent of all sales tax receipts. Such findings provide evidence of not only retail vitality, but also of retail specialization among small towns.

In addition, evidence of a much more 'specific' type of retail specialization emerges when sales tax receipts are disaggregated according to individual establishments. Specifically, it is found that among this group of settlements, one-half derive at least one-third of their receipts from a single business establishment. Such establishments are regarded as being 'outsized functions.' These outsized functions are found to range from traditional 'low-order' functions, like filling stations and general merchandise stores, to traditional middle-order functions such as eating and drinking establishments, hardware dealers, food stores, clothing stores, to traditional high-order functions like auto dealers and furniture stores.

Likewise, Dahms (1980a) finds evidence of outsized functions in his study of twenty settlements in Wellington County, Ontario. In this case, however, outsized functions are identified on the basis of economic performance ratings obtained from Dun and Bradstreet business directories. Such ratings are based on personal visits to each business establishment by Dun and Bradstreet investigators who consider each business' assets and liabilities when establishing a rating. Outsized functions are specifically defined as those establishments that score at least 1.5 times the average rating for its Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code in the county (excluding the City of Guelph; the largest city in the county). Based on this criterion, Dahms finds evidence of outsized functions among thirteen business types. Eight of these are the same categories (gas station, general store, grocery store, hardware, hotel, new car dealer, and restaurant) as identified by Hart et. al. (1968). Additional business types where outsized functions are present include auto body shops, building supply, furniture, men's clothing,

women's clothing, and variety store. Again, such business types range from those offering low to medium to higher-order goods and services. These outsized functions occur in sixteen (80%) of the settlements under study.

Dahms complements his 'supply-side' analysis with a survey of 168 households within the county. A questionnaire solicits information on resident work and shopping practices. Commuting data are further augmented with special tabulations provided by Statistics Canada. Commuting patterns are diverse and results obtained from the two sources (survey versus Statistics Canada data) appear to be contradictory. According to Statistics Canada, Guelph has the most drawing power, attracting over 21% of local commuters, while another 42% travel to a variety of other settlements in the county. Only 7.4% and 4.0% of commuters travel to metropolitan Toronto and the nearby Regional Municipality of Waterloo (a highly urbanized region containing the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge). Results from the distributed survey, however, paint a very different picture, with the vast majority (84.2%) travelling to (unspecified) larger centers outside Wellington County. In fact, only 7.9 percent of those surveyed work within the county.

Meanwhile, survey results reveal a 'weakened' hierarchical pattern for shopping behaviour. For the most part, convenience items (e.g., cigarettes, bread, and milk) are purchased locally. Average travel times taken to purchase such goods equalled 6.8 minutes. For traditional, higher-ordered goods (e.g., furniture, major groceries, clothing), however, households tend to travel to larger settlements both inside and outside the county. For these types of items, average travel times range from 27 to 37 minutes. However, it is also found that local residents regularly patronize outsized functions that Dahms had identified through Dun and Bradstreet directories.

Depending on the type of good or service required, between 12 to 47% of respondents regularly make purchases at local outsized functions.

What Hart et. al. (1968), and later Dahms (1980a) report is ample evidence of retail vitality among small settlements in the countryside. Such vitality is borne out of retail specialization, believed to be induced by improvements in transportation technology (i.e. the automobile). Moreover, the fact that such specialization occurs along such a broad range of business types and occurs within the majority of small settlements within the countryside, alludes to the idea that small towns located in this environment may operate in a manner described by the dispersed city in the countryside.

### **2.5.3 Evaluation**

Although there is increasing support for the existence of the dispersed city in the countryside, the sparse empirical research conducted, to date, has only provided partial verification of such a phenomenon. This is primarily due to three reasons. First, the methodologies employed in the few analyses conducted tend to follow a positivistic paradigm and, as such, tend to focus solely on the structure of the system. Because of this interpretation, the complexities of human behaviour patterns are minimized. The consequence is that conclusions made regarding the functioning of the system are unsubstantiated. Secondly, such studies have been static in nature. Thus, the claim that the dispersed city in the countryside is a recent phenomenon on the landscape also cannot be validated. Thirdly, and related to the previous issues, is that inconsistencies currently exist in the way the dispersed city in the countryside is defined and with the methodologies that have been used to identify its existence. These gaps make it difficult to ascertain if the dispersed city in the countryside constitutes a

viable, nonmetropolitan system of settlements; one that is fundamentally different from a central place system.

The dispersed city form has been identified from the existence of outsized functions. However, this is only the first step in establishing the validity of the dispersed city in the countryside. Unfortunately, it is here where most previous research has tended to stop. Evidence of outsized functions do prove that small towns are economically viable. It also shows that small towns have become specialized with respect to the types of goods and services they offer. However, because outsized function identification is based on aggregate importance, their presence does not emphatically prove that such specialization occurs within a dispersed city structure. Again, information on the client base is needed to determine if outsized functions represent increased levels of centrality (e.g., they attract customers from an extended market area), if one is to distinguish between central place and dispersed city systems.

In the absence of behavioural data, this may be partially ascertained by investigating the spatial distribution of such establishments. If the outsized functions identified are spatially clustered, (i.e. located in only a small number or particular types of settlements) then evidence of the dispersed city is considerably weakened since the trend of retail concentration runs counter to what the dispersed city represents. The concept is built upon retail decentralization, not continued concentration. Thus, if the dispersed city is to exist, outsized functions must be dispersed throughout several settlements within the system.

Not only must the general spatial distribution of outsized functions be identified, but the spatial 'mix' of outsized functions also must be determined. Of importance here is that similar outsized functions (e.g., all gas stations or all grocery stores) must not be clustered among 'hierarchically similar' settlements. If such a pattern did emerge, then this would only act to

reinforce the claims of central place theory, because a hierarchically structured system would still be present. In other words, if only gas stations qualify as outsized functions in the lowest-ordered settlements while clothing stores do so in middle-ordered centres, and auto dealerships in higher-order settlements, then this may only be another way of identifying a hierarchically structured system. If anything, the low-order settlements *should* excel in the offering of low-order type goods (i.e. gas stations and general stores) because the *purpose* of these smaller settlements (according to central place theory) is to offer these types of establishments. Likewise, in the middle-order settlements, middle-order goods and services such as clothing stores, grocery stores, or restaurants, should generally do well given that these types of centres are the primary destinations for consumers seeking these types of goods and services.

While work on the structure of the dispersed city is incomplete, behavioural work also fails to shed light on the mixed hierarchical - dispersed city clarification debate. Dahms' analysis of local shopping behaviour in Wellington County, Ontario, for example, does not sufficiently demonstrate that the countryside populace patronizes local outsized functions in a manner consistent with the theory. Dahms reports that "between 12 to 47% of respondents regularly utiliz[ed] local outsized functions..." (Dahms, 1980a: 300). This statement raises several questions. Does this mean that between 53 to 88% of residents do not shop at local outsized functions? If this is the case, then the majority of the local population avoid using local outsized functions when purchasing goods and services. Again, if this is true, then it begs the question: Can a dispersed city in the countryside be said to exist if the majority of its population do not shop at outsized functions? It is the opinion of this author that such a situation is not illustrative of a dispersed city in the countryside for the majority of residents conduct their shopping behaviour in a manner inconsistent with one of the dispersed city's key features.

Moreover, the data are revealed in such a manner that it is impossible to determine if households visit multiple outsized functions when buying different goods and services. This is a very important aspect to consider because the foundation of the concept of the dispersed city in the countryside is built upon the characteristic of non-hierarchical interdependency. There must be evidence to show that residents conduct their shopping at a number of outsized functions. This would support the contention that different settlements have become specialized with respect to the goods and services that they offer and support the idea of regional interdependency.

Despite the consensus that the dispersed city in the countryside is a relatively recent phenomenon, no empirical research conducted to date corroborates such a belief. Granted, both Hart et. al. (1968) and Dahms (1980a) published their works in the post-war period but this does not negate the possibility that either retail specialization or the dispersed city may have existed at an earlier date. Even before these works were produced, other researchers considered the idea that small towns were becoming specialized. American sociologists such as Kolb (1959), Hoffsommer and Pryor (1941), and Brunner et. al. (1927) were perhaps the first to contemplate the notion. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, while many claimed that hamlets and villages in the countryside were economically dead, there continued to be those who maintained that these settlements were, alternatively, becoming more specialized. Thus, the idea that settlements in the countryside have (and continue to) become specialized has a long history.

Placing such specialization within the theoretical context of the dispersed city, however, has not. Compounding the problem is the fact that those studies investigating the dispersed city in the countryside have been static in nature. It remains to be determined, therefore, when the dispersed city in the countryside first appeared. Ignorance of this temporal dimension prohibits strong statements regarding the nature of the dispersed city in the countryside.

## **2.6 Summary of Past Research**

### **2.6.1 Introduction**

Central place theory, the urban field, the arena society, and both variants of the dispersed city are all concepts that may be used to explain the role of countryside towns within the larger space economy. As the review of the literature indicates, both theoretical and empirical work has shown that a wide range of scenarios for towns and villages in the countryside can be realized. However, as has often been the case, much work remains to be done to distinguish each of these theories from one another. Each shares elements with the other, making it difficult to distinguish the implications of retail specialization among small towns in the countryside. Further compounding this problem is that the term 'retail specialization' carries with it, different connotations. Retail specialization may be present in each system. Fundamentally, however, retail specialization manifests itself in different ways according to the type of system operating. This summary acts to clarify these fundamental differences.

### **2.6.2 Retail Specialization and Regional Settlement Systems**

The different models developed by Christaller to represent a classic central place system do not allow for retail specialization among central places. Retail specialization is accommodated in either 'special' cases (e.g., border cities) or as a result of the interplay among competing organizing principles. In these cases, retail specialization occurs in a manner that largely maintains the hierarchical structure of central places. In a mixed hierarchical system, goods and services of once similarly-ordered central places become shared among multiple centers. Therefore, a particular group of central places will 'specialize' in the provision of particular types of goods and services. But those places that become specialized do so in a common bundle of goods and services. Essentially, a new hierarchical level is created; one slightly less important

than the centers that house all the goods and services indicative of a particular order, and yet slightly more important than those that are not able to offer any of the 'specialized' goods provided by the newly established order.

The urban field/arena society concept also accommodates retail specialization. The emphasis placed here appears not to be on the role of towns and villages as central places, but rather in their roles as tourist destinations. Retail specialization thus manifests itself in the presence of high-ordered central goods; goods that are able to capitalize on the urban tourist market. This type of supra-regional retail specialization is different from the retail specialization present in a mixed hierarchical system because of the much greatly expanded clientele base. Specialization, therefore, comes about as a result of increased urban influence; not from changes in local consumer behaviours.

Both variants of the dispersed city are built upon the idea of retail specialization. The 'urban' dispersed city may be likened to the situation existing among middle to high-ordered centers (not the core) located within the urban field. Such centers, rather than providing a common bundle of goods and services representative of a particular order, become specialized in one or two retail categories. Thus, one may specialize in apparel, another in entertainment, and yet another in home improvement. Specialization thus manifests itself on a macro-level (specializing among particular types of retailing rather than among individual establishments) similar to that existing in a mixed hierarchical system. However, unlike a mixed hierarchy, retail specialization does not occur systematically. Thus, instead of multiple centers specializing in similar bundles of goods (e.g., multiple settlements offering multiple offerings of multiple goods), cities in a dispersed city specialize in the provision of unique goods (e.g., one settlement offering multiple offerings of one retail type).

Further unlike the mixed hierarchy system are the consumer behaviours that bind the retailing system together. In the dispersed city, the hierarchical system is largely absent with people not necessarily adhering to the nearest neighbour principle. Remember that although the same bundle of goods may continue to be offered from each of the settlements existing within the dispersed city, each specializes in the provision of one or two types of retailing. In central place terms, goods of a similar type now exist among multiple orders. In other words, if a settlement specializes in apparel, then apparel may be considered a high order good for that settlement because it is able to draw upon the shared market areas of once individual centers. However, for the remainder of the settlements within the dispersed city system, apparel would remain a middle-order central good. In short, specialization extends the range of goods and/or settlements.

While the dispersed city describes the situation among larger settlements, the dispersed city in the countryside represents the situation existing among smaller towns and villages. It, like the mixed hierarchical and dispersed city systems, is based on the predominantly local relationships among settlements. The dispersed city in the countryside sets itself apart from the dispersed city with respect to the type of retail specialization that occurs within the system. In the dispersed city in the countryside, retail specialization manifests itself on a micro-level. Specifically, specialization exists in the form of outsized functions; individual businesses that do especially well. Towns and villages may continue to provide a common array of goods and services (maintaining their roles as central places) but will be utilized for specialized purposes. Thus, as in the dispersed city, the order of individual goods can vary, sometimes acting as low, middle, or high-ordered goods.

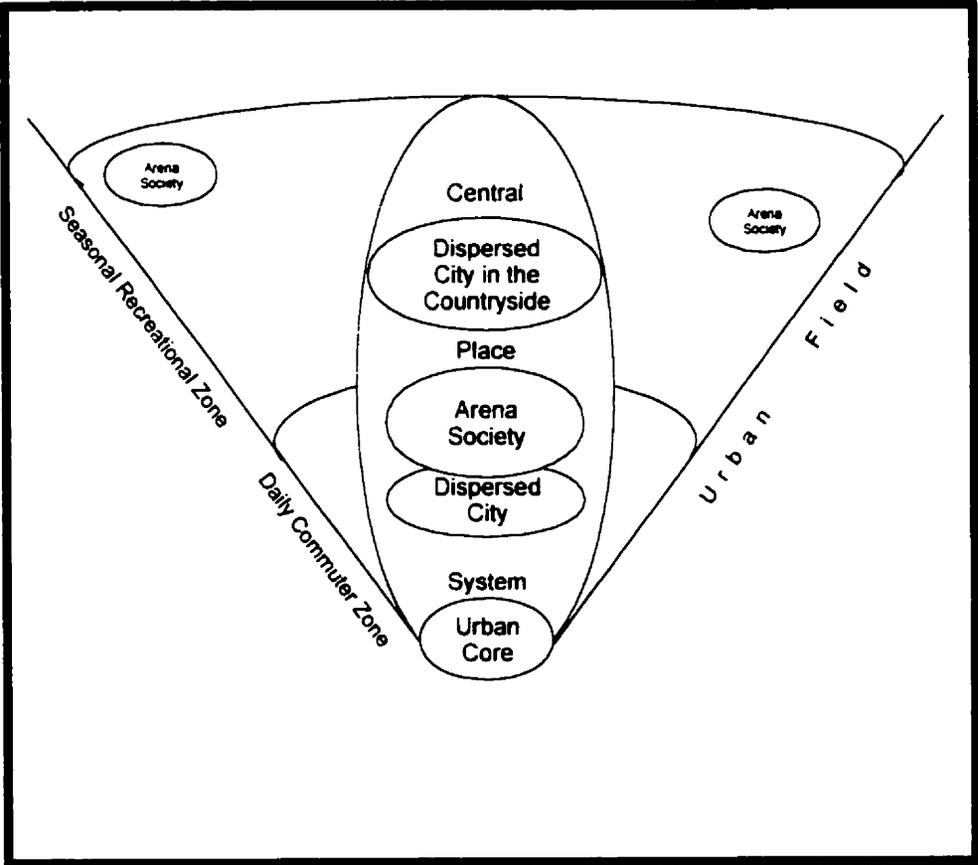
While each of the settlement system constructs accommodate retail specialization within them, each is represented by a different type of specialization. Retail specialization may be

differentiated in terms of three characteristics; source of demand, order of specialization, and the distribution of specialization.

**2.6.3 Geographical Implications of Retail Specialization**

Each of the settlement system constructs may be differentiated according to the type of retail specialization present. But it must be acknowledged that each occupies a distinct region of space. Several researchers have inappropriately applied specific constructs in an improper geographical context. The following acts as a guide to the geographical implications of retail specialization (refer to Figure 9).

**Figure 9:**  
**Settlement System Constructs and Their Geographical Contexts**



The urban field is the most spatially expansive of regional settlement system constructs. As mentioned, large urban cores may extend their influence up to 160km away. It can potentially accommodate all other previously mentioned regional settlement system constructs. In order to describe how this may occur, the urban field can be broadly disaggregated into its daily commuter zone (extending approximately 80km from the urban core) and its seasonal recreational zone (extending approximately 160km from the urban core).

Although little work has been done to delimit central place systems, they may be claimed to be geographically extensive. This is because, in the most general sense, they incorporate high-order, middle-order, and low-order places. Ultimately, the entire system is organized by one high-order central place, which offers all the goods and services that the regional population desires. The key difference between the two is that in the urban field, urban nodes become specialized while in central place systems, they do not. However, as the work of Coppack and Preston (1988) has shown, the development of the urban field can be used to explain the re-establishment of central place structures. This, and other works (Berry and Parr, 1988; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1984; Hodge, 1983; Dahms, 1981) have, however, observed that the central place systems existing in rural as opposed to urban environments are slightly different in character. Rural areas tend to display a 'hollowed out' central place system, whereby many middle order centers are absent (due, in large part, to the declines in local thresholds which are a result of rural to urban migration). In addition, rural central place systems tend to maintain relatively larger market areas due to the lack of competition from any nearby large, expanding metropolis. However, it must be remembered that a mixed hierarchical system also may emerge. This system may also comprise much space due to the multiple models that have been developed.

Nevertheless, it is different from the classic central place structure in that retail specialization is present.

Whereas urbanizing influences may act to re-establish central place structures, they also may be responsible for the development of a dispersed city structure. As mentioned, the dispersed city may mark a phase shift between urban and rural environments. It, therefore, may be most pronounced in those areas increasingly being incorporated into the urban core's sphere of influence. One measure of the linkages existing between the city and its countryside is the level of external commuting occurring between the two. Since the urban core's influence generally follows a distance-decay effect, those areas closer to the urban core (i.e., those places incorporated into its daily commutershed), may be more likely to display characteristics of the dispersed city.

The dispersed city in the countryside, however, may be more pronounced in those areas of the countryside that exist within urban fields, but beyond the daily commutershed of their urban cores. The dispersed city in the countryside emerges not so much as a consequence of the interactions between it and the urban core (because there is relatively little interaction), but rather as a reorganization in response to retail and population loss. It may be that the confusion surrounding the factors responsible for dispersed city formation (i.e., population loss versus population gain) actually influence the type of dispersed city that forms. Population growth, observed to be more pronounced in the countrysides adjacent to urban cores, may promote the develop of dispersed cities while population decline (or stagnation), characteristic of more rural areas (e.g., those regions not heavily influenced by urban cores), promotes the development of dispersed cities in the countryside.

Lastly, the arena society concept may exist within both rural and urbanizing countrysides. In other words, it may exist within the recreational and commuting zone of urban fields. Its emphasis on the role of specific small towns as tourist destinations require that the system exist within the recreational zone. But if this is the case, then this type of system exists within those portions of the countryside that possess high levels of amenity; the main draw in establishing urban to rural tourism. This being the case, the arena society may co-exist within larger dispersed city or central place complexes.

Alternatively, and more commonly, the arena society may be placed within the daily commutershed of contemporary urban fields. The arena society represents a system whereby contemporary landscapes are superimposed on historical landscapes. It follows, therefore, that it is in areas experiencing much change that evidence of the arena society should be found. Again, in the context of the urban field, those portions of the city's countryside closer to the urban core, displaying higher degrees of external commuting, may show characteristics of the arena society. Placed within this spatial context, the arena society and the dispersed city now coexist. However, given that the dispersed city is believed to represent a contemporary system, it may be claimed that dispersed city terminology should be used to describe the internal relationship (i.e., countryside to town and town to town) described by the 'open phase' society of the arena society while the external (town to city) linkages maintain their arena society perspective.

In conclusion, retail specialization is a phenomenon that is recognized by many regional settlement system constructs. Although retail specialization may exist it does so in many forms. It may differ in terms of how it is structured (i.e., distributed) in space, in terms of the spatial origin of demand, and in terms of its internal composition. Knowledge of these three characteristics is needed not only to have a better understanding of the phenomenon, but to better

assess its implications on the regional settlement systems within which small towns and villages in the countryside operate.

## **Chapter 3** **Methodologies of This Research**

### **3.1 Review of Goals and Guiding Philosophy**

The purposes of this study are to trace the evolution of retail specialization within settlement systems, to document the distribution of specialized retailers, as well as to determine the locational pattern of retail specialization. To meet these objectives, two different approaches are adopted. First, following the precedent set by Hart et. al. (1968) and Dahms (1980a), an historical-functional approach is employed to trace the evolution of retailing and the existence of specialized activity in the study area. Secondly, an empirical-behavioural approach is used to examine the spatial interaction of people living within the countryside. This is necessary to determine the implication of specialization for the structure of the settlement system.

The incorporation of both techniques is preferable to a static analysis which denies us the ability to test for settlement system dynamism. Untested hypotheses currently exist regarding the nature of retail specialization (i.e., that it is a recent manifestation) and its implications (i.e. that it is indicative of a 'phase-shift' from nonmetropolitan to metropolitan environments) on the settlement system. The inclusion of the historical-functional approach allows for the testing of these hypotheses. In a similar vein, the inclusion of the behavioural-empirical component allows us to document the contemporary functional linkages existing within the countryside. This, in turn, acts to verify the often untested behavioural assumptions associated with each settlement system construct, thereby allowing us to assess the appropriateness of such constructs in describing the retailing role of small towns in the countryside.

## **3.2 The Functional-Historical Analysis**

### **3.2.1 The Selection of a Study Area**

Two of the relevant settlement system constructs explicitly addressing retail specialization (e.g., the dispersed city and the arena society) portray two very different countrysides, differentiated by the degree to which they are influenced by metropolitan centers. Empirical documentation of retail specialization must, therefore, incorporate both environments. Consequently, the study area chosen must possess a sizeable urban center that is able to generate a noticeable influence on the countryside, and yet be sufficiently large to include areas lying beyond such an influence.

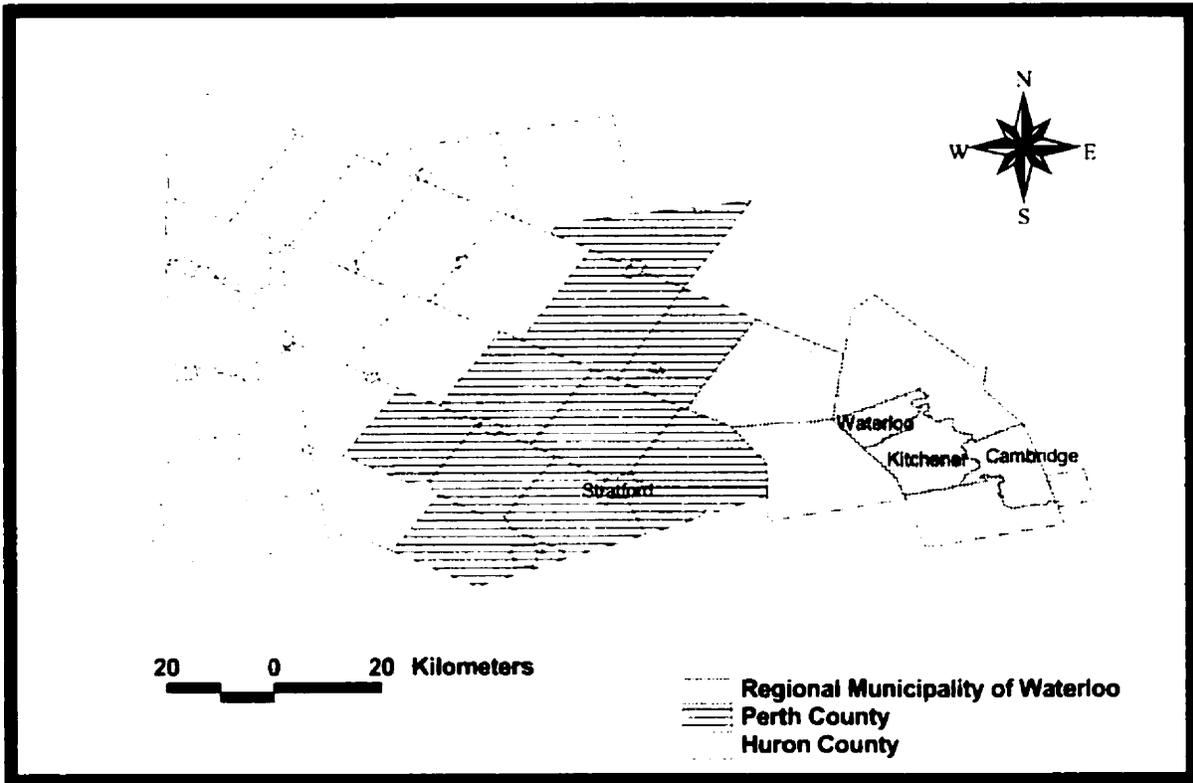
In the interest of becoming more aware of one's immediate environment, it was felt that an area of south-central Ontario, encompassing the Kitchener Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) would provide an appropriate location from which to investigate retail specialization. CMA's are defined as :

a very large urban area (known as the urban core) together with adjacent urban and rural areas (known as the urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100,000 based on the previous census.

(Statistics Canada, 1997; 181).

While several criteria dictate how a CMA is delineated, its areal extent is primarily determined by the level of commuting directed towards the urban core. Simply stated, a CMA effectively represents the commutershed of large metropolitan cores. The inclusion of the Kitchener CMA into the analysis ensures that one of the pre-requisites (e.g., of a high degree of urban influence) is met given the substantial level of in-commuting occurring from a CMA's fringe into its core.

**Figure 10:**  
**Study Area: Historical Analysis**

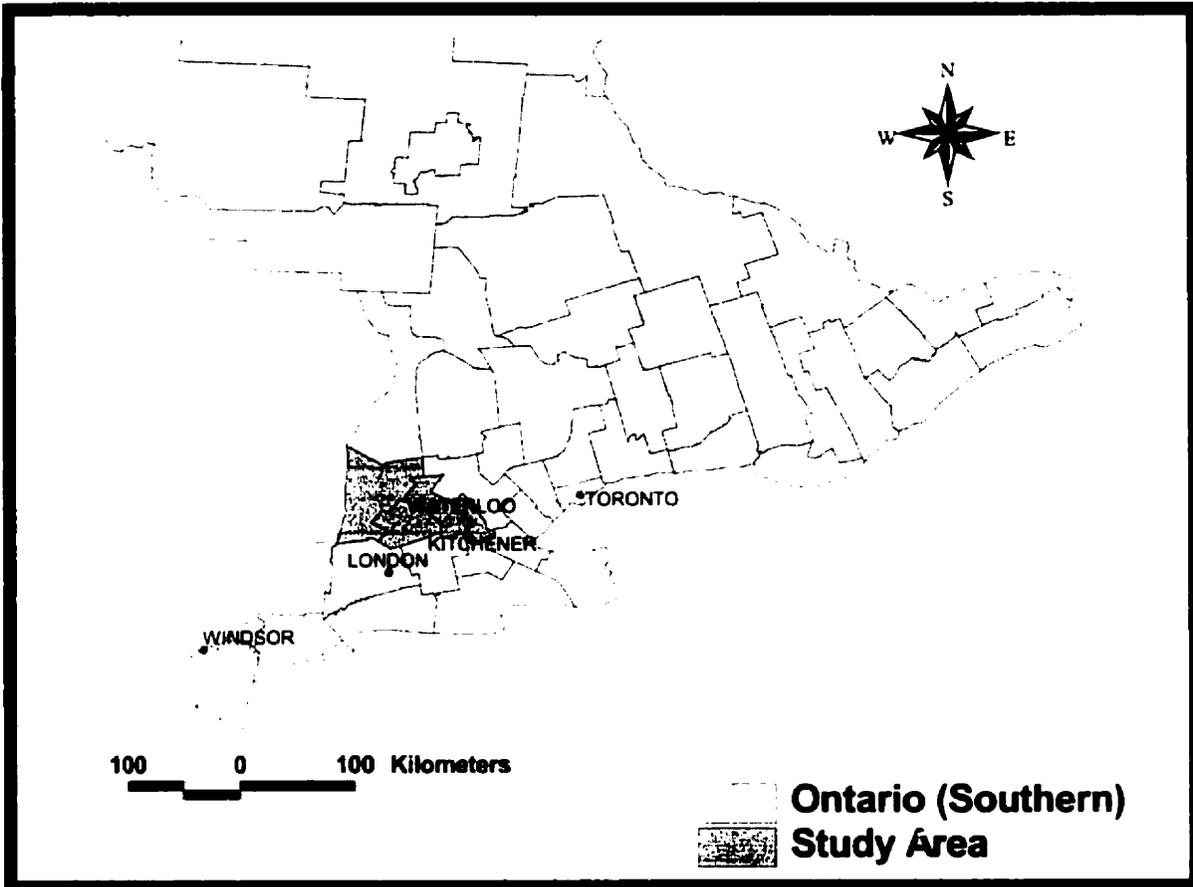


Once the metropolitan focus was established, it was then necessary to extend the study area beyond the confines of known metropolitan commuting zones. To satisfy this requirement, areas lying to the west and north of the Kitchener CMA were added to the study area.<sup>10</sup> For purposes of spatial contiguity, the two townships part of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo but not of the Kitchener CMA<sup>11</sup> were also included. Spatially, the entire study area can be described as a 30 degree arc extending approximately 140km from the Tri-Cities (refer to Figure 10).

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<sup>10</sup> This area was chosen to avoid the effects of other CMA and CA's (census agglomerations) such as Guelph, Mississauga, London, and Toronto (refer to Figure 11).

**Figure 11:**  
**Situation of Study Area Within Southern Ontario**



### **3.2.2 The Identification of Specialized Retail Activity**

Once the study area was established, the issue of documenting the presence of specialized retail activity needed to be addressed. From a retailing perspective, specialization has most often been recognized through the identification of outsized functions<sup>12</sup>; retail or service

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<sup>11</sup> The Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the Kitchener CMA do not incorporate the same municipalities within them. The Regional Municipality of Waterloo includes the Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge as well as the Townships of Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot, and North Dumfries. The Kitchener CMA includes all of the afore-mentioned cities and townships except Wilmot and Wellesley.

establishments that “qualitatively, seem completely out of place in [their small town] setting” (Hart et. al., 1968: 354). While the preceding statement allows for much maneuverability in the operationalization of outsized function identification, previous attempts to do so have adopted an economic perspective. Although past work has used different sources of financial data<sup>13</sup>, all share the characteristic in that location quotient analyses determine the extent to which excessively profitable businesses exist in the countryside. Those businesses ‘scoring’ in excess of some predetermined average<sup>14</sup> qualify as outsized functions.

This study adopts the data source and methodology used by Dahms (1980a). Use of published *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* provided data on all retail and service establishments, disaggregated by retail/service type (e.g., shoe, grocery, or hardware store) in each of the study area’s settlements. Thus, a comprehensive account of the retailing structure of the study area, over time, could be compiled.

Associated with each business is a ‘pecuniary strength rating (PSR),’ a composite measure, as determined by field investigators, which takes into consideration the differences between a business’ assets (e.g., sales, savings, etc.) and liabilities (e.g., debt, delinquency, etc.). Outsized function identification was based on this measure. Specifically, outsized

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<sup>12</sup> Other methodologies such as the use of P/F ratios have also been used to identify retail specialization. While this method will also be incorporated into the analysis, the bulk of the discussion will focus on the presence of outsized functions as representing retail specialization.

<sup>13</sup> Hart et. al. (1968) use State sales tax records as the basis for identifying outsized functions. In Canada, this type of data is not publically available. Dahms (1980a) uses Dun and Bradstreet data which is outlined in the ‘Methodology’ chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Hart et. al. (1968) use individual State averages while Dahms (1980a) uses county averages.

functions were defined as those businesses with a PSR equal to or in excess of 1.5 times the average PSR among individual retail types (e.g., all hardware stores) for the study area as a whole. Since the financial strength rating represents a range of monetary values<sup>15</sup>, businesses were assigned the mean value for the grade assigned. A hardware business that scored a 'FF' (\$10,000 to \$19,999) in 1991, therefore, would be given a PSR of \$15,000 for the purposes of this analysis. If the average PSR for all hardware stores was, for example, found to be \$15,000, then any hardware store with a PSR of  $(1.5 \cdot \$15,000)$  \$22,500 would be considered to be an outsized function. This exercise was performed on a decennial basis<sup>16</sup>, beginning in 1901 and terminating in 1991. In this manner, the evolution of retail specialization in the study area was achieved.

Because of the time-series nature of this analysis, further mention must be made of the specific methods involved. First, it should be noted that not all retail and service types are included in the analysis. Only those where the consumer was required to visit the business establishment for the transaction to be completed are included. Thus, services such as 'plumbing,' 'painting,' and 'oil dealers' are excluded. (For a complete listing of the types of businesses included in the analysis, refer to Appendix A).

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<sup>15</sup> For example, in 1991 a business that scored a 'BB' was valued to be worth between \$200,000 and \$299,999. Similarly, a business that obtained a grade of 'FF' was estimated to be worth between \$10,000 and \$19,999. The rating scheme also changes from year to year. For a description of the ranges of monetary values and how they have changed over time, refer to Appendix B.

<sup>16</sup> The analysis initially began with 1921 data but the preponderance of outsized functions prompted the research to extend back to 1901. No data for 1911 were collected.

Secondly, there is a greater appreciation of the retail sector by published sources. This results in a continuously finer disaggregation of retail types. Dun and Bradstreet field investigators are responsible for placing individual businesses into one of many retail types. In 1901, twenty-three general retail categories existed. For instance, in 1901, 'furniture and undertaker' was a single retail category as was 'books and stationary.' Within these general divisions, further subdivisions exist. For example, one category combined hardware, home furnishings, agricultural implements, and sporting goods. By 1941, these finer disaggregations had become included among the general retail categories. The establishment of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, and its respective coding sequences, allowed for even further retail disaggregation. Thus, whereas one could distinguish between approximately twenty-five to thirty retail types at the beginning of the twentieth century, approximately one hundred could be identified by its close. While every effort is made to maintain a level of consistency among retail types over time, differences do exist on a decade-by-decade basis. The impact of this is that comparability of numbers of outsized functions in total or by retail type becomes problematic.

Depending on the individual PSR's, finer retail disaggregation may alter outsized function counts. Let us take a hypothetical example to illustrate the potential for comparability problems. Assume that there are twenty-nine 'book and stationary' stores with PSR's as depicted in Table 2. The average rating for this retail classification is \$9,189. Therefore, there would be eight businesses that would qualify as outsized functions in this case (two businesses with a PSR of \$27,500 and six with a value of \$15,000; values in excess of the product of 1.5 and the average PSR of \$9,189). If we were to take these same twenty-nine businesses and disaggregate them by whether each was a 'book' store or a 'stationary' store, then the following situation

could arise. In this latter case, it can be seen that the book stores consistently achieve higher PSR's than do stationary stores. But under this circumstance, no book stores would be identified

**Table 2:**  
**The Effects of Changing Retail Classes on Outsized Function Identification**

<b>Pecuniary Strength</b>	<b>No. of Book &amp; Stationary Stores</b>	<b>No. of Book Stores</b>	<b>No. of Stationary Stores</b>
\$1,000,000.00	0	0	0
\$875,000.00	0	0	0
\$625,000.00	0	0	0
\$400,000.00	0	0	0
\$250,000.00	0	0	0
\$162,500.00	0	0	0
\$100,000.00	0	0	0
\$62,500.00	0	0	0
\$42,500.00	0	0	0
\$27,500.00	2	2	0
\$15,000.00	6	4	2
\$7,500.00	12	0	12
\$4,000.00	6	0	6
\$2,500.00	3	0	3
\$1,500.00	0	0	0
\$750.00	0	0	0
\$250.00	0	0	0
<b>Avg. Rating</b>	<b>\$9,189.00</b>	<b>\$19,166.00</b>	<b>\$6,586.00</b>
<b>(1.5) Avg. Rating</b>	<b>\$13,783.50</b>	<b>\$28,749.00</b>	<b>\$9,879.00</b>

as being outsized functions because each acquires a similarly weighted rating. Likewise, only two stationary stores could be claimed to be outsized functions (two stores with a PSR in excess of \$9,879; the value required to qualify). Thus, despite maintaining consistent PSR scores, finer retail disaggregation reveals different numbers of outsized functions to be present (eight versus two). The consequence of this is that comparisons of outsized function totals over time should be treated with caution.

Finally, it should be noted that the monetary values corresponding to each PSR have also changed over time (for a complete listing of PSR's and their respective monetary values, refer to

Appendix B). While this situation, like the previous one, may hinder comparisons made over time, it does not adversely affect the identification of outsized functions at any one point in time. This is because their identification is based on the relative economic strength of businesses at the same point in time.

While this is the same methodology employed by Dahms (1980a), minor variations between his and this work do occur. One important aspect of Dahms' study is that financial strength data were omitted from all businesses located in large cities<sup>17</sup>. While this research does the same, removing from the analysis all businesses in any city with a current population in excess of 10,000, it also tests for the presence of outsized functions among *all* settlements, regardless of population size, in the study area. In fact, attention is drawn to the results acquired from this latter analysis.

Dahms provides no rationale for his decision but it must be challenged for two reasons. First, restricting the analysis to only these settlements biases the results. It is acknowledged that the inclusion of retail establishments present in large cities into the analysis may 'cloak' what could be found among only small towns. Given the long-established trends of population and economic decline (in terms of absolute numbers) in small towns, it could be assumed that the economic strength of businesses in small towns was not on par with those located in large, growing cities.

The effects can be likened to the situation arising from changing retail categories, but in this case different locations are substituted for retail categories (refer to Table 3). In this

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<sup>17</sup> The largest settlement in Wellington County, the City of Guelph, was excluded from Dahms' (1980a) analysis.

**Table 3:  
The Effects of Omitting 'City' Businesses on Outsized Function Identification**

<b>Pecuniary Strength</b>	<b>No. of Retail Establishments</b>	<b>City Location</b>	<b>Small Town Location</b>
\$1,000,000.00	0	0	0
\$875,000.00	0	0	0
\$625,000.00	0	0	0
\$400,000.00	0	0	0
\$250,000.00	0	0	0
\$162,500.00	0	0	0
\$100,000.00	0	0	0
\$62,500.00	0	0	0
\$42,500.00	0	0	0
\$27,500.00	2	2	0
\$15,000.00	6	6	0
\$7,500.00	12	8	4
\$4,000.00	6	0	6
\$2,500.00	3	0	3
\$1,500.00	0	0	0
\$750.00	0	0	0
\$250.00	0	0	0
<b>Avg. Rating</b>	<b>\$9,189.00</b>	<b>\$12,812.00</b>	<b>\$4,730.00</b>
<b>(1.5) Avg. Rating</b>	<b>\$13,783.50</b>	<b>\$19,218.00</b>	<b>\$7,095.00</b>

instance, if all book and stationary stores are analysed, we again see that eight businesses qualify as outsized functions. Let us assume that all eight outsized functions are located in cities.

If these city businesses are removed from the analysis, we find a new set of four outsized functions emerging within the small town environment. Is it appropriate to claim that a business exists as an outsized function when there may be businesses nearby that are in a better financial situation? While comparison among results may reveal some interesting findings, to completely omit a group of businesses is misleading.

Not only is there the danger of biasing the results in this way, but by only including businesses located in small towns, one guarantees that outsized functions will exist solely in the countryside. Thus, the quest to identify outsized functions becomes self fulfilling. Moreover, it

is the opinion of this author that the exclusion of city businesses from the analysis relegates small towns to an unwarranted level of academic mediocrity as it indirectly acts to reinforce the stereotype that smaller settlements cannot compete in the face of metropolitan competition and are, as a result, somehow less important as a research endeavour. But, more importantly, in order to make an accurate appraisal of the influence of retail specialization on the settlement system, one must be aware of what has been occurring not just in the countryside, but also among those larger settlements existing within the system.

### **3.2.3 Limitations of the Functional-Historical Analysis**

Documenting the presence of outsized functions may indicate retail specialization but it, in itself, does not demonstrate that such establishments exist within any one particular settlement system. As the previous chapter has established, retail specialization can manifest itself in various ways (e.g., macro- versus micro-scale, systematic versus unsystematic manners) and in a variety of different locales (e.g., rural countryside versus urbanizing countryside). In addition, in each settlement system construct, retail specialization is a function of different behavioural assumptions.

In a mixed hierarchy or sister city system, specialization emerges because of the splintering of a subset of goods among a select group of settlements. In effect, a new level in the central place hierarchy is created. Consequently, businesses providing this subset of goods enlarge their 'traditional' market area. However, because this subset of goods is offered from fewer settlements, the expanded market areas continue to be mutually exclusive. In effect, consumers continue to visit the closest business possible when purchasing goods and services. Because, in theory, businesses providing similar goods maintain similarly sized market areas,

outsized functions would result not from the interpenetration of any one business, but rather from the ability of entrepreneurs to appropriately assess the logistics of running a business.

In a dispersed city system, however, specialization emerges because consumers actively choose to patronize a specific business, in spite of more proximate alternatives. Therefore, specialization is a result of outsized functions being able to penetrate once exclusive, adjacent market areas. In an urban dispersed city, specialization would manifest itself on a macro-scale, with outsized functions of a similar retail type clustering in a specific settlement. In the dispersed city in the countryside, retail specialization would likely manifest itself on the macro-scale, with dissimilar outsized functions being 'dispersed' throughout the countryside.

In the urban field/arena society system, specialization emerges largely due to urban influences. Either businesses are able to capture a niche, tourist market, or they are able to attract a newly arriving urban residential base. In the first instance, outsized functions would emerge because they act as supra-regional functions, drawing upon much expanded market areas; much more so than what is postulated by the dispersed city. The latter scenario is much more akin to the dispersed city with respect to the behaviours that drive the system. However, in this case, the system is brought about by newly arriving residents, not by the more 'established' population.

Thus, despite being an important tool for recognizing retail specialization, outsized function identification is only the first step in ascertaining the role that such businesses (and the settlements within which they are located) play within the regional space economy.

#### **3.2.4 Distribution and Location of Retail Specialization**

Consequently, once the evolution of retail specialization has been established, closer examination of its spatial distribution is made. Of concern here is determining the size of settlement that outsized functions occur in as well as their geographic distribution in space. Both

characteristics of outsized functions are determined in order to answer questions regarding the evolution of economic specialization as well as its implications for settlement systems.

First, much unsubstantiated support currently exists for small town retail specialization. Determining the extent to which outsized functions have located in small towns provides the empirical proof needed to justify such support. Secondly, the data may reveal that outsized functions are distributed among only a specific size range of small towns. This has immense implications for assessing the applicability of settlement system constructs that describe the role of small towns within them. Just as settlement systems may be organized by different, albeit coinciding organizing forces, it may be just as plausible that differently-sized small towns may exist within multiple settlement frameworks.

Not only is it important to establish the presence of outsized functions and their distribution within the settlement hierarchy, considerable importance must also be placed on the geography of outsized functions. Again, attention to this issue is needed to place retail specialization in its proper theoretical context. Both the dispersed city and the arena society expect small town retail specialization to exist. But in the latter, retail specialization is externally driven in that it is brought about by further incorporation into metropolitan spheres of influence. This component is absent in the dispersed city. As a result, it becomes important to identify where in space outsized functions are located for it provides insight as to the suitability of existing theoretical constructs in describing the role of small towns in the countryside.

### **3.2.5 Limitations of the Data Source**

The historical analysis sets the context for the rest of the dissertation. It is here where tried methodologies are implemented. Use of an expanded study area, the inclusion of both cities and small towns, and the incorporation of a time-series analysis also act as ways to test

unverified elements of retail specialization. While we may expand our current knowledge of retail specialization, we continue to achieve only a partial understanding of this phenomenon. The functional-historical analysis considers only the locational and spatial arrangement of retail specialization, with evidence of it being based on the presence of outsized functions. It has already been shown that their identification can be manipulated, thereby influencing one's results. Additional concerns must also be considered. These center on the use of *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* as the source of retail/service provision among settlements.

Short of visiting every settlement in the study area, *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* provide the most comprehensive account of retail and service businesses in each community. Because they have been published throughout the twentieth century, they allow for comparisons to be made among individual settlements with respect to their retail/service composition over time. Many academics, particularly geographers (e.g. Dahms, 1984; 1980b; Marshall, 1969; Hodge, 1965) have used them to conduct research on the economic evolution of towns and villages in the countryside. This list of respected geographers lends credence to the use of Dun and Bradstreet data when investigating the changing retail and service structure of Canadian settlements. However, this source of information is not without problems. Issues of reporting are of utmost concern as they may act to limit one's ability to identify outsized functions, thereby jeopardizing the ability to accurately document characteristics of retail specialization.

Despite its comprehensiveness, Dun and Bradstreet reporting is not complete. While this problem does not appear to have been significant in the earlier decades of the twentieth century, it is of concern for the post-1971 period. The first problem concerns the (admitted) under-reporting of retail chains. Specifically, Dun and Bradstreet acknowledges that it only lists such operations by the head office location, unless the store is individually owned. Branch

outlets, therefore, are omitted. This is not a major problem in this study because the majority of settlements under investigation have populations of under 10,000 and, as revealed through field investigation, contain only a small number of chain store outlets.

Of significant concern, however, is the declining reliability in the reporting of businesses and their associated PSR's in the post-1971 period. The problem first emerged with the 1951 data when Dun and Bradstreet began to adopt SIC codes. At that time, both their own categories and SIC categories were used, creating some confusion in the tallying of retail businesses. In the desire to conform to the more accepted SIC codes, however, it appears that the reporting of pecuniary strengths suffered, with just over one-half of identified businesses being assigned a value. This is a significant difference from the decades prior to, and following, 1951 when between 70% to 90% of identified businesses were given a PSR.

**Table 4:**  
**Percentage of Listed Businesses Reporting an Associated Pecuniary Strength Value**

Year	Businesses Reporting (%)
1901	86.3
1921	89.8
1931	79.1
1941	71.2
1951	51.5
1961	70.5
1971	78.2
1981	31.5
1991	15.9

Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

It is because of Dun and Bradstreet's ability to accurately identify most retail and service businesses and to assign PSR's to the majority of these, that the use of this data source to aid in the recognition of retail specialization is acceptable. But its use should only be restricted to the pre-1981 era. After 1971, the ability of Dun and Bradstreet to either report the existence of a

business or to assign a PSR is questioned. As Table 4 shows, in 1981 less than one-third of reported businesses were assigned a PSR. In 1991, this proportion declines further to 16% of identified businesses assigned a PSR. This situation must also be combined with Dun and Bradstreet's inability to verify the presence of retail and service establishments in settlements. Comparisons with field investigations in a number of towns and villages in the study area with *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* reveal a sometimes severe under-reporting of businesses in the publications. Taken together, these situations pose a tremendous problem in the identification of outsized functions during both 1981 and 1991. The end result is that one's contemporary knowledge of retail specialization is hindered.

### **3.3 The Behavioural - Contemporary Analysis**

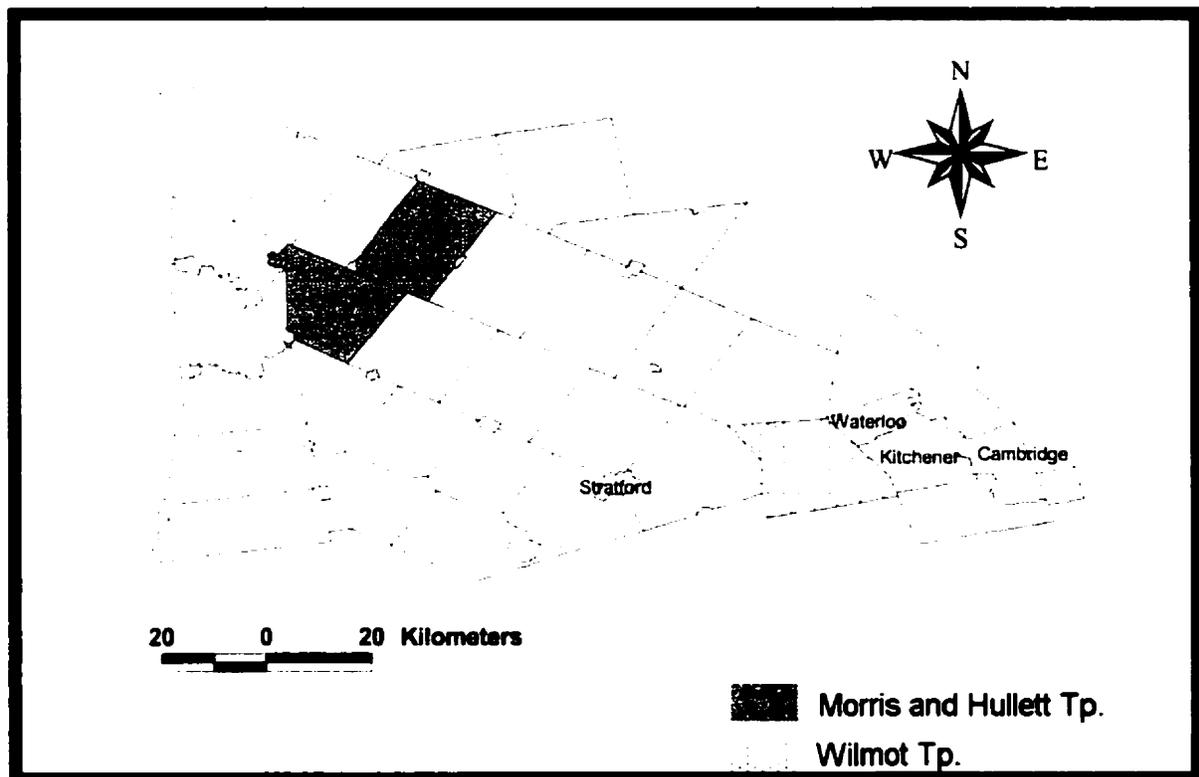
Identifying outsized functions on the basis of economic performance does tell us something about the vitality of small town businesses. It does not, however, tell us anything regarding the actual patronage of such establishments; a potentially dangerous flaw of functional-historical inquiry. Knowledge of the behaviour of countryside residents is critical in that it acts as further justification for the acceptance of established settlement system constructs to adequately describe the role of the small town within them. Each construct being considered is associated with particular behavioural postulates. If it is determined that people's actions do not conform to these assumptions, then further constructs must be elaborated.

#### **3.3.1 The Selection of a Study Area**

Before an investigation of the shopping behaviour of countryside residents was undertaken, it was first necessary to isolate portions of the study area from which to conduct the analysis. Guiding the choice was the inclusion of environments that illustrated very different degrees of metropolitan influence. It was believed that Wilmot Township, located in the

Regional Municipality of Waterloo, would be a locale heavily influenced by the Tri-Cities. Conversely, the Townships of Hullett and Morris, located in the northwestern sections of Huron County, were chosen to typify a more rural environment (refer to Figure 12).

**Figure 12:**  
**Study Area: Contemporary Analysis**

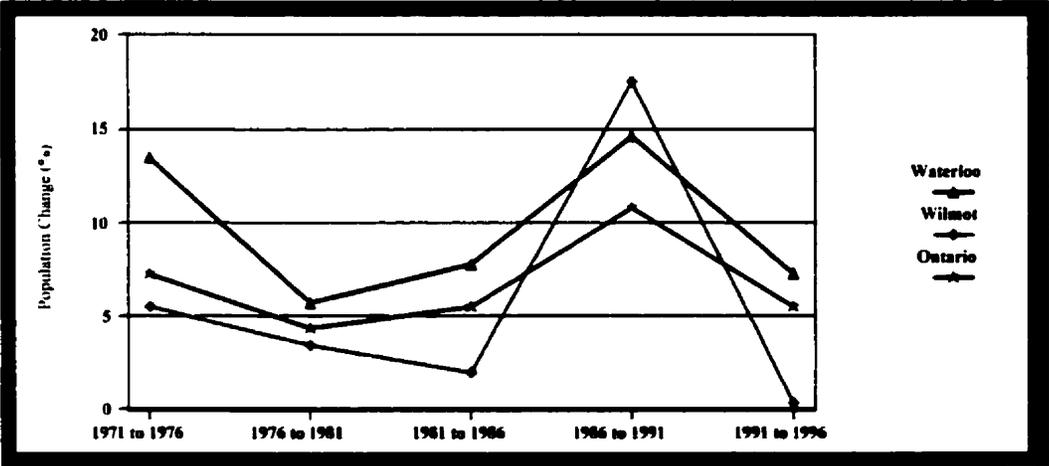


While distance from a metropolitan center initially influenced this choice, other factors also played a role. Despite not being included in the Kitchener CMA, previous research as well as Census publications reveal that Wilmot township is clearly located within the daily commutershed of the Tri-Cities. In 1996, 46% of Wilmot's resident employed labour force (RELF) worked within the same census division (CD), but in another census subdivision (CSD), that they lived in (Statistics Canada, 1998). Although specific destinations are not identified, it can be concluded that many of these workers found employment in the Tri-Cities. That a large

proportion of Wilmot’s residents found work in the Tri-Cities is supported by the work of Dahms (1962) who, almost forty years ago, showed that the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge drew more of Wilmot’s RELF than did the other areas located within the Region.

Wilmot Township also has recently experienced a tremendous increase in its population base. Between 1986 and 1991, the township’s population increased by 17.6% (1,962 people). To show how dramatic an increase this was, it had taken the previous twenty years (1966 to 1986) to match the gain experienced in the 1986 to 1991 period. Between 1991 and 1996 however, growth slowed to 5.5% (refer to Figure 13). Although growth in this period was not considerable, field investigations of the township revealed intense levels of construction activities in many of the settlements (e.g. Baden, New Hamburg, St. Agatha, etc.). That a substantial number of Wilmot’s RELF works in the Tri-Cities, combined with the facts that population growth and/or housing starts have been considerable, leads to the conclusion that Wilmot Township has become subsumed within the Tri-Cities’ sphere of influence.

**Figure 13:**  
**Population Growth: Wilmot Township, 1971 - 1996**



Source: (Statistics Canada).

Not only can it be established that Wilmot Township lies within the daily urban system of the Tri-Cities, but this locale was also selected due to the very recent findings of Thomson and Mitchell (1998). Their study of activity patterns of Wilmot Township residents found that newly arrived exurbanites tended to patronize local businesses (as opposed to stores located in Waterloo, Kitchener, or Cambridge) for goods and services traditionally viewed as being middle and higher-order types. Such findings could not easily be explained but it was hypothesized that such behaviour was a result of the presence of outsized functions in the area. Although Thomson and Mitchell's study does not look at outsized functions in any depth, their mentioning (unveiled through behaviouralist analysis) warrants further investigation in this area.

Hullet and Morris Townships, meanwhile, were chosen for their more 'rural' locale. In terms of distance, these two adjacent townships lie approximately 75 to 95km (as the crow flies) from the Tri-Cities. The city of London lies roughly the same distance to the south of the two townships (refer back to Figure 11). This distance would place them beyond the theoretically postulated, as well as empirically established, commuting reach of large urban centers.

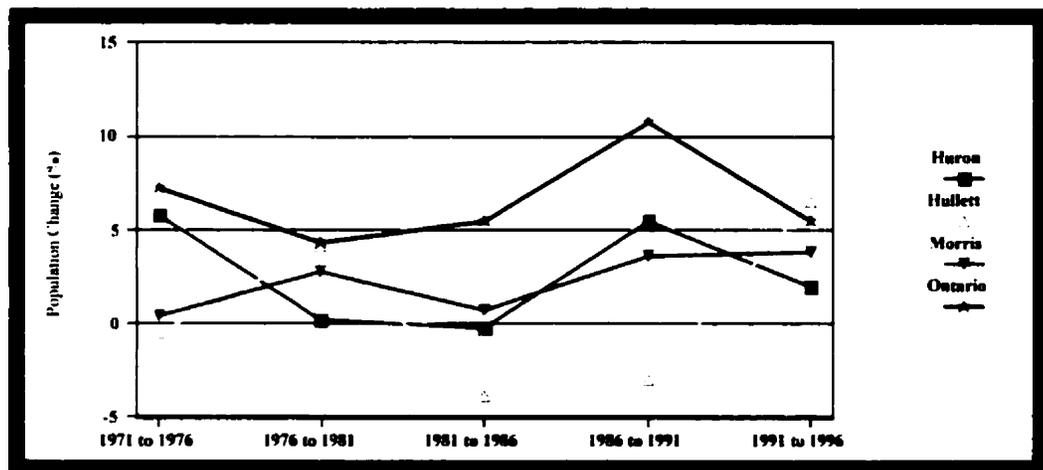
That Morris and Hullett do not lie within the commutershed of London or the Tri-Cities is verified by census data, which reveal that the two townships display a very high degree of employment self-sufficiency. 1996 commuting data suggest that 92.3% of Hullett Township's employed labour force worked within Huron County and 76.9% of Morris' residents do so (Statistics Canada, 1998). Therefore, the vast majority of Morris and Hullett's RELF work either at home or in nearby small towns.

Morris and Hullett Townships are 'rural' in the sense that they do not belong to any metropolitan commutershed. They are also defined as 'rural' by Statistics Canada. This agency defines rural areas as those that do not contain any settlements in excess of a population of 1,000

nor a population density of 400 people/km<sup>2</sup>. According to these criteria, the entire population of the two townships is rural. In fact, the only concentrated settlements that exist within the townships include Belgrave (population 437) and Londesborough (population 186) (Statistics Canada, 1998b).

The absence of metropolitan employment and the presence of a largely dispersed population is partially explained by the very high reliance on agriculture for the township's economies. According to the 1996 Census, 35% and 40% of Morris and Hullett's residents employed labour force was engaged in agricultural endeavours. This is much higher than the Ontario provincial average of 3% (Statistics Canada, 1999b).

**Figure 14:**  
**Population Growth: Morris and Hullett Townships, 1971 - 1996.**

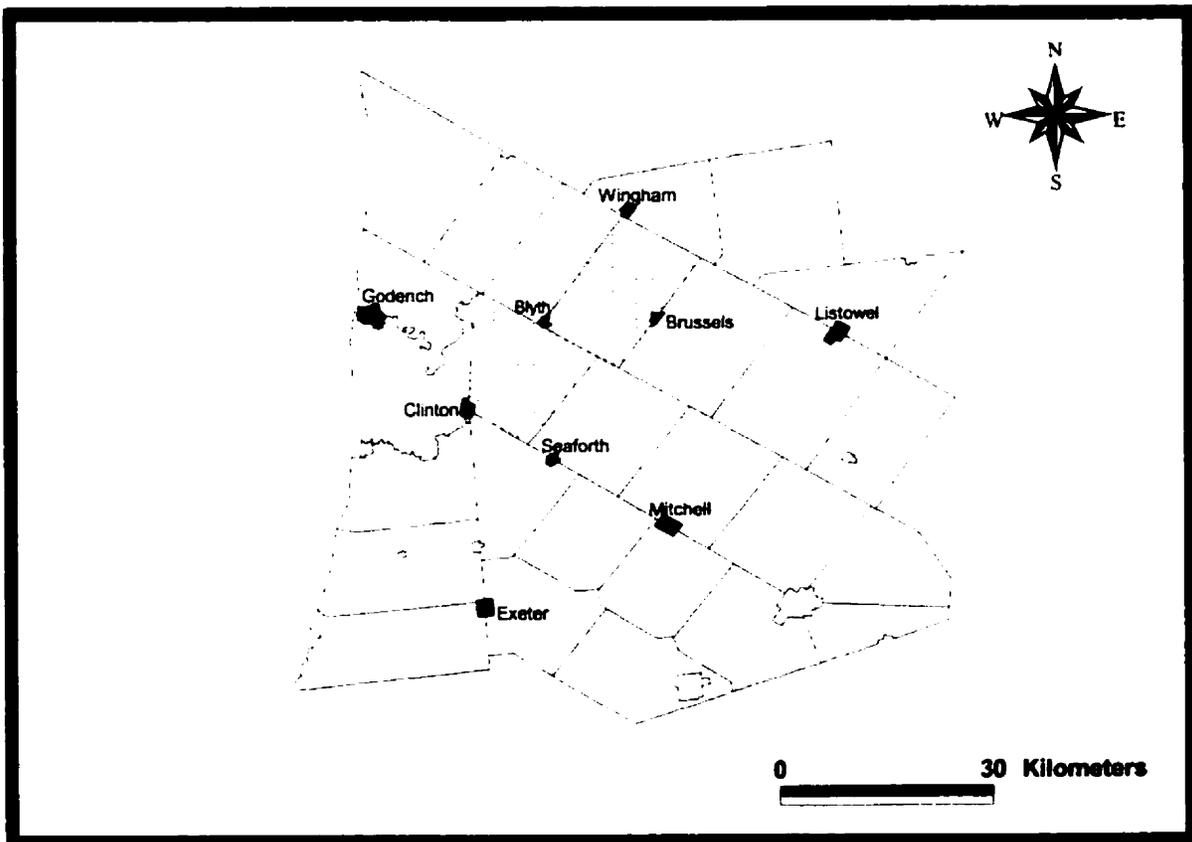


Source: (Statistics Canada).

To somewhat belabour the point, both Morris and Hullett Townships display population trends observed in many other rural areas. Specifically, neither township has ever experienced a rapid increase in its population and are, in fact, less populated now than at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1921, the populations of Hullett and Morris Townships stood at 2,081 and

1,905 respectively. By 1996, they stood at 1,878 and 1,732 respectively. Huron County as a whole can be deemed to be a slow growth region as it has consistently grown at a considerably slower pace than the Ontario provincial average. Hullett and Morris Townships, more often than not, have grown at a pace even less than Huron County's average (refer to Figure 14). It can be confidently stated, therefore, that the two townships have remained stagnant in terms of population growth.

**Figure 15:**  
**Situation of Morris and Hullett Townships in Relation to Nearby Settlements**



The picture presented of Morris and Hullett Townships is one of a sleepy, static, agriculturally-based, rural environment. While other areas in Huron County also display such characteristics, it is perhaps their situation relative to other towns and villages that make it an

excellent region to test for the presence of retail specialization. As Figure 15 shows, these townships are surrounded by several, functionally similar settlements. Exeter, Wingham, Clinton, Mitchell, Goderich, Listowel, and Seaforth are all within a thirty minute drive from these two townships.

Although caution is used in classifying these functionally similar centers as 'middle-order settlements,' they do house comparable numbers and types of economic functions. The similarly-sized group of settlements surrounding the townships are Seaforth (52 stores), Mitchell (57 stores), Wingham (67 stores), Clinton (81 stores), Listowel (86 stores), and Exeter (71 stores). One larger town, Goderich (116 stores) also lies immediately to the west of the two townships. Also nearby are the incorporated settlements of Brussels (29 stores) and Blyth (23 stores).

Thus, this region of the south-central Ontario countryside clearly stands in stark contrast to the rapidly growing suburban environment of Wilmot Township. Both provide excellent sites to test whether retail specialization marks a phase shift from more rural to urban environments, or if it represents a form of rural reorganisation, brought about by continual population loss or stagnation.

### **3.3.2 The Consumer Survey**

To acquire knowledge of the shopping behaviour of residents, a four-page questionnaire was distributed to a sample<sup>18</sup> of 2,000 households in the three townships (1,109 questionnaires in Wilmot and 892 in Morris and Hullett) during a four week period in the autumn of 1998. Respondants were supplied with pre-paid return envelopes in hopes of achieving a fairly high response rate. Two months after the questionnaires were delivered, a 20% response rate was attained.

A questionnaire was distributed to households for two main reasons. First, as it unfortunately turned out, *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* were an unsuitable data source for presenting an accurate contemporary distribution of outsized functions in the region. Secondly, even if published economic indicators were available, they only allude to particular behavioural patterns. In other words, use of published economic indicators allows for the identification of retail and service establishments that are prosperous. They do not reveal who is shopping in these flourishing establishments.

The actual questionnaire is composed of three parts (refer to Appendix C). The first part is devoted to general demographic information such as age, employment, economic, and residential history of the household. The second part reveals residents' information on shopping behaviour. The final segment of the questionnaire identifies the factors influencing the decision to shop in particular communities and at particular establishments.

Very little analysis is conducted on the results obtained from the first section of the questionnaire. The results are rather reported and act to merely set the geographic context from which to contrast Morris and Hullett Townships with Wilmot Township. The data are

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<sup>18</sup> A stratified random sampling design was utilized. The household 'population' was based on 1996 Canadian Census information. The proportion of the population located in each settlement and the open countryside acted as the basis for the stratified random sample. For example, according to the Census, 30.5% of all Wilmot Township's population are located in New Hamburg. Accordingly, 30.5% of the questionnaires were randomly distributed to New Hamburg households (at the scale of 'unincorporated settlement,' the Census does not list household information).

<sup>19</sup> As with all surveys, there is a danger of producing some form of response bias. This emerges in the under- and over-representation of specific settlements. For a detailed discussion of the conformity of the sample to the population (according to known statistics), refer to Appendix D.

also important in that they allow for a finer scale of disaggregation and hence a greater degree of association between shopping behaviour and specified demographic and geographic characteristics. The information obtained from the first section of the questionnaire allows for a disaggregation of shopping behaviour by, for example, length of residence ('oldtimers' versus 'newcomers'), age ('elderly' versus 'young'), and location ('nodal' versus 'scattered' residences).

The second (and most critical) section of the questionnaire is based in the 'empirical-behavioural' tradition, which attempts to document overt shopping behaviour. Of critical importance are the responses to two questions, which, in effect, allow for origin-destination matrices to be developed. One question asks participants to list the town(s) they visit to buy a number of low, middle, and higher-order goods and services. Therefore, it is from this section that information regarding the shopping behaviour of countryside residents is determined. The answers to this question are important in that they provide the necessary information to determine whether residents behave in a manner consistent with the central place hierarchy or in a fashion more consistent with either the dispersed city or arena society. For instance, if it was revealed that several small towns were visited for varied purposes then, depending on where the sample was taken, evidence of either the dispersed city or arena society might exist. Retail specialization necessitates several shopping trips if goods and services are required. According to central place theory, however, consumers' actions are, in a sense, predetermined since they live within the confines of one low-order, one middle-order, and one high-order center. Thus, in a system organized by central place principles, one would expect that relatively few centers be patronized.

The purpose of the next question in this section is to identify outsized functions. Specifically, it asks respondents to name the particular establishment they tend to visit to

purchase the afore-mentioned items. It is at this point that this research departs from previous studies. There is no precedence for the identification of outsized functions from a behaviouralist perspective. However, in attempting to remain true to the concept of the outsized function as established by Hart et. al. (1968) and operationalized by Dahms (1980a), two criteria must be met in order to qualify a business as an outsized function in the contemporary analysis. Outsized functions, at the very least, must be able to attract an observable number of consumers. Outsized functions are successful businesses. Whereas previous studies have measured 'success' in terms of economic strength, the contemporary analysis measures 'success' by a business' ability to attract consumers. Although arbitrarily established, a business therefore qualifies as an outsized function if at least one-quarter of sampled respondents mention it as being visited for any one good or service.

While this criterion acts as a basis for retail specialization, it must still be determined how specialization manifests itself and within what type of system specialization exists. Ultimately, the analysis of origin-destination matrices allow for a determination of the latter. Taken in the context of the dispersed city or arena society, outsized functions exist because of their ability to penetrate adjacent, previously exclusive or elusive market areas. However, in the context of mixed hierarchies, specialization exists not due to the interpenetration of market areas, but through the re-establishment of market areas of settlements within the system. The end result is an enlargement in some market areas (because of the re-organization of goods within the system) but market area exclusivity remains intact.

In order to accomodate these differing types of retailing specializations, in addition to attracting a sizeable clientele, outsized functions, in the contemporary analysis, must also be able to draw such a clientele from throughout the countryside. For example, it must be shown that

residents from all over Morris and Hullett Townships visit a particular retailer in order for it to be qualified as an outsized function.

While this research documents the behaviours that exist in a specialized retailing milieu, a third section was included in the questionnaire to act as an examination of the motivations of consumers. Thus, while the dissertation focuses on *what* type of system(s) exists, some attempt is made at explaining *why* a particular system may exist. A cursory examination of the latter is sought through the inclusion of a third section in the questionnaire. This final section, therefore, adopts a 'cognitive-behavioural' perspective by incorporating a multi-dimensional scaling technique similar to that used by van Auken and Lonial (1991), Davies (1987), Hooley and Cook (1984) and Burnett (1973).

Specifically, the final portion of the survey is composed of six questions and asks respondents to rate the importance (on a scale of 1 - 5: 1 meaning 'very important' with 5 representing 'unimportant') of several factors hypothesized<sup>20</sup> to be influential in the act of shopping. Eleven factors<sup>21</sup> in total are offered in the questionnaire and range from (a) distance factors (distance to both home and work), (b) store traits (store appearance and hours of operation), (c) good/service characteristics (price, quality, and variety of goods offered), (d) psychological factors (store reputation and friends with store proprietor) and (e)

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<sup>20</sup> Empirical studies by those such as Bates and Gabor (1987), Arnold et. al. (1983), Parker (1976), Pacione (1975), and Davies (1973) have investigated the importance of several factors in influencing consumer patronage. This body of retailing literature acted as the basis for choosing the motivational factors included in this questionnaire.

<sup>21</sup> The eleven factors identified in the questionnaire are primarily 'demand-based' rather than 'supply-based' variables. That is, factors that influence consumer demand for a particular product and/or business establishment are examined. No supply-side factors (i.e. the ability of the entrepreneur or retailer-supplier relations) are examined.

marketing peculiarities (store promotions). The same factors are assessed for a representative sample of low, middle, and high-order goods and services. Again, while relatively little attention is paid to data obtained from this group of questions, their inclusion allows insight to be gained on consumer behaviour. Specifically, it allows for a determination of factors that influence shopping behaviour, and ultimately the existence of retail specialization among small towns.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results: Historical-Functional Analysis**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Results obtained from this research are presented in the ensuing two chapters. Chapter 5 reports on the findings of the contemporary behavioural analysis. The present chapter describes the results of the historical-functional analysis. As outlined earlier, there are three objectives to this research. The first is to identify the presence of retail specialization and to trace its evolution over time. The second objective is to recognize the distribution of retail specialization, particularly with respect to the size of settlement. Lastly, the location of retail specialization, within the context of metropolitan influence, is determined. Achieving these objectives allows us to assess the implications of economic specialization on the structure of the settlement system and ultimately on the constructs that are used to model such systems.

#### **4.2 Patterns of Retail Change: An Overview**

Prior to reporting aspects of retail specialization, a general discussion of the changes occurring in the retail base of settlements<sup>22</sup> located within the study area is warranted. This account acts to set the retailing context of the region and, by doing so, identifies several retailing

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<sup>22</sup> In section 4.2 *Patterns of Retail Change: An Overview*, settlements are disaggregated into residential and retailing settlements. Residential settlements are agglomerations of households that provide no retail function, while retailing settlements are agglomerations of households that contain at least one retail/service establishment. The prior collection of settlements are identified from information presented in Canadian Census publications (*Census Division and Subdivision* collection and *Unincorporated Settlements* collection) and from Floreen Carter's (1984) *Place Names of Ontario*. Aside from the results presented in Section 4.2, the remainder of the analysis, unless otherwise specified, only includes all 'retailing settlements' or those settlements containing at least one retail/service business as recorded by *Dun & Bradstreet Reference Books*.

trends that have been documented elsewhere in the literature.

As the following two tables indicate (Tables 5 and 6), the settlement and retail system in the study area has undergone two very noticeable trends over the course of the twentieth century. First, more settlements exist on the landscape today than at the beginning of the twentieth century. Secondly, and in spite of the first observation, the retail system has become much more concentrated. Therefore, despite there being more settlements, fewer play any role in the retail system.

Table 5 shows that the number of settlements existing in the study area remained unchanged throughout the first half of the twentieth century with approximately 195. The study area, however, has witnessed a substantial increase in the number of recognized settlements during the post-war period. As of 1996, there were 234; an increase of almost forty new settlements. Disaggregating the data according to County reveals two trends. First, there has been a sustained, continual increase in the number of settlements present in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo since 1951. The same phenomenon can be accredited to Huron County, although the increase in the number of settlements is much more recent, manifesting itself since 1971.

**Table 5:**  
**Total Number of Settlements, 1901 - 1996**

	1901	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1996
Huron	80	80	80	80	81	81	82	92	97	97
Perth	66	66	66	66	66	66	68	69	71	71
Waterloo	49	49	49	49	49	57	60	65	66	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>234</b>

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

While there has been a 20% increase in the number of settlements dotting the landscape, such an increase is largely attributable to the increase in recognized residential enclaves. Among those settlements emerging on the landscape, very few offer any retail or service function. Such places are merely a collection of residential homes, acting as dormitory communities for other, surrounding employment nodes.

Not only do these 'new' settlements not provide any retail function, but many older settlements no longer play any retail role in the space economy. Thus, today, considerably fewer settlements act as providers of goods and services. As Table 6 illustrates, this trend of retail demise has been widespread, occurring throughout the study area. The trend, however, has been somewhat more pronounced in Huron and Perth Counties. In both counties, over one-half of all established<sup>23</sup> settlements existing at 1901 have since disappeared (refer to Figures 16 to 18 for a spatial distribution of this phenomenon).

**Table 6:**  
**Total Number of Settlements That Have Lost**  
**All Retail / Service Functions, 1901 - 1996**

	No. of Defunct Settlements
Huron	47
Perth	37
Waterloo	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

Retail demise not only displays a spatial pattern, but also a temporal one. As Table 7 shows, those settlements disappearing from the retail landscape have tended to do so during the

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<sup>23</sup> 'Established' settlements refer to those that contained at least one retail or service function.

post-war years. In each of Perth County and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, approximately one-half dozen settlements 'died' in the first half of the twentieth century. But since 1951, over one-half of Perth's and almost one-half of Waterloo's settlements have become defunct in terms of their retail structure. The picture is considerably worse in Huron County, where the trend of retail extinction has been sustained throughout the entire twentieth century.

**Table 7:**  
**Total Number of Settlements**  
**with at Least One Retail / Service Function, 1901 - 1996**

	1901	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1996
Huron	74	68	64	60	58	48	36	29	29	29
Perth	59	53	53	52	52	45	30	24	22	23
Waterloo	46	41	39	39	40	36	33	27	24	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76</b>

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

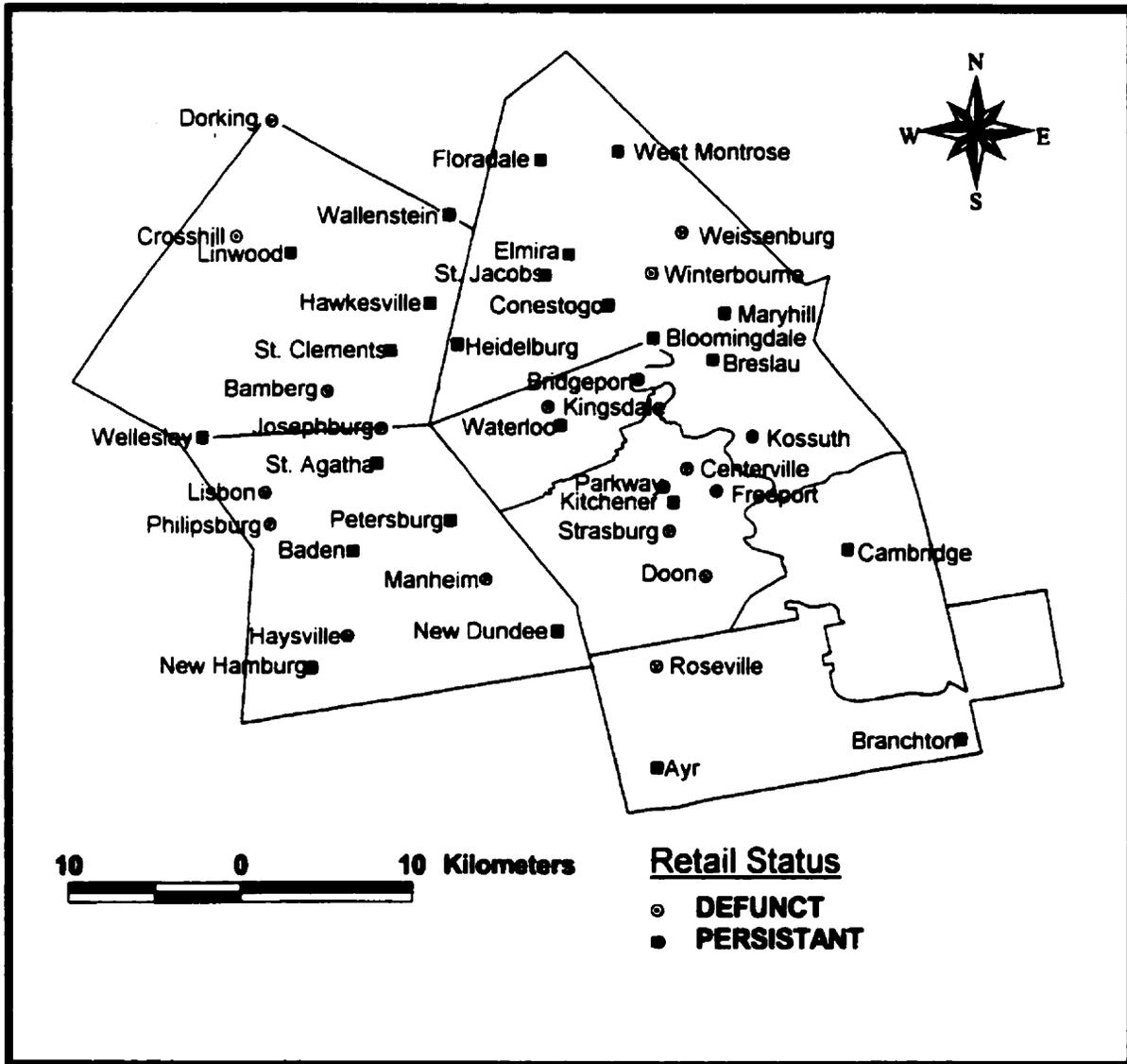
These findings echo those by Stabler and Olfert (1996), Dahms (1995, 1991b, 1986a, 1985), Carihfield (1991), Johansen and Fuguitt (1990), Johnson (1985), and Hodge and Qadeer (1982), who have all documented downright retail demise and/or decline in the countryside.<sup>24</sup> Many have used such observations as justification to claim that small towns are dying or that their importance within the retail system is declining.

It cannot be denied that within the Counties of Perth and Huron, and in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, many settlements have lost all retail functions. It is also true that many countryside settlements, although still containing retail functions, have lost a considerable

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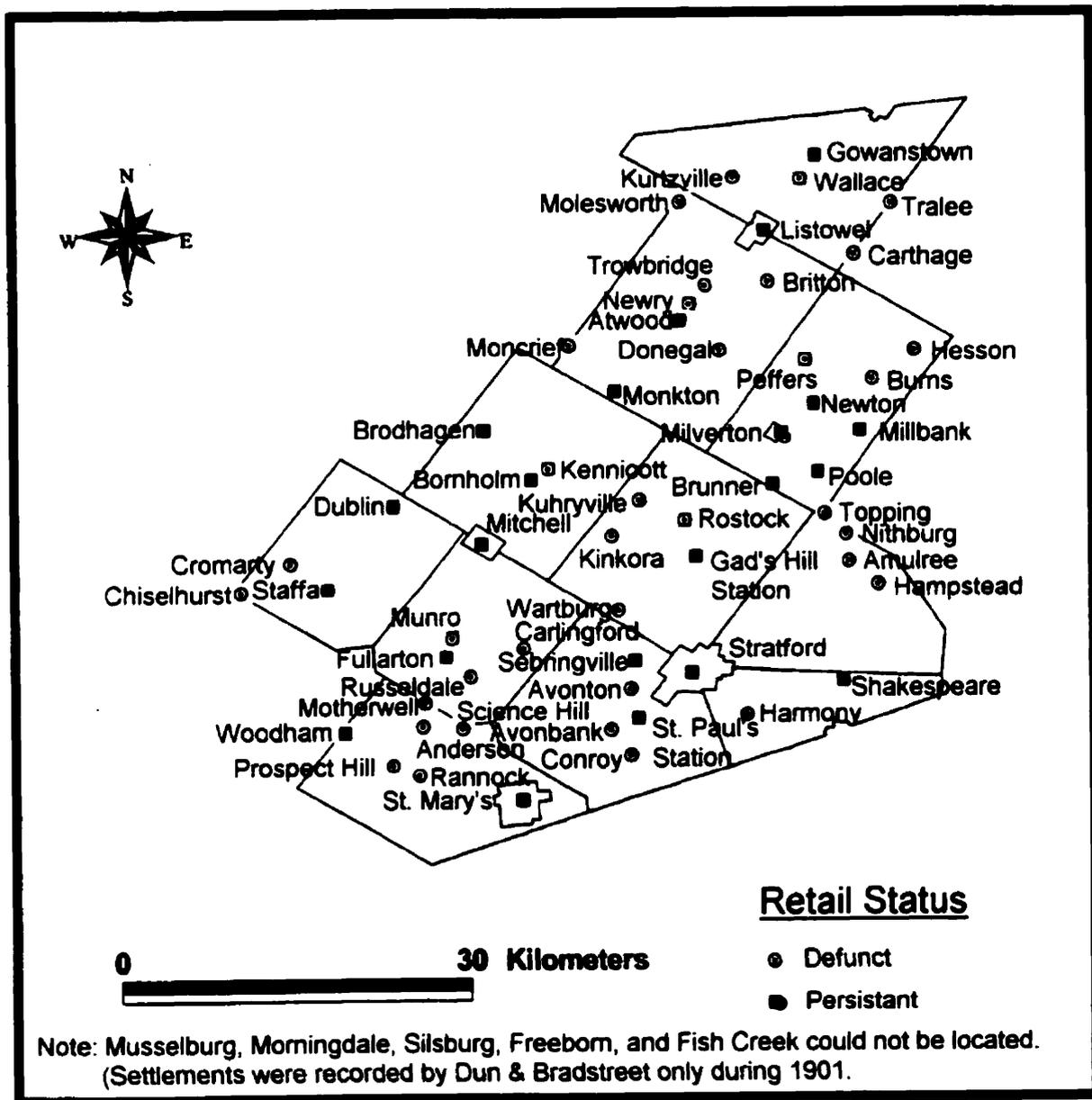
<sup>24</sup> Retail decline and/or demise has been indexed according to losses in the number of retail establishments and/or functions present in a settlement.

**Figure 16:**  
**Functional Status of Settlements in Study Area;**  
**Regional Municipality of Waterloo**



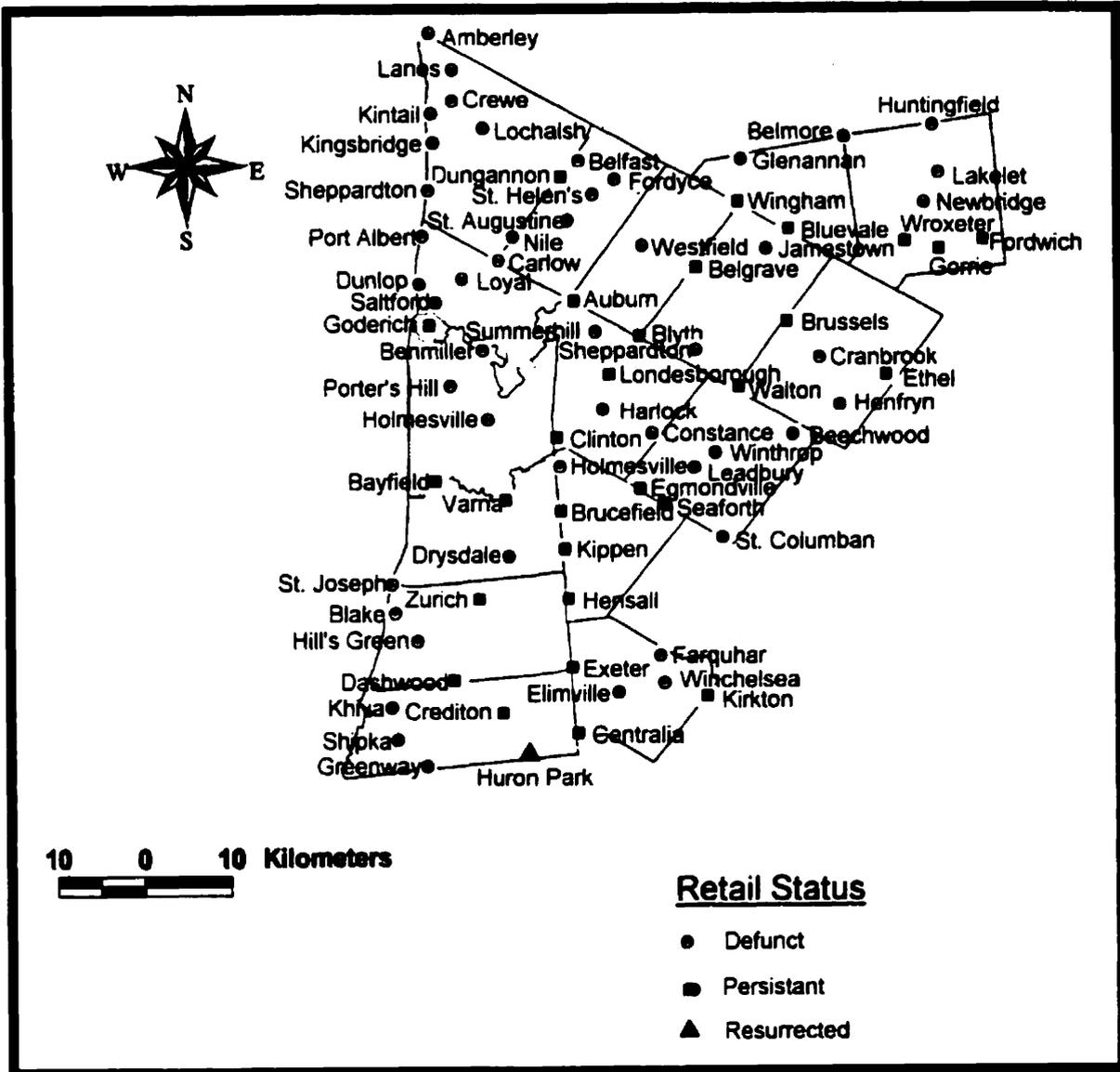
Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, 1901 - 1991).

**Figure 17:**  
**Functional Status of Settlements in Study Area:**  
**Perth County**



Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, 1901 - 1991).

**Figure 18:**  
**Functional Status of Settlements in Study Area:**  
**Huron County**



Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, 1901 - 1991).

number of them (refer to Appendix E). From this perspective, it appears that the retail future for small towns in the countryside is bleak. Despite this, it is believed by this author that small towns play a continuing, important role in the retail system and, as will be shown from the data collected on outsized functions, show signs of persistent retail vitality.

#### **4.3 Evolution of Retail Specialization**

Retail specialization has been a persistent feature of the study area. Outsized functions have not only been present in large numbers throughout most of the twentieth century, but they have spanned a broad range of retailing functions. Taken together, these findings suggest that retail specialization is widespread.

**Table 8:  
Number of Outsized Functions, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>	<b>Percentage of all Businesses Qualifying as Outsized Functions</b>
1901	345	14.7
1921	358	16.5
1931	346	14.2
1941	312	13.2
1951	248*	11.6
1961	299	13.1
1971	350	14.9
1981	113**	4.7
1991	37**	1.5

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

• Dun & Bradstreet provide pecuniary strengths for only 52% of listed businesses. This is considerably less than other years which report in the range of 80%.

\*\*Data obtained from the 1981 and 1991 Dun & Bradstreet Reference books fail to report pecuniary strength data for the majority of listed businesses. Thus, while results are presented in this and following tables, little reference is made to them due to the unreliability of data.

### **4.3.1 The Prevalance of Outsized Functions**

Table 8 documents the continuing prevalence of outsized functions. Until recently, their numbers have been impressive, with more than 300 being identified in each of the study years. This does not suggest that the same 300 businesses have continued to 'outperform' their competitors. It merely suggests that a large number of outstanding businesses have been present in the region during the century.

While the number of outsized functions present in the study area may sound large, the proportion of businesses qualifying as outsized functions is consistent with what has been found elsewhere. Dahms (1980a) found a total of thirty-two outsized functions in Wellington County, Ontario.<sup>25</sup> This figure may not seem on par with what was found here but, represented as a percentage of all businesses, he determined that approximately 15% of establishments stand out as being outsized functions.

What is somewhat unexpected is the longevity with which outsized functions have been present. Granted, retail specialization has been hypothesized to have existed as early as the 1930's, but most theoretical constructs portray it as a recent phenomenon. Retail specialization appears to be a common occurrence within the study area as far back as 1901.

### **4.3.2 The Diversity of Outsized Functions**

Not only have outsized functions consistently been present in the study area, they have spanned the entire range of retail classifications. Table 9 shows only a sample of retail categories (for a complete listing of outsized functions by retail type by decade, refer to Appendix A). Outsized functions can be found among almost all retail types for all years examined. Such

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<sup>25</sup> Wellington County lies immediately to the east of the area chosen for this study.

a finding, although expected, has not been documented elsewhere in the literature. One might expect that evidence of outsized functions exists among many retail types given the nature of retail specialization. Retail specialization is based on cooperation, rather than competition, among settlements. It, therefore, would make sense that each settlement specialize in the provision of goods not offered by other nearby centers.

**Table 9:**  
**Outsized Functions, by Retail Category; 1901 - 1991**

<b>Retail Type</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>
Gas Station*	n/a	n/a	7	13	34	46	22	8	1
General Store*	25	35	25	29	25	28	32	6	0
Grocery Store*	36	49	53	32	21	17	20	5	2
Hardware Store*	7	11	9	9	6	12	12	6	2
Hotel*	36	13	4	3	6	3	7	4	0
Car Dealer*	n/a	7	5	7	11	13	12	8	6
Restaurant*	0	2	4	7	8	14	20	3	2
Lumber Supply Store*	2	0	2	3	2	5	11	2	2
Furniture Store**	13	13	5	4	2	3	6	8	2
Men's Clothing Store**	1	6	2	3	7	15	11	5	2
Women's Clothing Store**	6	10	5	4	4	5	13	3	2
Variety Store**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	0	9	2	2
Auto Repair Shop**	n/a	11	19	22	13	12	20	8	5
Jewellery Store	8	13	6	4	13	7	8	3	0
Book Store	9	2	5	3	2	4	2	1	0
No. of Retail Types with Outsized Functions	34	36	42	37	33	42	45	32	21

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

- Retail types for which outsized functions were identified by Hart et. al. (1968) and Dahms (1981).
- \*\* Retail types for which outsized functions were identified by Dahms (1980a).

However, studies by Hart et. al. (1968) and Dahms (1981) found evidence of outsized functions in only nine and thirteen retail categories. The study of Huron, Perth, and Waterloo

regions reveals evidence of outsized functions in at least thirty-three and in as many as forty-five retail categories (depending on the year of analysis). Hart et. al.'s analysis is limited to nine retail categories due to data constraints, but Dahms states that "thirteen business types qualified as outsized functions" (Dahms, 1980a; 299). Although it is not known how many retail categories Dahms incorporated into his study, one must question why such great disparity exists between his 1980 study and the present one.

#### **4.4 Distribution of Retail Specialization**

The data suggest that retail specialization has clearly been present within the study area over the past 100 years. The numbers of outsized functions alone is impressive. The distribution of retail specialization within the settlement system is just as striking. Outsized functions can be found in the smallest of towns to the largest of cities in the study area. Nevertheless, signs of retail specialization become more pronounced as one travels up the settlement hierarchy.

**Table 10:  
Number of Settlements Containing at Least One Outsized Function,  
by Population Size, 1901 - 1991**

	Population Range					
	1-500	501-1,000	1,001-2,500	2,501-5,000	5,001-9,999	≥ 10,000
1901	39 (of 135)	9 (of 12)	7 (of 7)	7 (of 7)	2 (of 2)	1 (of 1)
1921	29 (of 129)	10 (of 11)	8 (of 8)	3 (of 3)	2 (of 2)	3 (of 3)
1931	35 (of 118)	9 (of 10)	7 (of 7)	3 (of 3)	2 (of 2)	3 (of 3)
1941	36 (of 116)	6 (of 8)	8 (of 8)	4 (of 4)	2 (of 2)	3 (of 3)
1951	29 (of 125)	7 (of 9)	4 (of 5)	8 (of 8)	1 (of 1)	4 (of 4)
1961	28 (of 94)	8 (of 11)	4 (of 6)	6 (of 6)	2 (of 2)	5 (of 5)
1971	20 (of 52)	12 (of 18)	4 (of 5)	8 (of 8)	2 (of 2)	5 (of 5)
1981	4 (of 39)	7 (of 16)	2 (of 5)	6 (of 6)	3 (of 3)	4 (of 4)
1991	2 of (30)	0 of (14)	4 (of 10)	2 (of 5)	2 (of 4)	4 (of 4)

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, Censuses of Canada).

#### **4.4.1 The Association Between Population and Number of Outsized Functions**

The approximate 300 outsized functions present are dispersed throughout large numbers of settlements. Data from Table 10 reveal that outsized functions have been consistently present in at least one-third of all settlements containing at least one retail/service establishment. In 1971, this proportion exceeded one-half. That the substantial number of outsized functions are present in a considerable proportion of settlements further suggests that retail specialization is widespread.

Disaggregation of the data presented in Table 10 reveals, however, that the likelihood of outsized functions being present in any settlement improves with increased size. All settlements with a population in excess of 2,500 have always contained at least one outsized function. Meanwhile, the vast majority of small towns with populations between 500 and 2,500 have also contained at least one outsized function. It is only among the smallest of small towns that the presence of outsized functions is not the norm. Among this group of settlements, approximately one-third contain an outsized function at any given point in time.

While outsized functions can be found among all sizes of settlements, there is a distinct trend towards concentration. At the beginning of the twentieth century, outsized functions were evenly distributed among settlements with a population less than 2,500 and those in excess of this number. But by 1981, over 80% of all outsized functions were located in the group of centers with the larger population (refer to Table 11). This trend has emerged because of two processes. First, the largest cities in the study area (i.e., Kitchener, Waterloo, Stratford, Cambridge) have continuously captured an increasing proportion of outsized functions. Secondly, a select group of small towns has increased their populations to surpass 2,500 (i.e.,

Wingham, Clinton, Mitchell, and Exeter) since 1901, thereby shifting their outsized function counts to the larger population size group.

**Table 11:**  
**Number of Outsized Functions, By Settlement Size Group,**  
**1901 - 1991**

	Population Range					
	1-500	501-1,000	1,001-2,500	2,501-5,000	5,001-9,999	≥ 10,000
1901	70	38	70	101	36	27
1921	42	50	86	33	26	121
1931	55	36	63	44	19	129
1941	68	24	66	42	18	94
1951	42	23	13	59	19	92
1961	39	27	15	69	20	129
1971	31	26	15	76	18	185
1981	6	12	5	22	14	54
1991	3	0	5	4	7	18

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, Censuses of Canada).

Disaggregating settlements by population size reveals evidence of specialization concentration. Correlation and regression analysis reveals that quite high degrees of association exist between a settlement's population and the number of outsized functions it possesses. Generally, the larger the settlement, the more outsized functions it contains. Table 12 shows that correlation coefficients have maintained very high values, ranging from a low of .8581 to a high of .9560. While no other research has conducted such a test on this association, previous studies have tended to find very high, positive correlations among population size and the number of retail establishments present. This study is no different, with correlations ranging in value from .7834<sub>(1921)</sub> to .956<sub>(1971)</sub>.

**Table 12:**  
**Coefficients of Correlation Among Population and Number of Retail Establishments**  
**and Among Population and Number of Outsized Functions, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Population and No. of Retail Establishments*</b>	<b>Population and No. of Outsized Functions</b>
1901	0.9668	0.8581
1921	0.9628	0.9509
1931	0.9791	0.9545
1941	0.9773	0.909
1951	0.9599	0.7834
1961	0.9793	0.8764
1971	0.9803	0.956
1981	n/a	n/a
1991	n/a	n/a

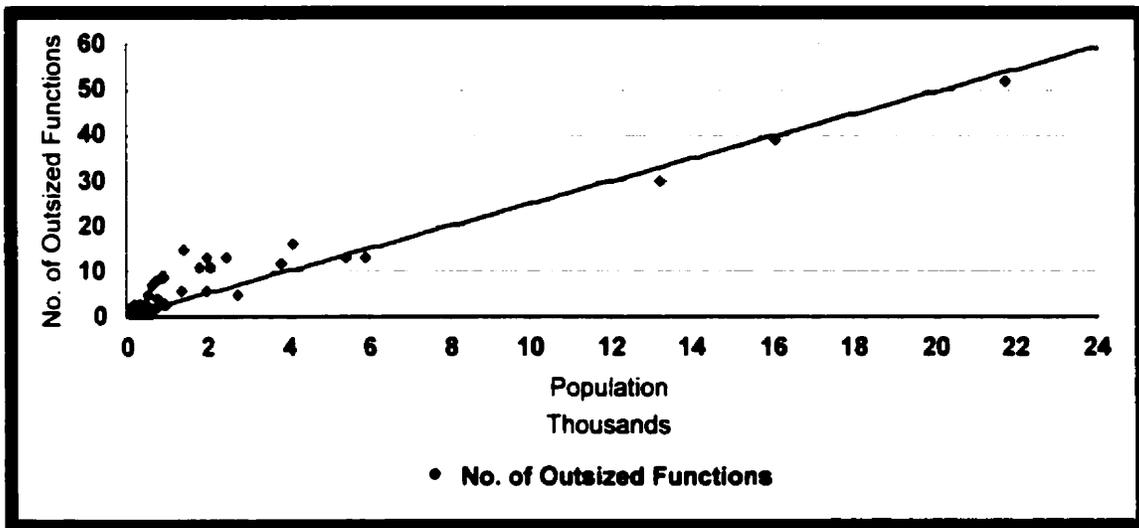
Source: (Calculated from data obtained from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, Censuses of Canada).

\* Correlation analyses among settlement population and number of retail establishments have often been conducted to determine the presence of a settlement hierarchy.

Corresponding regression analyses reveal that not only is the relationship strong among population and number of outsized functions, but also that the nature of the relationship is generally the same as has been found between population and number of retail establishments. That is, as population size increases, a proportionate increase in the number of outsized functions can also be witnessed (refer to Figure 19). Thus, similar to the P/F ratio established by Berry (1960) to illustrate evidence of a settlement hierarchy, a Population:Outsized Function (P/OF) ratio can be demonstrated to exist.

Despite the presence of a positive relationship between population size and the number of outsized functions, nonconformity exists among a certain group of settlements. That is, small towns exist that show either unexpectedly high or low numbers of outsized functions, given their population size (refer to Figure 19). While many small towns, at one point in time, display such

**Figure 19:**  
**Association Between Population and Number of Outsized Functions,**  
**(Example – 1921 Data)**



Source: (Calculated from data obtained from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, Censuses of Canada).

a characteristic. it has consistently been present among a particular size group; those containing populations between 1,000 to 5,000. More often than not, this group of small towns contains more outsized functions than would be predicted by established P:OF ratios. Among this group are towns that illustrate the opposite, but these are in the minority. Thus, while economic specialization is common among the majority of settlements in the study area, it appears that it is a very distinct characteristic among mid-sized small towns.

#### **4.4.2 The Association Between Population and Type of Outsized Functions**

It has already been established that outsized functions exist among a great variety of retail types. Just as there appears to be a relationship between settlement size and the number of outsized functions, there also exists an association between a settlement's population and the mix

**Table 13:**  
**Distribution of Outsized Functions by Retail Type, Study Area, 1901 - 1991**

	Cities	Towns	Villages		Cities	Towns	Villages
1901				1961			
Ten Most Common Occuring Functions	51	76	90		74	55	50
All Other Functions	36	69	23		59	41	20
Ten Least Common Occuring Functions	6	10	1		13	2	3
1921				1971			
Ten Most Common Occuring Functions	79	66	53		77	47	48
All Other Functions	73	48	36		110	48	22
Ten Least Common Occuring Functions	10	6	11		19	2	0
1931				1981			
Ten Most Common Occuring Functions	82	58	59		n/a	n/a	n/a
All Other Functions	63	47	27		n/a	n/a	n/a
Ten Least Common Occuring Functions	6	5	6		n/a	n/a	n/a
1941				1991			
Ten Most Common Occuring Functions	53	49	77		n/a	n/a	n/a
All Other Functions	64	49	20		n/a	n/a	n/a
Ten Least Common Occuring Functions	7	11	4		n/a	n/a	n/a
1951							
Ten Most Common Occuring Functions	49	33	47				
All Other Functions	92	35	16				
Ten Least Common Occuring Functions	13	5	2				

Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

Note: The functions making up each of the 3 categories have changed over time. For a listing of the most frequently occurring functions over time, refer to Appendix F.

of outsized functions that it contains. Generally speaking, as population size increases, settlements' retail specialities become more functionally complex. This pattern persists throughout the twentieth century.

Table 13 summarizes data to illustrate this point. For purposes of this analysis, settlements have been disaggregated into three categories; those with a current population in excess of 10,000, the ten largest small towns, and the remaining small towns. Functions have similarly been divided into three categories; the ten most frequently occurring, the remaining, as well as the ten least frequently occurring. Table 13 shows that each group of centers, regardless of population size, contains a large number of frequently occurring outsized functions. In fact, in most decades, these types of functions were most commonly found in both cities and small towns. Among the smallest of small towns (i.e., those with a population of less than 1,000) the data suggest that this group of settlements overwhelmingly specializes in the provision of commonly occurring functions. These functions have accounted for between 60 to 80% of all outsized functions present in this group of small towns.

While the majority of small towns specialize in the offering of commonly-found functions, retail types not as widespread tend to be found in the larger small towns and cities. Larger small towns have tended to contain outsized functions among an approximately equal number of common and less common retail types. Despite this relatively even split, proportionately speaking, cities have continued to capture a larger share of outsized functions among the less common retail types. At the beginning of the century, cities contained less than one-third of all outsized functions among less common retail types. By the middle of the century, this percentage stood at just under 50% and by the latter decades, it had risen to over 60%. Among the larger small towns, a proportionate decline has occurred. In 1901, this group

of ten settlements contained over one-half of all outsized functions among less commonly found retail types. By the end of the century, it only contained 27%.

**Table 14:**  
**Outsized Functions, by Retail Type, Among Large Towns,**  
**(Example -- 1921 Data)**

Function	Town									
	Goderich	St. Mary's	Seaforth	Clinton	Listowel	Wingham	Mitchell	Exeter	Elmira	Brussels
Blacksmith	1			1			1			
General Store		1			2	2	3	2	1	
Groceries	2	4	3	3	2	1	1	1		1
Hotels	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	1
Tailor	1		1	2	1					
Boots & Shoes		1	2	1	1		1			
Butcher	1			1			2			
Harness Maker		2		1	1		2	2	1	
Bakery & Confectionary	1	1			1				1	
Wagon Maker									1	1
Drugs	2	1			2		1			
Furniture & Undertaker			3		2	1	1			1
Shoe Repair						1				
Hardware	1		1				1		1	
Jewelry		1						1		
Livery	1					1		1		1
Dry Goods		1	1							
Implements	1		1			1			1	
Agricultural Implements	1	1								1
Hay, Grain, & Feed	1		1		1	1				
Millinery	1		1			1				
Carriage Maker				2		1	1			
Books & Stationary	1	1	1			2	1			
Photographic Supplies	1				1					
Fancy Goods		2								
Produce		1				1	1			
Cigars, Tobacco & Billiards						1				
Musical Instruments			1						1	1
Lumber			1					1		
Liquor		1						1		
Clothing						1				
Restaurant										
Crockery										
Florist										
Nursery										
Men's Furnishings	1									

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet, 1921).

Despite the trend towards retail specialization concentration throughout the twentieth century, an interesting finding emerges from the data in that the larger small towns show remarkably little retail overlap with respect to the types of outsized functions that they contain (refer to Table 14). For example, in 1921, the spatially proximate (and similarly sized) small towns of Wingham, Clinton, Seaforth, and Exeter provided outsized functions in at least nine different retail types for which there was very little overlap. Wingham provided outsized functions in books, produce, hay, grain and feed dealer, and drug stores. Clinton, meanwhile, offered an exceptional furniture store. Exeter possessed a musical instrument shop, an auto dealer, implements shop as well as a hay, grain, and feed dealer that all qualified as outsized functions. Lastly, Seaforth contained a fancy goods, furniture, and a hay, grain, and feed shop that acted as outsized functions. While the specific types of functions qualifying as outsized functions within different settlements may vary over time, a pattern of retail specialization differentiation has largely been maintained throughout the twentieth century.

The data reveal two very noticeable trends. Retail specialization concentration and retail specialization differentiation has occurred. Cities have continued to capture more and more outsized functions. They also contain more outsized functions of retail types that are not commonplace on the landscape. The situation is somewhat different among small towns. Among the smallest, retail specialization occurs primarily among very commonly found retailing types. Thus, while much overlap exists among small towns in terms of specialization, the condition is more variegated among large small towns. With increasing size comes increasing outsized function complexity. Not only do these small towns contain more outsized functions than their smaller counterparts, they contain outsized functions less commonly found on the

retailing landscape. Furthermore, there is noticeably less overlap with respect to the types of outsized functions that these settlements, as a group, possess.

#### **4.4.3 The Influence of City Overshadowing**

While this research is concerned with retail specialization in general, its emphasis, admittedly, is on the retail specialization of small towns. The identification of outsized functions has been based on the presence of retail/service establishments present in all settlements, regardless of size. It has been shown that many small towns possess outsized functions. This means that small towns can compete with urban retailers. But if we consider for the moment only small towns, some interesting findings are revealed.

When cities<sup>26</sup> are excluded from the analysis, fewer outsized functions exist (refer to Table 15). This is to be expected given the trend towards retail specialization concentration among the largest settlements. What also emerges is a second-tier of 'hidden' outsized functions. The term 'second-tier' is used because this group of establishments would not have qualified as outsized functions under the currently used method of identification. This tells us two things. First, the inclusion of 'urban-based' businesses inflates PSR values. Therefore, generally speaking, businesses located in large urban centers are economically stronger than those located in small towns. Secondly, a hierarchy of sorts exists among outsized functions. What has been presented so far highlights those establishments that stand out among all retailers. We might,

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<sup>26</sup> 'Cities,' for the purpose of this study includes all settlements with a current population in excess of 10,000. This includes the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, Stratford, and Cambridge (formerly Galt, Hespeler, and Preston).

**Table 15:**  
**Removing the Metropolitan Effect on Outsized Function Counts, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions (All Settlements)</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions (Small Settlements)</b>	<b>Outsized Functions Gained</b>	<b>Outsized Functions Lost</b>	<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>
1901	345	253	4	9	-5
1921	358	257	51	0	51
1931	346	240	47	1	46
1941	312	217	21	0	21
1951	248	147	23	2	21
1961	299	170	8	4	4
1971	350	199	41	5	36
1981	113	63	11	6	5
1991	37	21	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

therefore, qualify such establishments as being first-tier outsized functions. But if just small towns are considered, then additional establishments are revealed to stand out from their small town competitors. What is interesting to note is that, among these second-tier outsized functions, the majority of them are located in the largest of the small towns.

Table 16 identifies the distribution of these previously hidden outsized functions by population rank within the study area. A scan of this table reveals many of the same settlements emerging over the decades as containing these second-tier outsized functions (e.g., Goderich, St. Mary's, Seaforth, Listowel, Wingham, Clinton, Exeter, Mitchell, Elmira, and New Hamburg). A common characteristic of these small towns is that they tend to be the largest small towns in the entire study area. In fact, the top ten largest small towns account for the majority of second-tier outsized functions. In 1921, for example 57% (29 establishments) of second-tier outsized functions were located in one of these settlements.

**Table 16:**  
**Change in the Number of Outsized Functions Among Settlements**  
**when the Effects of Large Settlements are Removed, 1901 - 1991**

Rank (1901)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1921)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1931)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)
1	Goderich	2	1	Goderich	4	1	Goderich	2
2	St. Mary's	-1	2	St. Mary's	5	2	St. Mary's	2
3	Seaforth	-1	3	Listowel	3	3	Listowel	4
5	Listowel	1	4	Wingham	6	4	Elmira	2
6	Wingham	-2	5	Clinton	1	7	Seaforth	3
7	Mitchell	-1	6	Elmira	1	8	Exeter	1
13	Blyth	-1	7	Seaforth	2	9	Mitchell	9
22	Dashwood	-1	8	Mitchell	5	10	New Hamburg	3
28	Zurich	-1	9	Exeter	1	12	Ayr	1
32	Conestogo	1	10	New Hamburg	1	16	Hensall	1
38	Brucefield	-1	12	Milverton	2	17	Blyth	1
			13	Brussels	3	19	Atwood	2
			15	Hensall	1	21	Dublin	2
			17	Blyth	1	21	Dashwood	1
			20	Crediton	2	21	Sebringville	3
			21	Dashwood	1	27	Zurich	1
			21	Sebringville	2	29	Dungannon	4
			26	Zurich	4	29	Egmondville	1
			28	Egmondville	1	35	St. Jacob's	1
			31	Conestogo	1	38	Conestogo	1
			32	Monkton	1	45	Auburn	1
			32	St. Jacob's	1	46	St. Agatha	1
			37	Auburn	1	46	Centralia	1
			46	Kirkton	1			-1
Rank (1941)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1951)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1961)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)
1	Goderich	2	1	Goderich	3	1	Goderich	-1
4	Wingham	1	2	St. Mary's	2	3	Listowel	2
5	Elmira	1	3	Listowel	3	4	Clinton	2
6	Clinton	3	4	Wingham	2	5	Elmira	1
7	Mitchell	2	6	Clinton	1	7	Wingham	-2
8	Seaforth	2	7	Exeter	1	8	Seaforth	-1
9	Exeter	1	9	Mitchell	1	21	New Dundee	1
10	New Ham.	1	12	Milverton	3	24	Sebringville	1
11	Milverton	1	13	Ayr	1	35	Corrie	1
12	Brussels	1	14	Brussels	1			
13	Ayr	1	16	Hensall	2			
15	Blyth	1	17	St. Jacobs	-1			
19	Zurich	1	19	Zurich	1			
28	New Dund	1	23	New Dundee	-1			
31	Dublin	1	25	Dashwood	1			
39	Conestogo	1	47	Millbank	1			
54	New Germ	1						

**Table 16 Continued:**

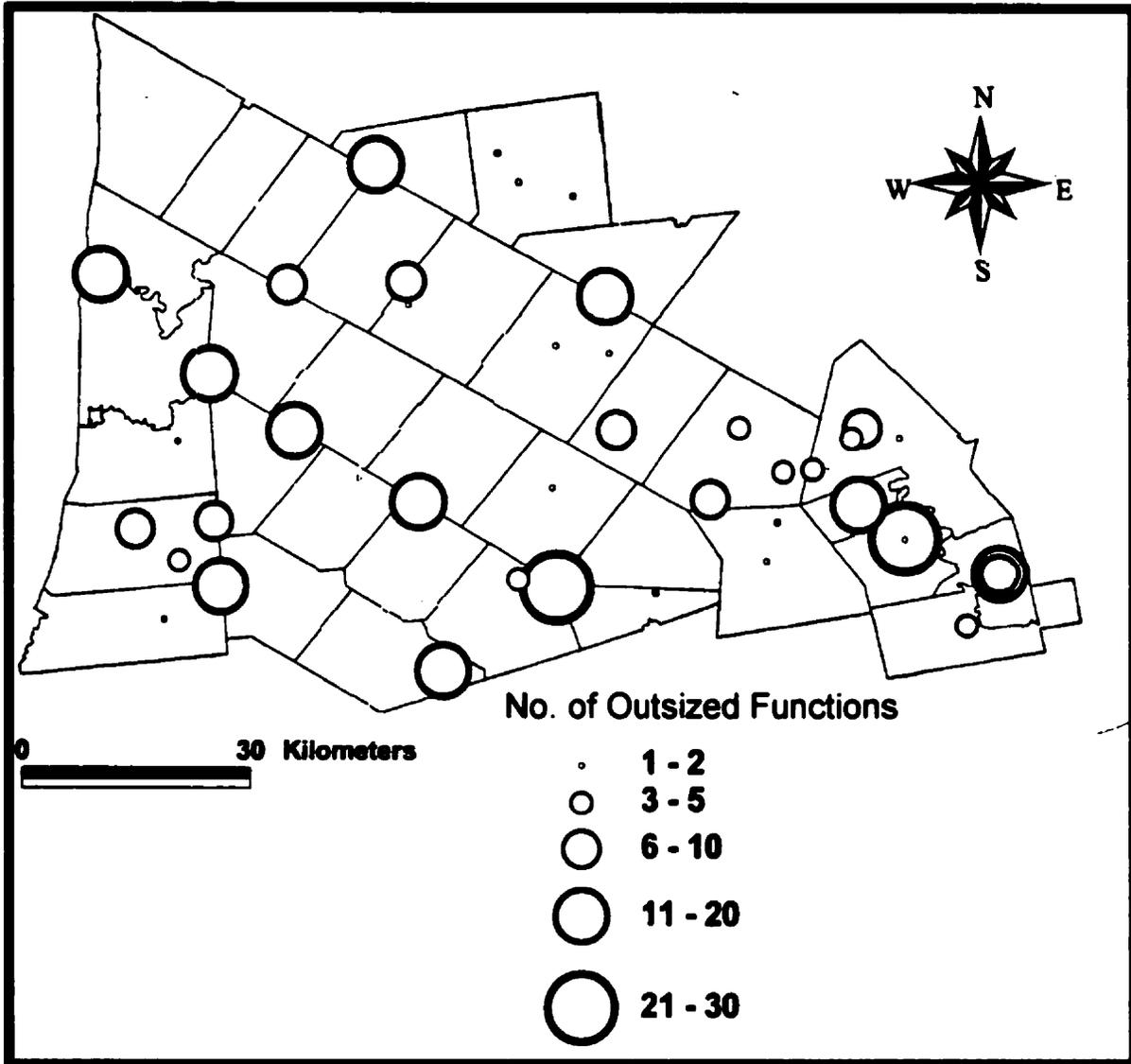
Rank (1971)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1981)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)	Rank (1991)	Settlement	Outsized Function Change (#)
1	Goderich	4	1	Goderich	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	Elmira	-2	2	Elmira	3			
3	Listowel	6	3	Listowel	-1			
4	St. Mary's	3	4	St. Mary's	1			
5	Exeter	4	5	New Hamb.	1			
6	Clinton	8	6	Exeter	-3			
7	New Hamb.	1	7	Clinton	1			
8	Wingham	2	12	Ayr	2			
9	Mitchell	2	15	Wellesley	-1			
11	Seaforth	1	17	Brussels	1			
12	Ayr	1	23	Conestogo	1			
14	Milverton	-1	36	Dashwood	-1			
17	Brussels	1						
18	St. Clements	1						
19	Wellesley	1						
20	Blyth	2						
21	St. Jacob's	1						
22	Zurich	1						
25	Atwood	1						
33	Conestogo	-1						
47	Auburn	1						
52	Branchton	1						

Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

#### **4.5 Location of Retail Specialization**

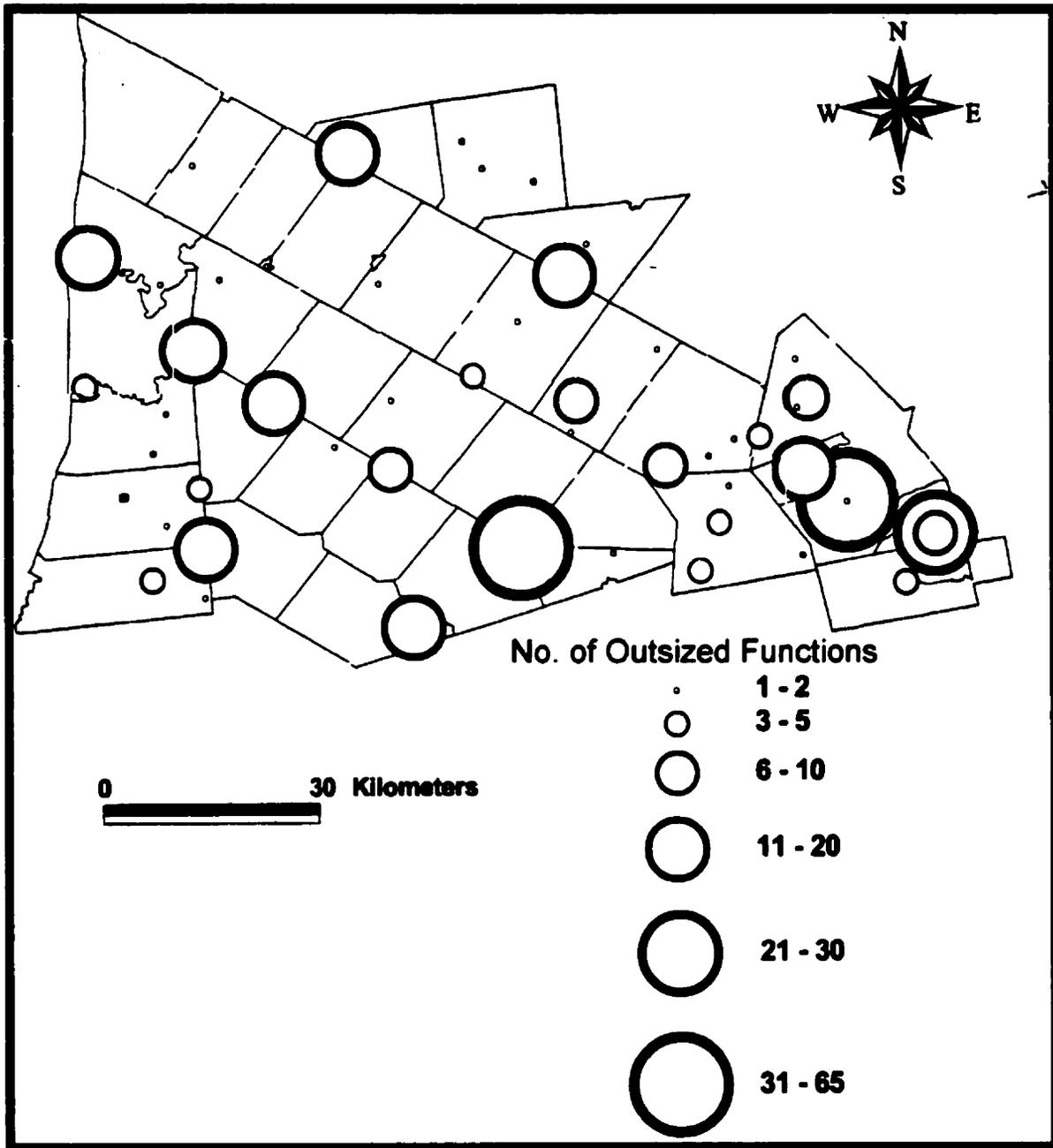
Even when all settlements are included, retail specialization is still commonplace throughout the study area. Much has already been said about the prevalence, persistence, and diversity of outsized functions. Retail specialization also displays particular locational attributes. It has already been established that the cities of Cambridge, Stratford, and particularly Kitchener-Waterloo, have gained an increasing number (and proportion) of all outsized functions. But aside from the present-day domination of cities of the retail landscape, outsized functions display additional locational attributes (refer to Figures 20 to 23 and/or Appendix G for the changing location of outsized functions, over time).

**Figure 20:**  
**Location of Outsized Functions, Study Area; 1901**



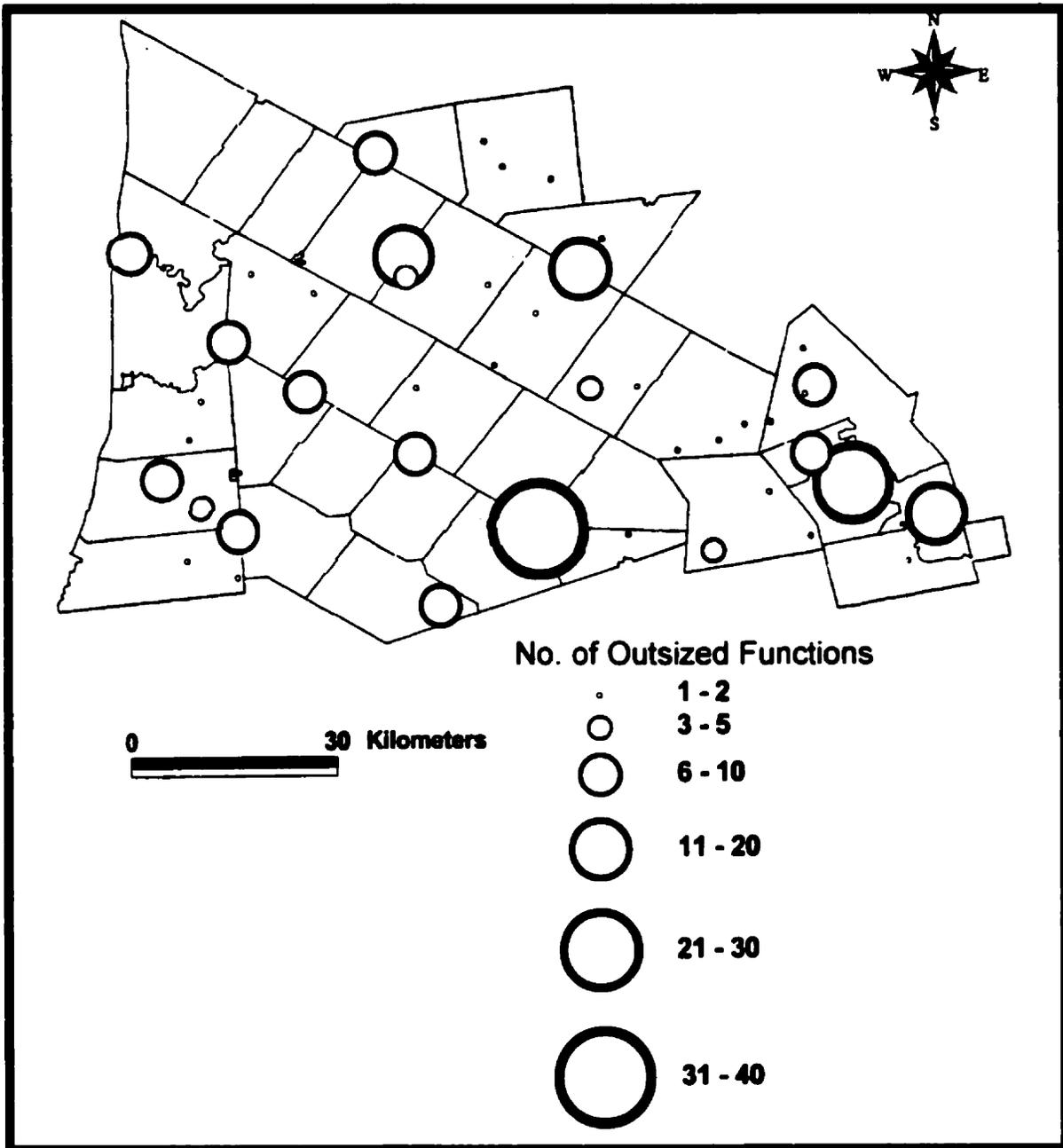
Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet, 1901).

**Figure 21:**  
**Location of Outsized Functions, Study Area; 1931**



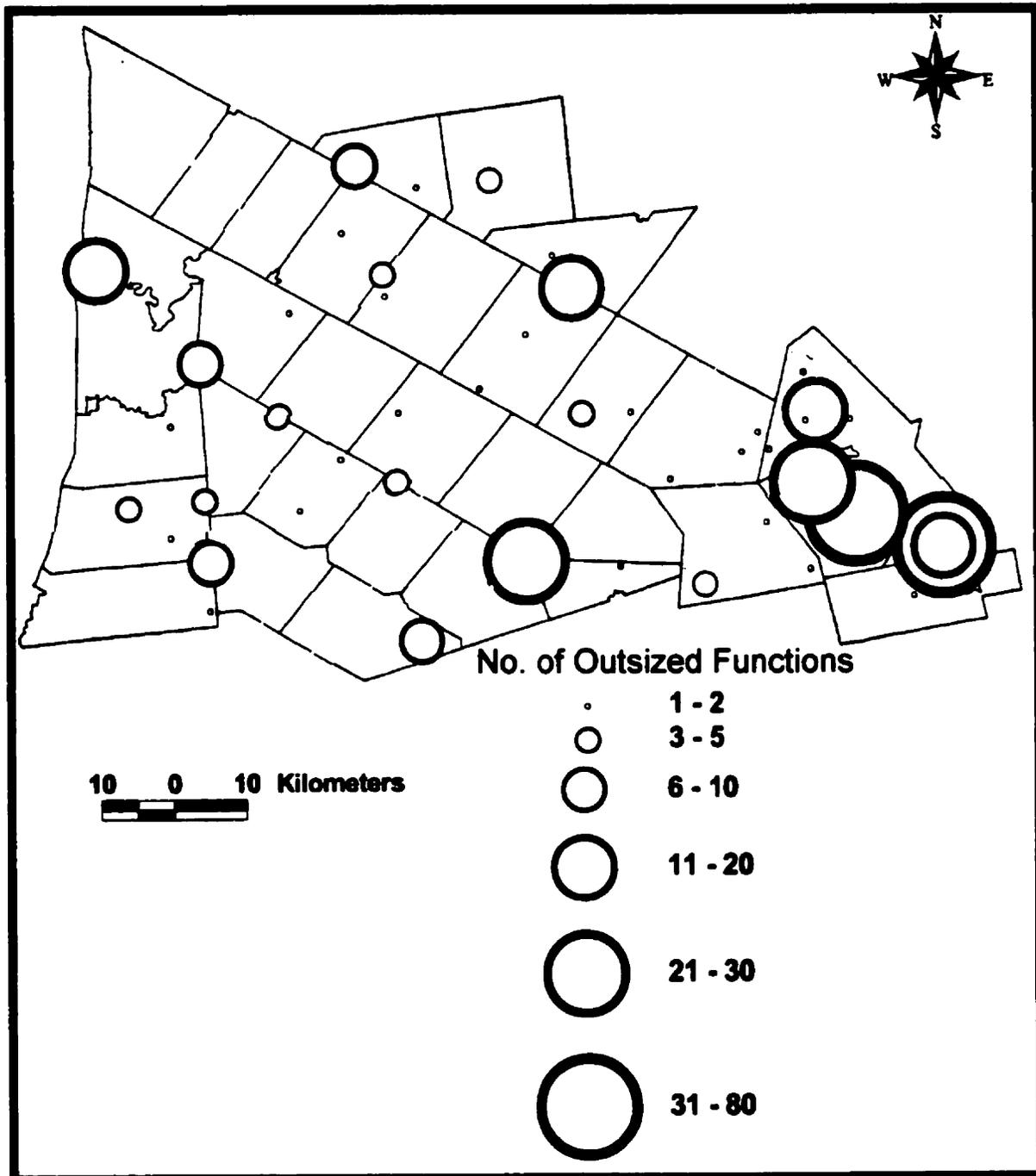
Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet, 1931).

**Figure 22:**  
**Location of Outsized Functions, Study Area; 1951**



Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet, 1951).

**Figure 23:**  
**Location of Outsized Functions, Study Area; 1971**



Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet, 1971).

**Table 17:  
Number of Outsized Functions, by County, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Huron County</b>	<b>Perth County</b>	<b>Regional Mun. of Waterloo</b>
1901	127	107	111
1921	134	99	125
1931	106	90	150
1941	108	81	123
1951	69	79	100
1961	96	67	136
1971	73	74	203
1981	22	34	57
1991	7	7	23

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

#### **4.5.1 Outsized Function Dispersal**

Disaggregating outsized function distribution over space further reveals a trend towards concentration. As Table 17 indicates, outsized functions were approximately equally distributed throughout Huron and Perth Counties and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo at the beginning of the twentieth century. While the proportion of outsized functions located in Perth County has remained relatively stable at 30%, the proportion contained by Huron County has continued to decline throughout the twentieth century. In 1901 it possessed 37% of all outsized functions. By the latter decades of the twentieth century, it contained only one-fifth. This trend has been reversed in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. It too possessed approximately one-third of all outsized functions in 1901. But by 1971, over one-half of all outsized functions could be found within this CD. In fact, since 1971, the majority of outsized functions has located in the Waterloo Region.

However, as already stated, outsized functions have tended to concentrate in the study area's largest centers. Waterloo Region contains most of the study area's cities including Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge. Thus, the data presented in Table 14 incorporates aspects of population size in addition to location. Once the effects of cities are removed, a very different picture of economic specialization emerges.

**Table 18:**  
**Number of Outsized Functions, by County,**  
**Excluding Large Settlements,**  
**Study Area, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Huron County</b>	<b>Perth County</b>	<b>Regional Mun. of Waterloo</b>
1901	121	79	53
1921	125	78	54
1931	116	72	52
1941	120	54	43
1951	71	49	23
1961	96	40	34
1971	95	61	43
1981	21	21	21
1991	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: (Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

As Table 18 shows, however, retail specialization shows signs of concentration only with respect to population size. In terms of location, the distribution of outsized functions has remained remarkably stable. When only considering small towns, in 1901 Huron County contained 48% of all outsized functions, Perth County 31%, and Waterloo Region 22%. In 1971, the last year for which data are reliable, Huron County continued to contain 48% of all outsized functions, Perth County continued to contain 31% and Waterloo Region continued to contain 22% of all outsized functions.

Retail specialization is very pronounced among the study area's cities. Once the effects of these cities are removed, there is evidence to show that outsized functions are markedly present among those regions far removed from the commuting fields of these cities. It could even be stated that it is among these more rural environments that outsized functions tend to concentrate. But even this statement does not capture the complexity of retail specialization. In terms of numbers, the previous two statements are valid. But if the distribution of outsized functions is examined from a different perspective, then there is evidence to suggest that retail specialization is becoming dispersed throughout the entire region.

**Table 19:**  
**Proportion of Settlements Containing at Least One Outsized Function,**  
**by County; 1901 - 1991**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Huron County</b>	<b>Perth County</b>	<b>Regional Mun. of Waterloo</b>
1901	23/74 (31%)	18/59 (31%)	24/46 (52%)
1921	21/68 (31%)	16/53 (30%)	18/41 (44%)
1931	23/64 (36%)	15/53 (28%)	21/39 (54%)
1941	22/60 (37%)	16/52 (31%)	21/39 (54%)
1951	21/58 (36%)	13/52 (25%)	17/40 (43%)
1961	22/48 (46%)	13/45 (29%)	18/36 (50%)
1971	16/36 (44%)	15/30 (50%)	20/33 (58%)
1981	10/29 (34%)	6/24 (25%)	10/27 (37%)
1991	5/29 (17%)	4/22 (18%)	5/24 (21%)

Source: (Calculated from Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books).

Table 19 depicts the proportion of settlements containing at least one function (disaggregated by County/Region) that also contain at least one outsized function. In each of Huron and Perth County, and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, a greater proportion of settlements now contains an outsized function. In 1901, approximately one-third of settlements in Huron and Perth Counties contained at least one outsized function. By 1971, one half of Perth

settlements and 44% of Huron settlements did so. Outsized functions, which were already present in the majority (52%) of Waterloo Region's settlements in 1901, were even more scattered in 1971 when 58% of its settlements contained an outsized function.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The functional-historical account of retail specialization has revealed several interesting findings. First and foremost, retail specialization exists. Outsized functions exist in great numbers and constitute a substantial proportion of all businesses in the study area. Moreover, retail specialization has been present for at least 100 years. Outsized functions can be identified in every decade examined, from 1901 to the present. In addition, retail specialization is multifarious. Outsized functions come in all retail types, from commonly occurring gas stations and convenience stores, to less frequently found furniture and women's clothing stores. Furthermore, retail specialization occurs in all sizes of settlements. Outsized functions can be found in the largest of cities all the way down to the smallest of small towns. Lastly, retail specialization occurs in regions experiencing different degrees of urban influence. Outsized functions occur in settlements lying adjacent to large metropolitan centers as well as in those lying far beyond metropolitan commutersheds.

Simply stated, retail specialization exists in a multiplicity of environments. Despite this, retail specialization may be associated with particular characteristics. First, it generally reflects a hierarchical pattern. More outsized functions can be found in large cities than can be found in small towns. Retail specialization also conforms to a hierarchical distribution in that large cities contain more varied types of outsized functions than do small towns. Retail specialization, however, manifests itself differently in large cities than it does in small towns. Whereas large cities show signs of retail specialization through the provision of multiple outsized functions of a

similar type. retail specialization in small towns is best represented by singular outsized functions of different retailing types. Thus, to use the term 'specialization' to describe the situation existing in cities is a misnomer because it 'specializes' in the provision of almost all types of retailing functions. A better expression might be retail domination because outsized functions are found among all retail types in great numbers. But among small towns, and particularly large small towns, retail specialization is more heterogeneous. In other words, large small towns possess individual businesses that, comparatively, do very well. Furthermore, these individual businesses cluster in different combinations among small towns. Thus, whereas one small town may specialize in, for example, grocery and hardware provision, another may specialize in the offering of baked goods and automobiles.

Retail specialization also exhibits trends of both concentration and dispersal. Over time, outsized functions have concentrated in the study area's largest cities. Its cities now contain almost two-thirds of all outsized functions in comparison with the one-third that they contained almost 100 years ago. But while a greater proportion (and greater numbers) of outsized functions may now be found in the largest cities, more settlements now possess at least one outsized function than they did a century ago.

The functional-historical analysis provides us with snapshots of the evolving nature of the structure of retail specialization. The images presented so far are incomplete. Contributing to this deficiency is the firm belief that the data source used to base evidence of retail specialization becomes unreliable after 1971. Adding to this lack of resolution is the absence of any behavioural data to complement that describing the settlement system's structure. There may be evidence to suggest that retail specialization is an evident feature among small towns but we are left to hypothesize how such specialization occurs. The lack of clarity on this issue is important

because it carries with it important implications for the choice in deciding what existing (if any) theoretical construct best describes the situation existing among small towns in the countryside. It is only with a holistic knowledge of both the system's structure and the interrelationships that exist among small towns, that the implications of retail specialization can be assessed.

## **Chapter 5:** **Results: Behavioural - Contemporary Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The contemporary-behavioural analysis acts to complement and augment the findings derived from the historical-functional analysis. This aspect of the research is derived from data obtained from a questionnaire distributed to households located in the countryside. While the first objective of the research (i.e., to trace the *evolution* of retail specialization) cannot be addressed in this manner, we can gain insight about the latter two objectives (i.e., to document the *distribution* and *location* of retail specialization). A different perspective is used, drawing evidence of retail specialization not so much from the structure of the system, but rather from the behaviours (as revealed through the questionnaire) that bind the system together. Nevertheless, the evidence can still be used to address the implications of specialization on the structure of the settlement system and to specifically assess the role of small towns within the space economy.

The chapter begins with a preliminary discussion of the demographic composition of the townships chosen for study and provides a glimpse of economic specialization through the presentation of commuting data. Although this research focuses on one type of economic specialization, it can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Commuting behaviour is but one way. Attention is then directed towards reporting the responses from questions '10' and '11' of the consumer survey, which ask countryside residents where (i.e., in what settlement and in what establishment) they shop for a wide variety of goods and services. It is here that the latter two objectives of the research are addressed. These data are used to determine the implications of retailing specialization on the larger settlement system.

The contemporary-behavioural analysis is based on the findings revealed from households located in two different regions of the countryside. The Townships of Morris and Hullett represent a rural environment. Their heavy reliance on agriculture, stagnant population base, and distance from large cities such as London and Kitchener-Waterloo, make them an ideal locale for which to test for economic specialization among regions not heavily influenced by metropolitan centres. Wilmot Township, in contrast, with its rapidly growing population, widespread construction, and adjacency to an urban complex numbering almost 400,000 people, makes it an appropriate location for which to document retail specialization among regions intimately associated with expanding metropolitan centres. By choosing these different environments, we are able to accommodate the different spatial requirements of existing settlement system constructs. This is needed to properly assess the implications of retail specialization on the settlement system.

## **5.2 Demographic Composition and History of the Townships**

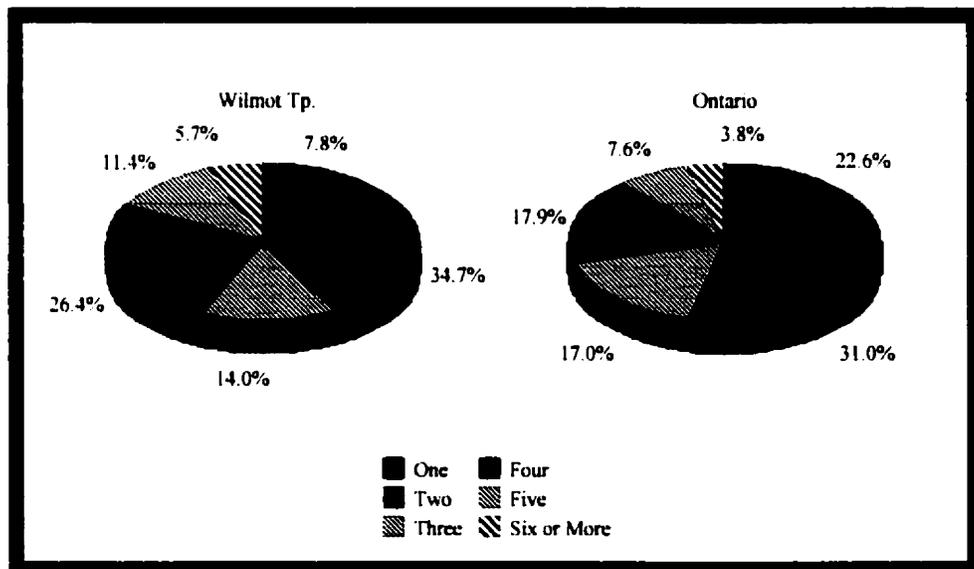
The questionnaire solicited information on several socio-demographic aspects of a sample of the population residing in the study areas. Residents were asked how many people lived in each household, their ages, how long they had lived in the home, and where they had previously resided. Responses to such questions acted to further differentiate Morris and Hullett Townships from Wilmot Township as well as to act as the basis for desegregating consumer behaviour by various socio-geographic criteria.

### **5.2.1 Wilmot Township**

Results from the survey reveal that the majority of Wilmot households consist of young families who have recently moved from the Tri-Cities, reinforcing earlier claims that this portion of the countryside represents a rapidly urbanizing environment. Figure 24 illustrates just over

three-quarters of Wilmot households contain between two to four occupants. This is different from the composition of Ontario households which tend to predominantly contain one or two occupants. That Wilmot households contain more people suggests that they may be occupied by families. The data further suggest that households are likely to be occupied by young families. As Figure 25 shows, almost one-quarter of Wilmot's population is under the age of 15. This figure is also in excess for the Province where less than one-fifth of the population falls into this age category.

**Figure 24:**  
**Number of Occupants per Household, Wilmot Township**

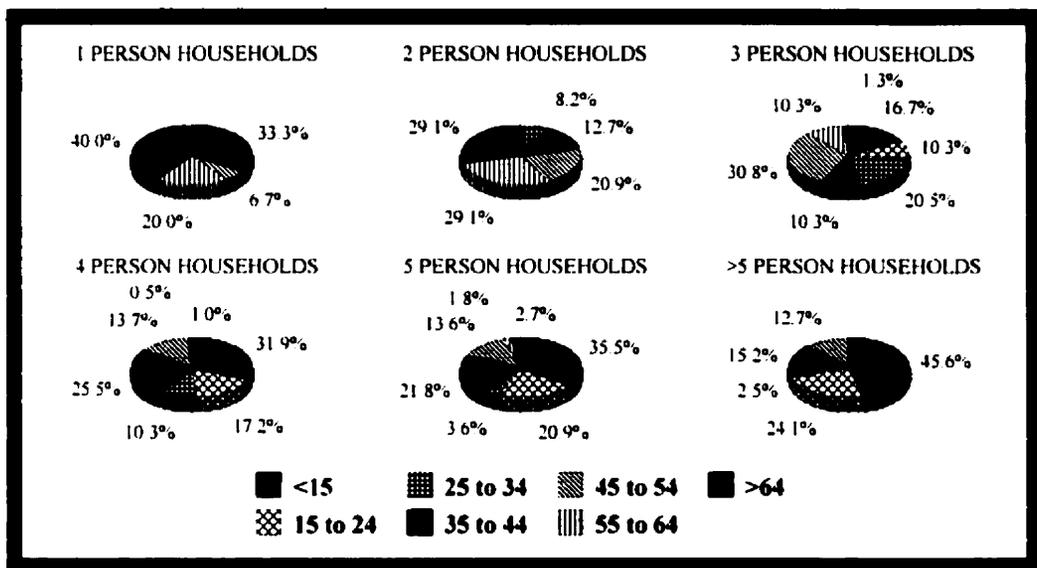


Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

A substantial number of Wilmot's population are newcomers. Respondents indicated that almost one in three had lived in Wilmot for less than five years. Over one-half of all respondents had lived in the township for less than fifteen years. The data suggest that Wilmot's population

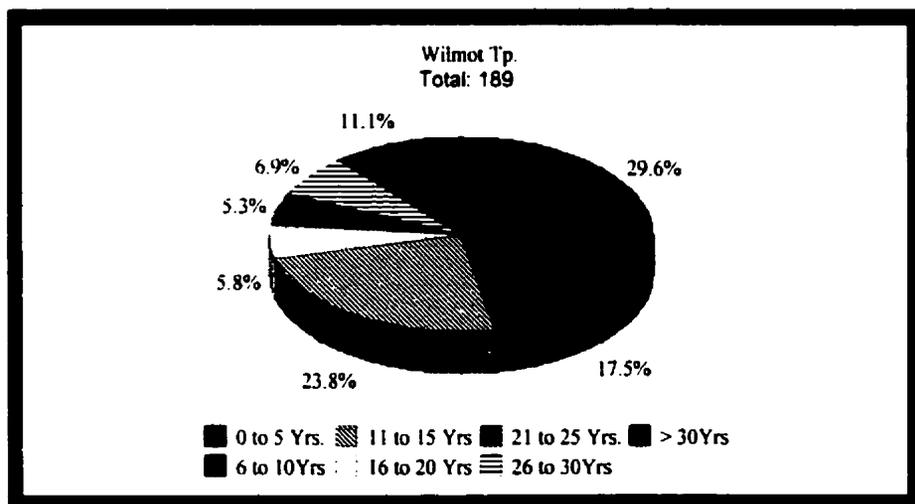
is a transient one, as fewer than 20% of respondents indicated that they had lived in the township for more than twenty-five years (refer to Figure 26).

**Figure 25:**  
**Age Distribution of Households, Wilmot Township**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

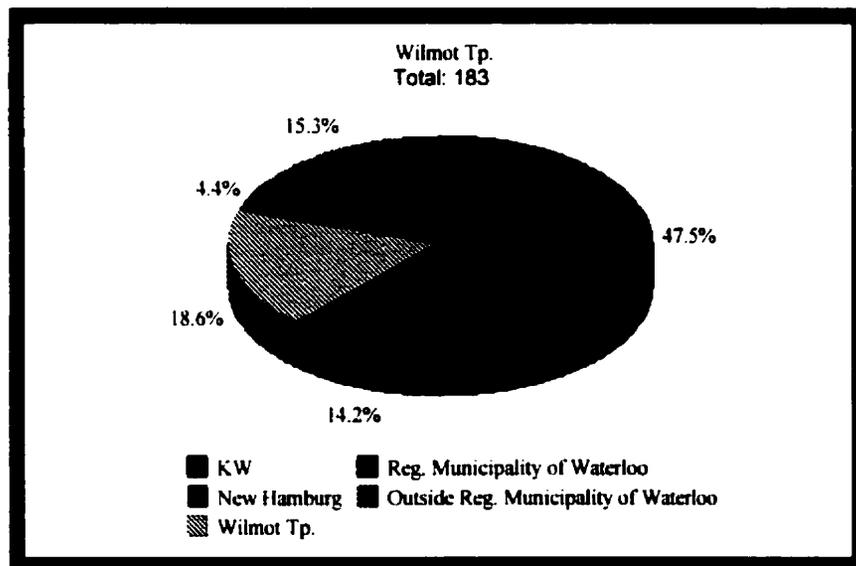
**Figure 26:**  
**Length of Residence, Wilmot Township**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

The data clearly indicate that Wilmot Township is a receptacle for urban migrants. Of those households sampled in Wilmot township, over one-half (55.8%) had previously lived in a large (population greater than 10,000) urban centre. While some of these migrations were either international (Brazil, Iowa, New York, and Indiana) or regional (St. Catharines, Hamilton, Markham, and Toronto), by far the majority of migrations into Wilmot Township originated from the Tri-Cities area. In fact, of all large urban places listed as being previous places of residence, the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge were cited in 85.3% of responses.

**Figure 27:**  
**Previous Places of Residence, Current Wilmot Households**

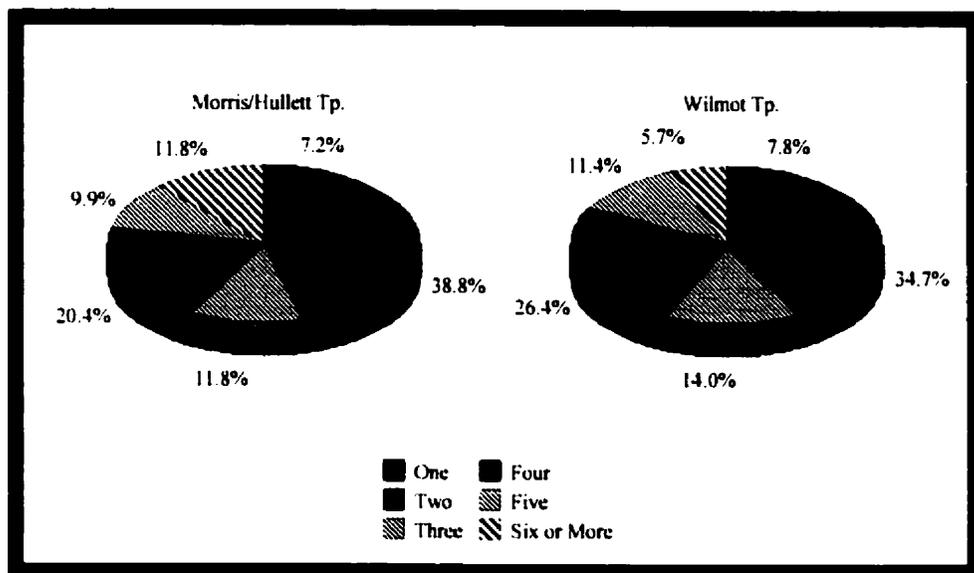


Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Those migrations that were not from large urban centres tended to be short-distance in nature. Ranking well behind Kitchener-Waterloo (47.5%), was New Hamburg (15.9%) and other, unspecified locations in Wilmot Township (13.7%). The surroundings villages of Baden, St. Agatha, New Dundee, Maryhill, Aylmer, Bridgeport, and Wilmot Centre were also mentioned

(although not to the same degree as New Hamburg) as being places of previous residence (refer to Figure 27). From the evidence gathered, it appears that Wilmot Township is currently experiencing an 'urban invasion' driven by outmigrations from the Tri-Cities.

**Figure 28:**  
**Number of Occupants per Household, Morris and Hullett Township**



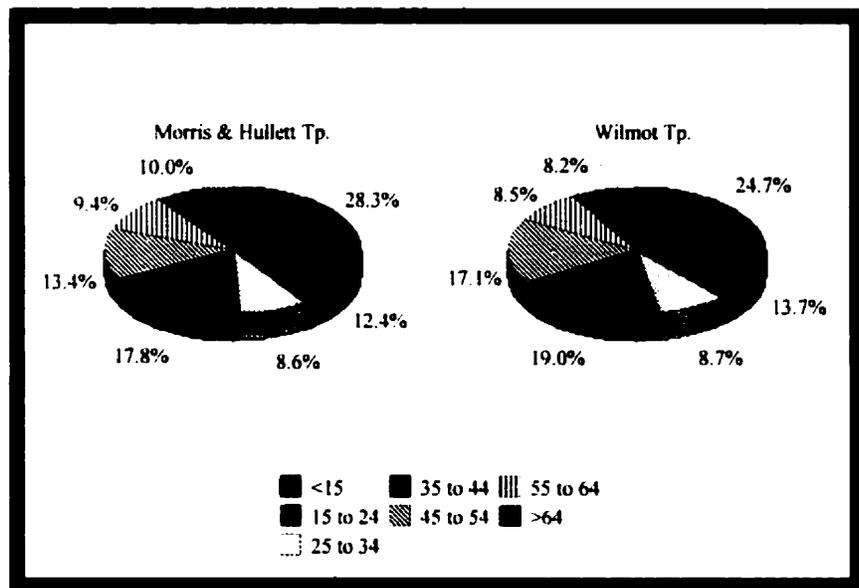
Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

### **5.2.2 Morris and Hullett Townships**

The composition and residential history of Morris and Hullett households can be quickly compared and contrasted with those of Wilmot. In this case, the data suggest that Morris and Hullett Townships are also populated by young, albeit larger, families. But this population is older and less mobile. As Figure 28 shows, the majority of households also contain between two to four occupants but almost one-fifth of its households contain five or more occupants. This proportion is twice as high as the Provincial average. The age composition of households in Morris and Hullett Townships is comparable to Wilmot's in that there is a relatively high proportion of the population that is under the age of fifteen. That a comparable proportion of the

population is also between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four, combined with the fact that a substantial number of households contain more than five occupants, suggests that Morris and Hullett households may be populated by young, large families. But Morris and Hullett can be contrasted with Wilmot with respect to the aged population. Specifically, a greater proportion of Morris and Hullett's population are over the age of fifty-four (refer to Figure 29).

**Figure 29:**  
**Age Distribution of Households, Morris and Hullett Townships**

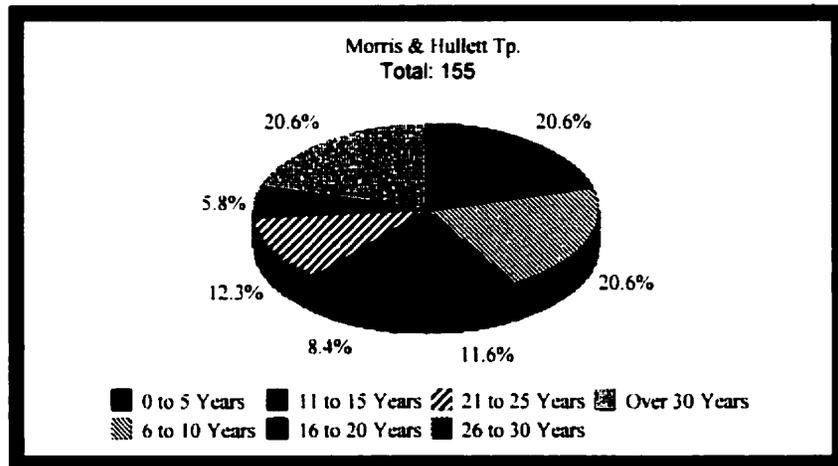


Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Morris and Hullett households are also very different from Wilmot's with respect to the length of time that residents have lived in the area. While the average length of residence among Wilmot respondents is fourteen years, Morris and Hullett residents stated that they had lived in the same household for an average of nineteen years. Whereas it was very uncommon (only 20%) for Wilmot residents to reply that they had lived in the same household for over twenty

years, almost 40% of Morris and Hullett residents could lay claim to that accomplishment (refer to Figure 30).

**Figure 30:**  
**Length of Residence, Morris and Hullett Townships**

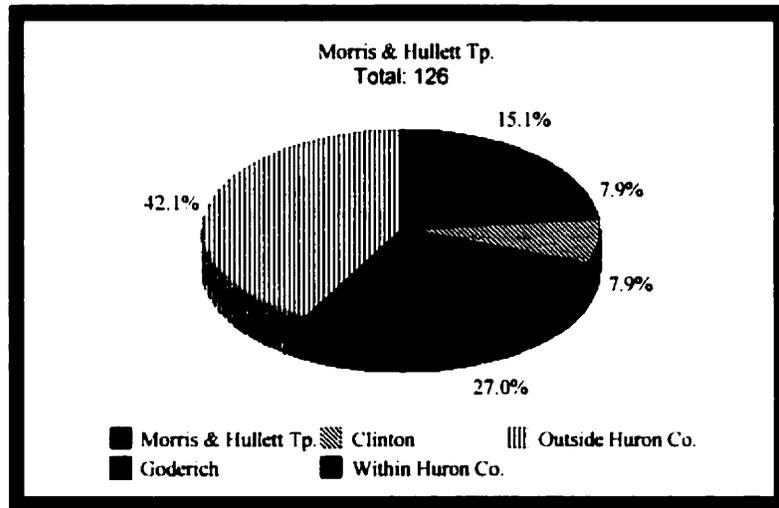


Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Morris and Hullett Townships, unlike Wilmot, are not the destinations for an urban exodus. Within this region, residents had previously lived in large urban centres such as Montreal (1 household), St. Catharines (3 households), London (2 households), Windsor (1 household), and Burlington (1 household) but numbers were generally very low. Both K-W and Toronto were listed as being previous places of residence but even these numbers were small with ten and five responses, respectively. Overall, therefore, only 20% of respondents listed a large urban centre as being their previous place of residence. Similarly, however, migrations into Morris and Hullett Townships appear to be short-distance in nature, with many current residents indicating that many of the surrounding settlements or townships acted as former places of residence. In fact, places such as Goderich, Clinton, Belgrave, Wingham, Blyth, Brussels, Dungannon, and Lucknow were listed on 69% of returned responses (refer to Figure 31). Thus,

it would appear that in Morris and Hullett Townships, migrations have involved short distances and display either a countryside-to-countryside or small town-to-countryside movement.

**Figure 31:**  
**Previous Places of Residence, Current Morris and Hullett Households**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

### **5.3 Commuting Behaviour in the Townships**

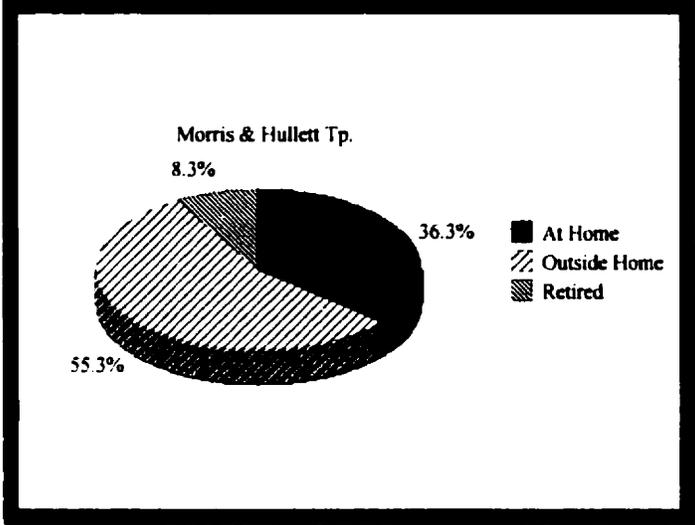
Residents were asked two questions regarding commuting. They were first asked “where the adult members of [their] household worked?” Options provided to them were “at home” or “outside home.” It should be noted that on several responses, an ‘additional’ category, “retired.” was introduced by the respondents. A subsequent question then asked residents to identify where (i.e., what settlement) outside the home, they worked.

Analysis of the nature of employment and of commuting behaviour in the three townships serves two purposes. First and foremost, it acts to further validate the regions as appropriate areas to investigate. The literature suggests that the dispersed city exists among settlements in the rural countryside while the arena society describes the situation existing within the urbanizing

countryside. The geographic situation and economic orientation of the countryside in relation to large urban centres is an important aspect of current settlement system dogma. Research on the location and distribution of economic specialization among both types of countrysides, therefore, is needed to properly assess the implications of such specialization on the settlement system.

In addition, insight into the commuting behaviour of countryside residents may also provide an indication of what type of settlement system may be operating. Both the dispersed city and arena society are based on the premise of a poly-centric system, while a central place system is based on a uni-centric structure. While only the arena society makes explicit mention of commuting behaviour, insight into its nature may aid in foretelling the type of settlement system operating in different countryside locales.

**Figure 32:**  
**Employment Status, Wilmot Township**

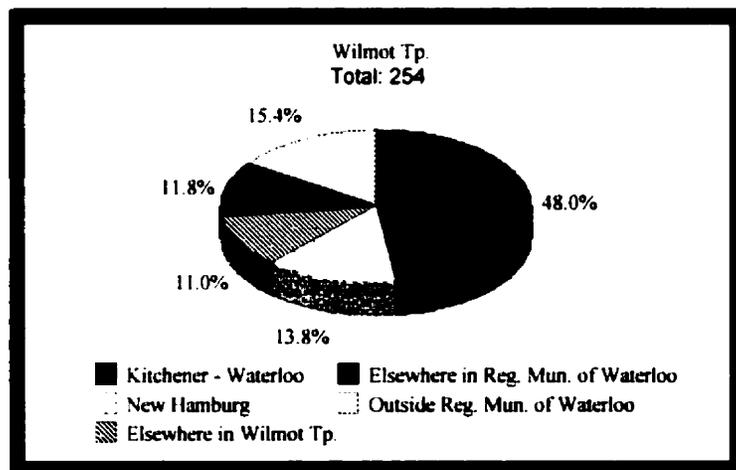


Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

### **5.3.1 Wilmot Township**

As Figure 32 indicates, approximately two-thirds of respondents living in Wilmot Township work outside the home. The remaining one-third are either retired (13%) or work at home (21%). Metropolitan employment is the norm among Wilmot respondents. Of the 263 people who indicated that they work outside the home, 145 (54.7%) do so in a city. Cities such as Guelph, Hamilton, and Mississauga are identified as employment destinations. These cities, despite being mentioned, do not attract a substantial proportion of Wilmot workers. Overwhelmingly, the biggest draw is the Tri-Cities which attracts just over one-half (52.9%) of all commuters (refer to Figure 33). Despite not being considered part of the Kitchener CMA, this countryside municipality clearly lies within its daily commutershed.

**Figure 33:**  
**Employment Destinations of Employed Wilmot Residents**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

One-half of commuters travel to the Tri-Cities for employment. This indicates that employment flows are extremely focused on one area. Commuting flows among the remaining half of commuters are also very concentrated. The only other considerable commuting flows that

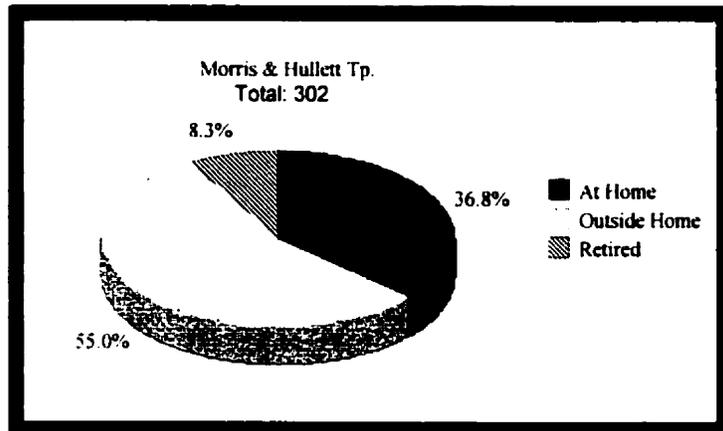
exist are from Wilmot Township to either the small town of New Hamburg (the largest town in Wilmot) or to New Dundee (also located in Wilmot). These two small towns attract 13.3% and 4.2% of Wilmot commuters. No other destination not already mentioned attracts more than 4 people (1.5% of commuters). Clearly, commuting flows originating from Wilmot Township converge on very few destinations, indicating that, not only is it incorporated within the Kitchener CMA, but that the system is organized in a uni-centric manner.

### **5.3.2 Morris and Hullett Townships**

A considerably smaller proportion of Morris and Hullett respondents commute to work. Within these two townships, just over one-half (55.3%) travel to work. The remaining 45% of respondents either work at home (36.3%) or are retired (8.3%) (refer to Figure 34). The fact that the Canadian Census indicate that many living here are engaged in agricultural practices may help explain the very high proportion of respondents who work at home. The majority, however, do travel to destinations within and beyond the townships' borders for employment purposes.

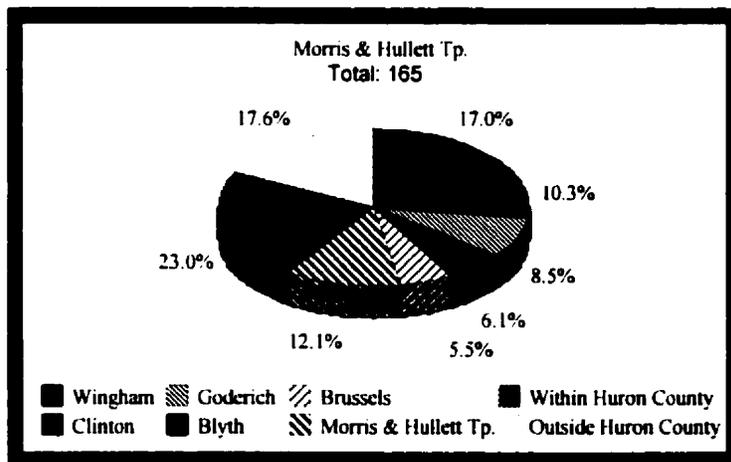
Commuting flows among Morris and Hullett workers are much more variegated than their Wilmot counterparts. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that this portion of the countryside is remotely incorporated within any metropolitan commutershed. Commuting distances, similar to Wilmot, tend to be short. Four-fifths of all commuters indicate areas within Huron County as their employment destination. Commuting patterns, therefore, are insular in nature. Although most commuting flows are concentrated within the confines of Huron County, they are equally scattered throughout the entire county. Among respondents, Wingham was identified as the number one draw.

**Figure 34:**  
**Employment Status, Morris and Hullett Townships**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 35:**  
**Employment Destinations of Employed Morris and Hullett Residents**



Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

But this small town does not act as the lone employment lure. Substantial commuting flows also exist between Morris and Hullett and the small towns of Clinton, Goderich, Blyth, Brussels, Belgrave, Seaforth, and Auburn (refer to Figure 35). In all, thirty-eight different destinations were identified by commuting respondents. There is certainly very little evidence to suggest, at

least from an employment perspective, that this portion of the countryside is organized in a uni-centric fashion.

It may already be surmised that Morris and Hullett Townships do not lie within any metropolitan commuting field. As indicated, four-fifths of all commuters commute to several places within Huron County and the county does not contain any cities within its borders. Overall, only 9 people (5.4%) indicated that they worked in a large city. London and Guelph were travelled to by one person each while two people worked in K-W. The biggest draw among city commuters was Stratford which attracted five people. The commuting behaviours of Morris and Hullett workers, therefore, are very different from Wilmot workers. Commuting patterns reveal that Morris and Hullett exist within overlapping, local employment fields. Trips are short-distance and conform to a polycentric nature. Negligible amounts of commuting exist to metropolitan centres. Wilmot Township, on the other hand, exists within a metropolitan commuting field with commuting heavily focused on the metropolitan core.

#### **5.4 Consumer Behaviour in the Townships**

Knowledge of consumer behaviour is central to the research. The retailing landscape and the consumer behaviours that contribute to its structure are the elements that are common to each of the settlement system constructs previously described. Survey results also afford us the opportunity to identify the existence of retail specialization, as well as to determine its distribution and location in space. In so doing, each of the objectives of the research are met and conclusions can be drawn regarding the implications of specialization on settlement systems.

##### **5.4.1 Wilmot Township**

As Table 20 indicates, the vast majority of goods and services purchased by Wilmot households are obtained by travelling less than 20km. As expected, items frequently purchased

(e.g., convenience goods, gasoline, prescription drugs, or groceries) are obtained by travelling less than 10km. Less frequently purchased goods (e.g., clothing, appliances, or automobiles) are obtained by travelling slightly greater distances but still within a 20km range. The only service for which Wilmot consumers are willing to travel any considerable distance is for live theatre. For this service, Wilmot consumers travel an average of 44km.

That the majority of goods and services are obtained within 20km of Wilmot Township suggests that surrounding small towns may play a very important role in the provision of a wide variety of goods and services. But the data suggest that this is not the case. Within this

**Table 20:**  
**Average Distances Travelled for Goods and Services, Wilmot Households**

Wilmot Households	
Good / Service	Average Distance Travelled
Conv.	7.17
Farm Sup.	17.35
Bldg. Sup.	11.55
Drugs	10.78
Banking	10.30
Haircutting	12.22
Gro.	11.18
Gas	11.00
Auto Rep.	11.75
Dentist	14.16
Doctor	14.93
Breakfast	13.84
Nightclub	11.54
Mjr. App'l.	13.31
Auto Dir.	15.90
Dinner	14.88
Movie	17.19
Live Theater	44.42
W' Clo.	18.86
K' Clo.	16.16
M' Clo.	16.50
Avg.	15.00

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Table 21:  
Most Popular Destinations to Purchase Goods and Services,  
Wilmot Households**

Good / Service	Rank (Proportion of All Responses)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Automobiles	KW (45%)	New Hamburg (31%)	Baden (19%)	n/a	n/a
Farm Equipment	Elmira (20%)	KW (18%)	New Hamburg (18%)	New Dundee (14%)	Ayr (12%)
Major Appliances	KW (75%)	New Hamburg (21%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Building Supplies	KW (38%)	Baden (22%)	New Dundee (16%)	Wellesley (9%)	n/a
Women's Clothing	KW (68%)	New Hamburg (16%)	Stratford (7%)	n/a	n/a
Men's Clothing	KW (64%)	New Hamburg (21%)	Stratford (6%)	n/a	n/a
Children's Clothing	KW (65%)	New Hamburg (20%)	Stratford (7%)	n/a	n/a
Prescription Drugs	KW (60%)	New Hamburg (37%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Groceries	KW (58%)	New Hamburg (35%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Auto Repair	KW (35%)	New Hamburg (32%)	New Dundee (9%)	Baden (7%)	n/a
Haircut	KW (52%)	New Hamburg (21%)	New Dundee (7%)	Baden (5%)	n/a
Breakfast	KW (64%)	New Hamburg (18%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dinner	KW (61%)	New Hamburg (12%)	Baden (6%)	Stratford (5%)	n/a
Club	KW (57%)	Baden (15%)	New Hamburg (11%)	St. Agatha (7%)	n/a
Movie	KW (90%)	Cambridge (6%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Live Theater	KW (43%)	Toronto (23%)	Stratford (18%)	Drayton (8%)	n/a
Doctor	KW (65%)	New Hamburg (25%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dentist	KW (59%)	New Hamburg (31%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Banking	KW (43%)	New Hamburg (43%)	New Dundee (6%)	n/a	n/a
Gasoline	KW (38%)	New Hamburg (22%)	Petersburg (10%)	New Dundee (8%)	St. Agatha (7%)
Convenience Items	New Hamburg (31%)	KW (30%)	New Dundee (19%)	St. Agatha (8%)	n/a

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

urbanizing environment. shopping is overwhelmingly conducted in the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo<sup>27</sup>. These two cities have almost completely usurped the retailing role once performed by neighbouring small towns. Consequently, the smallest of small towns play a negligible role in the retailing system, with only those located within the township itself being used for only the most frequently purchased items. Meanwhile, the only larger town to command any considerable market area is that of New Hamburg which, like KW, is able to attract Wilmot consumers, although at considerably smaller levels. Respondents indicated that all twenty-one

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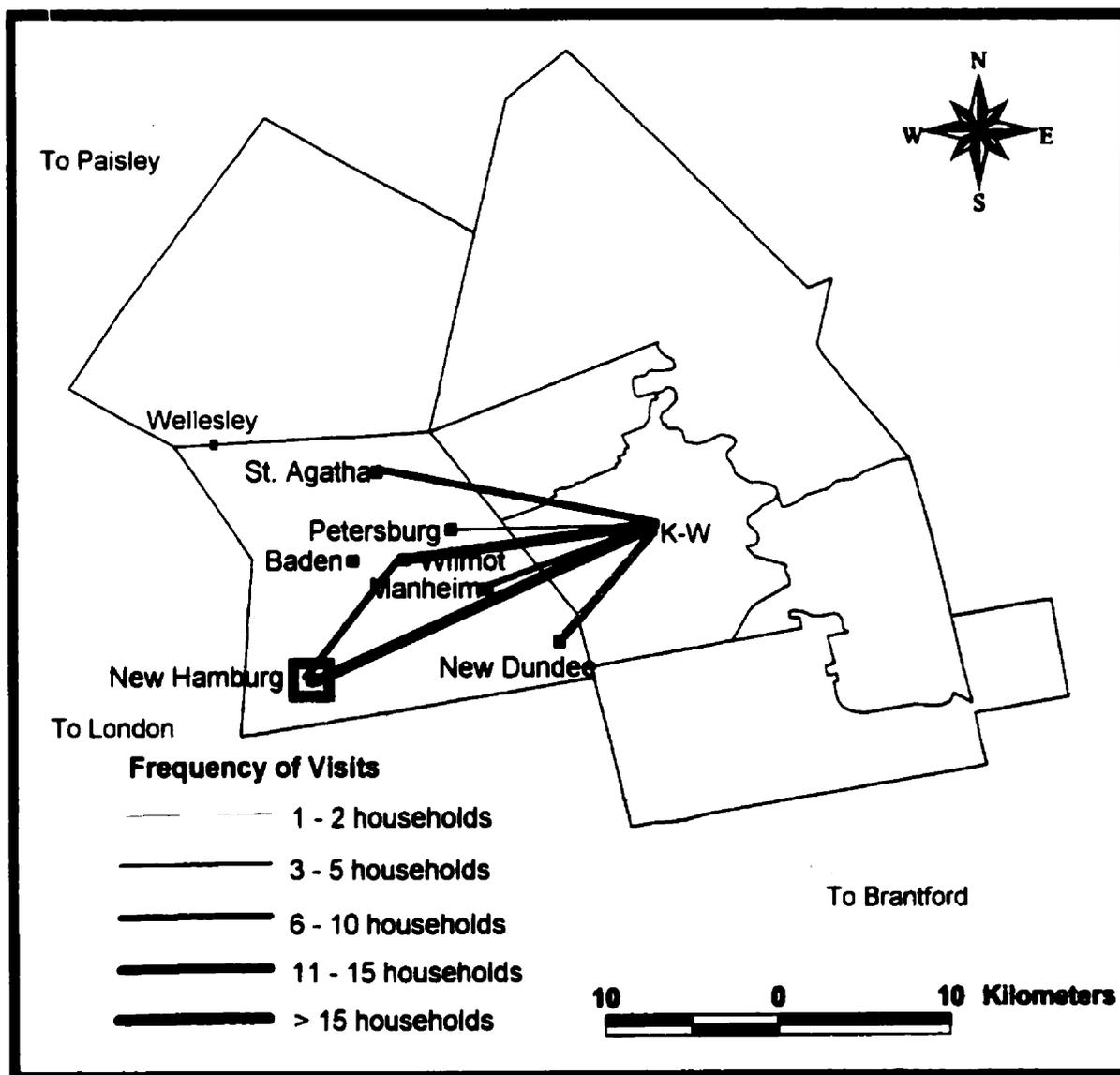
<sup>27</sup> Respondents often identified "KW" as the destination of choice when purchasing various goods and services. Because these two cities were interpreted as being one, they are listed as such in this analysis.

different types of goods and services were purchased, on average, in 4.57 different settlements. This figure appears to be very low, suggesting that very few settlements provide for the diverse needs of consumers. The data presented in Table 21 clearly illustrate this. The table lists the top five destinations for each good/service purchased by Wilmot consumers as a whole. Simply stated, KW is the settlement most often visited when purchasing the vast majority of goods and services. For nineteen of the twenty-one goods and services listed, it is ranked as the number one destination by respondents. This figure, in itself, is impressive but becomes even more so when one considers that over one-half of Wilmot consumers travel to KW for any one particular good or service.

KW's dominance of the retailing environment is unparalleled. Not only does it overwhelm many small town retail environments, but it acts as an intervening opportunity to other large cities, most notably Cambridge and Guelph, which are almost ignored by Wilmot consumers. Nevertheless, a few other cities are able to attract Wilmot consumers. One-quarter of Wilmot households report regularly travelling to Toronto for live theatrical performances (this high proportion no doubt contributes to the very high range of this service). But whereas Toronto is only utilized for one service, the nearby City of Stratford, lying to the east of Wilmot, acts as a draw for a slightly greater number of goods and services. Stratford, home of the Stratford Festival, draws a considerable proportion of Wilmot residents (18%) to see the many plays of William Shakespeare that are performed there. Stratford also appears to be a popular destination for clothing purchases, with between 6% to 7% of respondents reporting that the city is visited when purchasing each of men's, children's, and women's clothing. Stratford is also identified by 5% of Wilmot households as being a favourite location for dining out.

Note: For the following series of figures (maps), consumer flows are indicated by both the thickness and colour of the lines. Thickness illustrates the amount of households from each settlement and open countryside identifying various shopping destinations. Line colour indicates the source of consumer demand. For example, in the following figure, all those travelling from New Hamburg are identified by 'dark blue' lines. A settlement that is boxed indicates the number of households that use local retailers.

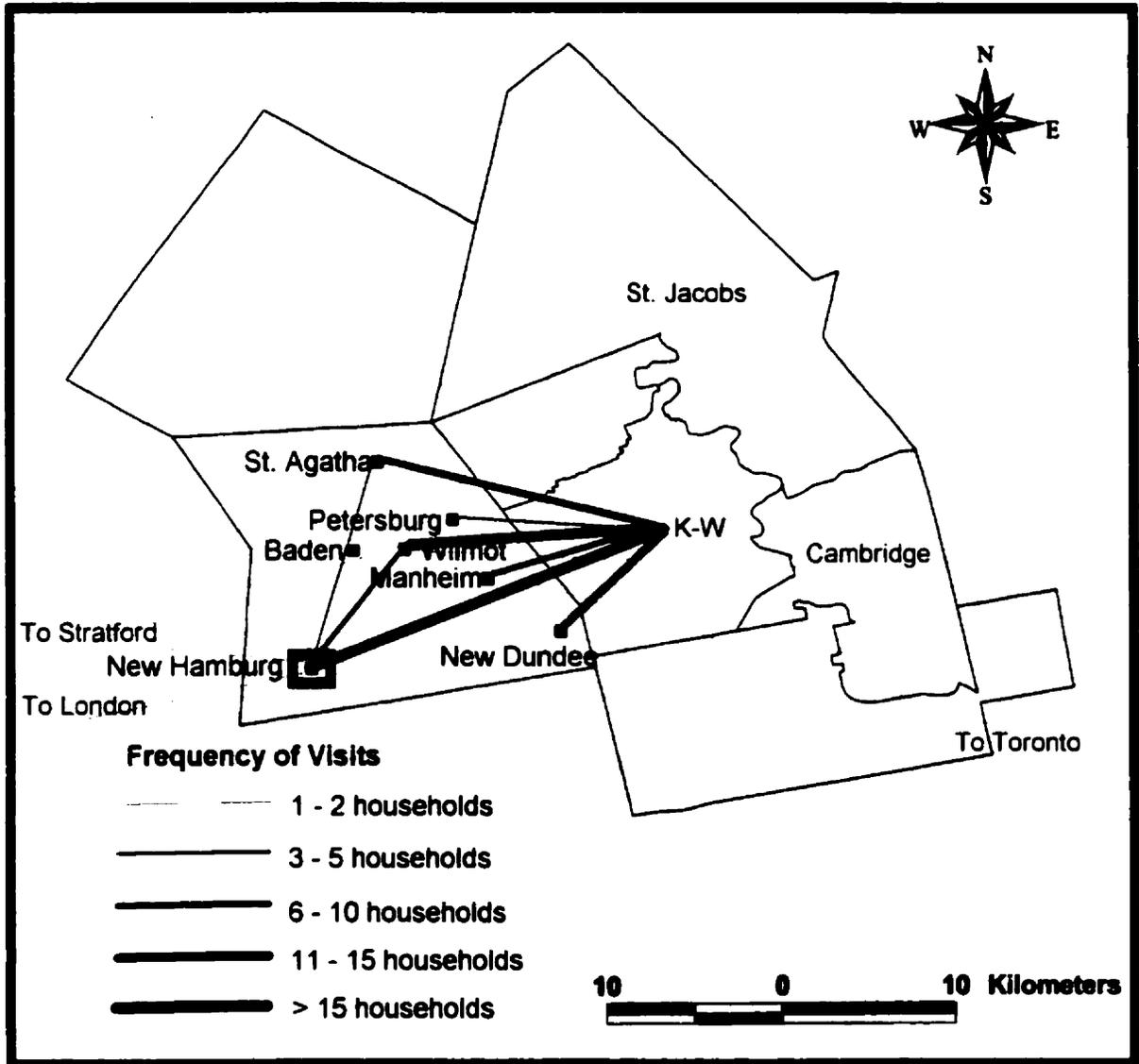
**Figure 36:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Major Appliance Purchases: Wilmot Households**



Three-quarters of Wilmot consumers made major appliance purchases in the cities of Kitchener-Waterloo. No other external center was able to draw consumers. The only other internal center was New Hamburg, which only attracts residents of the town.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 37:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Clothing (Men's) Purchases: Wilmot Households**



At least two-thirds of respondents indicated making clothing purchases in the cities of Kitchener-Waterloo. Very few travelled west beyond the Regional Municipality to external centers such as Toronto, Guelph, or Cambridge. A small, but noticeable number of Wilmot consumers travelled to Stratford, located east of the township. Despite Kitchener-Waterloo's dominance, note the ability of New Hamburg to draw consumers from all over Wilmot Township for clothing purchases.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

The only other settlement that draws a substantial proportion of Wilmot consumers is the small town of New Hamburg. It, like KW, acts as an important destination for a comprehensive array of goods and services. It consistently ranks second behind KW, regularly drawing between 15% to 40% of Wilmot consumers, depending on the good or service required. Taken together, KW and New Hamburg are routinely visited by over three-quarters of respondents, regardless of the good desired.

**Table 22:**  
**Proportion of New Hamburg Households that Shop in New Hamburg**

Good / Service	Proportion of New Hamburg Households that Shop Locally
Automobiles	50%
Farm Equipment	n/a
Major Appliances	47%
Building Supplies	9%
Women's Clothing	26%
Men's Clothing	33%
Children's Clothing	30%
Prescription Drugs	90%
Groceries	67%
Auto Repair	58%
Haircut	58%
Breakfast	40%
Dinner	26%
Nightclub	42%
Movie	n/a
Live Theater	4%
Doctor	50%
Dentist	65%
Bank	88%
Gasoline	60%
Convenience Items	96%

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Although New Hamburg is used by considerably fewer Wilmot consumers than is KW, this small town does display very high degrees of centrality and nodality. KW's influence is certainly felt, as the cities are ranked first for nine of the twenty-one goods and services listed.

But for ten different goods and services, New Hamburg is ranked as the destination most often visited by New Hamburg residents. If not ranked number one, it is almost always ranked second behind KW. Thus, although there is leakage out of New Hamburg, the town is able to retain a sizeable local market (refer to Table 22).

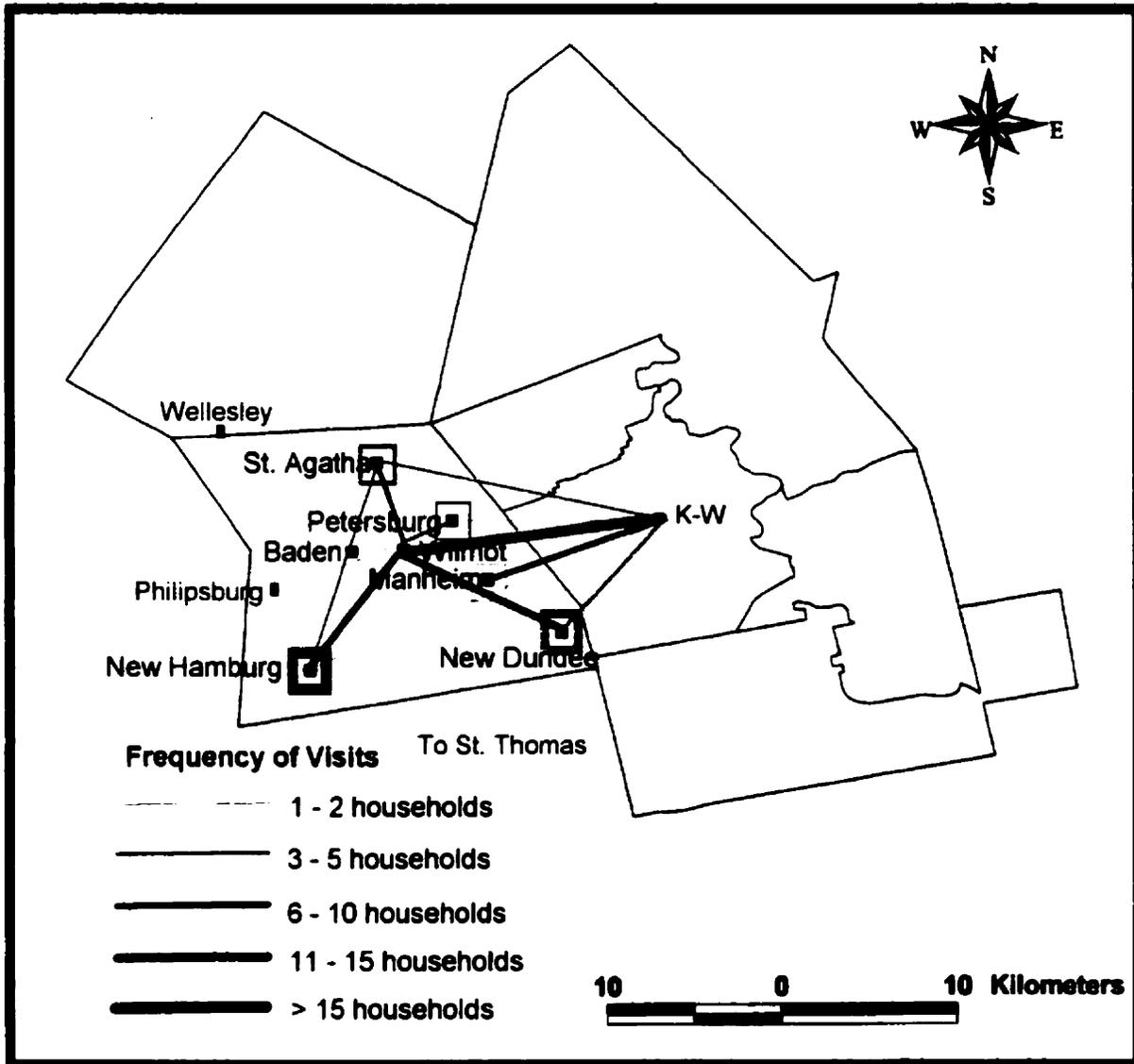
New Hamburg's market area extends beyond its built-up environment. Consumers from other small towns, and those living in the open countryside, also utilize New Hamburg for a variety of retailing purposes. Residents from New Dundee, St. Agatha, and Petersburg patronize New Hamburg retailers for several different types of goods and services. The situation is similar in the open countryside where New Hamburg is consistently ranked second behind KW as the destination visited for a majority of goods and services.

**Table 23:**  
**Average Distances Travelled for Goods and Services, Morris and Hullett Households**

Morris & Hullett Households	
Good / Service	Average Distance Travelled
Conv.	11.94
Farm Sup.	15.26
Bldg. Sup.	15.78
Drugs	17.01
Banking	17.25
Haircutting	18.39
Gro.	18.59
Gas	19.03
Auto Rep.	19.88
Dentist	21.75
Doctor	22.97
Breakfast	25.20
Nightclub	28.24
Mjr. App'l.	29.98
Auto Dir.	30.49
Dinner	30.89
Movie	32.10
Live Theater	36.49
W' Clo.	44.53
K' Clo.	44.77
M' Clo.	48.33
Avg.	26.14

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 38:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Convenience Item Purchases: Wilmot Households**



For purchases such as convenience items or gasoline, the nearest center providing such goods is utilized. Market areas for these goods are small due to the frequency with which they are offered.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Very few other small towns act as an important destination for shopping purposes. Elmira is the only small town lying beyond Wilmot's municipal boundary that is used to any significant degree and it is only visited when purchasing farming equipment. Within Wilmot's borders, local small towns are only used for the most convenient of goods and services. Moreover, these small towns tend to only be patronized by those living within them. Petersburg residents shop in-town for only convenience items and gasoline. The situation is similar in St. Agatha where residents use in-town retailers for convenience items and gasoline, in addition to dining out and clubbing. In Baden, residents also buy convenience items and gasoline locally as well as building supplies. Meanwhile, New Dundee residents patronize their own town for only a slightly wider variety of goods and services.

Generally speaking, Wilmot residents' shopping behaviour is very similar to their commuting behaviour. Shopping behaviour displays an extremely uni-centric nature, with purchases almost exclusively occurring in Kitchener-Waterloo. Given that Wilmot is adjacent to K-W, it is not unexpected that Wilmot shoppers travel very short distances for all types of goods and services. But in spite of the short distance travelled, local small towns are often bypassed except for the most convenient of goods and services.

#### **5.4.2 Morris and Hullett Townships**

Households in Morris and Hullet Townships display much different shopping patterns than their Wilmot counterparts. First and foremost, Morris and Hullett consumers travel significantly farther to purchase goods and services. Whereas Wilmot consumers travel no more than twenty kilometres to purchase most goods and services, Morris and Hullet consumers travel at least twenty kilometres (refer to Table 23). For frequently purchased goods such as convenience items, gasoline, groceries, and prescription drugs, consumers travel under twenty

kilometres. But for the majority of goods, and most notably for items such as clothing, major appliances, and automobile purchases, consumers, on average, travel in excess of thirty and even forty kilometres.

Despite travelling much greater distances, the majority of respondents indicated that they purchased all twenty-one goods and services within Huron County (refer to Table 24). At least 90% of all respondents indicated shopping 'in-county' for goods such as farm equipment, building supplies, groceries, prescription drugs, and gasoline and for services such as haircutting and banking. In fact, for every good or service except for clothing, at least two-thirds of respondents indicated purchasing goods somewhere within Huron County.

**Table 24:**  
**Proportion of Purchases Made Within Huron County by Morris and Hullett Households**

Good / Service	Proportion of Purchases Made Within Huron County
Automobiles	71%
Farm Equipment	94%
Major Appliances	72%
Building Supplies	93%
Women's Clothing	52%
Men's Clothing	50%
Children's Clothing	52%
Prescription Drugs	96%
Groceries	90%
Auto Repair	89%
Haircut	93%
Breakfast	82%
Dinner	75%
Nightclub	82%
Movie	76%
Live Theater	67%
Doctor	83%
Dentist	86%
Bank	95%
Gasoline	90%
Convenience Items	99%

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

That Morris and Hullett consumers travel considerable distances to purchase goods and services, combined with the observation that most are bought within the Huron County itself, raises the possibility that many local settlements are utilized to satisfy the retailing demands of consumers. This appears to be the case. Morris and Hullett consumers, in fact, visit, on average, seven different settlements to purchase all twenty-one goods and services identified in the questionnaire. This is significantly greater than the 4.6 settlements visited by Wilmot consumers. To further illustrate the greater variability in consumer behaviour among Morris and Hullett as compared with Wilmot, the total number of settlements collectively mentioned by consumers (in order to purchase individual items) is greater for almost all goods and services (refer to Table 25).

**Table 25:**  
**Total Number of Settlements Mentioned by Households for Various Purchases,**  
**Morris and Hullett and Wilmot Townships**

Good / Service	Total Settlements Mentioned	
	Morris & Hullett Tp.	Wilmot Tp.
Automobiles	20	17
Farm Equipment	16	11
Major Appliances	21	8
Building Supplies	10	10
Women's Clothing	14	9
Men's Clothing	17	11
Children's Clothing	16	9
Prescription Drugs	9	6
Groceries	10	11
Auto Repair	21	19
Haircut	20	20
Breakfast	22	13
Dinner	25	16
Club	15	11
Movie	7	5
Live Theater	12	13
Doctor	15	16
Dentist	14	15
Banking	14	12
Gasoline	22	20
Convenience Items	12	14

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

In this part of the rural countryside, cities play a much less important role than they do in Wilmot Township. Here, small towns play a vital role in the retailing system. Small towns of all sizes, from the smallest hamlet to incorporated towns, are visited for a variety of retailing offerings. Nevertheless, consumer behaviour patterns suggest the presence of a multi-centric retailing structure, with a collection of larger small towns providing for the needs of the Morris and Hullett populace.

**Table 26:**  
**Most Popular Destinations to Purchase Goods and Services,**  
**Morris and Hullett Households**

Good / Service	Rank (Proportion of All Responses)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Automobiles	Goderich (35%)	Listowel (14%)	Wingham (13%)	Brussels (8%)	Exeter (6%)
Farm Equipment	Walton (28%)	Blyth (21%)	Seaforth (17%)	Lucknow (8%)	Londesboro (5%)
Major Appliances	Wingham (25%)	Goderich (18%)	Clinton (15%)	Listowel (14%)	Hensall (6%)
Building Supplies	Brussels (22%)	Wingham (21%)	Blyth (18%)	Clinton (17%)	Goderich (11%)
Women's Clothing	Goderich (33%)	London (18%)	KW (12%)	Listowel (11%)	Wingham (11%)
Men's Clothing	Goderich (29%)	London (20%)	Wingham (16%)	KW (13%)	Listowel (7%)
Children's Clothing	Goderich (39%)	London (15%)	KW (11%)	Wingham (11%)	Listowel (11%)
Prescription Drugs	Wingham (32%)	Goderich (24%)	Clinton (17%)	Blyth (12%)	Brussels (5%)
Groceries	Wingham (26%)	Goderich (26%)	Blyth (15%)	Clinton (12%)	Brussels (8%)
Auto Repair	Goderich (25%)	Wingham (20%)	Blyth (10%)	Brussels (7%)	Westfield (6%)
Haircut	Blyth (24%)	Clinton (16%)	Goderich (13%)	Wingham (12%)	Brussels (9%)
Breakfast	Wingham (15%)	Clinton (14%)	Goderich (14%)	Blyth (14%)	Brussels (8%)
Dinner	Goderich (23%)	Wingham (21%)	Clinton (10%)	Blyth (10%)	London (6%)
Club	Goderich (28%)	Blyth (17%)	Brussels (14%)	Wingham (11%)	KW (10%)
Movie	Goderich (46%)	Wingham (30%)	London (8%)	Stratford (5%)	KW (5%)
Live Theater	Blyth (61%)	Toronto (8%)	Stratford (7%)	KW (6%)	n/a
Doctor	Wingham (27%)	Clinton (25%)	Goderich (15%)	Seaforth (10%)	Teeswater (5%)
Dentist	Wingham (30%)	Clinton (23%)	Goderich (15%)	Brussels (9%)	Seaforth (6%)
Banking	Wingham (29%)	Clinton (25%)	Goderich (15%)	Blyth (12%)	Brussels (10%)
Gasoline	Wingham (21%)	Blyth (14%)	Clinton (14%)	Goderich (9%)	Brussels (9%)
Convenience Items	Wingham (21%)	Clinton (17%)	Blyth (17%)	Belgrave (14%)	Brussels (11%)

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Table 26 reveals the settlements most often used by Morris and Hullett consumers. As already stated, cities play a much reduced role, being only regularly used for infrequently purchased items such as clothing or theatre (live and film). London appears to be a favourite destination for clothing purchases, attracting between 15% to 20% of the Morris and Hullett

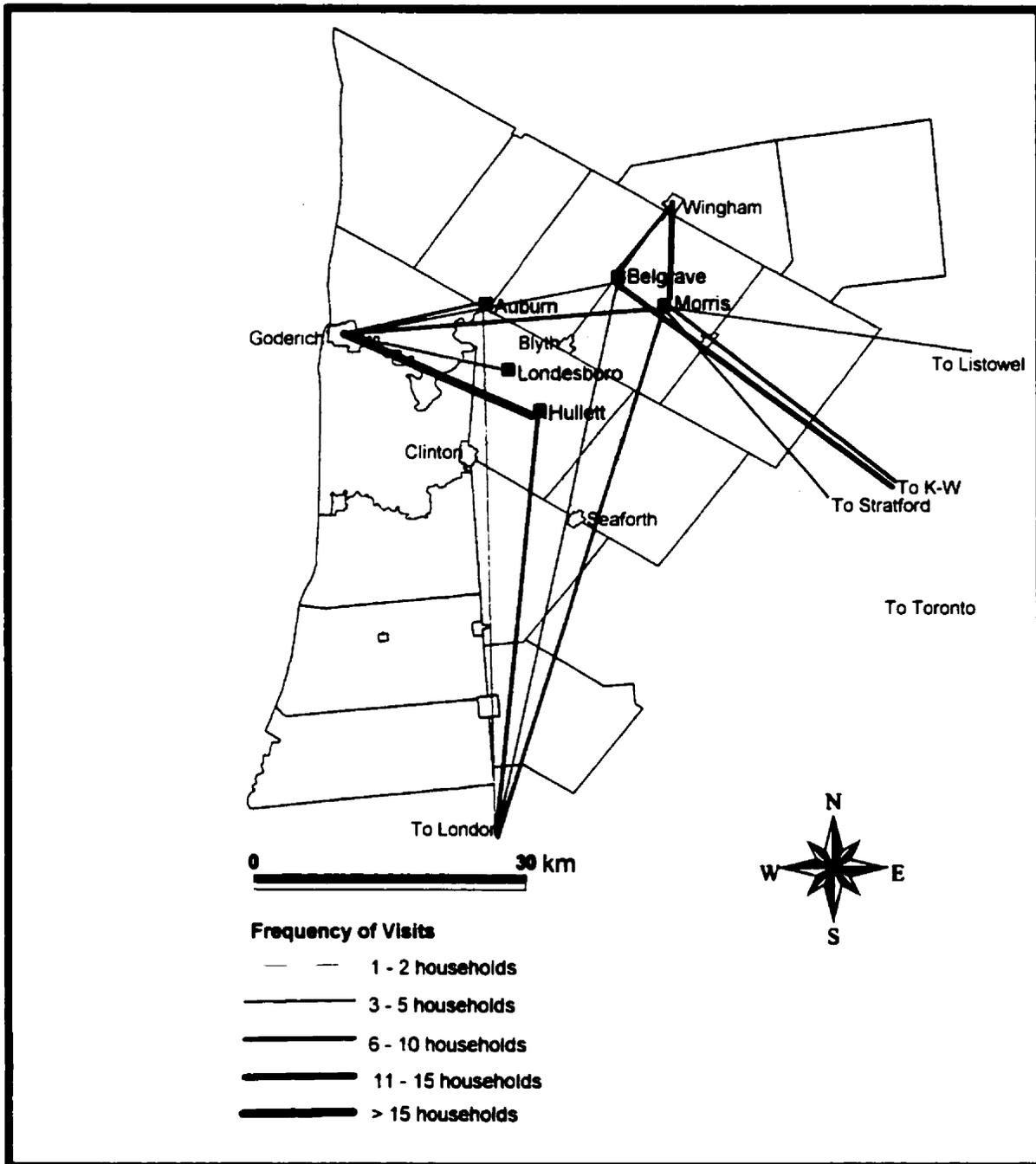
sample depending on the type of clothing purchased. KW is also identified by a sizeable percentage of consumers (11% to 13%) as being patronized for clothing items. Either London or KW are also used by a small proportion of consumers for clubbing, dining out, or seeing a movie. The only other city to attract Morris and Hullett consumers is Toronto, which is visited by a small number of theatre-goers.

Table 26 also reveals that several nearby small towns are patronized by Morris and Hullett consumers to acquire goods and services. Over one dozen draw at least 5% of consumers depending on the type of good or service required. Small towns such as Exeter, Westfield, Hensall, Lucknow, and Londesborough are regularly visited for individual items. But it is the small towns of Goderich, Wingham, Blyth, Clinton, Brussels, Listowel, and Seaforth that are identified by respondents as being used for multiple retailing purposes. Stated another way, this group of seven small towns is regularly visited for more than one type of good or service.

Goderich and Wingham are identified most often, and are used to a considerable degree by Morris and Hullett consumers for the majority of the twenty-one goods and services. At least 5% of respondents identified either of these small towns as being patronized for eighteen of the twenty-one goods listed. Despite this, for no good or service do these two small towns attract the majority of Morris and Hullett consumers.

While these two small towns seem to provide for all consumers' needs, their popularity differs according to the type of good or service required. Goderich is favoured over Wingham for the less frequently purchased items such as automobiles, clothing, as well as for evening outings (dinner, club, and movie). Wingham, although visited for each of the afore-mentioned goods and services, tends to be preferred for major appliance purchases, medical

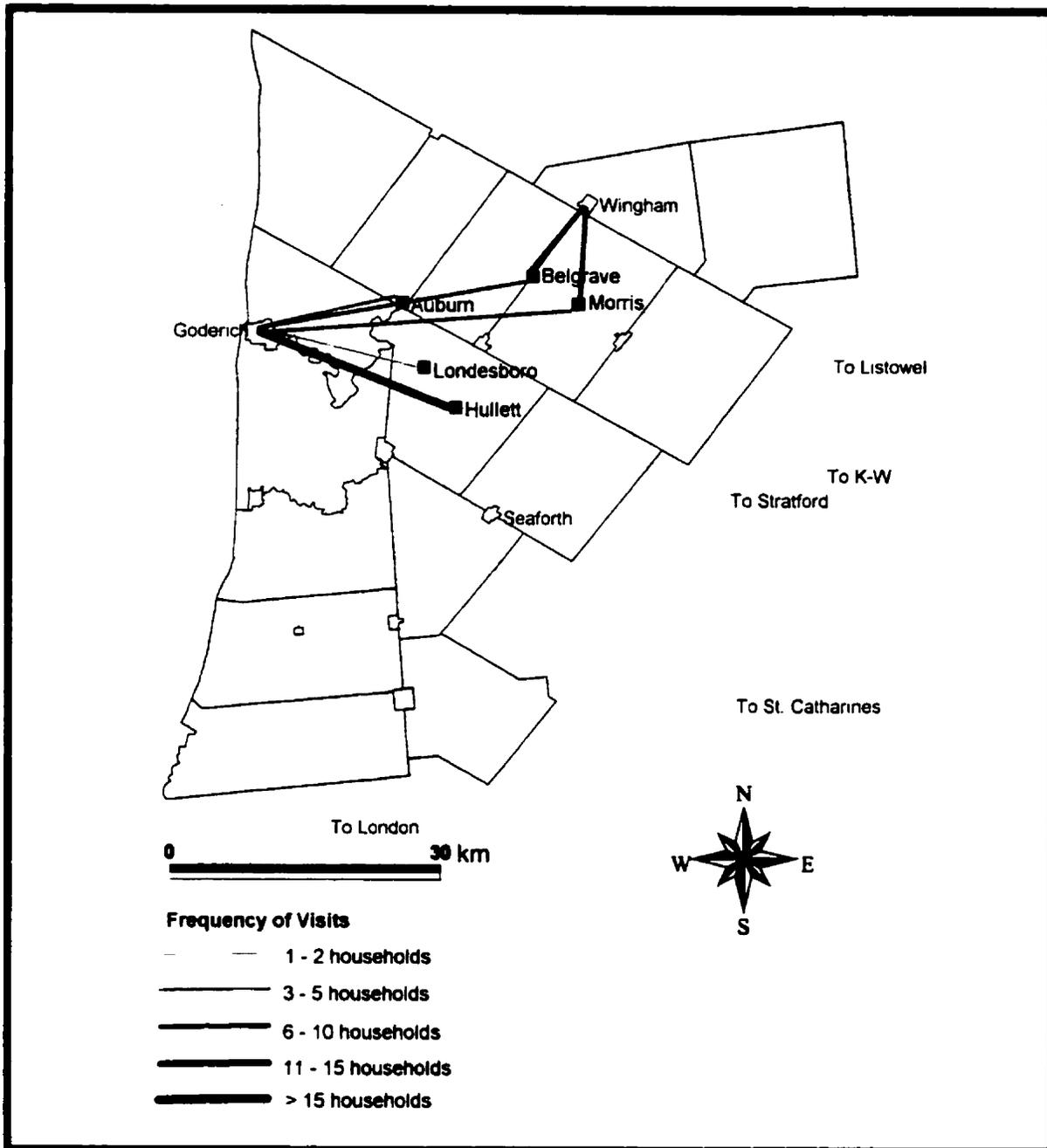
**Figure 39:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Clothing (Men's) Purchases: Morris and Hullett Households**



Although Goderich is able to attract consumers from all parts of Morris and Hullett Townships, major, external centers such as Kitchener-Waterloo and London draw noticeable numbers of Morris and Hullett consumers. Smaller towns are, however, not ignored, but command considerably smaller market areas.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

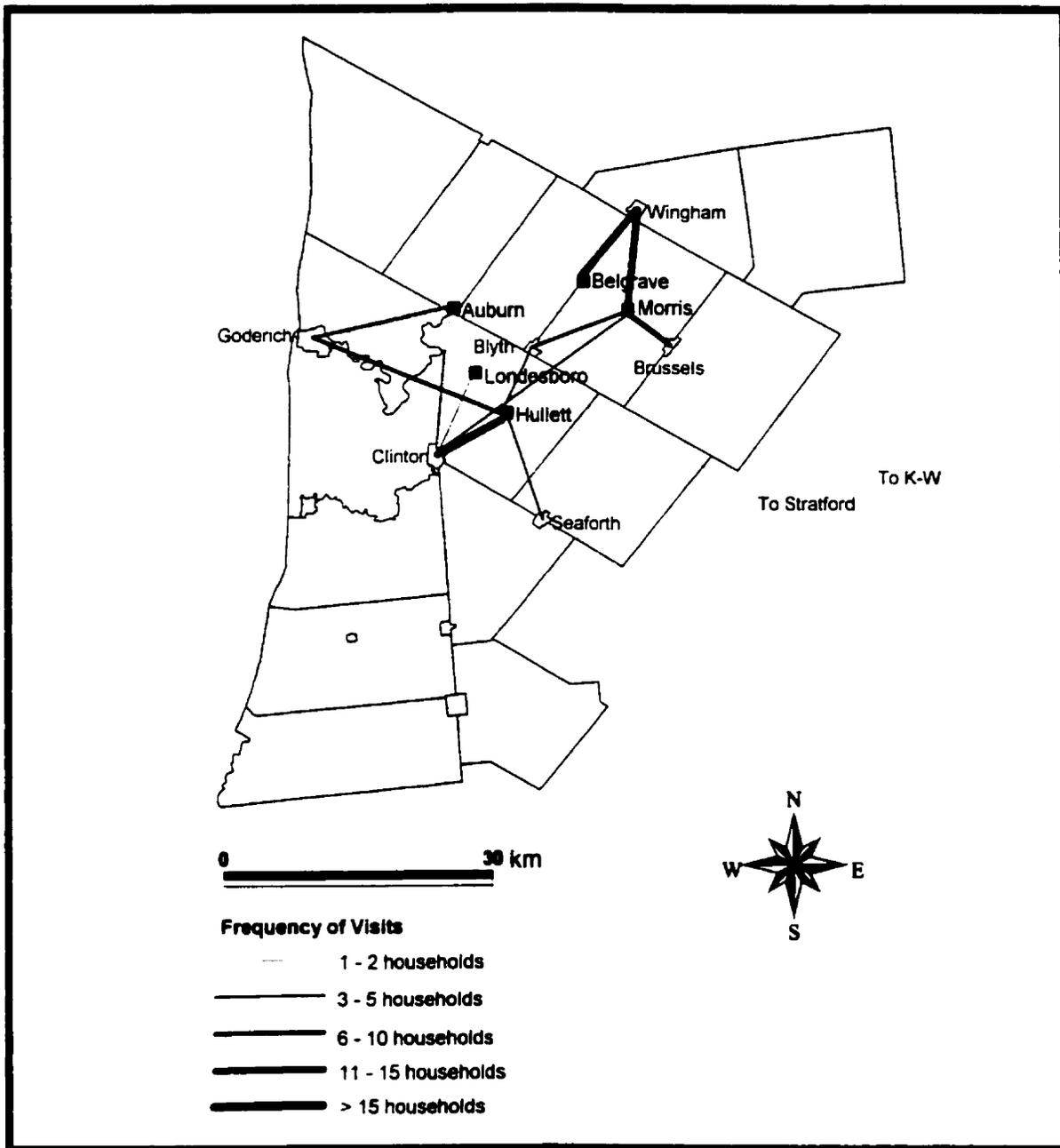
**Figure 40:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Cinematic Movie Purchases: Morris and Hullett Households**



Both Goderich and Wingham are heavily used by Morris and Hullett consumers to view theatrical films. The two towns, however, largely maintain exclusive market areas for this retail function.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 41:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Banking Services: Morris and Hullett Households**



Goderich and Wingham also maintain mutually exclusive market areas for banking services. The market areas, however, are not as extensive for banking services as they are for movie-houses. This is due to the availability of banking services in many other small towns in the area.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

and banking services, and for frequently purchased items such as gasoline, groceries, and convenience items.

The smaller towns of Blyth, Clinton, and Seaforth are also used to a considerable degree by consumers. These three small towns are patronized by at least 5% of the sampled households for at least eleven different goods and services. While considerable overlap does exist with respect to the types of goods and services that are purchased (for example, all three small towns are used for building supplies, groceries, dining out, banking, gasoline, and convenience item purchases), there also appears to be evidence of retail specialization as one town is favoured over the other for a small variety of goods and services. For live theatrical performances, Blyth is the destination of choice for almost two-thirds of respondents. Blyth is also a much utilized destination for farming equipment purchases, drawing one-fifth of all households sampled. Brussels, meanwhile, is somewhat important for automobile consumers (although not as important as either Goderich or Wingham). Alternatively, Clinton acts as an important draw for major appliance purchases (again, not to the same degree as Goderich or Wingham) and is visited by approximately one-quarter of Morris and Hullett households for medical (doctor and dentist) services.

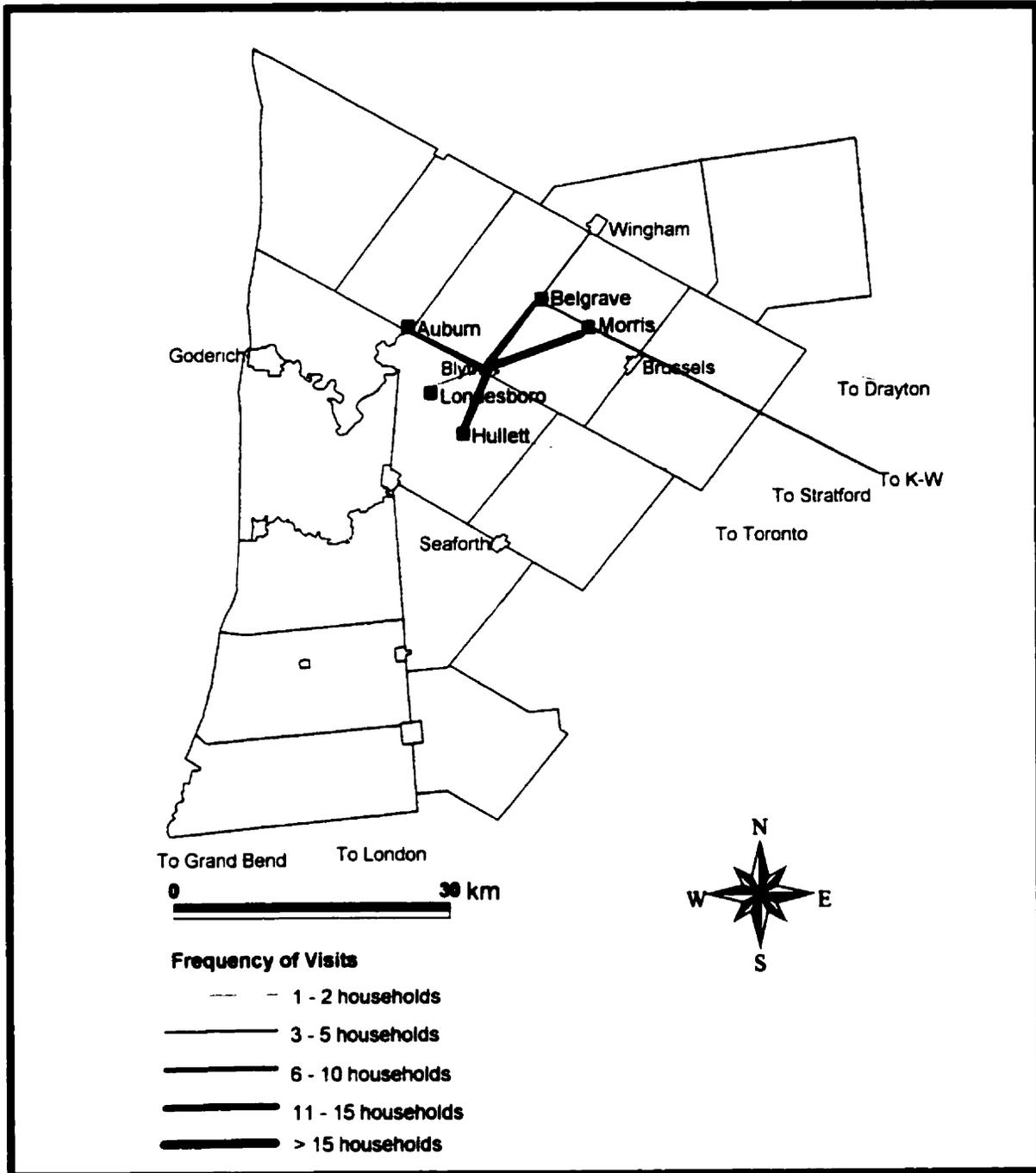
Two other small towns are also visited to a considerable degree, although for a smaller variety of goods and services. Listowel (located in Perth County) acts as an important destination for infrequently purchased goods such as automobiles, major appliances, and all types of clothing. Seaforth, on the other hand, appears to act as an important 'medical' node, being used primarily for medical services (doctor and dentist) and health-related goods (prescription drugs).

The smallest of (unincorporated) small towns appear to possess healthy, albeit limited, retail environments. Those people living in the small towns of Belgrave, Auburn, and Londesborough tend to purchase items such as gasoline and convenience items in their home environment. Other small towns, however, such as Westfield and Walton are visited by people living throughout the two townships for specific goods. Westfield appears to be an attractive town for automobile repairs. Walton seems to be an immensely popular town to purchase farming equipment. This small town was identified by over one-quarter of all households as being the destination of choice when purchasing this particular type of good.

Consumer behaviour reveals a much different picture in Morris and Hullett Townships than in Wilmot Township. Morris and Hullett consumers travel longer distances and visit more settlements to purchase goods and services. Although large cities such as London, KW, and Toronto are visited to some extent for a limited number of items, the small towns located within the countryside act as the main draws for the majority of goods and services. Evidence of retail specialization exists, but it is limited. Many small town market areas penetrate the two townships. This sharing appears to result in competition, rather than cooperation. While some may travel to Goderich, others will travel to Wingham for the same type of good. In spite of this, these two towns display signs of retail specialization as one is often favoured over the other, depending on the type of good or service required.

In a similar fashion, some households may purchase goods in Blyth, but often an equal number will also shop in the small towns of Brussels or Clinton to purchase the same type of good or service. But, again, evidence of retail specialization does emerge among these small towns as each seems to be favoured over the others for either one or two specific types of goods

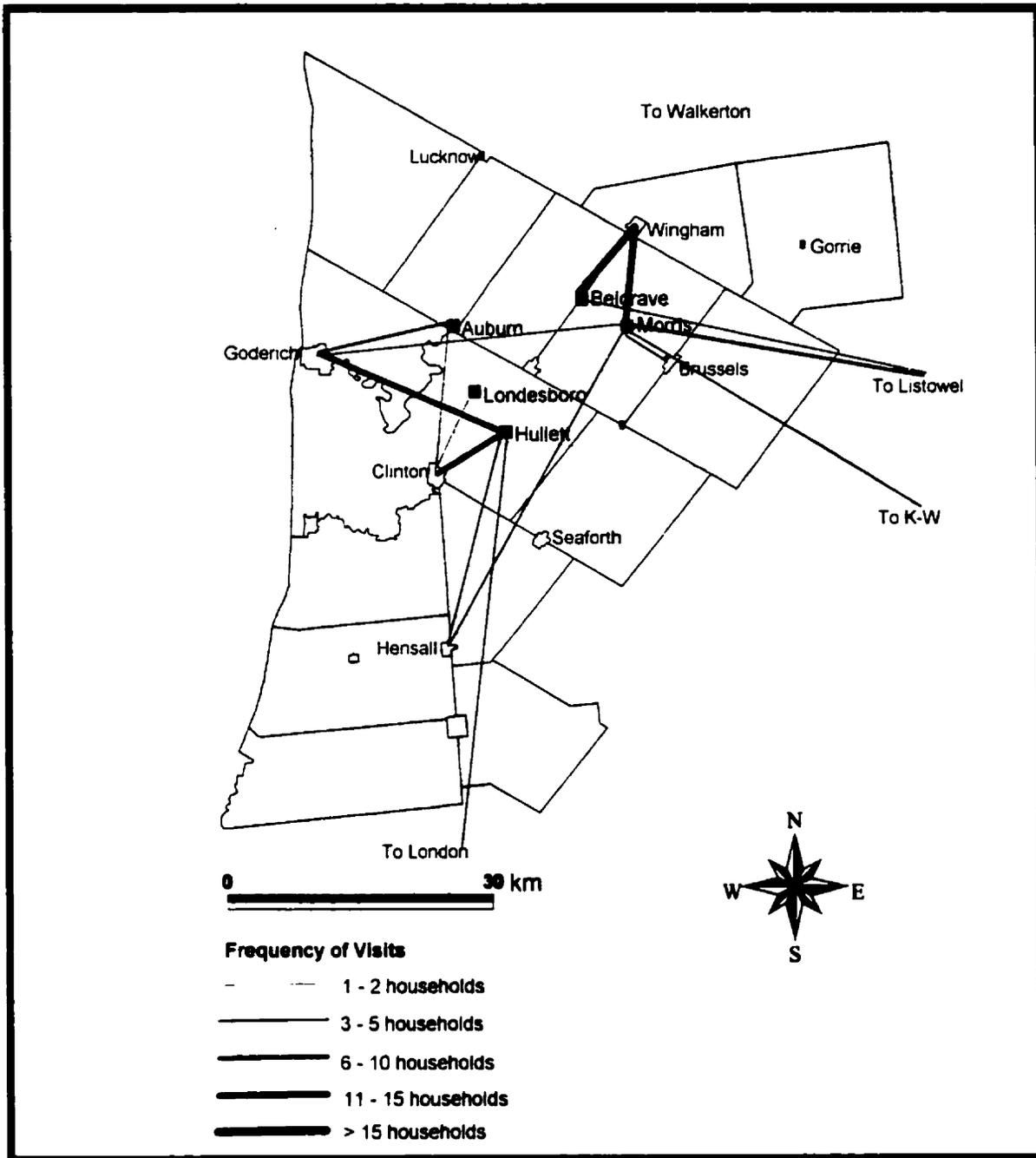
**Figure 42:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Live Theatrical Performance Purchases:**  
**Morris and Hullett Households**



By far, the sole destination for live theatrical performances for Morris and Hullett consumers is Blyth. Other external (e.g., Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto) and internal (e.g., Goderich and Wingham) centers draw minimal numbers.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

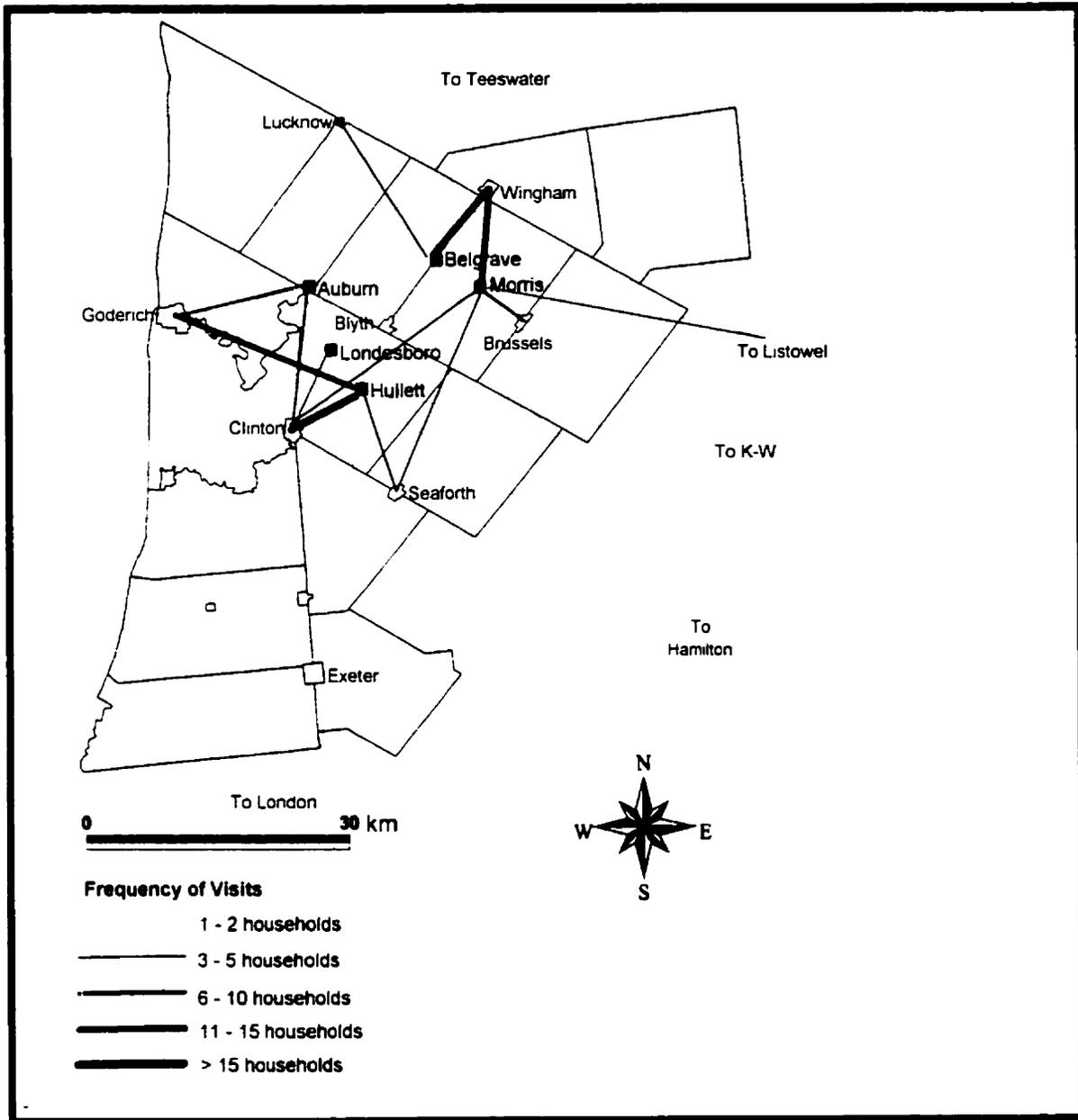
**Figure 43:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Major Appliance Purchases: Morris and Hullett Households**



Despite the continued importance of Goderich and Wingham, Clinton is able to penetrate into all areas of Morris and Hullett Townships for major appliance purchases.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

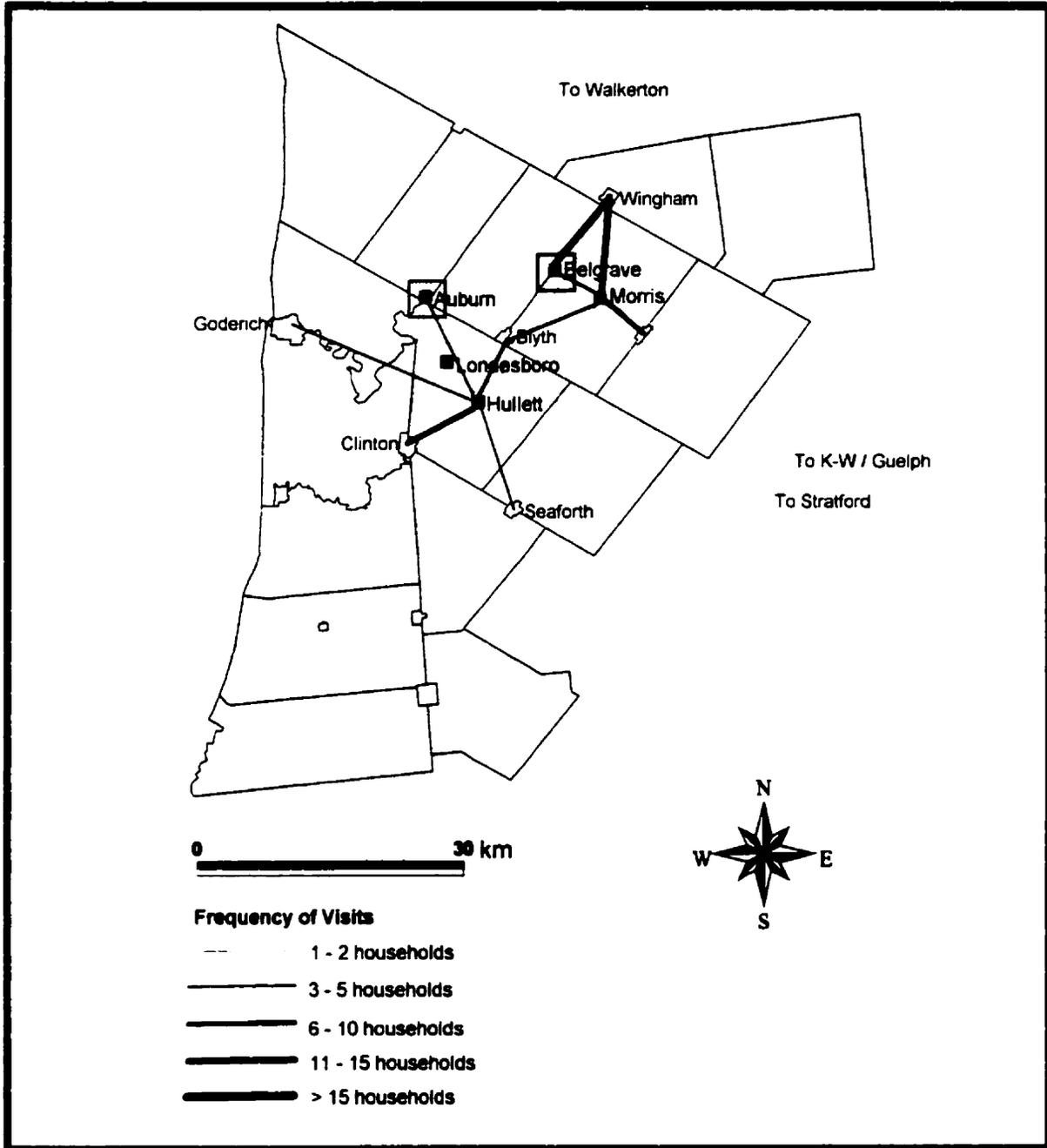
**Figure 44:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Medical (Doctor) Services: Morris and Hullett Households**



Clinton is also able to attract a considerable number of consumers from all over Morris and Hullett Townships for medical (i.e. doctor and dentist) services. Wingham, while also an important destination for these services, commands a much smaller market area than does Clinton.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

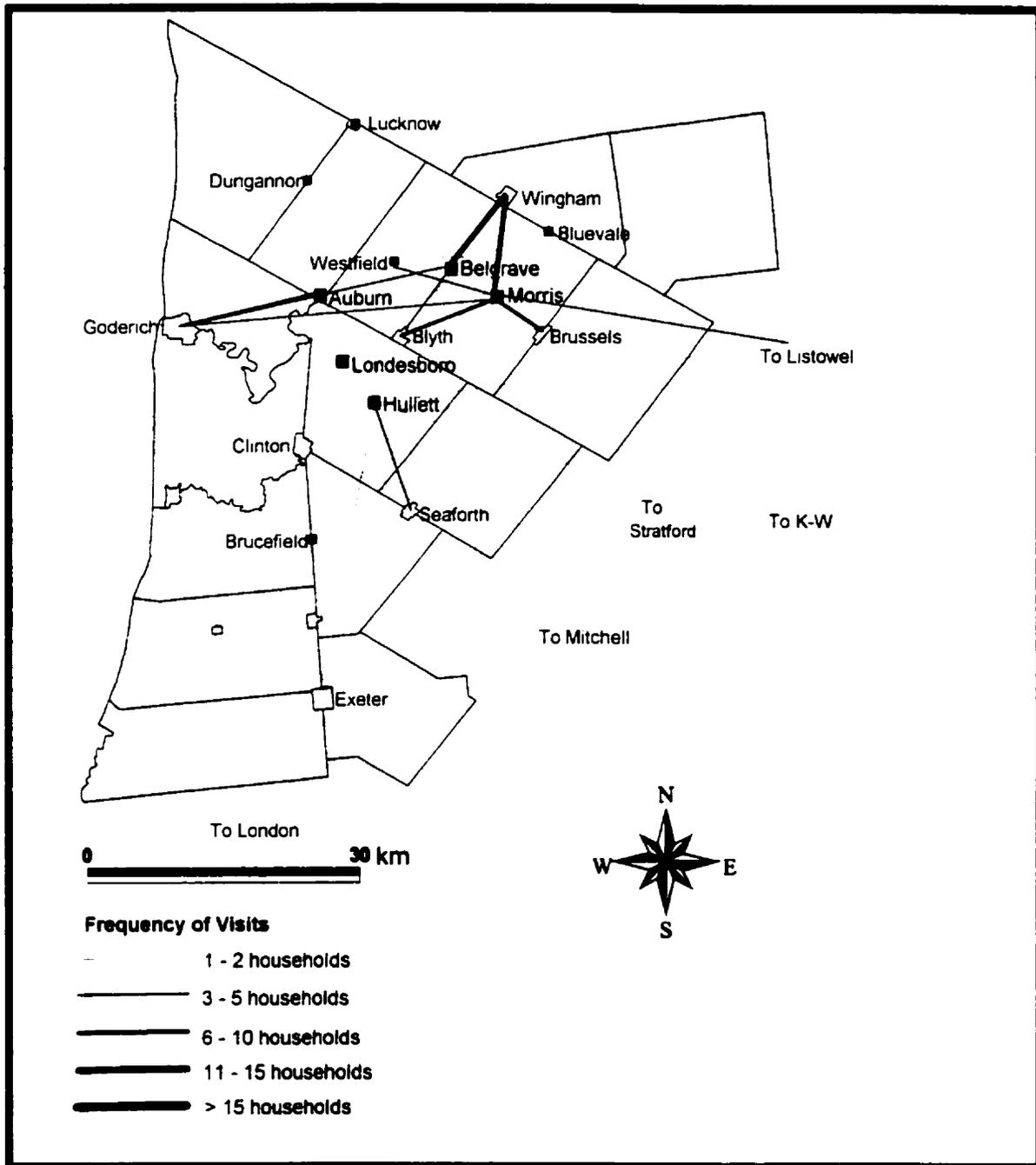
**Figure 45:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Gasoline Purchases: Morris and Hullett Households**



For the most part, convenience items and gasoline are purchased in the closest center providing these goods. Centers such as Belgrave, Auburn, and Lonsesborough, therefore, become very important.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 46:**  
**Shopping Behaviour For Automobile Repair Services: Morris and Hullett Households**



Generally speaking, auto repair services control a relatively small market area. Notice must, however, be taken of the popularity of Westfield, which is able to attract consumers from an expanded market area for this service.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

or services. Even among the smallest of small towns, which are most often only patronized by those who live in them for the most convenient of goods and services, there is evidence to suggest retail specialization. Towns such as Walton and Westfield are used for purposes other than acquiring simply gasoline or convenience items.

### **5.5 Retail Specialization in the Countryside**

So far, only settlements have been identified as being destinations for consumers. Nothing has been stated with respect to the retailing establishments that are visited. Recall that the historical-functional analysis based evidence of retail specialization on the existence of outsized functions, establishments that outperform their competitors. While there may be evidence to suggest a limited degree of retail specialization, particularly among rural small towns, claims of retail specialization must be cautiously made. It is unclear whether some settlements are favoured over others as a result of the presence of individual outsized functions or as a result of a conglomeration of establishments offering the same type of good or service. Given that it is the larger settlements that show signs of specialization, both scenarios are possible. In order to discern the differences, respondents were also asked to identify the specific retail establishment they visited when purchasing each of the twenty-one goods or services listed in the questionnaire.

#### **5.5.1 Wilmot Township**

Very little evidence exists to conclude that retail specialization is widespread among the settlements within or surrounding Wilmot Township. It is clear that in terms of settlement choice, Kitchener-Waterloo is often utilized by the majority of Wilmot consumers for most goods and services. Because of this fact, it is difficult to state that Kitchener-Waterloo shows signs of retail specialization. Not only is it used by high proportions of Wilmot consumers, but

these consumers use a myriad of retail establishments when acquiring such items. When buying major appliances, for example, thirteen different retailers are identified by respondents. For items such as women's clothing, the number of retailers rises to twenty-five. For haircutting services, almost forty different salons within Kitchener-Waterloo are identified as being used. Kitchener-Waterloo, therefore, acts as a complete and comprehensive retailing agglomeration for Wilmot consumers (refer to Table 27).

**Table 27:**  
**Total Number of Establishments Mentioned by Wilmot Households**  
**While Patroning Kitchener-Waterloo**

Good / Service	Total No. of KW Establishments* Visited by Wilmot Households
Automobiles	14
Farm Equipment	0
Major Appliances	13
Building Supplies	2
Women's Clothing	25
Men's Clothing	17
Children's Clothing	13
Prescription Drugs	14
Groceries	6
Auto Repair	25
Haircut	39
Breakfast	16
Dinner	23
Club	8
Movie	5
Live Theater	2
Doctor	unknown
Dentist	unknown
Banking	9
Gasoline	9
Convenience Items	8

\* Respondents identified several retail chains in KW. Since there tends to be multiple store locations (i.e., several Zehrs grocery stores) in KW, these numbers represent the minimum number of different establishments visited.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

In spite of the retailing dominance displayed by Kitchener-Waterloo, it is known that a few small towns are able to attract a substantial number of Wilmot consumers. Perhaps the most attractive of these small towns is New Hamburg. As previously stated, it displays a relatively high degree of nodality (being able to rely on a majority of its own residents) and centrality (drawing consumers from all over the township). Its attraction appears to be a result of both retailing agglomeration and individual outsized functions.



**Photograph 1:** Murray's Clothing Store, New Hamburg

New Hamburg is a popular destination for auto sales. Of the 172 respondents identifying a specific establishment for auto purchases, New Hamburg establishments emerge in 58 (34%) of them. But when it comes to auto dealers, no one outstanding establishment emerges. In New Hamburg, auto sales appear to be evenly split among three dealers, Expressway Ford, Hanson Pontiac Buick, and Heffner Chrysler. Thus, while New Hamburg may claim to be a major draw

for automobile purchases, its attraction comes about from the concentration of auto dealers in the area, not through the emergence of individual outsized functions.

New Hamburg is also an important destination for a variety of other goods and services. For some types of goods, there is evidence of the presence of outstanding local retailers. Of those travelling to New Hamburg for groceries, two-thirds shop at Murray's IGA. A slightly smaller proportion go to Cook's Pharmacy for prescription drugs. New Hamburg also seems to have a very popular clothing store, Murray's (refer to Photograph 1). This store, specializing in women's, men's, and children's clothing, is often identified by Wilmot consumers when purchasing apparel.



**Photograph 2:** EJ's Restaurant, Baden

The only other indication of retail specialization, as identified through the presence of individual outsized functions, lies in the small town of Baden. Baden ranks immediately behind KW in terms of attracting Wilmot consumers for building supplies. This appeal is due to

Herner's Wood Products. This establishment was identified by one-quarter of all who purchased these types of items. Another establishment in Baden also stands out in the field of restaurants/clubs. Although the town itself is not a major draw in relation to KW, EJ's Tavern is the establishment of choice among a considerable number of Wilmot households (refer to Photograph 2). In fact, EJ's is the business most often listed by respondents for the purposes of 'clubbing.'

Thus, even in the shadow of an expanding metropolis such as the Tri-Cities, some small towns show vibrancy with respect to their retailing environment. Granted, the majority of small towns are only visited for the most basic of goods and services, if at all. But other small towns, such as New Hamburg and Baden, have been able to carve out niche markets, drawing consumers from all over Wilmot Township for a limited number of goods and services. More often than not, these markets are generated by the presence of individual, highly patronized businesses.

#### **5.5.2 Morris and Hullett Townships**

More signs of retail specialization exist among the small towns surrounding Morris and Hullett Townships than in Wilmot Township. As already indicated, there is very little reliance upon cities to satisfy consumer demands. Rather, Morris and Hullett households tend to visit a great number of small towns to acquire goods and services. While it has been shown that many small towns are used for the same types of goods and services (indicating the existence of exclusive market areas), there is evidence to show that some are used for specific items, thereby suggesting selective retail specialization. Consumer behaviour indicates, however, that the largest small town in the county, Goderich, plays a role similar to that of Kitchener-Waterloo, in that it is visited because of the presence of many establishments selling similar goods; not

necessarily because of retail specialization. However, among the remainder of the small towns, individual outsized functions may be present.

**Table 28:**  
**Total Number of Establishments Mentioned by Morris and Hullett Households**  
**While Patronizing Goderich**

Good / Service	Total No. of Goderich Establishments* Visited by Morris & Hullett Households
Automobiles	6
Farm Equipment	0
Major Appliances	5
Building Supplies	4
Women's Clothing	10
Men's Clothing	6
Children's Clothing	6
Prescription Drugs	4
Groceries	1
Auto Repair	8
Haircut	6
Breakfast	3
Dinner	5
Club	3
Movie	1
Live Theater	0
Doctor	unknown
Dentist	unknown
Banking	8
Gasoline	2
Convenience Items	3

\* Respondents identified some retail chains in Goderich. Some chains have multiple stores within Goderich. Therefore these numbers may underestimate the total number of establishments visited by Morris and Hullett households.

Source: (Distributed Questionnaire, 1998).

Goderich is used to a considerable degree for the majority (nineteen of twenty-one) of goods and services listed in the questionnaire. In spite of this, it never attracts a majority of households for any one item. It is most popular for cinematic movies, automobile, and clothing purchases, attracting 46%, 35%, and 29% of respondents, respectively. Goderich appears to be

used by many Morris and Hullett consumers because of the presence of many, particularly larger retailers in the town. For women's clothing purchases, ten different establishments are listed as being visited by consumers. In this specific case, two retailers, Walmart and Zellers, are most often mentioned. These two stores are used to a considerable degree for all clothing purchases (women's, men's, and children's). Similarly, six different auto retailers are used by Morris and Hullett households. None are visited by more than 10% of respondents (refer to Table 28).

While multiple establishments providing the same types of goods and services exist, Morris and Hullett consumers do show favouritism for Zehrs with respect to grocery and prescription drug purchases. Approximately one-quarter of Morris and Hullett households visit Goderich for these two goods. Of these, 70% listed Zehrs as being the establishment where prescription drugs are purchased. For groceries, Zehrs was the unanimous choice by those travelling to Goderich.

While Goderich is used by consumers largely because of the presence of multiple retail establishments providing similar goods, the remainder of the small towns surrounding Morris and Hullett Townships appear to possess businesses that may best be described as outsized functions. When travelling to these small towns, consumers tend to visit one particular establishment when purchasing individual goods and services.

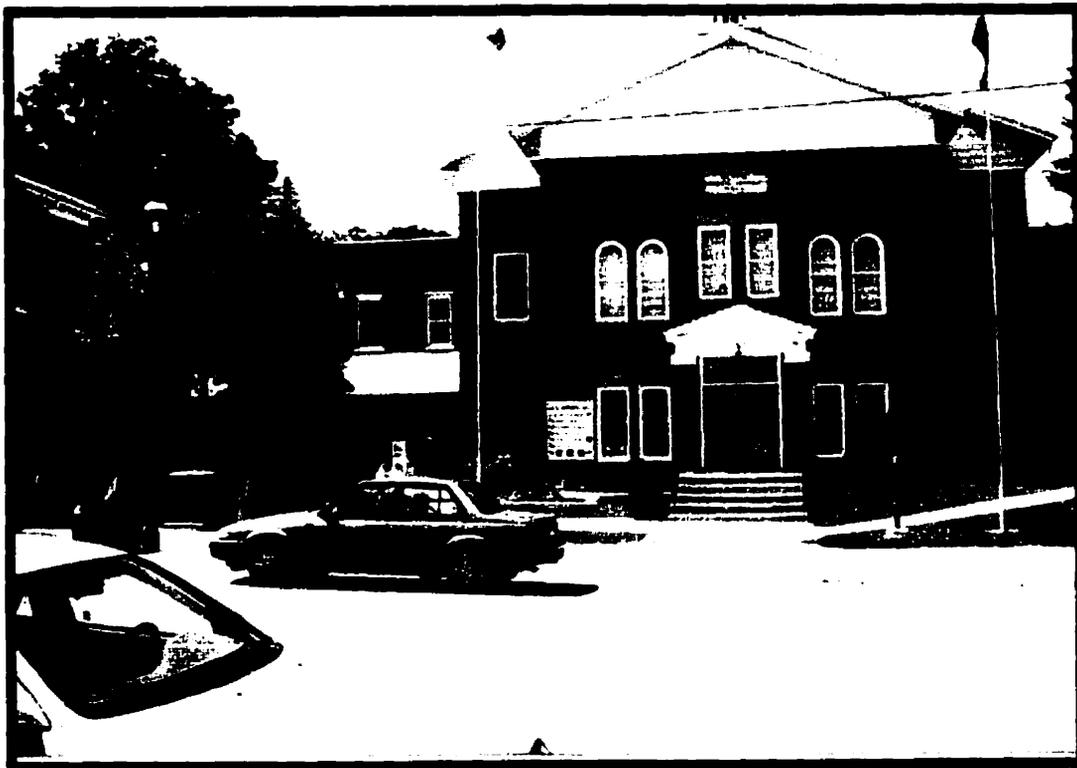
Wingham, another popular destination for most goods and services, also provides consumers with multiple choices when purchasing items. While for some goods and services all of these establishments are used (i.e., for clubbing, haircutting, and auto repair), for others, specific businesses are heavily used. For dinner outings, JJ's Fireside Cafe appears to be a popular restaurant. Of those able to identify a specific business, almost one-quarter identified JJ's as their restaurant of choice. For prescription drug purchases, Vance's Guardian Drugs is the

overwhelming pharmacy of choice by Morris and Hullett households. For those travelling to Wingham, Vance's is used by six times as many customers than is the second-most visited pharmacy in the town. One other business in Wingham may also qualify as an outsized function. Although the town itself is not heavily used by Morris and Hullett consumers for clothing (attracting approximately 13% of households), among those that do visit the town patronize Saan's. This store is often chosen over other clothing retailers (i.e., Gibson's) in the town.

The small town of Blyth is another popular destination for Morris and Hullett consumers. This town, while also providing the populace with a wide variety of goods and services, is perhaps best known for its live theatre. As mentioned, Blyth, and more specifically, the Blyth Festival Theatre, (refer to Photograph 3) attracted almost two-thirds of respondents. While this would certainly allude to the existence of an outsized function in Blyth, personal inspection (through discussions with attendants and the displays of 'guest books' in the theatre) of the theatre indicates that it may act as much more. The theatre, in fact, is better described as a supra-regional function, for it draws patrons from an extensive, even international market area. In other words, the theatre in Blyth, although heavily utilized by local residents, is also a significant draw for those living in places such as Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo (Blyth was even identified by those living in Wilmot Township as being a destination for live theatrical performances).

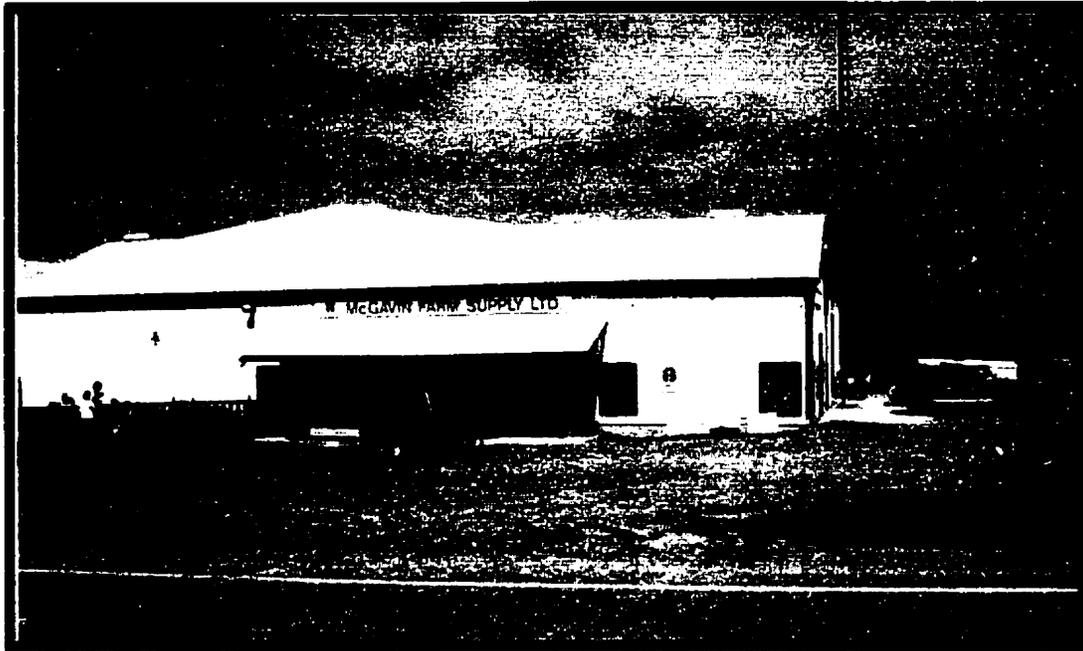
In addition to acting as a premier draw for live theatre, Blyth is an important destination for those seeking to buy farming equipment. In this case, Huron Tractor receives a large amount of business, being identified by one-fifth of those who purchased this type of good. But while this may sound impressive, Huron Tractor is overshadowed by McGavin's Farm Equipment, located in the small town of Walton (refer to Photograph 4). This retailer attracts almost

one-half of all those wishing to purchase this type of good. Given that McGavin's is able to attract customers from all over the townships, qualify this establishment as an outsized function.



**Photograph 3:** Blyth Festival Theater, Blyth

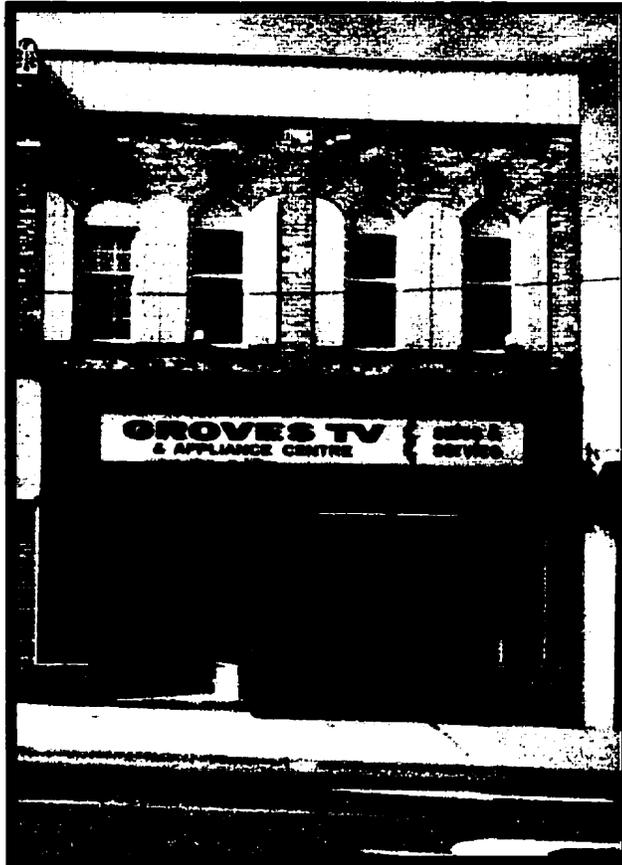
An outsized function also appears to exist in Clinton. This town, as already mentioned, is a popular destination for major appliance purchases. Among those able to identify specific establishments, Grove's T.V. and Appliances ranked first among all appliance retailers (refer to Photograph 5). Although not attracting the same proportion of households as McGavin's is able to do for farming equipment purchases, Grove's is able to attract at least 15% of Morris and Hullett households for appliance purchases.



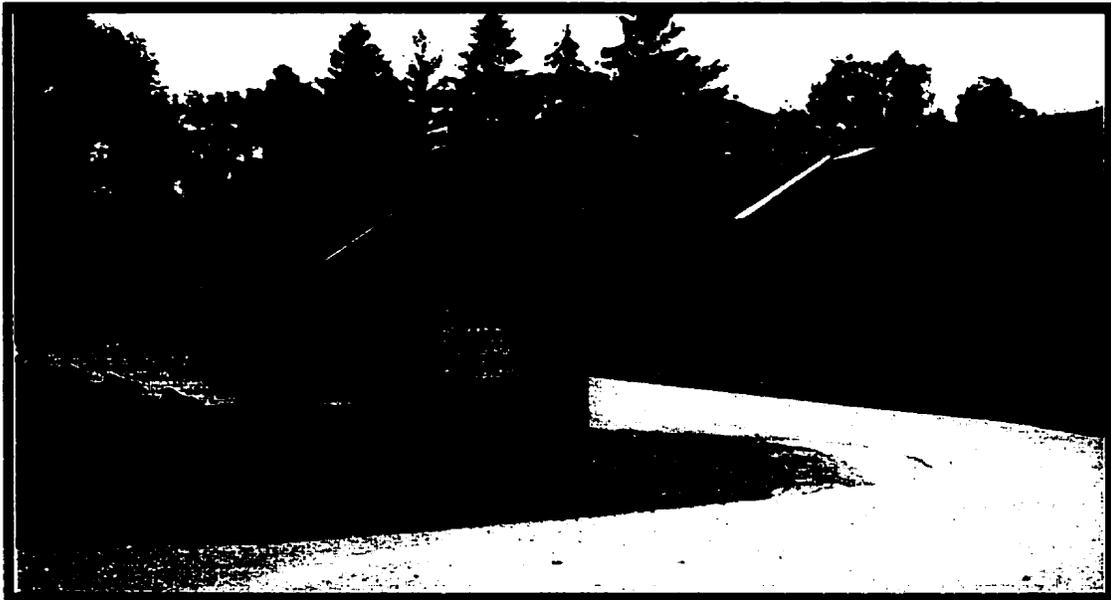
**Photograph 4:** McGavin's Farm Supply, Walton

Clinton is also an important draw for medical services (refer to Photograph 6). This appears to be due to the presence of the Clinton Medical Centre which houses a collection of medical specialists. This centre attracts just over one-quarter of all households in the two townships.

Lastly, the very small town of Westfield appears to be well known for its auto repair service. Although the town attracts fewer people than Goderich and Wingham, its auto repair service, Dan's Auto Body, is the shop most frequently identified by Morris and Hullett households. Given the location of this business, combined with the relatively large market area that automobile services command, in general, qualifies this particular establishment as an outsized function.



**Photograph 5:** Groves T.V. & Appliances. Clinton



**Photograph 6:** Clinton Medical Center. Clinton

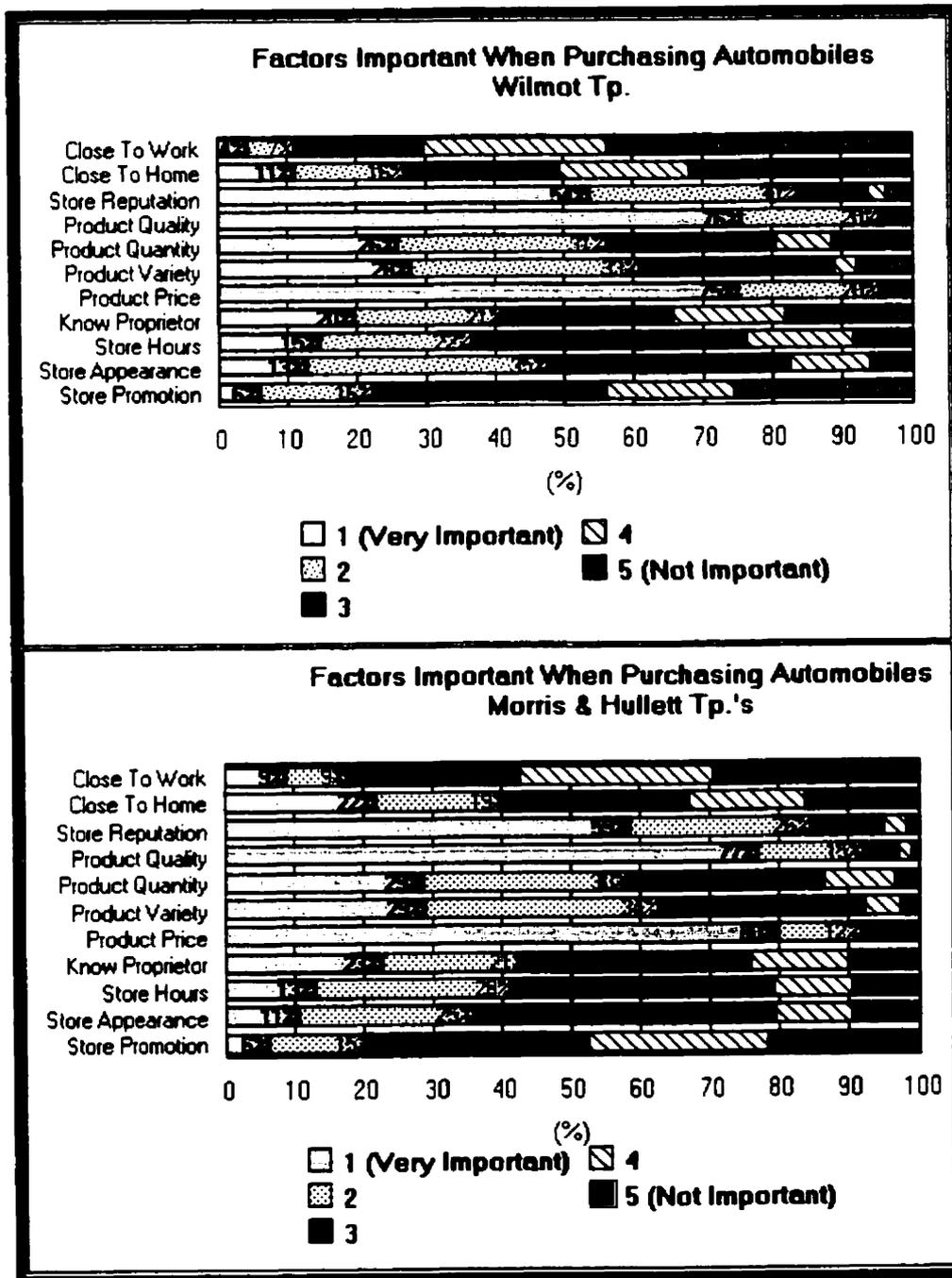
Morris and Hullett consumers affiliate themselves with a great number of nearby small towns. While the larger of these small towns are patronized because of agglomeration tendencies of like retailers, there is evidence to suggest that many individual outsized functions dot the retailing landscape. Walton houses an extremely popular farming equipment store while Clinton is home to a preferred appliance shop. Wingham contains a favourite restaurant while Westfield accommodates a frequently used auto repair shop.

### **5.6 Shopping Motivations**

Although importance is placed on identifying those businesses that consumers patronize, a cursory examination of the motivations propelling their actions is undertaken. Specifically, the survey asked what factors were important to respondents when purchasing a representative sample of low (weekly groceries, auto repair), middle (dining out), and high-order (automobiles, clothing, major appliances) goods and services. Generally speaking, subtle differences exist between the motivations of consumers living close to a large urban centre as opposed to those living farther away from one. When it comes to the patronizing of outsized functions, stark differences emerge. It would appear, therefore, that the motivations for visiting outsized functions, particularly those located in Huron County, are much different from the reasons for visiting other retailers providing the same types of goods and services.

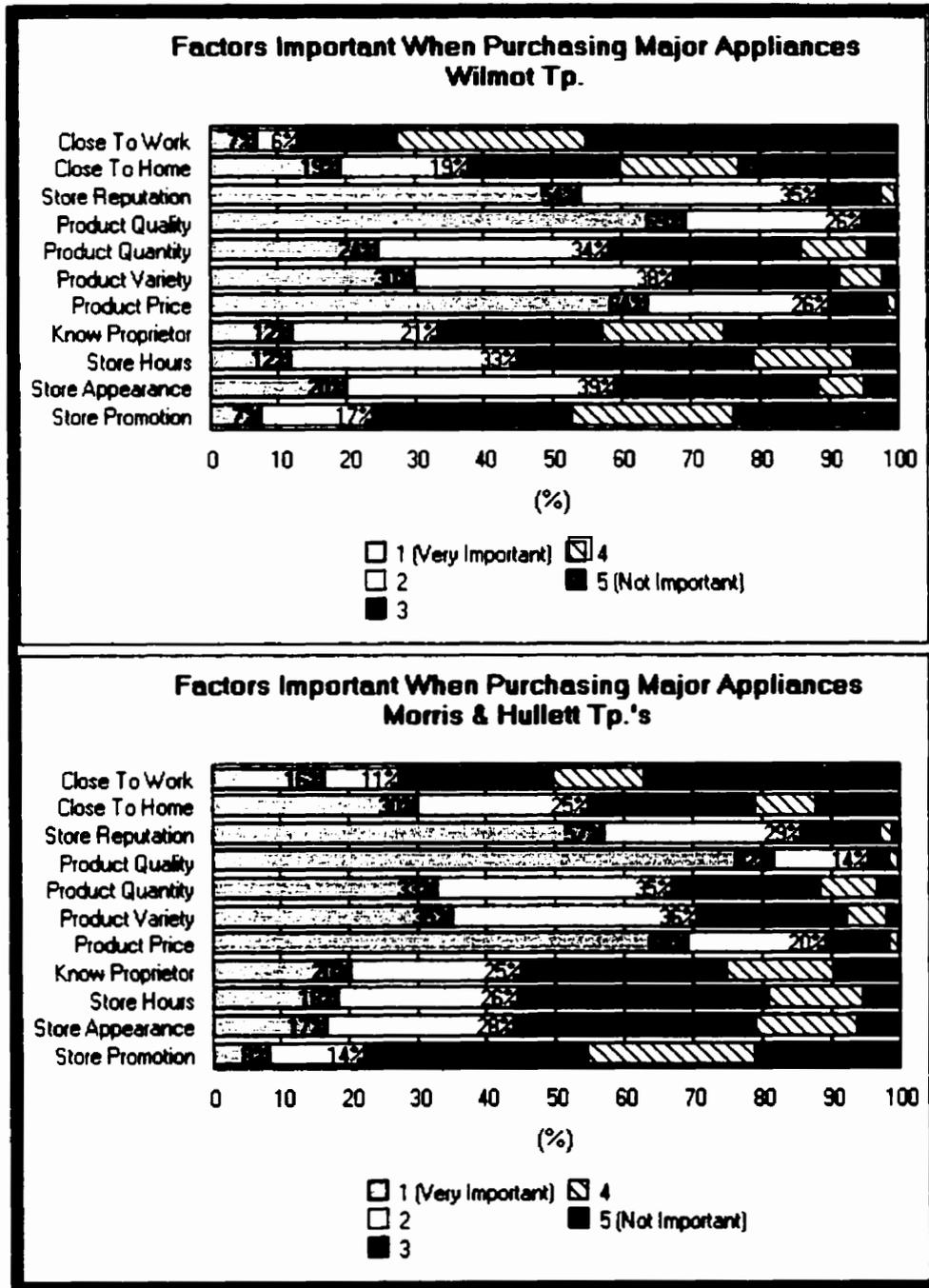
As the following series of figures illustrates (Figures 47 to 52), the factors that were consistently most important to consumers, regardless of where they lived and of the type of good or service purchased, included quality, price, and reputation. At least 50% and as many as 90% of respondents indicated that each of these three factors were very important when determining where to shop. Consistently ranking behind these factors were issues related to good variety or

**Figure 47:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Purchase an Automobile:**  
**Morris and Hullett versus Wilmot Households**



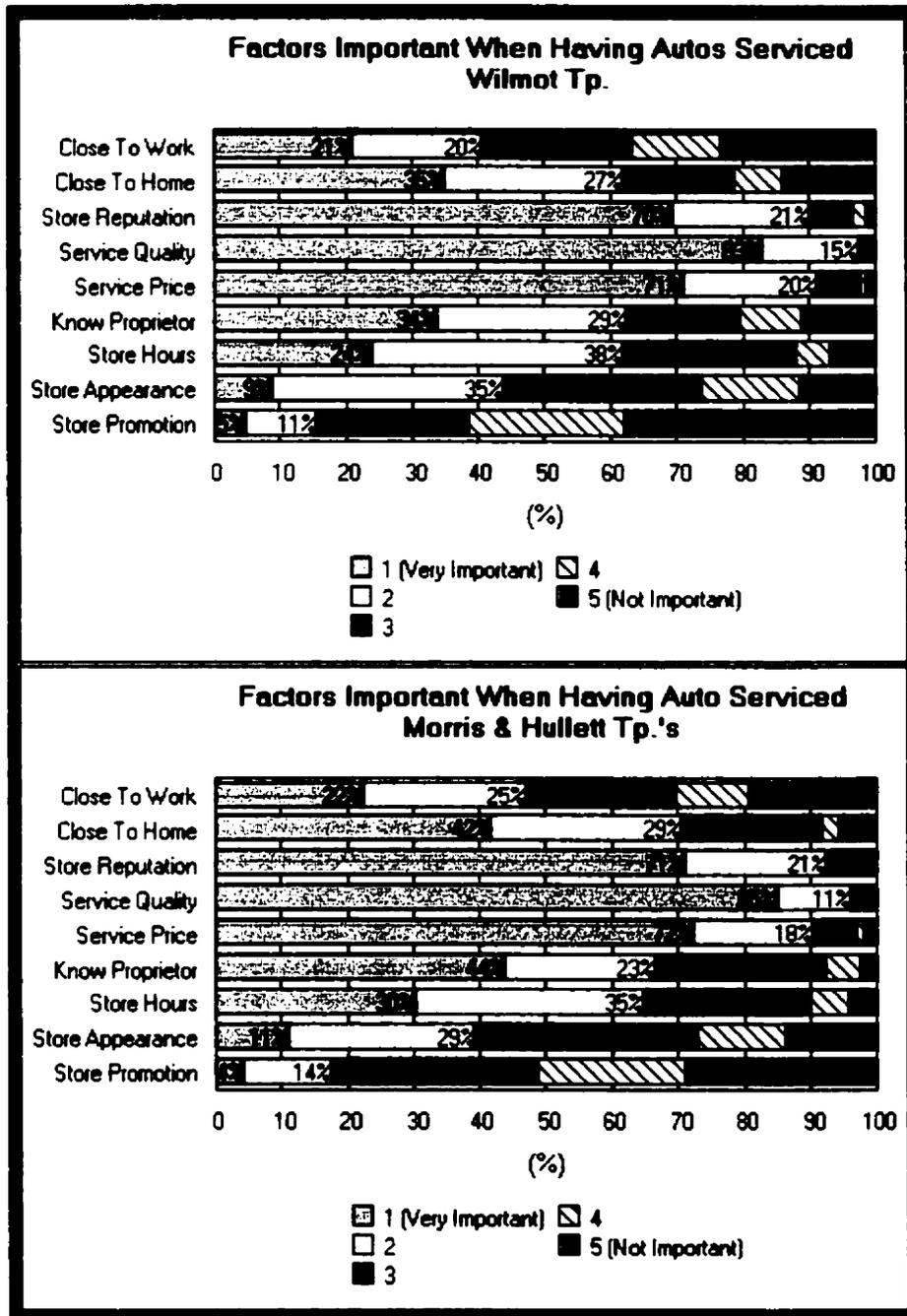
Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 48:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Purchase Major Appliances:**  
**Morris and Hullett versus Wilmot Households**



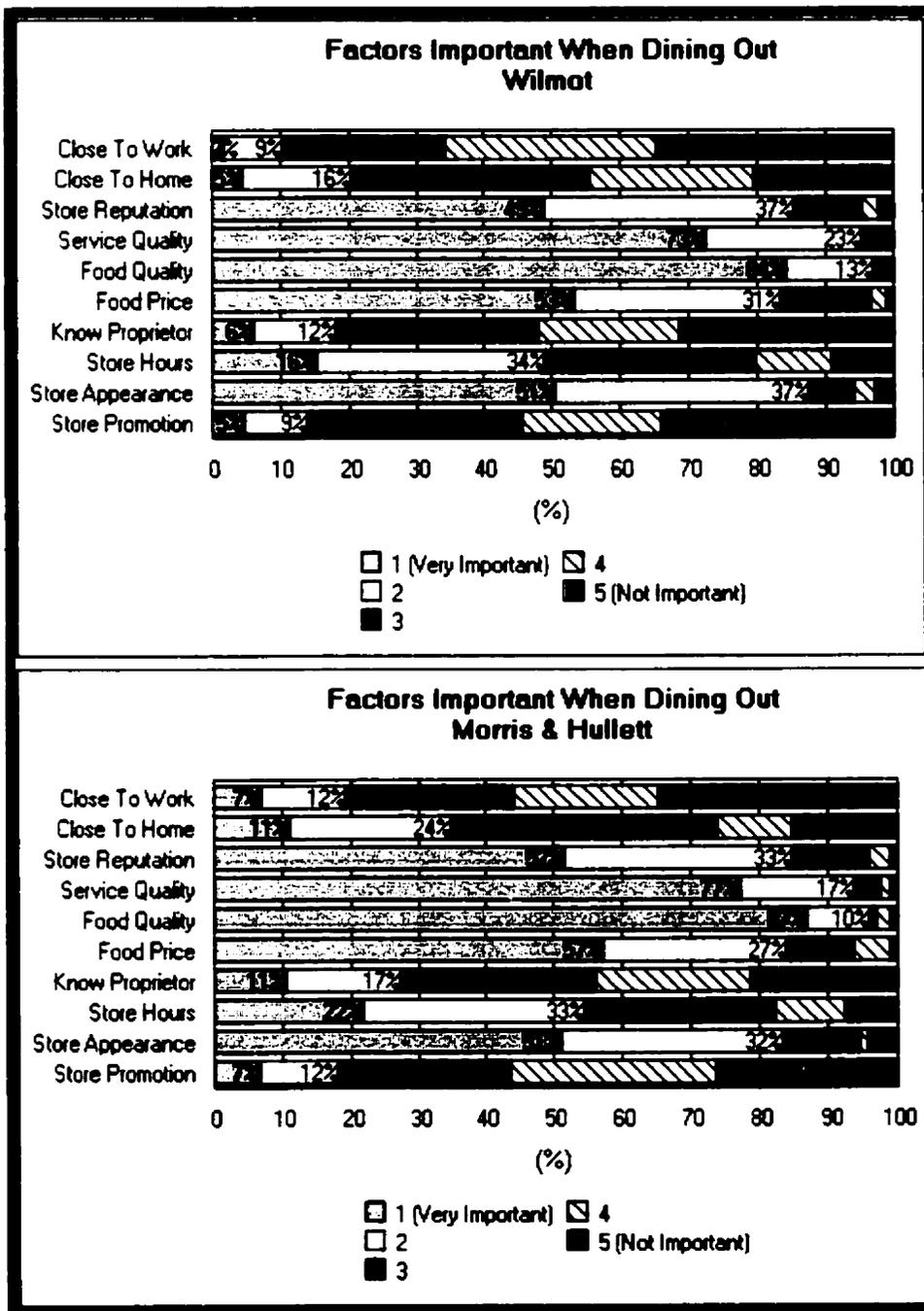
Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 49:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Have Auto Serviced:**  
**Morris and Hulleth versus Wilmot Households**



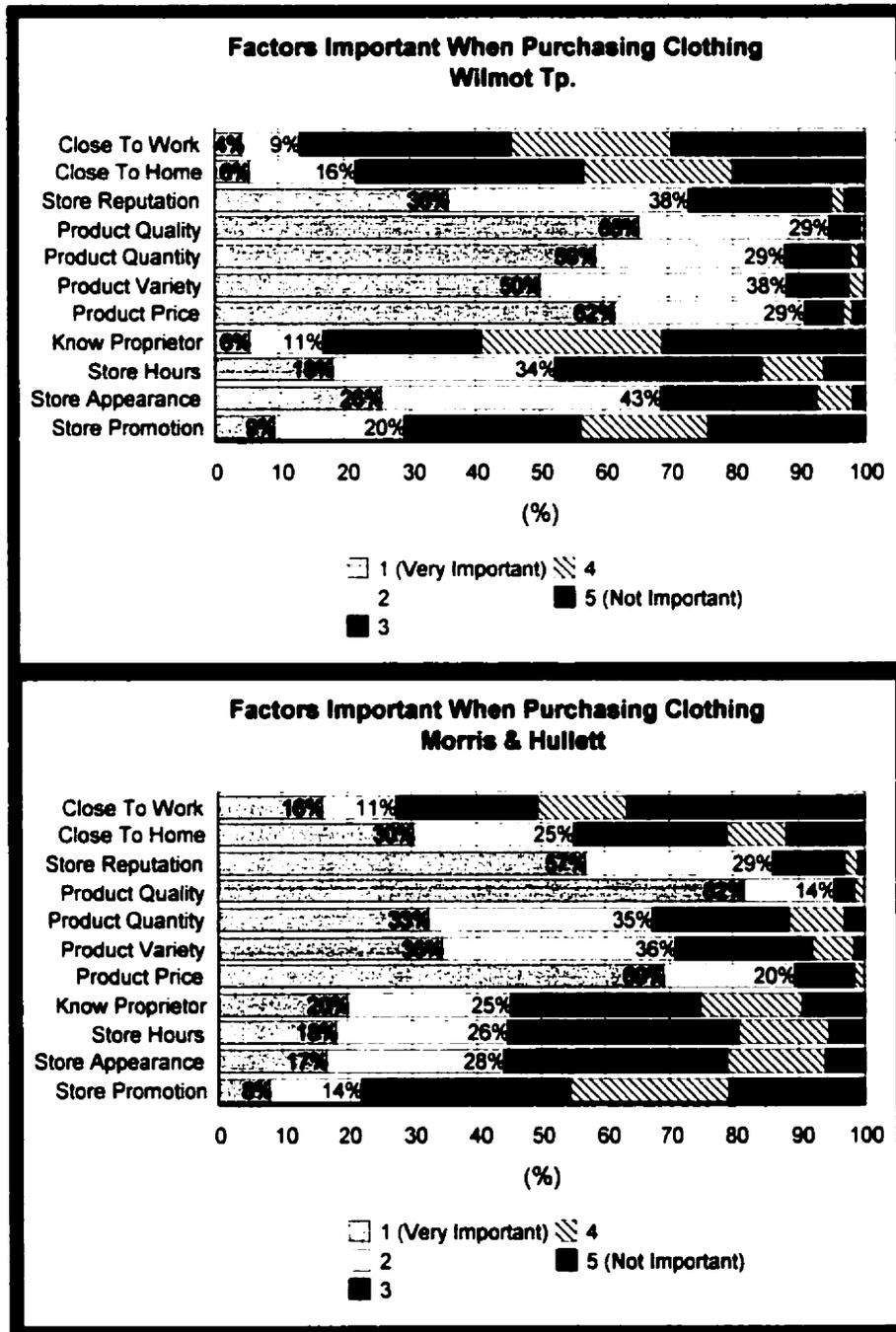
Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 50:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Dine Out:**  
**Morris and Hullett versus Wilmot Households**



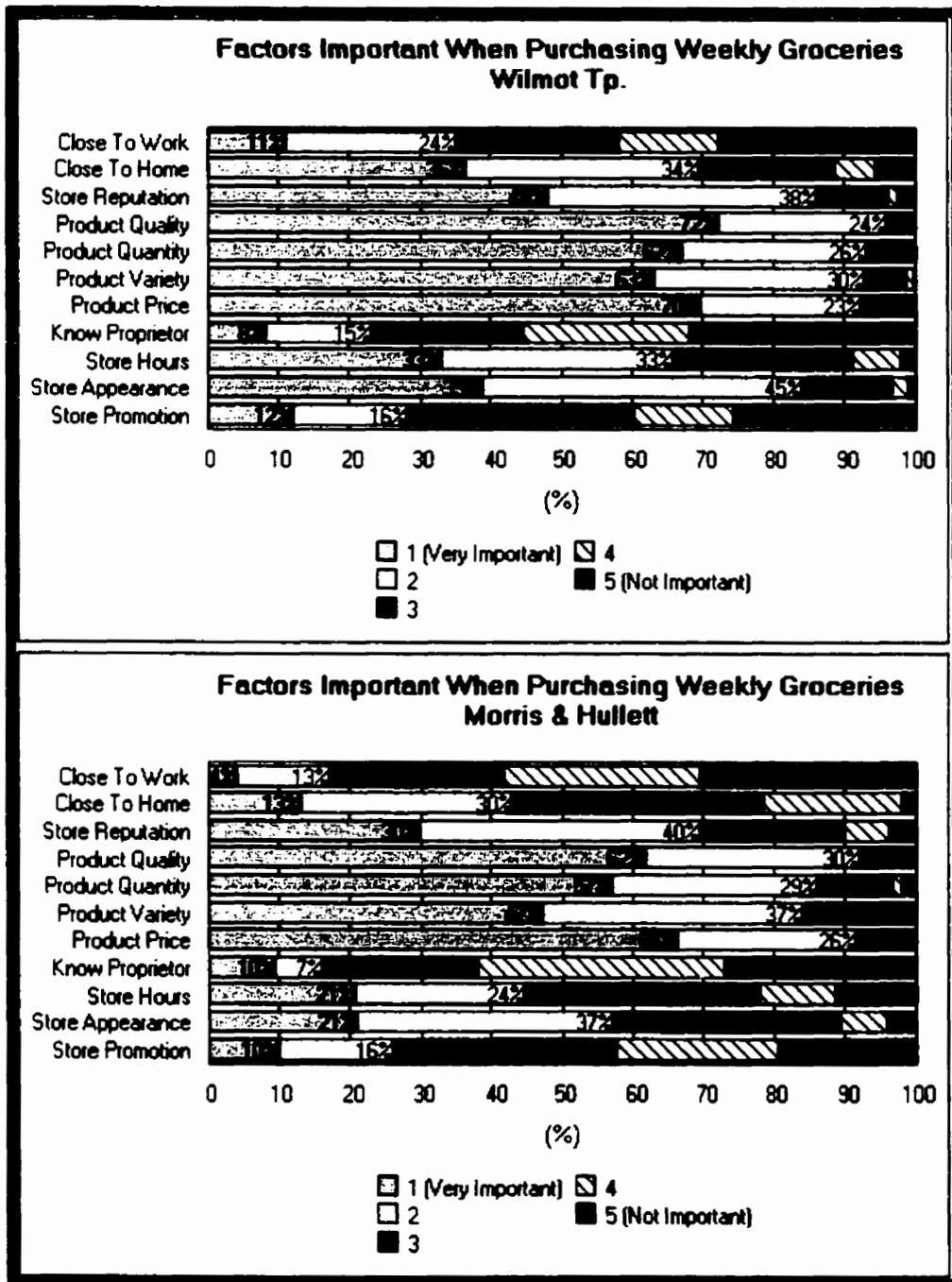
Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 51:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Purchase Clothing:**  
**Morris and Hullett versus Wilmot Households**



Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

**Figure 52:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision Where to Purchase Groceries:**  
**Morris and Hullett versus Wilmot Households**



Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

quantity. Consumers appear to want to first get value for their dollar, and then be provided with a wide range of available options.

Rarely were any other factors deemed to be important to consumers. Almost no respondents indicated that store promotions were a very important (or important) factor in gaining their patronage. Other factors, such as store hours or knowing the proprietor of the business, were also not deemed to be very important to consumers. The exception to this was when it came to the purchasing of lower ordered goods and services, where store hours were indicated to be of slightly greater importance.

Distance factors (i.e., distance to home or work) also were often not deemed to be very important to consumers. However, regardless of the good or service purchased, proximity to home was always considered to be more important than proximity to work. Having stated this, as the order of the good increased, proximity to either home or work tended to become progressively more important. For items such as weekly groceries, or having their automobile serviced or repaired, approximately 60% of respondents indicated proximity to home as being an important factor in influencing where they shopped. However, for items such as automobile, clothing, or major appliances, proximity to home was often deemed to be important for less than one-half of respondents.

A slight difference that did appear in the data between those sampled in Wilmot versus Morris and Hullett Townships was the influence of store appearance. Morris and Hullett consumers rarely indicated that this factor was of much importance, except for deciding on a location to dine out. However, for Wilmot consumers, store appearance, although never deemed to be more important than issues related to price, quality, or reputation, did play a role in determining where Wilmot consumers shopped. In fact, for each of the goods and services

identified in the survey. Wilmot consumers consistently listed store appearance as being a more important factor than their Morris and Hullett counterparts.

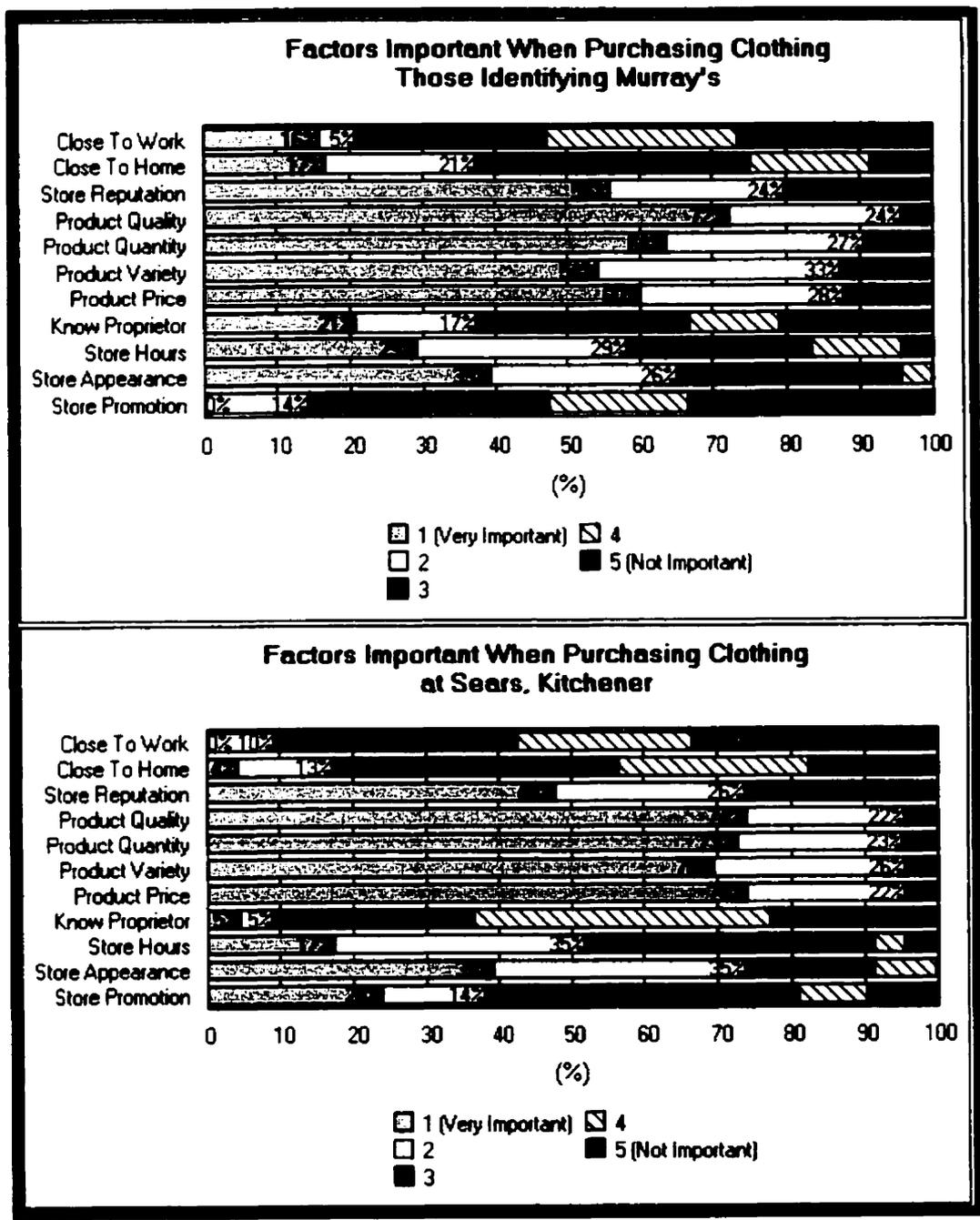
Generally speaking, very few differences exist in the motivations of consumers regardless of whether they live in the rural or urbanizing countryside. Differences do exist, however, in the motivations of consumers when comparing popular businesses (i.e. outsized functions) with other businesses that offer similar wares or services.

### **5.6.1 Wilmot Township**

As already mentioned, responses from Wilmot households did not reveal evidence of many individual outsized functions. Kitchener-Waterloo, the overwhelming destination for Wilmot consumers, tended to be chosen for the wide variety of offerings that the cities provide in every retail category. Nevertheless, for major appliance purchases, Sears was identified by just over 40% of those listing a specific establishment. Comparing the motivational factors of those who identified Sears as opposed to those who did not, reveal that Sears may be preferred because of the greater stock and variety of products that are available at this store. Again, factors such as store reputation, product quality and price are prime determinants regardless of whether Sears is the store of choice. The most glaring difference between consumers is that distance to home played a limited role if Sears was visited. For those not choosing Sears, distance continues to play a fairly important role in determining where one goes to purchase major appliances.

Sears also emerges as an outsized function for clothing, particularly women's clothing purchases. Murray's, located in New Hamburg ranks immediately behind Sears. For men's clothing purchases, meanwhile, the scenario is reversed, with Murray's emerging as an outsized function. For those identifying either Sears or Murray's, again, factors such as product quality

**Figure 53:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision to Shop at Sears, K-W, and Murray's, New Hamburg**



Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

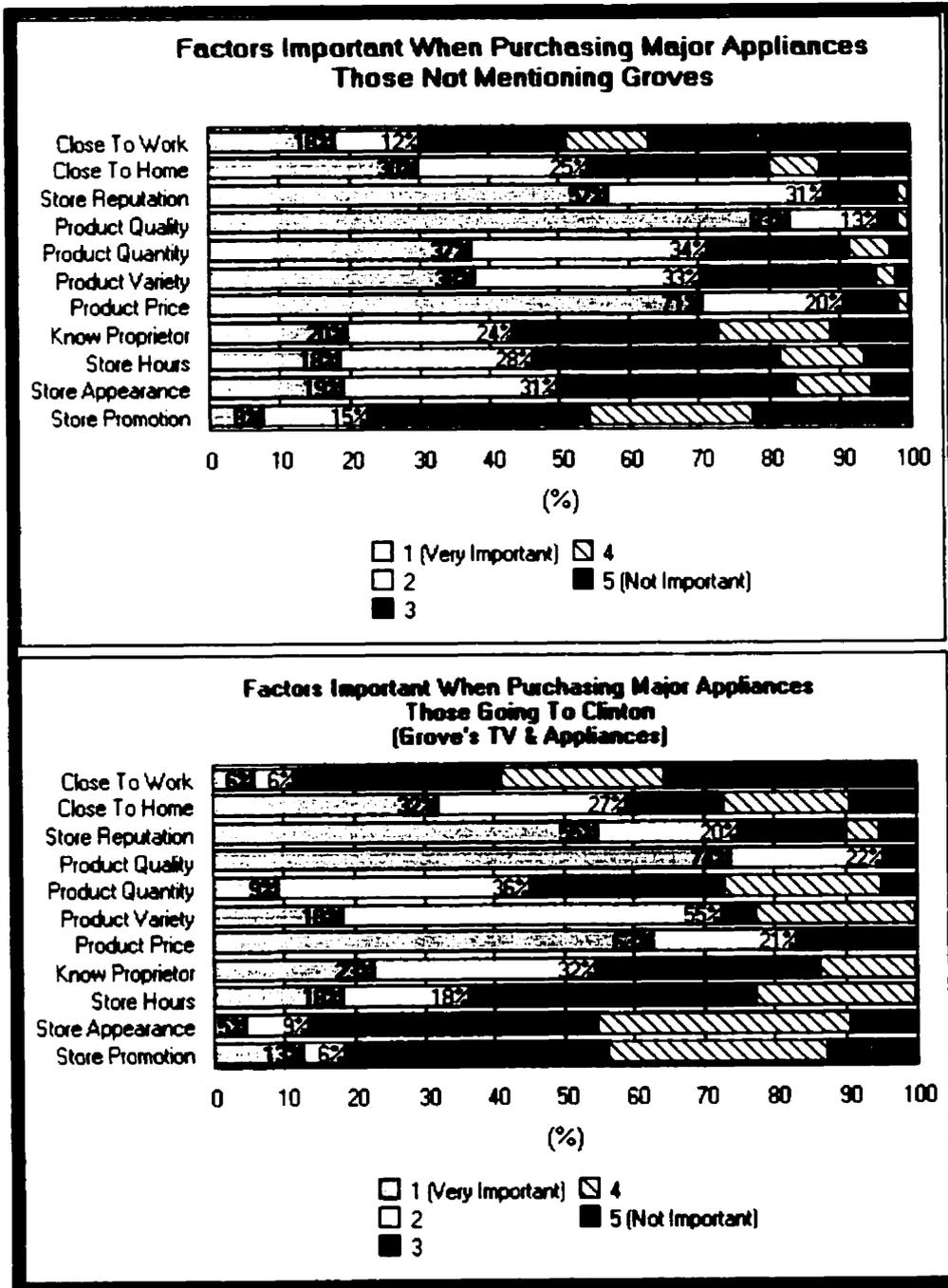
and price ranked very high (refer to Figure 53). However, different factors appear to be responsible for both these businesses emerging as outsized functions. As was the situation for Sears with respect to major appliance purchases, this store seems to attract customers because of the variety and quantity of clothing stock. While also important to those who patronize Murrays, they are not as important as factors. Other motivations also seem to be at play. Store promotions appear to play a fairly important role in attracting customers to Sears. For those visiting Murray's, however, store promotion practices were not deemed to be very important at all. A final difference that emerges from the comparison arises out of customers' knowledge of the proprietor. Less than 10% of those who identified Sears mentioned knowledge of the owner/manager as being an important factor in influencing them shopping there. For those shopping at Murray's, however, personal knowledge of the proprietor was substantially more important (40%).

#### **5.6.2 Morris and Hullett Townships**

Knowledge of the proprietor emerges as a recurring, important factor for outsized functions patronized by Morris and Hullett consumers. Recall that, overall, this factor was not deemed to be very important for any of the goods or services for which attitudinal data were obtained. But for those patronizing Grove's T.V. and Appliances and, overwhelmingly for Dan's Auto Body, knowledge of the business' proprietor was considerably more important (refer to Figures 54 and 55).

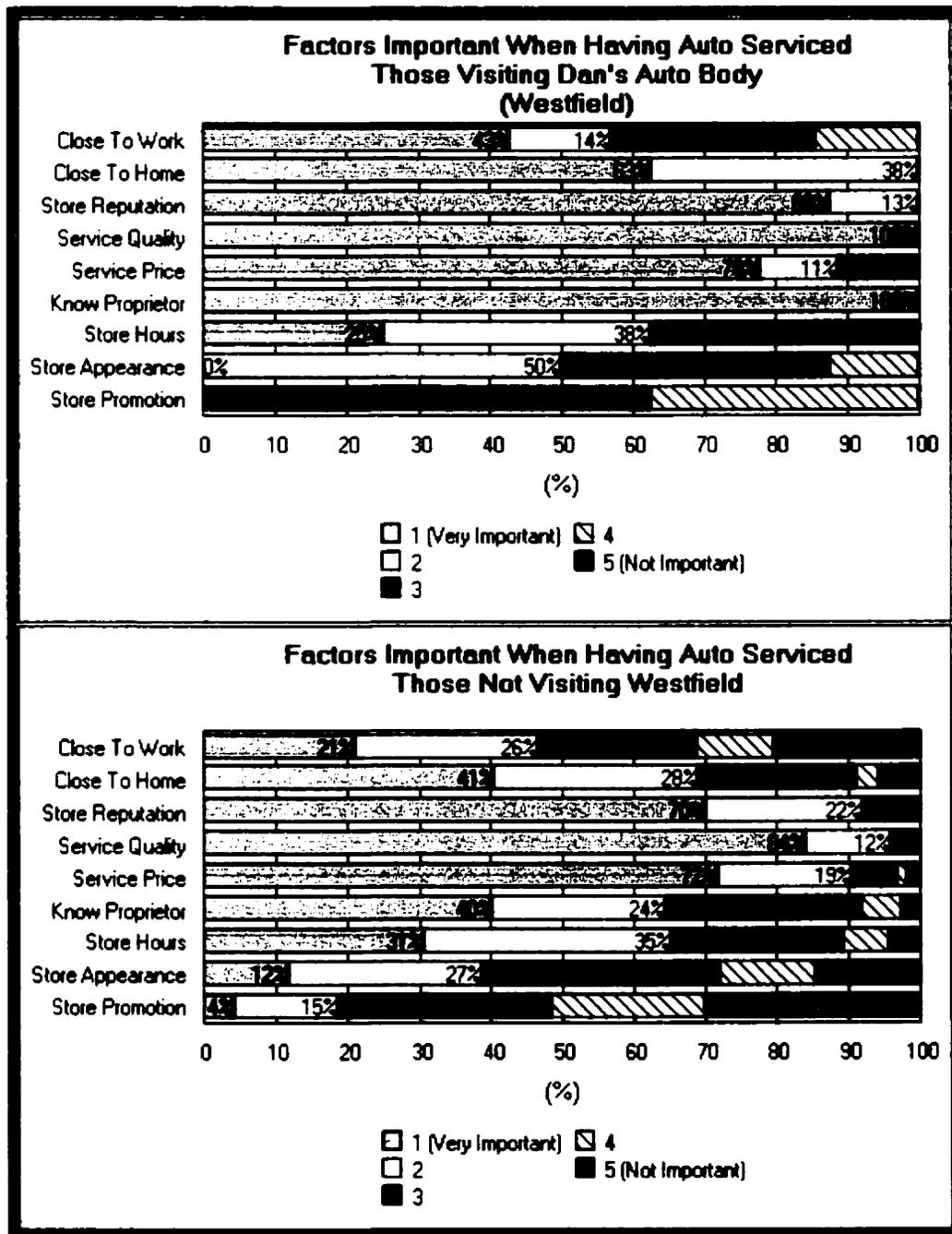
Although those travelling to Goderich or Wingham may enjoy more choice (in terms of stores and in-store stock), Grove's acts as an important draw for those wishing to purchase major appliances. This may be due, in part, to the relationship established between Grove's proprietor

**Figure 54:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision to Shop at Groves T.V. and Appliances, Clinton**



Source: (Distributed questionnaire. 1998).

**Figure 55:**  
**Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Auto Serviced at Dan's Auto Body, Westfield**



Source: (Distributed questionnaire, 1998).

and its customer base. Just over one-half of those visiting the store cited knowledge of the proprietor as an important factor in their decision-making.

The connection between the proprietor and his/her clients is nowhere more apparent than in the case of Dan's auto body. In this case, all respondents indicated that knowledge of the proprietor (i.e. Dan) was very important as a factor influencing their decision where to get their automobiles serviced or repaired. For those who did not patronize Dan's, this factor was very important to less than half surveyed.

### **5.7 Summary**

Consumer behaviour manifests itself in different ways according to geography. In Wilmot Township, shopping patterns are highly concentrated on the two (although the two are essentially perceived to be one city) cities of Kitchener and Waterloo. These cities not only provide a wide variety of retailing establishments but are used by the majority of Wilmot consumers for all types of goods and services. As would be expected, most small towns are either bypassed altogether in favour of visiting these two large cities or command very small market areas, being used for only the most essential of goods and services.

In spite of the overwhelming favouritism directed towards Kitchener-Waterloo, there are signs of retail vibrancy in a few small towns. For all intents and purposes, the small town of New Hamburg is able to maintain an extensive market area for a majority of consumer products. It displays relatively little leakage among its own inhabitants and is able to attract substantial numbers of Wilmot consumers for many types of items.

While New Hamburg does not specialize in the provision of any one or two goods or services, it does contain some establishments that may be considered to either be important locally or even qualify as outsized functions. Specific establishments providing either groceries,

clothing, or medical goods are used to a considerable degree by the surrounding populace. The situation is similar in Baden which, although having a number of stores, is most favoured for its building supply store. Aside from these two examples, however, evidence of retail vitality, let alone specialization, is limited.

The situation is quite different in Morris and Hullett Townships. People residing in this, more rural part of the countryside, display variegated patterns of consumer behaviour. In the absence of any nearby city, these people rely on a collection of surrounding small towns to satisfy their needs. No one town dominates the retailing environment, although two towns, Goderich and Wingham, are utilized to a considerable degree for many items and services. But several other small towns are also important to Morris and Hullett consumers. These other small towns, most notably Blyth, Clinton, and Brussels are not used for the same variety of goods and services that are obtained in either Goderich or Wingham. Their viability is borne out of not just being visited for several different types of goods and services, but for being favoured for specific, often less-frequently purchased, types of goods and services. Within these towns, individual outsized functions capture the bulk of the clientele. Outsized functions are not only present among larger small towns but are also present in the smallest of small towns. Both Walton and Westfield house businesses that the Morris and Hullett population rely on.

The locations chosen by consumers, no matter where they live, is largely dictated by three factors. These include the quality and price of the product for sale and upon the reputation of the establishment selling the good or service. Distance factors play a much lessened role, only becoming of some importance for the most basic of needs.

While quality, price, and reputation continue to play very important roles in establishing the clientele for outsized functions, other factors also appear to be at work. Within the

urbanizing countryside, consumers note the importance of product quantity and variety. Thus, although Kitchener-Waterloo provides a multitude of stores in many product areas it is the 'big-box' or 'department' stores that emerge as important destinations for many middle to high order goods. In spite of this urban competition, Murray's, located in New Hamburg, is able to act as an important draw for consumers living throughout Wilmot Township. In this case, however, it is not so much variety, but rather proprietorship and store reputation that emerge as luring factors.

Among Morris and Hullett consumers, additional importance is also placed on proprietorship in establishing a business as an outsized function. For Grove's T.V. and Appliances, located in Clinton, this factor is of increased importance. For Dan's Auto Body, located in Westfield, this factor is of immense importance.

**Chapter 6:**  
**Discussion: The Implications of Retail Specialization for Settlement Systems**

**6.1 Introduction**

Many settlement system constructs, including the mixed hierarchy variant of central place theory, both versions of the dispersed city, and the amalgam of the urban field - arena society, accommodate elements of economic specialization within them. Despite its integration into theory, and the increasing acceptance of its presence on the landscape, there is a paucity of empirical work investigating the phenomenon. As a result, the idea of specialization and, of particular importance, small town retail specialization, lacks clarity and validation.

This study addresses many of the questions that cloud our understanding of small town retail specialization. It seeks to document its history, identify its location and distribution on the landscape, in addition to assessing its implications for the structure of the settlement system. Much is found that corroborates earlier claims of small town retail change. The investigation focusing on the phenomenon of retail specialization therefore, produces findings that necessitate this author to challenge current dogma.

This chapter reviews the results of the research and discusses its ramifications for our current understanding of retail specialization. Many of the findings are, in themselves important, in that they shed light on a much-ignored topic. However, they are also meaningful because they allow us to reassess the ability of existing theory to adequately address the phenomenon of small town retail specialization.

While this research significantly contributes to our current understanding of small town retail specialization, it by no means closes the door on the subject. As with all research, improved knowledge in one area often exposes further gaps in our knowledge elsewhere. Thus,

in addition to providing answers to currently unanswered questions, new ones are posed for those interested in researching the continuing important and complex role that small towns play within the larger space economy. In hoping to aid these future researchers, advice is offered on how subsequent studies may be conducted, thereby improving upon what is presented here.

## **6.2 Functional - Historical Analysis**

The functional - historical analysis provides much insight into the spatial dynamic of retail specialization. Documenting its evolution reveals a long history, great diversity, and geographically widespread nature. Evidence further shows that retail specialization displays characteristics of both hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures. The existence of these are discussed in relation to each of the settlement system constructs previously mentioned in the literature review.

### **6.2.1 The History of Retail Specialization**

This research shows that retail specialization has a long history. Outsized functions have existed on the landscape in great numbers and among several types of retail businesses throughout the twentieth century. That outsized functions have been present for so long raises doubts with respect to the claim that small town retail specialization is a recent phenomenon, precipitated through transportation improvements.

Burton (1959) attributes dispersed city formation, in part, to spatial proximity of settlements. While this may have played a role in the genesis of this type of structure, its influence has been tremendously weakened as improvements in transportation technology have allowed people to travel increasingly greater distances in smaller amounts of time. Indeed, Fuller (1997), Hart et. al. (1968), Burton (1959), and even Christaller himself (1933; Baskin trans. 1966) acknowledge the role of transportation improvements, resulting in increased levels of

accessibility, as playing a pivotal role in promoting a transformation in the nature of the settlement system. Each recognizes the potential of retail specialization manifesting itself in the settlement system as a plausible outcome.

While each settlement system construct recognizes the theoretical contribution of transportation improvements in promoting change in settlement systems, most have narrowed their attention to the role of the automobile in fostering such change. Hart et. al.'s description of the dispersed city is a testament to such a claim.

Just as city residents once thought nothing of boarding a streetcar and travelling to other parts of the city in search of various goods and services, so the modern village dweller and farmer may hop into his car and drive to many other villages to obtain the goods and services provided by their outsized functions  
(Hart et. al., 1968; 346).

The increased levels of mobility bring about a "reorientation of the use of space" (Fuller, 1997: 9) which, in turn, results in the collapse of traditional hierarchical structures.

Although it is difficult to isolate the sole influence of the automobile, one must question the degree to which its adoption is responsible for settlement structure change and, more specifically, its ability to promote retail specialization. In Canada, the automobile was introduced in the early years of the twentieth century. Although it gradually gained in popularity, it was not used by the majority of the general population until after WWII. If the automobile is key to the development of retail specialization, then we should not see evidence of it until at least this point in time.

But the evidence shows that outsized functions were present at least fifty years prior to WWII. Moreover, the number of outsized functions (and their proportion relative to the total number of retail businesses) has remained constant over time. In short, retail specialization was prominent before *and* after the population had access to advanced modes of transportation.

While this does not negate the existence of dispersed cities, mixed hierarchies, or open society forms, it does raise doubts about their theorized premises.

Outsized function numbers have been impressive. Equally striking has been the breadth of retail/service types within which they have existed. This finding is also unprecedented. Previous works identifying outsized functions have recognized their existence among a limited array of business types. This research has found evidence of outsized functions in thirty-five to forty-five different retailing types depending on the year analysed.

This finding may be used to argue against the existence of an arena society and a mixed hierarchical system. The arena society concept only accommodates retail specialization in its open society phase. In preceding stages, the system operates under central place principles. By definition, therefore, retail specialization does not exist. However, even if we ignore this crucial premise of the arena society and assume, for the moment, that its final phase, 'open society,' could exist during the early decades of the twentieth century, the breadth of functions qualifying as outsized functions further prevents this theory from being accepted. The open society phase of the arena society emerges because of the existence of high-order functions. The data, however, show that *all* types of functions may exist as outsized functions.

In a similar manner, the data do not support the existence of any type of mixed hierarchy. In a 'sister city' mixed hierarchical system, only high-order goods become scattered. Again, over thirty-five retail types, spanning traditionally defined low, middle, and high-order functions consistently contain outsized functions. But even if we expand the mixed hierarchy to other levels within the system, there is little evidence to support its existence. In this case, settlements become specialized in terms of a particular bundle of goods and services. If this was the case, we

should only see retail specialization occur among a limited number of retail types. This, however, is never the case.

The evidence does, however, conform to what is predicted by dispersed city structures, particularly the dispersed city in the countryside. It predicts widespread retail specialization, whereby each settlement specializes in the provision of one or two retail types. If we include the provision that each settlement specializes in the provision of *different* types of retailing, it follows that many retailing functions must contain outsized functions if this type of system is to exist.

### **6.2.2 The Distribution of Retail Specialization**

Outsized functions exist in large numbers and among many different types of retailing. This research also finds that retail specialization is present among all types of settlements, from the largest city to the smallest hamlet. In spite of this, outsized functions become more numerous (and are becoming more so) as one travels up the settlement hierarchy. In addition, larger settlements tend to contain a wider variety of outsized functions than do small towns. Moreover, cities often possess outsized functions that are in stronger financial positions than those located in small towns. Despite showing signs of hierarchical structuring from different perspectives, and of a trend towards concentration (in terms of absolute numbers), there are also signs of a non-hierarchical arrangement of outsized functions and of a trend towards dispersal (in terms of the numbers of small towns that contain an outsized function).

Outsized functions exist among all levels of the settlement hierarchy. This is a curious finding as it may suggest the existence of multiple systems<sup>28</sup>. The afore-mentioned settlement system constructs describe retail specialization among differently sized settlements. For instance, the urban dispersed city primarily describes the situation that may exist among larger

cities. The dispersed city in the countryside, meanwhile, directs its attention towards smaller towns and villages. So too does the arena society. Sister city mixed hierarchies discuss high-order<sup>29</sup> settlements. It is only among more general mixed hierarchical models that all types of settlements may potentially be included.

What is also peculiar is that the general distribution of outsized functions adheres to a hierarchical structure. Outsized functions increase in number as settlement size increases. The breadth of outsized functions, in terms of retail types, also becomes more numerous as settlement size increases. While the variable identified may be different, these findings are no different from the majority of findings derived from past nodality studies which clearly identify hierarchically structured systems. It is ironic that retail specialization, which is posited by those supporting the dispersed city and arena society structures as representing a non-hierarchical arrangement of centres, illustrates this characteristic.

This finding, in turn, raises the issue that outsized function identification may act to identify classic central place structures. This suggestion is guardedly made since outsized function identification (from the historical - functional context) acts as a measure of nodality.

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<sup>28</sup> This is certainly plausible given the size of the study area. However, at this point, it is premature to state this is the case. Further mention of this will be made in the following section when retail specialization is disaggregated according to geographical space.

<sup>29</sup> Caution must be used when equating 'high-order' settlements with settlements of large populations. Settlement orders reflect the centrality of central places while populations reflect the nodality of central places (refer back to the discussion of centrality in the 'Literature Review' chapter). However, it should be noted that high degrees of association have been found among centrality and nodality measures at the higher levels of the settlement hierarchy.

Although impossible to determine the extent to which, historically, consumers from a central place's complementary area travel in order to support such establishments, the inclusion of several function types (i.e., frequently purchased versus infrequently purchased items) allows for preliminary conclusions to be drawn. If we include the findings derived from the analysis of retail establishment financial data, disaggregated by retail type, we see that this practice also reveals evidence of hierarchical structuring.

Specifically, the data show that establishments selling frequently purchased items (i.e., those items with traditionally small range and threshold values) often qualify as outsized functions solely among settlements that only provide such types of goods. In other words, these low-order settlements excel in the provision of low-order goods and services. Meanwhile, larger, more functionally complex centres excel in the provision of higher-ordered goods and services. This pattern is maintained throughout the settlement hierarchy and it is this pattern that may be expected to exist in a central place system because low-ordered settlements are *supposed* to excel in the provision of low-ordered goods while higher-ordered settlements are *supposed* to excel in the provision of higher-ordered goods.

At this point it again becomes important to qualify what can be derived from the identification of outsized functions. As stated earlier, outsized function identification alone may not indicate evidence of retail specialization. At the very least, it indicates retail vitality. Retail vitality merely acts as a prerequisite for specialization, which is revealed not necessarily in the presence of outsized functions, but in their spatial organization. For example, the high degree of association between population size and number and type of outsized functions means that cities such as Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Stratford contain large numbers of different types of outsized functions. However, no one city dominates in a single retail category. Instead, each

excels in identical retail categories, rather than among mutually exclusive categories. This finding alone sheds doubt on the presence of an 'urban' dispersed city, or a sister city mixed hierarchical system, particularly among the 'Tri-Cities' because such systems are based on the idea of retailing uniqueness (either among all types of retailing or among a select group of retailing types) among constituent cities.

Furthermore, much retailing overlap exists among smaller towns and villages. That is, outsized functions exist in similar retail types among proximate centres. Such a pattern precludes specialization from occurring because the retailing structure implies a competitive, not co-operative system. Rather than each settlement specializing in the provision of one or two different retail types (thereby promoting co-operation in the system), in actuality, each settlement dominates in like retailing types. Thus, while evidence of retail vitality abounds, one must differentiate the spatial pattern of outsized functions in order to determine if retail specialization exists.

Despite much evidence of hierarchical structuring, the pattern does break down as one travels down the settlement hierarchy. The anomalous pattern manifests itself most strongly among mid-sized towns.<sup>30</sup> These places show very little evidence of hierarchical structuring, neither with respect to the number, nor the types, nor the financial strength of outsized functions. Although the analysis spans the entire twentieth century, this group of settlements has remained remarkably consistent over the decades. Specifically, this group of settlements includes the towns of Goderich, Seaforth, Mitchell, Wingham, Clinton, and Exeter. This group of centres

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<sup>30</sup> 'Mid-sized' towns are categorized as those with populations above 2,500 but less than 10,000.

tends to possess higher than expected numbers of outsized functions given their population size. However, unlike the case with the study area's cities, the distribution of outsized functions among this collection of towns reveals signs of retail specialization. That is, each appears to dominate in only a few retail categories. This pattern likens itself most to a dispersed city system where small towns specialize in the provision of one or two retail types, with other, nearby settlements specializing in alternate types of retailing functions. The data suggest, however, that a dispersed city structure manifests itself most prominently among mid-sized small towns: not necessarily among all towns and villages in the countryside.

Again, however, the pattern depicted among the settlements requires that further adjustments be made to established theory. In the dispersed city system, retail specialization exists among several settlements, each accommodating a limited number of outsized functions. In essence, the system operates under conditions of singular specialization. What is observed, however, are multiple specializations, whereby each settlement excels in the provision of several, often unique, retail types.

Such a finding, although not previously identified, should not be considered surprising. Given the number of retail establishments present in this group of settlements, combined with the observation that outsized functions consistently<sup>31</sup> comprise approximately 13% of all retail establishments, means that these settlements should possess several outsized functions.

### **6.2.3 The Location of Retail Specialization**

Closer analysis of the geographical location of outsized functions, as opposed to their internal arrangement within settlements, allows for further evaluation of the applicability of

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<sup>31</sup> This constant proportion has been found in this research and in Dahms' (1980a) study.

various settlement system constructs in accommodating retail specialization. This is because most settlement system constructs are associated with particular geographic spaces (refer back to Figure 9).

The findings show that outsized functions are scattered throughout the entire study area. Conceivably, therefore, all settlement systems may exist. In spite of this, two patterns emerge. First, there are signs of outsized function concentration while, at the same time, there exists evidence of outsized function dispersal. The result is that despite most outsized functions being located in the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, more and more small towns now contain outsized functions. What is interesting to note is that this pattern of outsized function dispersal exists among urbanizing as well as more rural small towns. Again, this suggests that multiple systems may exist concurrently. The arena society may exist most often in areas lying adjacent to large cities, but pockets may also exist in areas lying within the recreation zone of urban fields. Within the more rural countryside of Huron and parts of Perth County, the arena society may be present, despite its geographic improbability. That outsized functions are now found among more of these settlements may suggest that more rural centres are becoming destinations for urban tourists. However, the continuously large numbers of outsized functions in this area suggests the presence of other systems for it is unlikely that such centres have experienced high levels of tourism throughout the entire twentieth century.

However, one again has to incorporate previous findings into this aspect of the analysis. It cannot be forgotten that the presence and, in particular, the distribution of outsized functions largely indicates a pattern of retail vitality and not necessarily retail specialization. Thus, although many rural and urbanizing countryside settlements have come to contain outsized functions, their distribution seemingly conforms to a hierarchical arrangement. The cities of

Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Stratford contain multiple outsized functions among multiple retail types. Meanwhile, most smaller towns and villages possess similar outsized functions, with each dominating in similar retail types.

But attention must again be drawn to a particular geographic area within Huron County for it is within this region that vitality does appear to translate into specialization. In other words, there exists very little retailing overlap among mid-sized rural towns located beyond the daily commutershed of metropolitan cores. Specifically, the towns of Goderich, Clinton, Wingham, Mitchell, Seaforth, Listowel, Exeter, and Brussels display evidence of multiple specializations. Granted, considerable overlap exists when it comes to frequently occurring functions such as general stores, grocery stores, hotels, or service stations<sup>32</sup>, but among less frequently offered businesses, this pattern becomes atypical rather than typical. Thus, within the rural countryside, evidence of retail specialization exists: a specialization that indicates the presence of a dispersed city in the countryside.

#### **6.2.4 Retail Specialization and its Impact on Settlement Systems**

The functional - historical analysis has revealed much. Outsized functions have been present on the landscape for at least 100 years. They have existed in tiny hamlets, small towns, and large cities. They have also been present in regions intimately tied to large, expanding metropoli as well as in places removed from their immediate influence.

Many of these findings are unprecedented but because they encompass much time and

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<sup>32</sup> The retail functions deemed to be 'commonly occurring' have changed over time. The four functions listed here are only used to illustrate the point being made.

geographic space, they do not clearly indicate which settlement system construct best describes the position of small towns within the larger space economy. In short, the inclusiveness of such findings makes it difficult to discern which settlement system (or systems) exist in the countryside.

Nevertheless, some tentative conclusions may be drawn. First, outsized function presence is not sufficient in itself to qualify as evidence of retail specialization. Admittedly, documenting the presence of outsized functions tells us very little. It does not allow us to discern what type of settlement system construct accommodating retail specialization best exemplifies the situation existing in the countryside. In fact, it does not even allow us to claim that any (let alone one) of these types of settlement systems exists.

This is because the presence of outsized functions may just as plausibly indicate continuing central place structures as it may equally indicate evidence of the arena society, mixed hierarchies, and/or dispersed cities. In order to be able to differentiate the various settlement system constructs, the distribution of outsized functions must also be determined. In other words, the distribution of outsized functions within individual settlements (the retail mix of outsized functions within settlements) as well as their distribution relative to other outsized functions (the retail mix of outsized functions among groups of settlements) must also be determined. Only in this way can we determine if outsized functions indicate evidence of retail vitality or specialization.

Once these two characteristics can be distinguished, then outsized function geography becomes critical. This is because the many settlement system constructs that accommodate retail specialization tend to possess particular spatial attributes. The evidence presented in this research suggests that there may be signs of the dispersed city in the countryside. Within a

region of Huron County, which lies beyond the daily commutershed of both London and the 'Tri-Cities' of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge, mid-sized towns appear to have maintained elements of multiple economic specializations. While they continue to provide (and excel<sup>33</sup> in the provision of) commonly-found goods and services, many appear to have become specialized among a unique bundle of less frequently occurring retail functions. This pattern of retail specialization is best represented by the concept of the dispersed city in the countryside. However, the evidence suggests that this type of system does not exist in isolation. The claim made here is that the dispersed city may exist concomitantly within the larger framework of a central place or, at the very least, a hierarchical system.

Among other settlements, outsized functions display a pronounced hierarchical structuring. It is primarily only among a select group of settlements that this hierarchical arrangement is absent. However, it does not appear that there is a 'fight for dominance' among these different settlement system types. As previously mentioned, most researchers acknowledge that different organizing principles can exist concurrently. But they also claim that they do not exist in a steady state. The differing systems compete for dominance suggesting that settlement systems are, more accurately, in a constant state of flux or transition. The indication is that, over time, regions will transform from existing within one system to another. Researchers such as Dahms (1984; 1980a), Hart et. al. (1968), and Berry (1961) suggest that the dispersed city (either urban or rural variants) displaces more hierarchical structures. But this does not appear

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<sup>33</sup> 'Excel' is used in the context of pecuniary strength. Thus, not only do these towns offer commonly found functions, each tends to provide establishments that qualify as outsized functions in these retail categories.

to be the case in Huron County. It is argued here that both systems have existed in conjunction with one another with hierarchical elements manifesting themselves among common and rare goods and services, while non-hierarchical characteristics exist among infrequently found goods.

This may sound odd for we are describing a situation whereby, among a particular hierarchical level, a hierarchy is absent. But it is because of this *very* characteristic that we can say that a dispersed city system exists within a hierarchical system. Despite its oddness, this conclusion, although tentative, carries with it very profound implications because it challenges the established dichotomy between non-hierarchical and hierarchical systems. The way that these constructs are currently conceptualized, one can have either one or the other. In other words, non-hierarchical and hierarchical systems compete against one another. What is argued here is that both types of systems may complement one another.

Such claims are tentative, however, because of the limitations of the functional - historical analysis. Its principal limitation is that it can only infer consumer behaviour from the observed pattern in the structure of the retailing system. This bounds the study in two ways. First, it does not allow central place hierarchies to be identified. Secondly, the spatial pattern of outsized functions only alludes to particular settlement system types. Each is associated with different consumer behaviour. It therefore becomes necessary to document such behaviours to determine if the behavioural assumptions associated with each system can be substantiated.

### **6.3 Bridging the Gap Between Historical and Contemporary Analyses**

The behavioural-contemporary analysis was initially developed to complement the findings of the historical-functional research. One analysis provided insight into the structure of settlement systems, while the other provided insight into the linkages that existed within such systems. However, because of the deterioration in the ability of *Dun and Bradstreet Reference*

*Books* to accurately identify retail and service businesses, and their increasing omission of listed business' associated pecuniary strengths, the contemporary analysis played a much more important role, as it also acted to bridge the gap over the thirty years for which the historical data were unreliable.

Although this is a considerable amount of time, the contemporary analysis essentially picks up where the historical analysis leaves off; not so much in terms of time, but rather in terms of geographic space. The historical analysis provided extensive evidence of outsized functions, documenting their presence and their characteristics over time and space. The contemporary analysis isolates the latter element and disaggregates geographic space according to its level of incorporation within urban spheres of influence. The spatial component is important because it carries with it implications for settlement system constructs that have been shown to manifest themselves in different spatial (as well as temporal) contexts. Collectively, therefore, the historical and contemporary analyses are undertaken to provide complementary proof of retail specialization, thereby allowing for a knowledgeable assessment of the types of settlement systems that may be operating within these differing environments.

#### **6.4 Behavioural - Contemporary Analysis**

This assessment, in the case of the contemporary analysis, is based on evidence of consumer behaviours, as revealed through a questionnaire soliciting information on the locations where respondents purchase various goods and services. The responses to two questions are critical. First, respondents were asked within what town various goods and services were purchased. Secondly, respondents were asked to identify specific establishment from which they bought these goods and services. In this way, evidence of retail specialization (or lack thereof) could be provided on both a macro (i.e., specialization brought about by retail agglomeration of

similar retail types) and micro (i.e., specialization brought about by the presence of individual outsized functions) level.

Overall, evidence shows that countryside consumers favour specific destinations when engaging in shopping activities. However, geography plays an important role in influencing this type of behaviour. Specifically, favouritism is much more geographically confined among Wilmot consumers in that it is overwhelmingly directed towards the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo. Meanwhile, among Morris and Hullett consumers, favouritism is spread out among several mid-sized towns. Thus, in terms of shopping behaviour, Wilmot consumers display pronounced uni-centric shopping tendencies, whereas Morris and Hullett consumers conduct their shopping in a much more multi-centric fashion.

The evidence also confirms that outsized functions exist. Consumers, therefore, show favouritism not only for specific towns but also for particular establishments within selected settlements. These outsized functions exist in both urbanizing (i.e., Wilmot) and rural (i.e., Morris and Hullett) countrysides, although they appear to be much more numerous and widespread in those parts of the countryside that lie beyond the daily commutershed of large cities. Having stated this, it must also be stressed that, overall, the presence of outsized functions does not appear to be as pronounced as the historical analysis would suggest.

However, as was the case in the functional-historical analysis, the identification of often patronized, individual settlements or of individual outsized functions, are not sufficient in themselves to determine what type of settlement system best describes the situation existing among towns or cities. Rather it is how these settlements and outsized functions are collectively used that is key in determining which construct(s) is/are most appropriate.

## **6.5 Wilmot Township - The Urban Countryside**

The evidence clearly shows that Wilmot Township lies within the daily commuting field of the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo. These two cities' importance for employment purposes is comparable to their importance as retailing nodes. Their presence, relative to Wilmot Township, has resulted in Wilmot consumers behaving in fundamentally different manners, compared to those living in more rural areas of the countryside.

For example, Wilmot consumers travel, on average, only 20km for all<sup>34</sup> types of goods and services. The distances do not vary considerably, regardless of the type of good required (i.e., frequently versus infrequently purchased items). This suggests, at the very least, a very insular retailing system, with almost everything required being purchased locally.

The insular nature of consumer behaviour is further confirmed through the disclosing of specific destinations for various purchases. First, almost no centres outside of Wilmot Township are ever patronized. Secondly, even within Wilmot itself, the majority of small towns are overlooked, except when purchasing the most basic of provisions. Thus, towns such as New Dundee, St. Agatha, Manheim, and Baden are only primarily utilized for items such as convenience items, gasoline, or the occasional dinner out. The only settlement within Wilmot that is able to attract a considerable number of Wilmot consumers is the township's largest, New Hamburg, which is utilized for a majority of goods and services. Thirdly, and related to the first two observations, is that the adjacent cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are the overwhelming destinations of choice when purchasing the vast majority of items.

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<sup>34</sup> 'All' refers to the 21 different goods and services listed on the consumer questionnaire.

The bypassing of local small towns in favour of large cities results in there being very little evidence of retail specialization (or of outsized functions) among Wilmot's settlements. The majority of its small towns simply cannot generate or maintain a sizeable consumer base from which to establish specialized retailers. However, New Hamburg is able to attract a sizeable number of Wilmot consumers for many items. But even in this case there is limited evidence to suggest the presence of outsized functions in this town. Murray's, however, may act as an outsized function for clothing (men's, women's, and children's) purchases.<sup>35</sup> This store, offering all types of clothing<sup>36</sup> was the most frequently mentioned store when asked which retailer was visited for this item. Thus, whereas Kitchener-Waterloo was the most often visited settlement for clothes, Murray's was the business most often patronized.

But for other items, New Hamburg's popularity is accounted for by the presence of multiple retailers providing the same good or service. For automobile purchases or repairs, for example, each of Expressway Ford, Hanson Pontiac-Buick, and Heffner Chrysler are patronized on an equal basis. Collectively, these businesses attract just over one-quarter of all Wilmot consumers, but individually, they are patroned by less than 15% of Wilmot consumers.

While New Hamburg is a popular destination for automobile purchases and repairs, it does not specialize in this activity. In other words, whereas Murray's acts as evidence of retail specialization on a micro scale, the three automobile retailers do not act as evidence of retail specialization on a macro scale. This is because New Hamburg is a popular

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<sup>35</sup> Thomson and Mitchell (1998) also suggest the Murray's acts as an outsized function for clothing purposes, noting that it deliberately markets to resident of the Tri-Cities.

<sup>36</sup> Type of clothing refers to whether it is men's, women's, or children's.

destination among Wilmot consumers for a wide variety of items. In this case, retail agglomeration, not specialization accounts for the large clientele.

The same can be said for the situation existing within Kitchener and Waterloo. These two cities are popular destinations for Wilmot consumers, not because of retail specialization, but because of the agglomeration of retailers within them. Despite some large big box or department stores (e.g., Sears, Home Depot, Walmart) being visited by many collectively, respondents identified at least fifteen, and as many as forty, different retailers in either Kitchener or Waterloo that they patronized, depending on the type of good or service desired. Again, because these two cities are used for a multiplicity of purposes, among a multitude of different retailers, suggest that retail specialization, either on a macro or micro scale, is absent.

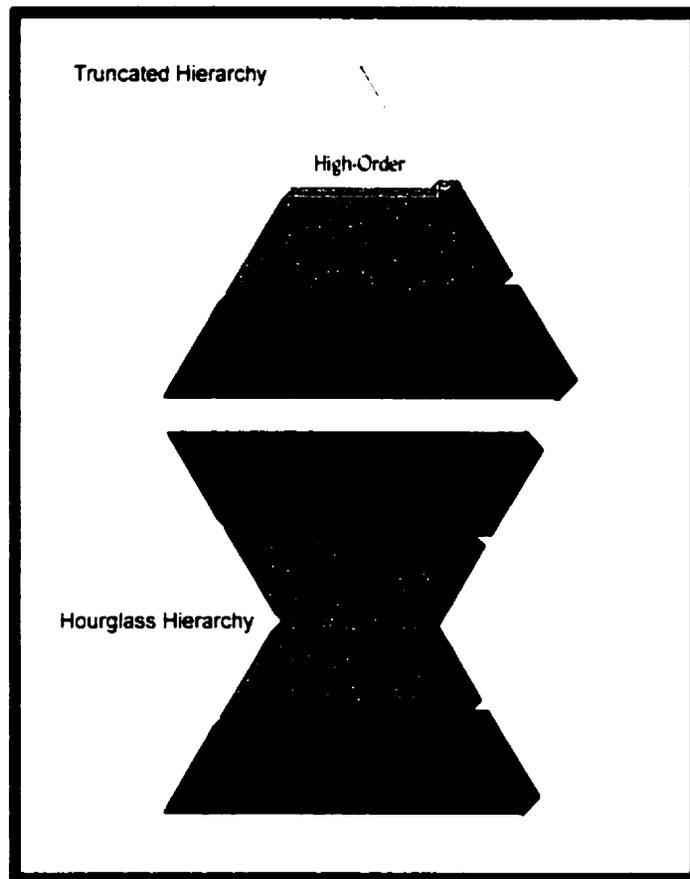
Another aspect related to the prevalence of Kitchener and Waterloo is that the two cities are not perceived by Wilmot consumers as being specialized. In other words, neither Wilmot consumers' actions, nor perceptions, indicate specialization among the region's largest cities. Respondents often did not differentiate Kitchener from Waterloo when responding to the survey. In other words, these two cities were often perceived as one entity. If these two cities had been specialized, then it would be expected that respondents would have distinguished between the two when identifying where they purchased different goods and services. However, this never emerged.

Because there exists very little evidence of retail specialization, strong arguments cannot be made for any of the settlement system constructs accommodating this characteristic. Therefore, the arena society, both versions of the dispersed city, sister cities, and mixed hierarchies are not appropriate constructs to describe the situation existing within the urbanizing

countryside of Wilmot Township. There is evidence to suggest, however, that classic central place system principles are at work.

The pattern of consumer behaviour displayed by Wilmot consumers suggests the presence of a central place hierarchy, one which may more appropriately be called an 'hourglass central place hierarchy.' Parallels may be drawn between this terminology and Burton's (1963) 'truncated hierarchy,' which used to describe the urban dispersed city. However, as already stated, no evidence of an urban dispersed city exists within this particular urbanizing countryside.

**Figure 56:**  
**Truncated Versus Hourglass Hierarchies**



In Burton's (1963) truncated hierarchy, a regional centre is absent. Thus, former 'middle-order' settlements take over part of the role once assigned to the 'larger-ordered.'

regional centre. In essence, Burton describes a system whereby one level of the hierarchy is partially absent. As a result, the role of middle-ordered settlements are expanded to accommodate some higher-ordered functions.

In the context of this research, the term 'hourglass hierarchy' is used to describe the same phenomenon, except it applies to a different level of the central place hierarchy (refer to Figure 56). In Wilmot Township, several low-order market centres exist, providing and being utilized solely for the most basic of goods and services (e.g., convenience items, gasoline, prescription drugs, and groceries). However, higher-ordered settlements, in particular Kitchener and Waterloo, have usurped the role once assigned to middle-order settlements. Thus, these two cities are now relied upon by the surrounding countryside populace for both middle and higher-ordered type goods and services.

#### **6.6 Morris and Hullett Townships - The Rural Countryside**

Morris and Hullett consumers display dissimilar behaviours from their Wilmot counterparts. First, consumers living in this region travel at least 20km to purchase the majority of goods and services. In fact, it is not uncommon for consumers to travel between 30 to 40km. Secondly, consumers visit considerably more settlements when acquiring all of the afore-mentioned goods and services. Morris and Hullett consumers visit, on average, 7 different settlements. Alternatively, Wilmot consumers, on average, patronize only 4.6 settlements. Thus, a much more multi-centric behaviour is displayed by rural consumers. However, similar to the situation in Wilmot Township, Morris and Hullett consumers show a propensity to shop locally, with the majority of purchases occurring within the confines of Huron County. In spite of this, there appears to be more reliance on external centres for some infrequently purchased.

London, for example, attracts one-fifth of Morris and Hullett households for men's clothing and just under one-fifth for women's and children's clothing items. London is also a popular destination for activities such as going out to the movies or dinner among Morris and Hullett households. However, in these instances, less than one in ten Morris and Hullett households utilize London.

Morris and Hullett consumers also patronize Kitchener and Waterloo, although on a much more limited basis. These two cities, at most, attract 12% of Morris and Hullett households for men's and children's clothing purchases. For other activities, such as going out to a club, dining out, or watching a movie, Kitchener-Waterloo is only able to attract approximately 5% of Morris and Hullett households.

In spite of this partial reliance on external centres, the fact remains that Morris and Hullett consumers are more likely to visit proximate towns and villages when purchasing goods and services. Moreover, coherence exists in the pattern displayed by consumers in that it tends to be the same group of settlements that are visited. These settlements include nearby Goderich, Wingham, Blyth, Clinton, and Brussels. Collectively, these towns provide the majority of Morris and Hullett consumers with frequently and infrequently purchased items.

While considerable overlap exists, these settlements show signs of retail specialization. That is, while several of these settlements are used to purchase individual items<sup>37</sup> by particular subgroups of consumers (e.g., 22% of respondents identified Brussels as the destination of choice when purchasing building supplies. Meanwhile 21%, 18%, 17%, and 11% identified the towns

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<sup>37</sup> This suggests the presence of multiple, mutually exclusive market areas within Morris and Hullett Townships.

of Wingham, Blyth, Clinton, and Goderich, respectively for the same item) instances also exist where one town is collectively favoured over the others for individual items.<sup>38</sup> Goderich and Wingham, for example, are both visited for the majority of identified items but the two appear to differentiate themselves with respect to the types of goods that are purchased within them. Goderich is preferred for automobile and clothing purchases whereas Wingham is preferred for such items as prescription drugs, groceries, and medical services. The same can be said for the towns of Blyth, Clinton, and Brussels, which appear to specialize in live theatre, major appliances, and automobiles, respectively. Even functionally less complex centres such as Walton and Westfield are visited to a considerable degree for specific purposes (e.g., farming equipment in Walton and auto repairs in Westfield).

Morris and Hullett consumers patron a wide variety of local towns and villages when purchasing goods and services. On many occasions, they also visit outsized functions located within these towns and villages. The only exception to this pattern occurs in the region's largest settlement, Goderich, which is patroned because of the influence of retail agglomeration.

Goderich is consistently used by approximately one-third of all Morris and Hullett consumers. Although not as important as Kitchener-Waterloo is to Wilmot consumers, parallels can be drawn between the two<sup>39</sup> settlements. Kitchener-Waterloo is popular because it provides a variety of retailers offering identical fares. The same situation exists in Goderich, although not to

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<sup>38</sup> This suggests the presence of multiple, non-exclusive market areas within Morris and Hullett Townships.

<sup>39</sup> As previously established, Kitchener and Waterloo are often perceived as being one large city. It is for this reason that the settlements of Goderich, in addition to Kitchener-Waterloo are deemed to be two settlements.

the same degree. For example, Goderich is a popular destination among Morris and Hullett consumers when purchasing automobiles. For this item, six different dealers were consistently listed, with no one dealer standing out among the rest. For several other items, at least five and as many as ten different retailers were identified. However, due to Goderich's limited popularity relative to other settlements in Huron County, a case may be made that the town specializes in the provision of automobiles. It therefore, specializes on a macro scale (being a popular destination for automobile purchases) but not on a micro scale (because of the absence of individual outsized functions within the automobile dealer retail category).

However, among the remainder of the previously mentioned towns and villages, outsized functions exist. In Wingham, J.J.'s Fireside Cafe is a popular restaurant for dinner and Vance's Guardian Drugs is the pharmacy most often utilized by Morris and Hullett consumers. Blyth's Festival Theatre is an immensely popular institution for viewing live theatre. Blyth is also home to a very popular farm equipment dealer, Huron Tractor, but its popularity is overshadowed by the presence of McGavin's Farm Equipment, located in the village of Walton. Clinton, meanwhile contains a preferred furniture store, Grove's T.V. & Appliances. Similarly, the village of Westfield has an auto repair dealer, Dan's Auto Body, that distinguishes itself from other businesses engaging in the same activity. Each of these businesses is able to attract consumers from all over the two townships, further establishing them as outsized functions within this part of the countryside.

Much more evidence of retail specialization exists within the rural countryside. Consequently, the settlement system constructs that were prohibited from existing around Kitchener-Waterloo are, on the surface, much more applicable in this region. Having stated this,

however, it appears that either variants of the dispersed city may most fully describe the situation existing in this portion of the rural countryside.

Claims that this area may operate under conditions of a truncated hierarchy, or an urban dispersed city, may be made because the region lacks any dominant regional centre. If pressed to identify one, Goderich would have to be chosen as representing a regional centre for it is this settlement that is most often visited for infrequently purchased items such as automobiles and clothing. However, for no one good or service does Goderich attract a majority of Morris and Hullett households. This lack of a dominant, high-order centre may explain why a small, but noticeable proportion of consumers, travel beyond Huron County to destinations such as London or Kitchener-Waterloo for particular items. These characteristics are what Burton (1963) identifies as being important indicators of the urban dispersed city. But it is not felt that sufficient reliance on external centres exists to warrant such an affirmation. Granted, some reliance exists, but again, for no one good do these external centres attract a majority of Morris and Hullett consumers. Rather, they tend to patronize one of several local towns. Thus, among Morris and Hullett households, there is a reliance on a collective of local towns and villages.

This insular pattern of consumer behaviour, combined with the geography of Morris and Hullett Townships, suggest that it is not the urban dispersed city that exists, but rather the dispersed city in the countryside. However, even this claim must be qualified because this type of system does not seem to exist in isolation, but rather in conjunction with a classic central place system.

As mentioned, Morris and Hullett consumers rely on several different local settlements when purchasing goods and services. A small number of outsized functions exist predominantly within mid-sized, functionally abundant settlements. Not only do outsized functions display this

distribution pattern, but they also exist among predominantly infrequently purchased items. If stated in central place terms, it is among high and middle-ordered functions that outsized functions exist. This terminology is used with caution as it is slightly misleading due to the fact that the outsized functions are each patroned by consumers living *throughout* Morris and Hullett Townships. In other words, these outsized functions transcend the often mutually exclusive market areas of other businesses that offer the same type of good or service. Among frequently purchased items, however, central place principles hold. That is, consumers purchasing gasoline, groceries, and other convenience items, purchase them in the closest settlement offering such goods. Thus, settlements such as Blyth, Clinton, Brussels, and Wingham maintain exclusive market areas for all low-ordered goods. But this hierarchy shows signs of breaking down for other, less frequently purchased higher-ordered goods. This occurs in spite of each settlement providing such goods. Thus, despite many of these settlements offering the same types of retail functions, they are sometimes used for different purposes. Thus, within a central place retailing structure, dispersed city behaviours exist.

### **6.7 Bridging the Gap II - Historical and Contemporary Analyses Compared**

The results derived from both the historical and contemporary analyses, for the most part, reinforce one another. The historical analysis showed that the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo had come to possess the majority of outsized functions within the region. The large number of businesses doing well suggested that these two cities were popular destinations for shopping purposes. The contemporary analysis confirmed this, indicating that these two centers are visited by the majority of countryside consumers, for a majority of goods and services.

However, the historical analysis also indicated that a considerable number of outsized functions continued to exist within settlements surrounding these two cities. Towns and villages

such as Elmira, New Hamburg, New Dundee, Floradale, St. Jacobs, Ayr, Petersburg, Heidelberg, Hawkesville, St. Clements, and Wellesley all recorded at least one outsized function as late as 1971. This is considerably greater than the numbers of outsized functions identified through the behavioural analysis.

Several reasons may explain why such a discrepancy exists. First, the settlements identified incorporate a much larger geographic area than Wilmot Township and it may be that multiple, geographically confined settlement systems exist within the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. This would explain why places such as Elmira, Ayr, St. Jacobs, and Heidelberg, which are located in other townships within the region, are shown to possess outsized functions from an historical perspective, but not from a contemporary one. But even if only Wilmot Township is isolated, several of its settlements registering outsized functions in the historical analysis do not in the contemporary analysis.

Another explanation may be that, over the course of thirty years, the retailing system has changed. While certainly plausible, this argument is inconsistent with the premises of many of the settlement system constructs accommodating elements of retail specialization. Recall that the development of the open phase of the arena society, both types of dispersed cities, as well as mixed hierarchical systems, are based, in part, on improvements in transportation technology. Indeed, the developers of some of these concepts openly claim that these systems are recent phenomena. If this were the case, then we should expect to see more outsized functions over time, not less, which has been documented to be the case.

One other explanation rests on the fact that outsized functions, as identified through pecuniary strengths, provides evidence of a settlement's nodality; not necessarily its centrality. Disaggregation of outsized function numbers by retail type reveal that most small towns contain

what are traditionally viewed as being 'low-ordered' retail functions. The argument has previously been made but needs to be reiterated here that small, low-ordered settlements *should* excel in the provision of low-ordered functions. It therefore follows that businesses such as gasoline dealers and convenience stores *should* do well financially in these locations.

The contemporary analysis confirms that settlements in Wilmot possess high nodality levels for these frequently purchased items. As mentioned, Petersburg, St. Agatha, New Dundee, and Baden are all used by its residents for these goods. But among those living in the open countryside of Wilmot Township, these settlements are largely ignored. These settlements or, more appropriately, these types of retail functions, display high levels of nodality, but low levels of centrality.

The same issues arise when contemporary and historical findings are incorporated in the case of Huron County and, more specifically, the area surrounding Morris and Hullett Townships. Again, the historical analysis revealed many more outsized functions than did the contemporary analysis. The differences can be attributed to the same reasons. That is, there may be more than one settlement system existing within Huron County, the retailing system operating within Huron County has changed, and the historical identification of outsized functions, in itself, may not exemplify retail specialization.

The idea that multiple settlement systems may exist within Huron County is plausible as the County is geographically larger than the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. Having said this, it does appear that the aerial extent of comparable settlement systems is larger in rural countrysides, thereby shedding doubt on this claim. As mentioned, Morris and Hullett consumers travel considerably farther distances than do Wilmot consumers do. In short, rural consumer patterns are geographically more extensive than their more urban counterparts. Thus,

even though Huron County is larger than the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, much more of Huron County's area is covered by local consumers.

The idea that the retailing system has changed over the past thirty years is also credible. Retail specialization continues to be apparent as Morris and Hullett consumers identify many more outsized functions than do Wilmot consumers. Even so, the numbers identified through the historical as compared to the contemporary analysis do not closely correspond to one another. Thus, it may be claimed that the phenomenon of retail specialization in the rural countryside is in a process of decline. If this is the case, one must again contend with the contradiction that this implies between theory and reality.

The idea that the dispersed city in the countryside may be changing is further supported by another difference in the findings between the historical and contemporary analyses. In this case, however, it is suggested that the system is not so much in a state of decline, but rather in a state of flux, or transformation. Specifically, the historical analysis gave indications of 'multiple specializations,' thereby challenging one of the principle characteristics of the dispersed city in the countryside. Alternatively, the contemporary analysis showed evidence of singular specializations; a characteristic more in line with dispersed city principles. Whether the system has changed from one characterized by multiple specializations to that of individual specializations, or whether it is in a state of decline is an issue that is difficult to address because of the time difference from where the historical data becomes unreliable to when the contemporary analysis begins.

The fact that the historical analysis' identification of outsized functions is representative of a settlement's nodality may also partly explain why outsized function numbers are greater. Again, the same argument applies; that outsized functions, as previously identified, may be used

to illustrate a settlement, or even a central place, hierarchy. The historical evidence showed that many small settlements excelled in the provision of what can be viewed to be low-order functions. Larger, more functionally complex settlements, meanwhile, have been found to excel in both low-order and higher-order goods and services.

Even though a difference exists in the degree to which settlements in Huron County contain outsized functions, it is interesting to note that several of the same settlements stand out in both the historical and contemporary analyses. Recall that the historical analysis revealed a strong association between population size and the number of outsized functions each settlement possessed, indicating the presence of a settlement hierarchy. However, settlements such as Goderich, Exeter, Clinton, Mitchell, Brussels, and Seaforth displayed very high outsized function counts in relation to their populations. These settlements share two characteristics. First, they are similar in population size. Secondly, they are located in the rural countryside. As the behavioural analysis showed, these same settlements are identified by Morris and Hullett consumers as being frequented when shopping for goods and services. Moreover, and even more significant, is that these consumers patronize outsized functions located within many of these towns.

The confirmation of retail specialization, as opposed to solely retail vitality, by the contemporary analysis lends credence to the claim that it is within the rural countryside that evidence of the dispersed city in the countryside may be found. But because signs of retail vitality are also confirmed, it can be suggested that dispersed cities may exist concomitantly with central place systems.

An addendum may be added to this previous statement. Both the historical and contemporary analyses reveal that outsized functions exist as businesses offering relatively

infrequently purchased items. In other words, it is among particular types of functions that outsized functions exist. Therefore, it may be that dispersed cities may have fused with central place systems, creating a hybrid system incorporating selective aspects of each. This statement is fundamentally different from what has previously been suggested because it argues that *both* hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures can be present, not in competition with one another, but rather collectively as integral components within settlement systems.

### **6.8 Conclusions**

The evidence shows that different patterns of retailing and different settlement systems operate in the countryside. Within urbanizing countrysides, urban cores have usurped the roles once occupied by 'middle-order' settlements. These urban cores dominate the retailing system, being relied upon for the majority of goods and services by the majority of people living in the adjacent countryside. The system is best described as an hourglass hierarchy, where low-order settlements maintain small, largely exclusive market areas, subsumed within the large market areas of expanding urban complexes. Because of the small ranges garnered by low-order goods such as convenience items, gasoline, or even groceries, these small towns are not in direct competition with the nearby urban complex. But middle-order centres, possessing middle-order goods and services by definition, require substantially larger market areas. It is because of this fact that these centres are most at risk to urban competition. In essence, these centres are made redundant because of the presence of the nearby metropolis, thereby resulting in the hourglass central place hierarchy. This finding is not new as it has been found in other 'urbanizing' environments (e.g., Berry, 1960).

In the rural countryside, a significantly different situation exists. Here, both central place and dispersed city arrangements are present. Here, central place hierarchies exist among both

commonly occurring and infrequently occurring functions. But specific businesses also exist within these infrequently occurring functions that act to integrate the system. Thus, in addition to maintaining exclusive market areas, communal market areas exist among specialized centres and businesses. In effect, hierarchical and non-hierarchical systems exist in harmony with one another.

## **6.9 Implications and Suggestions for Future Research**

The findings and conclusions presented in this dissertation advance our knowledge of retail specialization, particularly that which is present among small towns in the countryside. In spite of this, many research avenues still exist. This study documents the presence of retail specialization and assesses its implications for the role that small towns play within both the rural and urbanizing countryside. More, of course, can be done to complement and enhance our understanding of this subject. What follows are some of the implications this research has for the current library of literature. In addition, advice and suggestions for those future researchers interested in the subject is provided.

### **6.9.1 Theoretical Implications**

This research challenges current dogma. Previous research has supported retail specialization as the basis for the emergence of a group of antithetical settlement system constructs opposed to hierarchical principles. What this research posits is that the two attributes are possible in the same region. Moreover, this research posits that the two attributes do not indicate some form of rivalry between competing organizing principles. Rather, symmetry exists between the two attributes. This illustrates, at the very least, a continuing existence of dual structures in the countryside; dispersed city and central place. However, it is further posited that these two, dichotomously viewed constructs may interact in such a way so as to produce a hybrid

dispersed city-central place system. The suggestion that a new type of system, incorporating both hierarchical and non-hierarchical elements is unprecedented.

While this research identifies the duality that exists within the retailing system, further research may broaden its scope to include other economic and social phenomena. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, many existing settlement system constructs go beyond the retailing environment. The distribution of recreation, manufacturing, transportation, and administrative facilities may each be analysed to determine the comprehensiveness of such a system. Similarly, behaviours in addition to the journey to shop (e.g., employment commuting, social journeys, etc.) may also aid in the identification of such a system.

### **6.9.2 Methodological Implications**

This research concludes that methodologies historically used to identify 'retail specialization' and, in the process, alternate settlement system constructs, need to be adjusted. Previous research recognizing outsized functions must be praised for bringing to the forefront important issues related to the role small towns play within the larger space economy. But while commendable, they only lay the foundation for much needed research in the field. The identification of outsized functions, as operationalized through the identification of pecuniary strengths, does not necessarily indicate retail specialization. At the very least, signs of retail vitality are revealed. However, retail vitality may indicate both hierarchical as well as non-hierarchical systems. Closer analysis of the distribution and location of outsized functions supports this and the behaviour of countryside consumers confirms this. Consequently, further disaggregation of the retailing structure and of the behaviours that generate this structure are required to determine the type(s) of settlement systems operating within regions.

The revelation that the use of PSR's, as derived from Dun and Bradstreet investigators, merely indicates retail vitality and not necessary retail specialization acts to further complicate research in this field. Retail vitality (and specialization for that matter) may come about through different circumstances. The assumption made here, and in previous research, is that vitality and/or specialization comes about through expanded market areas of successful businesses. The assumption is valid. *Ceteris paribus*, an enlarged market area should translate into greater sales, thereby resulting in a higher PSR. However, other factors may also play a role in producing a successful business. Differences in supplier - retailer relations, the economies (e.g., rich versus poor) of regions, and the internal operations of retailing businesses (e.g, differences in the abilities of entrepreneurs to effectively 'run' a business) all have the potential to influence PSR values.

Despite the inability to uncover the sole reason for the existence of successful retailing businesses, it cannot be denied that *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* are an extremely comprehensive source of information for identifying such businesses. But the contention is made here that the use of such a database be limited to historical analyses. Simply stated, *Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books* can no longer be relied upon to provide the appropriate information needed to conduct a contemporary analysis of outsized functions. In a present-day context, other sources of information and, ultimately, new methodologies need to be established.

However, even with the afore-mentioned problems in using Dun and Bradstreet, and of the inherent problems in focusing on retail structure, the (much needed) inclusion of historical analyses necessitates a focus on the structure of the retailing system. This is because past consumer behaviours cannot be identified on a comprehensive scale. Granted, multiple studies may exist that isolate one area over time, but this accomplishment is rare in the literature. Thus,

the use of Dun and Bradstreet acts as an acceptable source of information in determining the historical location and distribution of outsized functions.

In a present day context, however, it is believed that further behavioural work into the documentation of outsized functions would be fruitful. This study lays the foundation for such work. It operationalizes outsized functions in a manner consistent with the assumption held to produce them. That is, outsized functions are believed to exist in a non-hierarchical environment, drawing consumers from a shared market area. However, further refinement may be required. In this case, outsized functions attract one-quarter of respondents. This minimum level of patronage needed to qualify a business as an outsized function is certainly open to debate. What has been established here is that specialized, popular businesses exist. Whether one chooses to use a 5%, 10%, 25%, 50% or 100% pre-requisite is only important if one is solely investigating the presence of outsized functions.

Another pre-requisite that was established in this research is that outsized functions draw clientele from areas beyond the settlement within which the businesses are located. Further research could determine whether households travel beyond the nearest offering of a good or service. This would require knowing, exactly where in space, responding households are located. But in so doing, one could differentiate whether outsized functions (i.e., retail specialization) produce a system akin to the dispersed city or mixed hierarchy systems.

Other behavioural work is also needed. While this research acts as a step forward in our understanding of retail specialization, particularly within the urbanizing and rural countryside, further issues need to be addressed. The contention that elements of both types of systems may be present cannot be fully explored by this research. This is because the contemporary analysis isolates the consuming behaviours of a particular sample of countryside residents. That is, it

confines itself to particular geographic areas and determines the shopping activity patterns of people living within those areas. From these activity patterns, outsized functions are identified. While this certainly allows us to identify retailers that are important to these consumers, it tells us relatively little about the nature of outsized functions. Mention was made earlier of how outsized functions could either cater to an external, urban clientele, or to an internal or local clientele. This external component, or the supra-regional nature of outsized functions, cannot be determined because this segment of the population is excluded from the analysis. It may be that outsized functions play a dual role; that these establishments cater to both, further acting to incorporate elements of the arena society into already merged central place and dispersed city systems. This issue may be addressed by identifying the market areas of locally identified outsized functions. Thus, once the results of the consumer questionnaire identify outsized functions, a survey should then be distributed to those local store owners whose businesses qualify as outsized functions.

### **6.9.3 Practical Implications**

While this research admittedly addresses the theoretical implications of small town economic specialization there, nevertheless, exist many practical implications of the findings. Two underlying themes guide this research. First is the belief in the vitality of small towns; that they constitute an important place on the retail landscape. Secondly is that they can constitute a viable system. This research acts as validation of both beliefs. From a practical perspective, these two findings have important ramifications.

There is continuing evidence of retail vitality in small towns. This is an important statement. Despite broad-based claims of retail demise (Beale, 1992; Stabler, et. al., 1992; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1990), entrepreneurs and businesses can succeed in this environment. This

marketed to potential, external investors. Attraction of private capital, if properly invested, can only enrich the retail (as well as other economic) sector(s). The issue here is appropriate investment. Across rural Canada, local entrepreneurs can take advantage of a Federally-initiated, although locally run, program that provides financial capital and technical support in order to promote local economic development.

The program, known as Community Futures, was established in 1986 by Employment and Immigration Canada.<sup>40</sup> The program, run through local Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC's), provides business development loans of up to \$125,000 to local entrepreneurs wishing to establish a new business in the area or expand an existing business. The program encompasses all types of economic activity, from primary, secondary, tertiary, to quaternary. One such CFDC exists in Huron County. Launched in 1993, it claims to be responsible in either creating or expanding over 393 businesses in the County, resulting in 2,470 new employment opportunities ([www.huronbdc.on.ca](http://www.huronbdc.on.ca)).

While future research may explore the relevance of such a program to the emergence of outsized functions in the area, another concept, existing primarily in the planning literature, may also be of relevance. Specifically, the concept of 'multi-community collaboration' may act to merge rural planning issues with the research conducted in this dissertation. In fact, it is believed that this latter concept also holds much promise.

This is because, in theory, both the establishment of Community Futures Programs and the implementation of multi-community collaboration projects takes a holistic approach to rural

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<sup>40</sup> Employment and Immigration Canada is now known as Human Resources Development Canada.

economic development. Whereas Community Futures may deal with businesses on an individual basis, projects are examined in relation to others, the idea of multi-community collaboration deals with a number of projects simultaneously. Although issues are solved from different perspectives, synergy is developed with respect to local economic development.

Many terms can be used to describe the relationships among small towns in the countryside: 'synergy,' 'co-operation,' 'collaboration,' or 'partnerships.' These terms are appropriate as this dissertation has shown that small towns are by no means isolated. People living in the countryside display polycentric behaviours, visiting many nearby settlements in order to satisfy their consumer needs. Moreover, it reveals evidence that small towns are becoming specialized. Specialization often translates into greater interdependency. Rural planning must respond to these developing interdependencies and specialities by adopting a regional approach to economic development. However, the extent to which this philosophy has been implemented is unknown. It would be interesting to see if the implementation of such a philosophy galvanizes retail specialization (as well as other types of specialization) in an area.

#### **6.9.4 Cognitive Implications**

The nature of outsized functions should also be explored further to understand why they exist in the countryside. While not the focus of this research, the distributed questionnaire did ask people why they visited the establishments. Geography has been shown to play a role, as countrysides adjacent to large cities tend not to possess outsized functions, but other geographic, economic, and sociological factors also may play a role.

In fact, preliminary examinations reveal that choice-based decision making may play an important role in establishing outsized functions and, ultimately, in organizing the retail milieu within which they exist. Of note is the potential that store reputation and proprietorship may play in this process. Many consumers patronizing outsized functions in small towns make note of the increased importance of these two factors. Additional studies, perhaps adopting either a cognitive-behavioural approach, may add additional insight into the reasons behind the existence of outsized functions, from a consumer's as well as from an entrepreneur's perspective.

Unlike the empirical-behavioural approach adopted in this dissertation's contemporary research, the cognitive-behavioural approach focuses more on the actions of humans. This latter approach recognizes that individual peculiarities, such as aspirations, beliefs, and opinions, influence behaviour. Consequently, behaviours are based not so much on the reality of the retail landscape, but rather with respect to what is perceived of the retail environment. Such investigations may illustrate why consumers travel to outsized functions.

From the retailer's perspective, this focus on human agency may provide important insight into the existence of outsized functions. Indeed, both Dahms (1980a) and Hart et. al. (1968) stress the potential significance that local entrepreneurs may play in developing such businesses and ultimately in the types of systems within which they operate. Knowledge of their own motivations and beliefs may provide insight into why some businesses are more successful than others.

#### **6.9.5 Geographical Implications**

While several suggestions have been made for future study, one must not forget that that geography is a important factor in the development of regional settlement systems. As is the situation with all 'case studies' it would also be important to note if what was observed by this

research is observed elsewhere. At the very least, this study allows future researchers to narrow their geographic search. It has been established that countrysides lying beyond the daily commutersheds of metropolitan cores display more evidence of retail specialization than do those lying within them. Given the landscape of south-central (or any region of southern) Ontario, it is difficult to identify a region lying beyond the spatial extent of contemporary urban fields. It would be interesting to see if those areas of the countryside, essentially isolated from any considerable urban influence, exist within the settlement system(s) identified in Huron County.

#### **6.9.6 Dynamic Implications**

Associated with the geographical context of future research is the temporal context. Although constituting a major component of this research, temporal issues need to be further explored. It has been shown that outsized functions have been present for some time and, it may be argued, that there were more signs of retail specialization at the beginning of the twentieth century than there were at the end.

Several factors have been hypothesized to have influenced regional settlement structures. Indeed, issues surrounding improved transportation technologies and population shifts are considered to be important factors in the development of each of the settlement system constructs examined here. In addition to these two factors, this research has shown that entrepreneurial ability (from either an economic or a social perspective) can encourage retail specialization. One must, however, consider a myriad of other factors. Quick reference to a table (Table 29) developed by Preston (1980) lists several factors that individually and collectively can induced change in any settlement system.

‘Change’ is not a new concept, particularly when applied to the countryside. At the onset of this research, mention was made of socio-economic changes that have been witnessed in the

countryside. No facet of the countryside's economy nor its society has been immune. Agriculture, manufacturing, retailing, the population, and its behaviour have all undergone change. But whereas many (authors) would interpret such change in a grim manner with respect to the fortunes or even to the importantness of small towns, this research stresses that this is not necessarily the case. Small towns and the businesses located within them can succeed. This research has established that. What remains to be seen is how such success comes about. This latter statement opens up an abundance of potential research topics that can utilize a number of different philosophical perspectives.

**Table 29:**  
**Key Factors Influencing the Existence of Outsized Functions**

Key Factors and Forces Shaping Regional Settlement Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>population distribution</li> <li>population density</li> <li>demographic structure</li> <li>price of goods and services</li> <li>availability of goods and services</li> <li>range of goods and services</li> <li>production costs</li> <li>the nature of the region</li> <li>the transportation system</li> <li>income levels</li> <li>consumer tastes</li> <li>consumer preferences</li> <li>consumer attitudes</li> <li>political structure</li> <li>government planning</li> <li>cultural differences</li> <li>business cycles</li> <li>entrepreneurial ability</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Coppack and Preston (1988; 84).

## **6.10 Concluding Remarks**

These six issues raise a plethora of implications that are, unapologetically, not addressed here. To treat them appropriately would require several volumes. Whether future researchers feel they are fitting research avenues, or whether they respond to other, as unyet unanswered questions, remains to be seen. What is known is that the countryside provides much fertile ground for research. It is hoped that this researcher has helped sow the seeds of academic inquiry in this very important field of geography.

## Postscript

My fascination with small towns over the past twenty years has been somewhat of an enigma. I was born a city boy, born in Northwestern hospital in Toronto, Ontario. I should have seen it coming one day that I would come to live either in the open countryside or in a small town as my parents, every five years or so, would move farther away from Toronto's core. When I was born, my family lived in downtown Toronto, then moved to Weston, then to Rexdale. However, the big move to 'Nowheresville' occurred in 1980 when we moved to the village of Tottenham, located in what seemed at the time to be hours away from civilization. The story that I stick with is that, upon hearing of the decision to move, I locked myself in my bedroom for three days (it was probably only three hours, but the other version sounds much more dramatic).

At the time of our move, the main street was being converted from a gravel roadway to a paved one. I lived the next ten years, (most of them the 'teen' years) of my life in Tottenham, lamenting that there was never anything to do in this forlorn, 'hick,' godforsaken place. I yearned for the summer months when I could visit my grandparents in the 'big city' where I could see movies, shop in malls, or visit museums whenever I wanted, without needing someone to drive me to these greatly desired attractions.

But a funny thing happened: I got older and presumably much wiser and appreciative of my family and of the place that has been home to me for many of the formative years of my life. My move back to the 'big city' to attend the University of Toronto was to be my ticket back into civilization. I guess you can call it reverse culture shock but much had changed. Toronto had changed and so had I. I had been converted. Living in a small town no longer seemed to be that

bad: it was actually kind of wonderful and, in hindsight, becoming a small town boy was probably a good thing.

Needless to say, after one year at the University of Toronto, I dropped out, vowing never to return. However, at the urging of my parents, I decided to attend Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. Although Peterborough cannot be called a small town, the University is the smallest in the province and it is not located in the city itself, but rather immediately north of it, along the Otonabee River. I must admit that at the time of graduating high school, I had never even heard of Trent.

At Trent, I further rediscovered my passion for small towns. A course offered by Ken Beesley (a fantastic professor) on the 'rural-urban' fringe first spurred my attention and it was in an assignment for the course that I discovered the writings of Fred Dahms. Upon reading his articles, I was further hooked, and decided then and there that I would like to devote the rest of my academic career to researching various aspects of small town life.

At the time, I certainly did not realize that the rest of my academic career would still be in progress. After three years at Trent, I moved on to do my Master's degree at Wilfrid Laurier University. I have now spent six years at the University of Waterloo in my pursuit of a Doctoral degree. During this time I have studied population movements in the countryside, the countryside's increasing incorporation into cities' spheres of influence, the social networks existing in countrysides, and the tourism that occurs here. With the recent passing away of my grandfather, I also hope to look at issues of rural, geriatric health care. I must say, proudly, that I am fascinated by all aspects of small town life; from its economics to its society. I am also a staunch believer that small towns are of immense importance to the nation and am quick to counter anyone who would argue otherwise.

It's funny the way life turns out. I have gone from a big city boy to a small town boy. I have spent my teen years being unappreciative of my parents and now I realize that they were and always have been. wonderful parents. I have contemplated not going to university and here I am on the verge of receiving my Ph.D. I have been unlucky in love and yet I am married to a wonderful woman. Although I do not know how the rest of my life will turn out, I am grateful for what I have experienced. Thank you all the Tottenhams's of the world; thank you mom and dad; thank you nana and papa; thank you Paula; thank you Clare; and thank you Lady and Oreo. I hope for those of you still with us (or for those of you who can read) that you enjoyed this.

*Greg Atkinson*

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**Appendix A:**  
**Functions Considered for Outsized Function Identification**

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>
Lumber									
Hardware									
Variety	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Groceries									
Auto Accessories	n/a								
Service Station	n/a	n/a							
Women's Wear <sup>1</sup>									
Furniture & Undertaking <sup>2</sup>									
House Furnishings									
Home Appliances	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Sporting Goods									
Nursery									
Jewelry									
Florist									
Fancy Goods									
Baking & Confectionary									
Auto Dealer	n/a								
Auto Repair	n/a								
Plumbing/Heating Supplies								n/a	n/a
Paint, Glass, & Wallpaper									
Agricultural Implements								n/a	n/a
Department Store									
General Store									
Groceries									
Meat & Fish									
Fruits & Vegetables									
Candy, Nut, & Confectionary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Family Clothing	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Boots & Shoes									
Tailor								n/a	n/a
Furs									
Crockery (Pottery, China, ..)					n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Music Store									

<sup>1</sup> Women's Wear represents 'women's ready-to-wear,' 'millinery,' 'women's accessory and specialty stores.'

<sup>2</sup> Furniture and Undertaking disaggregated into two separate categories from 1951 onward.

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>
Hay, Grain, Flour & Feed								n/a	n/a
Amusement Park	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Photographic Supplies									
Hotels									
Shoe Repair									
Clock & Jewelry Repair									
Floor Coverings & Drapery									
Reupholstery	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Armature Rewinding	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Misc. Repair	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Eating & Drinking Places									
Cigars, Tobacco, & Billiards <sup>3</sup>									
Men's & Boy's Furnishings									
Electrical Supplies	n/a	n/a							
Misc. Aircraft, Marine, & Auto Dealers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Books & Stationary <sup>4</sup>									
Blacksmith							n/a	n/a	n/a
Carriage Making					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Harness Making					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wagon Repair					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Laundry									
Cleaning	n/a	n/a							
Antiques	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Electrical Repair	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
Implements					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Livery					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Drug Store									
Liquor Store					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Bicycles									

<sup>3</sup> Cigars, Tobacco, and Billiards disaggregated into two separate categories from 1951 onward.

<sup>4</sup> Books and Stationary disaggregated into two separate categories from 1951 onward.

**Appendix B:  
Dun and Bradstreet Financial Strength Ratings, 1901 - 1991**

Code	Pecuniary Strength (\$)	Code	Pecuniary Strength (\$)	Code	Pecuniary Strength (\$)
	(1901, 1921, 1931) (1941, 1951*, 1961*)		(1971)		(1981, 1991)
AA	> 1,000,000	3A	> 1,000,000	5A	> 50,000,000
A+	750,000 - 1,000,000	2A	750,000 - 1,000,000	4A	10,000,000 - 50,000,000
A	500,000 - 750,000	1A	500,000 - 750,000	3A	1,000,000 - 10,000,000
B+	300,000 - 500,000	BA	300,000 - 500,000	2A	750,000 - 1,000,000
B	200,000 - 300,000	BB	200,000 - 300,000	1A	500,000 - 750,000
C+	125,000 - 200,000	CB	125,000 - 200,000	BA	300,000 - 500,000
C	75,000 - 125,000	CC	75,000 - 125,000	BB	200,000 - 300,000
D+	50,000 - 75,000	DC	50,000 - 75,000	CB	125,000 - 200,000
D	35,000 - 50,000	DD	35,000 - 50,000	CC	75,000 - 125,000
E	20,000 - 35,000	EE	20,000 - 35,000	DC	50,000 - 75,000
F	10,000 - 20,000	FF	10,000 - 20,000	DD	35,000 - 50,000
G	5,000 - 10,000	GG	5,000 - 10,000	EE	20,000 - 35,000
H	3,000 - 5,000	HH	3,000 - 5,000	FF	10,000 - 20,000
J	2,000 - 3,000	JJ	< 3,000	GG	5,000 - 10,000
K	1,000 - 2,000			HH	< 5,000
L	500 - 1,000				
M	< 500				

\* Codes 'L' and 'M' were joined to represent a pecuniary strength value of < \$1,000.

**Appendix C:  
Consumer Questionnaire**

**Please be aware that this is a completely voluntary exercise. If you feel uncomfortable answering any (or part of any) question, feel free to decline in answering it.**

1. How many people currently live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the ages of the people living in your household?  
(Please circle one category per person living in your household).

<b>Person 1</b>	<b>Person 2</b>	<b>Person 3</b>	<b>Person 4</b>	<b>Person 5</b>	<b>Other</b>
under 15	under 15				
15 - 24	15 - 24	15 - 24	15 - 24	15 - 24	15 - 24
25 - 34	25 - 34	25 - 34	25 - 34	25 - 34	25 - 34
35 - 44	35 - 44	35 - 44	35 - 44	35 - 44	35 - 44
45 - 54	45 - 54	45 - 54	45 - 54	45 - 54	45 - 54
55 - 64	55 - 64	55 - 64	55 - 64	55 - 64	55 - 64
over 64	over 64				

3. In what type of community is your household located?

<b>Population of Community</b>	<b>Name of Community/Township</b>
_____ 1,000 to 10,000	_____
_____ under 1,000	_____
_____ rural non-farm	_____
_____ rural farm	_____

4. What is your current postal code? \_\_\_\_\_

5. For how many years has your household lived at your current residence? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where was your last place of residence?

<b>Population of Community</b>	<b>Name of Community/Township</b>
_____ over 100,000	_____
_____ 10,000 to 100,000	_____
_____ 1,000 to 10,000	_____
_____ under 1,000	_____
_____ rural non-farm	_____
_____ rural farm	_____

7. How many automobiles are at your household's disposal? \_\_\_\_\_ automobiles

8. Where do the adult members of your household work?

<b>Adult 1</b>	<b>Adult 2</b>	<b>Other</b>
at home	at home	at home
outside home	outside home	outside home

9. If the adult members of your household work outside the home, in what community do they work?

	<b>Name of Community</b>
<b>Adult 1</b>	_____
<b>Adult 2</b>	_____
<b>Other</b>	_____

10. Please list the community(ies) your household visits when engaging in the following activities.  
Please circle the settlement you **most often visit** for each activity.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Community(ies)</b>
buy a car	_____
buy farm machinery	_____
buy major appliances (i.e. washing machine, refrigerator)	_____
buy building supplies (i.e. lumber)	_____
buy women's clothing	_____
buy men's clothing	_____
buy children's clothing	_____
buy prescription drugs	_____
buy weekly groceries	_____
get your car repaired	_____
get a haircut	_____
dine out (for breakfast) (for dinner)	_____
visit a drinking establishment (i.e. bar, nightclub)	_____
see a movie	_____
go to live theater	_____
go to your physician	_____
go to your dentist	_____
do your banking	_____
buy gasoline	_____
buy convenience items (i.e. bread, milk)	_____

11. When engaging in the following activities, **do you tend to visit one particular business establishment?**  
If so, please write the name of the establishment in the space provided. (For example, if you make the majority of your automobile purchases at the same car dealership, write down the name of the dealership).

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Name of Establishment</b>
buy a car	_____
buy farm machinery	_____
buy major appliances (i.e. washing machine, refrigerator)	_____
buy building supplies (i.e. lumber)	_____
buy women's clothing	_____
buy men's clothing	_____
buy children's clothing	_____
buy prescription drugs	_____
buy weekly groceries	_____
get your car repaired	_____
get a haircut	_____
dine out (for breakfast) (for dinner)	_____
visit a drinking establishment (i.e. bar, nightclub)	_____
see a movie	_____
go to live theater	_____
go to your physician	_____
go to your dentist	_____
do your banking	_____
buy gasoline	_____
buy convenience items (i.e. bread, milk)	_____

12. Many factors influence the decision regarding where one shops. Please rate how important the following factors are to you when determining where you purchase different goods and services.

**(a) When purchasing major appliances**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
quantity of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
variety of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
price of good(s)	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**(b) When purchasing an automobile**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
quantity of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
variety of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
price of good(s)	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**(c) When getting your car repaired**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of service offered	1	2	3	4	5
price of service	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**(d) When dining out**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of service offered	1	2	3	4	5
quality of food	1	2	3	4	5
price of food	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**(e) When buying clothing**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
quantity of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
variety of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
price of good(s)	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**(e) When buying weekly groceries**

	Very Important			Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
store close to work	1	2	3	4	5
store close to home	1	2	3	4	5
store reputation	1	2	3	4	5
quality of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
quantity of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
variety of good(s) offered	1	2	3	4	5
price of good(s)	1	2	3	4	5
know proprietor of store	1	2	3	4	5
hours of operation of store	1	2	3	4	5
store appearance	1	2	3	4	5
store promotion (in store, radio, t.v.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

**On behalf of myself and the University of Waterloo, thank-you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. As a reminder, please insert the completed questionnaire in the pre-paid, self-enclosed envelope.**

**Should you wish a copy of the summary of findings when the study is complete, please provide the appropriate information on the following page.**

**Appendix D:  
Elements of Sample Bias**

**(a) Demographic Composition**

<b>Morris &amp; Hullett Townships</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
< 15	28.3	< 15	24.5
15 to 24	12.4	15 to 24	14.7
25 to 54	39.8	25 to 54	39.3
55 to 64	9.4	55 to 64	8.3
> 64	10.0	> 64	16.0

<b>Wilmot Township</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
< 15	24.7	< 15	23.1
15 to 24	13.7	15 to 24	11.1
25 to 54	44.8	25 to 54	42.5
55 to 64	8.5	55 to 64	8.7
> 64	8.2	> 64	12.4

**(b) Proportion of Returned Questionnaires**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>Distributed</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Wilmot Tp	78	432	18.06%
New Hamburg	52	333	15.62%
New Dundee	34	97	35.05%
Manheim	8	60	13.33%
St. Agatha	13	57	22.81%
Petersburg	6	40	15.00%
Baden	2	90	2.22%
Town	115	677	16.99%
Rural	78	432	18.06%

<b>Region</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>Distributed</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Morris Tp	83	413	20.10%
Hullett Tp	71	379	18.73%
Auburn	14	81	17.28%
Belgrave	30	144	20.83%
Kinburn	1	16	6.25%
Londesboro	8	60	13.33%
Town	53	301	17.61%
Rural	154	792	19.44%

**Appendix E:  
Settlement Retail Status, 1901 - 1996**

Settlement	County	Date									
		1901	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1996
Amberley	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Amulree	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Anderson	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Atwood	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Auburn	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Avonbank	Perth	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Avonton	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ayr	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Baden	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bamberg	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Bayfield	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Beechwood	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast	Huron	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Belgrave	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Belmore	Huron	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Bermler	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Blair	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Blake	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Bloomingdale	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bluevale	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Blyth	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bornholm	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Branchton	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Breslau	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brewster	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgeport	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Britton	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Brodhagen	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brucefield	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brunner	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brussels	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Burns	Perth	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambridge	Waterloo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Carlingford	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Carlow	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Carthage	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Centerville	Waterloo	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Centralia/Devon	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chiselhurst	Perth	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinton	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Conestogo	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Conroy	Perth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Constance	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Cranbrook	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Crediton	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Crew e	Huron	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cromarty	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Crosshill	Waterloo	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Dashwood	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Donegal	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Doon	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Dorking	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0

Settlement	County	Date									
		1901	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1996
Drysdale	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dublin	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dungannon	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dunlop	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Egmondville	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Elimville	Huron	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elmira	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ethel	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Exeter	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Farquhar	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fish Creek	Perth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Floradale	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fordwich	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fordyce	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Freeborn	Perth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Freeport	Waterloo	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fullarton	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gad's Hill Stn.	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Galt	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
German Mills/Parkway	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Glenannan	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Goderich	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gorrie	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gowanstown	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Greenway	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Hampstead	Perth	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Harlock	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harmony	Perth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawkesville	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Haysville	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Heidelberg	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Henfryn	Huron	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hensall	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hespeler	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Hesson	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Hill's Green	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Holmesville	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Huntingfield	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huron Park	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Jamestown	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Josephburg	Waterloo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kennicott	Perth	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Khiva	Huron	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingsbridge	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kingsdale	Waterloo	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kinkora	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Kintail	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Kippen	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kirkton	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kitchener	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kossuth	Waterloo	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kuhryville	Perth	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0



Settlement	County	Date									
		1901	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1996
Seaforth	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sebringville	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Shakespeare	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sheppardton	Huron	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shipka	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Silsburg	Perth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffa	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Strasburg	Waterloo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Summerhill	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Topping	Perth	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tralee	Perth	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Trowbridge	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Varna	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wallace	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wallenstein	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Walton	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wartburg	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Waterloo	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Weisenburg	Waterloo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wellesley	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Westfield	Huron	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Montrose	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Winchelsea	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wingham	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Winterbourne	Waterloo	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Winthrop	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Woodham	Perth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wroxeter	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Zurich	Huron	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>179</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76</b>

Note: German Mills changed to Parkway (1951)  
Note: Freeport annexed by Cambridge  
Note: Galt, Hespeler, and Preston amalgamate to form Cambridge (1971)  
Note: German Mills/Parkway, Centerville, Doon, Strasburg, and Kingsdale annexed by Kitchener  
Note: Sheppardton annexed by Port Albert (1941)  
Note: Devon annexed by Centralia (1921)

'1' : Retail or service function recorded by Dun & Bradstreet.

'2' : No retail or service function recorded by Dun & Bradstreet.

**Appendix F:**  
**Most Frequently Occurring Functions, By Decade**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1941</b>
1	B'smith	Groceries	Groceries	Groceries
2	Gen. Store	Gen. Store	Gen. Store	Gen. Store
3	Groceries	B'smith	Garage	Gas St'n
4	Hotel	Bak. & Confec.	B'smith	Garage
5	Tr.	Hotel	Bak. & Confec.	Bak. & Confec.
6	B & S	Garage	Butcher	Butcher
7	Butcher	Butcher	H'ware	B'smith
8	Harness Mkr.	B & S	Hotel	Hotel
9	Bak. & Confec.	Tr.	Cig., Tob, & Billd's	H'ware
10	Wagons	H'ware	Implts.	B & S

<b>Rank</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>
1	Groceries	Gas St'n	Gas St'n	Eating Places	Eating Places
2	Gas St'n	Groceries	Restaurant	Service St'n	Auto Rep.
3	Gen. Store	Gen. Store	Groceries	Auto Dir.	Auto Dir.
4	Garage	Restaurant	Gen. Store	Groceries	W'wear
5	Restaurant	Garage	Auto Dir	Furniture	Groceries
6	H'ware	Auto Dir	Garage	Hotel	Furniture
7	Auto Dir	Men's Fumg.	Farm Eq'p.	Radio & TV	Radio & TV
8	Butcher	Home App'l.	Hotel	W'wear	Hotel
9	Men's Fumg.	H'ware	Men's Fumg.	Lbr.	Drugs
10	Bak. & Confec.	Drugs	Lumber	Auto Rep.	Lbr.

**Appendix G:  
Outsized Function Distribution, 1901 - 1991**

<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1901</b>		<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1921</b>	
<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>
Stratford	27	Kitchener	52
Kitchener	21	Stratford	39
St. Mary's	19	Galt	30
Godench	19	Godench	16
Seeforth	18	Exeter	15
Mitchell	18	Listowel	13
Listowel	17	Waterloo	13
Wingham	16	Elmira	13
Galt	15	Preston	13
Waterloo	12	St. Mary's	12
Clinton	12	Mitchell	11
Exeter	11	Wingham	11
Zunch	9	Seeforth	11
Mikerton	8	Mikerton	9
Elmira	8	Brussels	9
Hensall	7	Hensall	8
Wellesley	7	Blyth	7
Hespeler	7	Clinton	6
Brussels	7	New Hamburg	6
Blyth	7	Crediton	5
Preston	5	Hespeler	5
Ayr	5	Ayr	4
St. Jacobs	4	Baden	3
Deshwood	4	Heidelberg	3
Petersburgh	4	Linwood	3
Heidelberg	4	Monkton	3
Linwood	3	St. Clements	2
St. Clements	3	New Germany	2
Sebringville	3	Game	2
Game	2	Varna	2
Kinkora	2	Wellesley	2
Wraxeter	2	Zunch	2
Brucefield	2	Centralia	2
Dublin	2	Brochagen	2
St. Agatha	2	Dublin	2
Crediton	2	Shakespeare	1
Shakespeare	2	Floradale	1
Conestoga	2	Postock	1
Walton	1	Britton	1
Blair	1	Sebringville	1
Varna	1	St. Agatha	1
Branchton	1	Conestoga	1
Baden	1	St. Jacobs	1
Avanton	1	St. Paul's Str.	1
Winterbourne	1	Barnholm	1
Woodham	1	Walton	1
Donegal	1	Bayfield	1
Bresieu	1	Wraxeter	1
Postock	1	Fordwich	1
Auburn	1	Newry	1
Dungannon	1	Atwood	1
Egmondville	1	Drysdale	1
Ethel	1	Deshwood	1
Cramery	1	Lakelet	1
Fordwich	1	Jamestown	1
Hawkesville	1		
Kingsbridge	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>
Paole	1		
Britton	1		
Londesborough	1		
Menhem	1		
Bridgeport	1		
New Germany	1		
Newry	1		
Atwood	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>		

Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1931		Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1941	
Settlement	No. of Outsized Functions	Settlement	No. of Outsized Functions
Kitchener	64	Kitchener	48
Stratford	43	Stratford	31
Galt	22	Goderich	19
Listowel	14	Galt	15
Goderich	14	Exeter	13
Waterloo	13	Waterloo	12
Seaford	13	Wingham	12
St. Mary's	12	Listowel	11
Clinton	11	Clinton	10
Exeter	11	Seaford	9
Wingham	11	Zurich	8
Brussels	8	Brussels	8
Elmira	7	Elmira	8
Wellesley	7	St. Mary's	7
Preston	6	Preston	6
Milverton	6	Mitchell	6
Mitchell	6	Milverton	5
Hensell	4	Hespeler	5
Heidelberg	4	Atwood	4
New Hamburg	4	Gome	4
Hespeler	4	Wellesley	4
Crediton	4	St. Jacobs	4
Baden	3	Sebringville	4
Sebringville	3	New Hamburg	3
Monkton	3	Monkton	3
Ayr	3	Flora Dale	3
Bayfield	3	Fordwich	3
Linwood	2	Brucefield	2
St. Jacobs	2	Crediton	2
Wraxeter	2	New Dundee	2
St. Clements	2	Dashwood	2
New Dundee	2	Petersburgh	2
Atwood	2	Blyth	2
Zurich	2	St. Clements	2
Fordwich	2	Dungannon	2
Centralia	2	Shakespeare	2
Centreville	2	Walton	2
Gome	2	Kippen	2
Benmiller	1	Drysdale	2
Bamberg	1	Centralia	2
Bridgeport	1	Linwood	2
Walton	1	Brunner	2
Brodhagen	1	Bayfield	1
Brucefield	1	Bamberg	1
Brunner	1	Ayr	1
St. Agatha	1	St. Agatha	1
Blyth	1	Woodham	1
Dashwood	1	Centreville	1
Shakespeare	1	Newry	1
Dungannon	1	Breslau	1
Auburn	1	Auburn	1
Gowanstown	1	Heidelberg	1
Flora Dale	1	Hensell	1
New Germany	1	Millbank	1
Hesson	1	Londesborough	1
Dublin	1	Bridgeport	1
Newry	1	Brodhagen	1
Drysdale	1	Pool	1
Kippen	1	Dublin	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>

<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions. 1951</b>		<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions. 1961</b>	
<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>
Stratford	40	Kitchener	45
Kitchener	27	Galt	30
Galt	20	Stratford	30
Listowel	19	Listowel	16
Preston	19	Waterloo	16
Brussels	11	Goderich	16
Goderich	10	Clinton	14
Exeter	9	Exeter	13
St. Mary's	8	Wingham	11
Wingham	7	Elmira	9
Mitchell	7	Preston	8
Waterloo	6	St. Mary's	6
Elmira	6	St. Jacobs	6
Zurich	6	Zurich	6
Clinton	6	Hensall	5
Seaforth	6	Mitchell	5
Milverton	4	Hespeler	4
Dashwood	4	Seaforth	4
New Hamburg	4	Wraxeter	4
Hespeler	3	Ayr	4
Walton	3	Auburn	3
St. Clements	2	New Dundee	3
New Dundee	2	Brussels	3
Sebringville	2	Brodhagen	2
Monkton	2	Bluevale	2
Atwood	2	Blyth	2
Auburn	2	Flordale	2
Hensall	2	Dashwood	2
Brodhagen	2	Dashwood	2
Flordale	2	New Hamburg	2
Fordwich	2	Dungannon	2
Ayr	2	St. Agatha	1
Wellesley	1	Shakespeare	1
Woodham	1	Postock	1
Wraxeter	1	Shipka	1
Bamberg	1	Wellesley	1
Belmore	1	Petersburgh	1
Blyth	1	Gornie	1
St. Jacobs	1	Monkton	1
Bridgeport	1	Centralia	1
Centralia/Devon	1	Baden	1
Shakespeare	1	Blake	1
Brucefield	1	Bloomington	1
Gornie	1	Brucefield	1
Londesborough	1	Brunner	1
Millbank	1	Conestogo	1
Gowanstown	1	Molesworth	1
Ethel	1	Dublin	1
Heidelberg	1	Ethel	1
Newry	1	Fordwich	1
Petersburgh	1	Heidelberg	1
Crediton	1	Kurtzville	1
Kippen	1	Atwood	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>

<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1971</b>		<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions, 1981</b>	
<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>
Kitchener	77	Kitchener	25
Galt	41	Stratford	13
Waterloo	28	Waterloo	9
Stratford	24	Listowel	8
Listowel	20	Cambridge	8
Goderich	14	St. Mary's	6
Preston	13	Exeter	5
Elmira	13	Wingham	4
Exeter	10	Elmira	4
Clinton	10	Clinton	3
St. Marys	7	Mitchell	3
Wingham	6	St. Jacobs	3
Hensall	5	Wellesley	3
Mitchell	5	Dashwood	2
Milverton	5	Goderich	2
Brussels	5	Hensall	2
New Hamburg	5	Atwood	2
Bridgeport	5	Milverton	2
Seaford	4	Flora Dale	2
Hespeler	4	Linwood	1
Gornie	4	Kirkton	1
Zurich	3	New Ham.	1
Centralia	2	Bayfield	1
Monkton	2	Breslau	1
Blair	2	Blyth	1
Walton	2	Brussels	1
Bluevale	2	<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>
St. Jacobs	2		
Sebringville	2		
Conestogo	2		
New Dundee	2		
Atwood	2		
Dashwood	2		
Flora Dale	2		
Londesborough	2		
Belgrave	1		
Wellesley	1		
Fullerton	1		
Ayr	1		
Wallenstein	1		
Kurtzville	1		
Brodhagen	1		
St. Clements	1		
Dublin	1		
Staffa	1		
Shakespeare	1		
Brucefield	1		
Hawkesville	1		
Petersburgh	1		
Millbank	1		
Heidelberg	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

<b>Distribution of Outsized Functions. 1991</b>	
<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Outsized Functions</b>
Kitchener	6
Waterloo	5
Cambridge	5
Listowel	4
Exeter	3
Mitchell	2
Goderich	2
Seaforth	2
Stratford	1
Clinton	1
Hensall	1
Wellesley	1
Baden	1
Gorrie	1
New Dundee	1
Flora Dale	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>