

**GEOGRAPHYJOHN**



**GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK**

**ESTABLISHING AND  
INVESTIGATING A HIERARCHY  
OF SHOPPING CENTRES IN A  
TOWN**

Retailing in British towns and cities has been based on a well established hierarchy from the CBD or 'High Street' at the top, through major district centres, to neighbourhood shopping parades and the local corner shop.

A full hierarchy for a town would be:-

LOCAL CORNER SHOP / LOCAL CENTRE

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

COMMUNITY OR DISTRICT CENTRE

REGIONAL CENTRE

CBD (CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT)

### **This can be simplified to illustrate the main differences in shopping centres**

#### **A - Corner Shops**

These services sell low order goods in old inner city areas and are often located on their own in residential streets or in a small row of shops. Goods are sold in small amounts, but at higher prices than they would be found in other shopping areas and more often (people may go in everyday to purchase bread, milk and newspapers).

These shops are small in size and stock a small range of convenience goods. The sphere of influence / range of these shops is quite small and there are lots of them, hence their position at the bottom of the shopping hierarchy.

#### **B - Shopping Streets**

There are two types of shopping streets. The first can be found near the CBD in the low class residential areas, and sell anything from low order goods to specialist goods. The second type are found in the city suburbs and serve a local housing estate. People may visit several times a week, and the sphere of influence is bigger than a corner shop.

There are less of these than corner shops and they cover a wider area, hence their position on the hierarchy diagram.

# TYPES OF SHOPS/SERVICES

Two main shops types are recognised

## 1. Convenience shops or services

They sell goods that are bought frequently, often daily and are not of high value. They may be goods that perish or become unusable quickly and shoppers will not be prepared to travel very far to buy them.

## 2. Comparison shops or services

They sell goods that are bought less frequently, but are more expensive which means people will be prepared to travel further and compare quality and price before a purchase. A more complex classification will include 3 orders of shops/services

**HIGH ORDER**      Department stores    Specialist stores      Furniture stores

**MIDDLE ORDER**    Chemists      Hairdressers    Shoe shops

**LOW ORDER**                      Newsagents    Grocers      Post Offices

# IMPORTANT IDEAS/CONCEPTS

## Range of a good

This is the distance that people are prepared to travel to purchase that good, high order goods have a larger range than lower order goods and services.

## Threshold (Threshold Population)

This is the number of people needed need to use a shop or service for it to survive. Higher order shops have a large threshold population than lower order ones. We presume that people use their nearest shop or service of a particular type!

## Sphere of influence

This is the 'Catchment area', the area within which people will use a particular shop or service.

## Accessibility

The ease with which shoppers reach a particular centre. Traditionally the CBD has been seen as the most accessible point from all areas of the town. Increases in traffic and the inability of town centre roads to cope may mean that central locations are no longer the most accessible

## Rateable values

The cost of the land upon which a shop or service is built. Only higher order services with a large turnover can afford the higher rents and rates of the town or city centre.

## **RETAILING REVOLUTION**

Recent or fairly recent changes may be affecting the hierarchy of shopping centres in a town or city and people use of shops and shopping centres.

They include:-

**Superstores in existing shopping centres**

**Hypermarkets on edge of city sites**

**Non food retail parks**

**Growth of regional shopping centres ( Meadowhall, Metro Centre, Merryhill)**

**One stop shopping**

**Congestion and traffic problems in city and town centres**

**Pedestrianisation and undercover malls in town centres**

**Improvements in transport networks due to motorways  
Increased car ownership**

**Refrigerators and freezers allowing less frequent shopping**

**Long life products which 'go off' more slowly**

## **Ideas/Hypotheses that may be tested**

People travel further to shop at larger shopping centres

People visit smaller centres more often than larger centres

The size of the shopping centre and the distance people travel influences:-

- The mode of transport used

- The length of time spent at the centre

- The amount of money spent

- Larger shopping centres have a higher proportion of comparison shops/higher order services

## **FIELDWORK**

1. Conduct a questionnaire of shoppers at your centre. Your sample size should be 30 (per group). Conduct a systematic survey by asking every third person the questions, if that person refuses ask every person who arrives until someone is prepared to take part in the survey.

Think about the problems that could be caused by:-

- The time of day

- The day of the week (weekday/weekend)

- The weather

- The age of respondents

- The sex of respondents

How could you have conducted a STRATIFIED sample to take into account shoppers sex and ages?

2. Conduct traffic and pedestrian counts outside your centre. Make sure the counts are for 10 minutes. Count the traffic travelling both ways, but only count the pedestrians on one side of the street (the one with most shops).

Can you think of any problems concerning the two counts?

3. Conduct a survey of the shops and services at your centre. Note the type of each shop and measure the frontage of the shop in metres to one decimal place.

Also list any other services that are on offer at your centre.

How will you be able to find out the value of the land your shopping centre is built on?



<5 mins										
5-10 mins										
10-20 mins										
>20 mins										
Approx. how much intend to spend?										
<£1										
£1-£5										
£5-£10										
£10-£20										
£20-£50										
>£50										
Main item you have come to buy?										

Note any problems here :-





<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>	<b>No frontages needed here</b>