

THE PATTERN OF MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA¹

RICHARD E. PRESTON
San Fernando Valley State College

and

DONALD W. GRIFFIN
Western Illinois University, Macomb

Los Angeles is a prototype of the decentralized city; in fact, it may be the most striking example.² Suburbanization has occurred in a landscape that was historically decentralized, so to an extent far greater than in other large American cities dispersed retail concentrations have always been an integral part of the area's business geography. Commercial districts developed early in the satellite towns, and although continuous urban sprawl has fused numerous communities into one vast agglomeration, the older established central business districts remain, forming nuclei in the profusion of suburbs surrounding downtown Los Angeles.³ After World War II the older centers were unable to supply retail goods and shopping conveniences demanded by an expanding, automobile oriented, and affluent, suburban population. This resulted in the formation of numerous commercial concentrations geared specifically to serve the suburbanites' needs.

PURPOSE

The intent of this study is to describe, analyze, and interpret the spatial arrangement of Major Retail Centers in the Los Angeles area. Specifically, an attempt will be made to answer six questions: (1) How is the volume of retail sales distributed among Major Retail Centers? (2) What is the composition of retail sales in each Major Retail Center? (3) How many classes of Major Retail Centers are there in the Los Angeles area? (4) How are the different classes of centers arranged areally? (5) How does the composition and volume of retail trade vary in different classes of centers? And, (6) what changes took place in the structure of Major Retail Centers in the Los Angeles area between 1958 and 1963?

¹ We wish to thank the San Fernando Valley State College Foundation and National Science Foundation for funds in support of this study. Also, thanks are due to Mr. Gerald Zeck for his cartographic assistance.

² A. L. Gray, "Los Angeles: Urban Prototype," *Land Economics*, Vol. 35 (1959), pp. 232-242; R. A. Smith, "Los Angeles, Prototype of a Supercity," *Fortune*, Vol. 71 (1965), pp. 98-101, 200, 202, 207-208, 210, 212; D. W. Griffin, "Economic Profile of the Los Angeles Area," *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 55 (1965), p. 617.

³ For development of the decentralized pattern of commercial centers, see G. S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1944), pp. 76-200; and, H. J. Nelson, "The Spread of An Artificial Landscape over Southern California," *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 49, No. 3, Part 2 (1959), pp. 80-100.

PROCEDURE

The study area is topographically limited, embracing the broad lowlands of the Los Angeles Basin and Orange County, and two great valley systems, San Fernando to the northwest and San Gabriel to the east (Figure 1). This territory was selected because it contains those portions of Los Angeles and Orange Counties that were continuously built-up in 1963, and at the same time, includes all but two of the Major Retail Centers within the Los Angeles-Long Beach and Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.⁴ In 1963, the study area covered just over 1,400 square miles, and contained a population of approximately 7,416,000 people.

Major Retail Centers (MRC's) include two recognized and distinct types of trading concentrations, the established *central business district* and the *larger shopping center*. Within the study area the Census Bureau identified eighty Major Retail Centers in 1963: six central business districts and seventy-four larger shopping centers. The central business district definition employed here is the Census Bureau's and designates "an area of very high land valuation; offices, theatres, hotels, and 'service' businesses; an area of high traffic flow."⁵ Similarly, the definition for larger shopping centers used here is the Census Bureau's and identifies a "concentration of retail stores . . . which include a major general merchandise store—usually a department store."⁶ Major Retail Centers, then, include all forms of planned and unplanned retail concentrations that normally feature a department store. Obviously, many retail establishments are excluded from MRC status because of this limiting criterion, but the study of CBD's and other larger shopping centers allows for an analysis of a highly complex and significant segment of the American city's retail structure. Knowledge about Major Retail Centers is also essential for understanding and planning urban growth, zoning existing built-up areas, and renewing older parts of the city.

The findings presented here are largely derived from analyses made from maps. First, the areal pattern of retail sales in MRC's was plotted for 1963. Second, the composition of retail trade in individual MRC's was established by dividing total retail sales into three categories, convenience goods, shopping goods, and specialized goods,⁷ and plotting the areal distribution of each. The next step was to find out how many different classes of MRC's were present in the Los Angeles area in 1963. The first class was determined arbitrarily as the six Central Business Districts were

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Budget, *Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964). The two excluded centers are Lancaster and Palmdale, separated both by distance and terrain from the Los Angeles agglomeration.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 2.

⁶ U.S. Bureau of Census, 1963, *op. cit.*, p. 2. The Census Bureau refers to retail concentration exclusive of CBD's as "secondary shopping centers." The term larger shopping center was substituted in this paper inasmuch as the term "secondary shopping center" will be used in a later section of this paper with a meaning different from that of the Census Bureau definition.

⁷ Convenience goods include items and services that are purchased frequently and usually at regular intervals. For the most part they represent the necessities of life

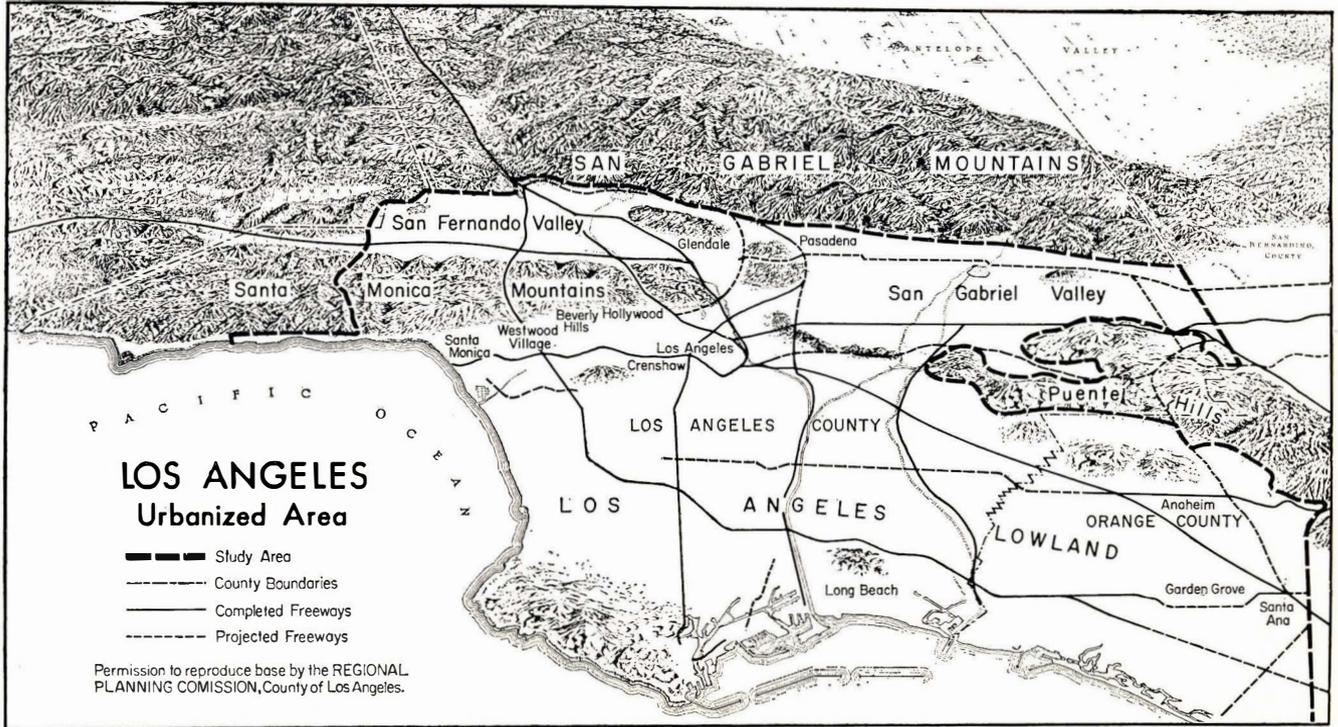


Figure 1. The Los Angeles Agglomeration, plus places and features mentioned in the text.

designated as one distinct group because of their paramount position in the study area's retail structure, and because of the peculiarity of their traditional and space consuming morphology. The remaining larger shopping centers, seventy-four in number, were divided into broad classes of "Major" and "Secondary". A determination based on an examination of two factors, volume of retail sales and aspects of morphology.⁸ On a series of scatter diagrams total volume of retail sales for each center was plotted against sales for each center recorded under the convenience, shopping, and specialized goods categories.⁹ Visual inspection of these diagrams revealed a positive relationship between total retail sales and total shopping goods sales (Figure 2).¹⁰ Moreover, in the total sales-shopping goods sales diagram a "break" appeared between approximately the \$9,000,000 and \$15,000,000 shopping goods levels, with clusters of centers lying above and below those values. An arbitrary division of the centers was made at \$10,000,000 shopping goods sales, and thus Major and Secondary status was determined on the basis of whether a center was above or below \$10,000,000 shopping goods sales for 1963. Forty-four centers lay above this value and were classed as Major and the remaining thirty centers were classed as Secondary.

Next, the Major Retail centers were studied in the field with three purposes in mind: (1) to visually classify each larger shopping center as Major or Secondary on the basis of their general focality and physical impressiveness; (2) to classify the centers on the basis of selected morphological aspects, that is, whether planned or unplanned, string of compact; and (3) to compile field notes on each center and its immediate environs.

The Major-Secondary classification determined in the field was then matched with those same categories based on the relationship between total retail sales and total shopping goods sales. Correspondence between the two classifications was so high that all but three of the seventy-four larger shopping centers were either Major in both instances or Secondary

and can be found close at hand in great selection and at competitive prices. Shopping goods are those items about which the customer is more selective and buys at infrequent and irregular intervals. Such goods are usually higher priced than convenience items, they are found at fewer locations, selection is limited, and they are generally purchased in a discriminating manner. "Specialized goods" is a term substituted for the Census Bureau category of "all other stores," an awkward title for a sub-classification of retail trade. Specialized goods, with the exception of gasoline service again excepting gasoline stations, these products are found at fewer locations than convenience goods and are generally purchased on a comparative basis. For a complete list of the types of establishments included under the convenience, shopping, and specialized goods categories see, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963, *op. cit.*, Appendix A.

⁸ In this instance, morphology refers to the nature and pattern of parking facilities, the overall shape of the retail center, and to whether a center is planned or unplanned.

⁹ Exclusive of Central Business Districts and omitting those centers affected by the disclosure rules of the Census Bureau.

¹⁰ A partial explanation for the total sales-shopping goods sales relationship is that department stores usually generate more business in individual centers than do convenience goods or specialized goods outlets, and since the Census Bureau states that a major criterion for delimiting its MRC is the presence of a department store or general merchandise store, shopping goods sales account for a large share of total MRC sales literally by definition. U.S. Bureau of Census, 1963, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

in both. The three non-conforming centers focused on "discount" stores,¹¹ a fact that masked their high retail sales. Field work also revealed that refinement of the Major and Secondary classification on the basis of morphological aspects was possible. Thus, the centers were further subdivided on the basis of whether they were planned or unplanned, string or compact.¹² The above procedure resulted in a division of the seventy-four

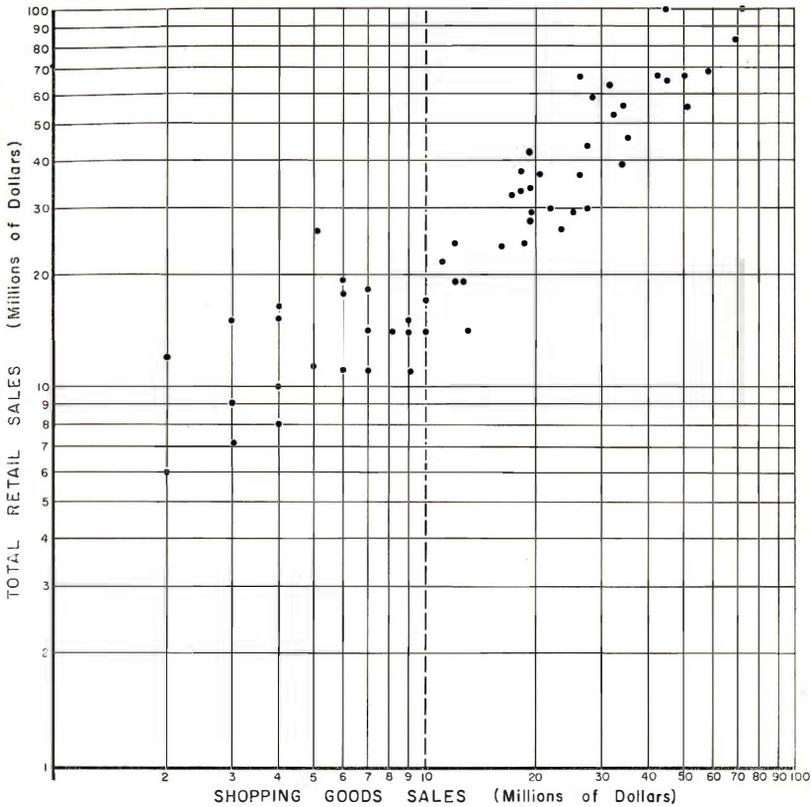


Figure 2. The relationship between total sales and shopping goods sales in seventy-four larger shopping centers. Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-54 (Washington D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965); U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-7 (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965).

¹¹ The "discount" department store is primarily a post-1950 development. As with department stores, this retail type is characterized by the sale of a wide variety of items, but at prices designed to be competitive with the department store and other retail stores specializing in such items as furniture and appliances. Price discounting is possible through low overhead costs and high sales volume.

¹² All retail concentrations have been subject to a certain amount of "planning," but the term "planned" has a more limited definition in this paper, referring to sites that (1) were envisioned as retail centers and accordingly set aside for future construction; (2) have planned store locations, store mix, and overall architecture, and (3) that have adequate parking supplied within the planned unit. All other retail concentrations were considered to be "unplanned".

larger shopping centers into six distinct classes in addition to the Central Business Districts (Table 1).

Each class of center was then plotted on maps and their areal patterns analyzed.¹³ Next, the composition and volume of retail trade for each class of center was analyzed and compared on the basis of average establishment profiles constructed for each class of center. The final part of this study dealt with changes in the structure of MRC's in the study area between 1958 and 1963. Change was measured in terms of (1) percentage contribution to overall retail trade conducted in the study area; (2) number and areal arrangement of each class of center; (3) areal arrangement of retail sales, and (4) composition of trade in each class of center.

CLASSIFICATION OF MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS	
Class of Center	Number
Central Business District	6
Major Planned-Compact	20
Major Planned-String*	0
Major Unplanned-Compact	12
Major Unplanned-String	12
Secondary Planned-Compact	14
Secondary Planned-String*	1
Secondary Unplanned-Compact	3
Secondary Unplanned-String	12
Total	80

*Dropped from the classification (see footnote 13.) Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, *Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Los Angeles — Long Beach, California, SMSA BC63-MRC-54*, and *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim — Santa Ana — Garden Grove, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-7* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1965).

Table 1

FINDINGS

RETAIL ACTIVITY IN THE STUDY AREA

Total retail trade generated in the study area in 1963 was approximately twelve billion dollars, ranking it second in the United States to the New York SMSA.¹⁴ The eighty Major Retail Centers contributed retail sales totaling \$3,079,981,000, or 26 percent of the retail trade conducted in the Los Angeles area.¹⁵ Such data reveal that the bulk of retail trade

¹³ No Major Planned-String center and only one Secondary Planned-String center was recognized in the study area. Because of the difficulties (and dangers) in generalizing from one case, this latter classification was dropped from consideration.

¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, New York, N. Y. SMSA, BC63-MRC-69* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 5.

¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-54* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 24-56; and, U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-7* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 13-17.

took place in centers that were neither recognized CBD's nor retail nuclei featuring one or more general merchandise or department stores. The Los Angeles agglomeration is not unique in the percentage of retail trade contributed by Major Retail Centers; for example, their contribution in New York City was 29 percent; in Chicago, 26 percent; and in Philadelphia, 21 percent.¹⁶

THE AREAL ARRANGEMENT OF SALES IN MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS

The location of Major Retail Centers and the magnitude of trade for each center in 1963 is illustrated by Figure 3.¹⁷ In accordance with the areal frequency of MRC's, retail sales are greatest in the central portion of the study area, with outstanding contributions made by the six Central Business Districts of Los Angeles, Glendale, Pasadena, Long Beach, Anaheim, and Santa Ana. Central Business District dominance is further shown by the Los Angeles CBD's position as the largest single generator of retail trade, and by the fact that total sales for an individual larger shopping center extending westward from downtown Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean; namely, the centers of Hollywood, Crenshaw, Beverly Hills, Westwood Village, and Santa Monica. The San Fernando Valley is another important retail area, with the older and longer established east valley overshadowing other sections. The west San Gabriel Valley dominates its portion of the study area, as does Long Beach's CBD the south coast. Between these last two areas is located a concentration of larger shopping centers in northern Orange County. The overriding areal pattern is one of dispersed clusters composed of centers of various sizes.

THE COMPOSITION OF RETAIL TRADE IN INDIVIDUAL MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS

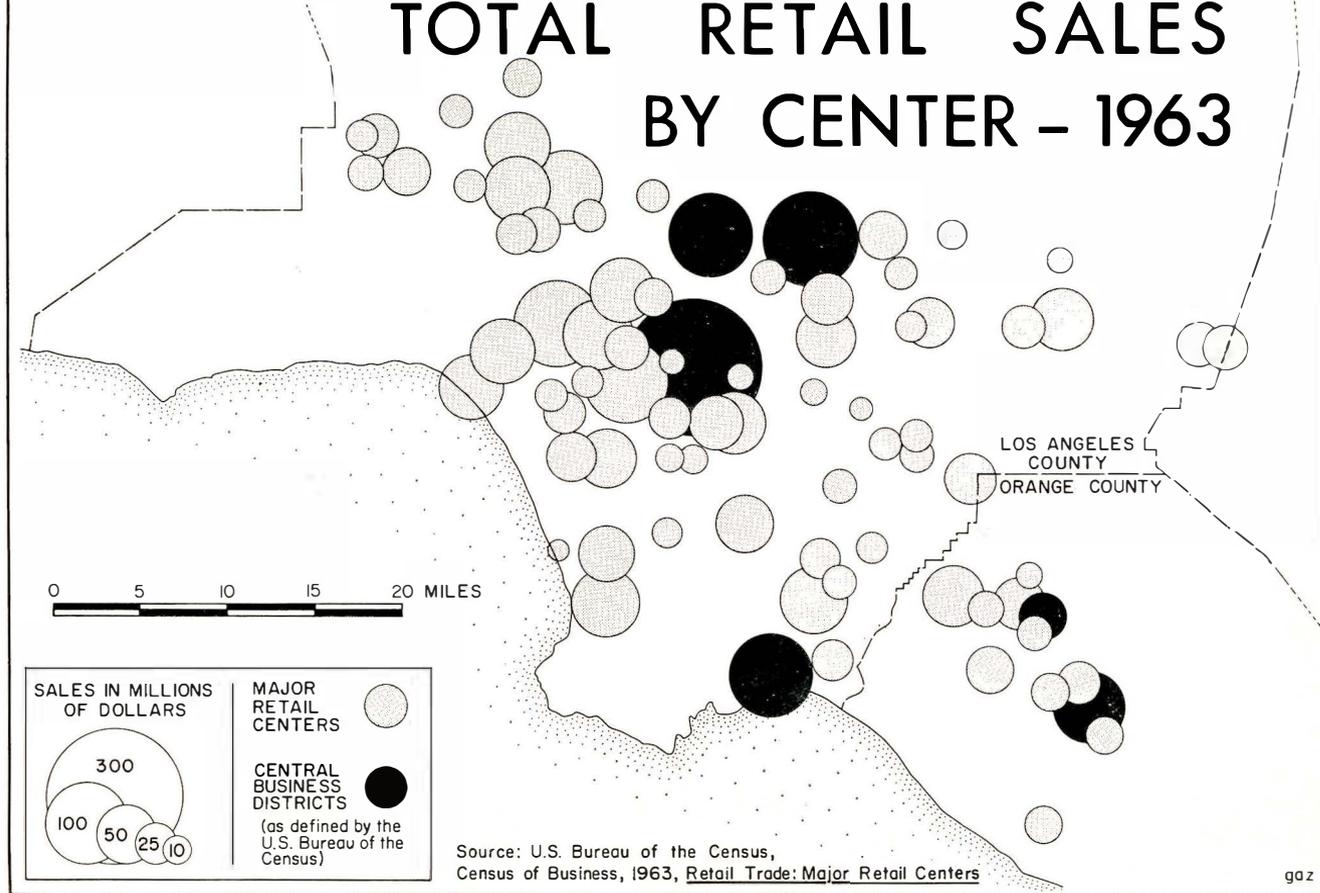
Another areal aspect of retail trade is revealed by examining the kinds of trade conducted within each center; that is, by dividing total retail activity into three categories; convenience goods, shopping goods, and specialized goods. The volume of trade generated by Major Retail Centers in each of the three categories is illustrated in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

Some economists assert that convenience goods retailing is characterized by monopolistic competition, and that under such circumstances location competition becomes the dominant element in determining the

¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census (footnote 14), *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9, 23-45; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers Chicago, Ill.* SMSA, BC63-MRC-20 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 4, 9-45; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Philadelphia, Pa., N.J.*, SMSA, BC63-MRC-77 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 6-7, 14-26.

¹⁷ Several shopping centers enumerated in the 1958 Census Bureau Major Retail Center Bulletin for Los Angeles were not designated for 1963; that is, the general merchandise or department store was no longer part of the center. These sites were checked in the field, and in one case (Reseda, in the San Fernando Valley) an error in the Census data was found. In the case of Reseda, a department store was present in 1963. In order to include this center and thus complete the retail universe for 1963, the following procedure was used. The present (1966) retail store pattern was assumed to be similar to that of 1963, and knowing the sales for each retail function in 1958, and also knowing the number of functions for 1963, the 1958 sales per function was estimated for 1963. Thus, if five general merchandise-apparel stores generated one million dollars in sales in 1958, then ten such stores in 1963 were estimated to produce two million dollars in sales.

TOTAL RETAIL SALES BY CENTER - 1963



8

gaz

Figure 3

areal pattern of convenience outlets.¹⁸ Shopping goods retailing, by comparison, appears to be governed by circumstances under which people will shop around among competitive outlets. In spatial terms this suggests that, on the one hand, distance is crucial in locating convenience goods stores, with the result that their areal pattern should be one of uniformity. On the other hand, price competition is more critical than distance in locating shopping goods outlets and the result is not a uniform distribution but an overall pattern composed of clusters of outlets. It would appear, however, that for at least three reasons the above principles are less pertinent today than in the past; first, because of the mixing of convenience and shopping goods in stores located in modern planned shopping centers; second, because of the rise of discount department and drug stores; and third, because corporate chain decisions introduce peculiar locational patterns.¹⁹

When volume of trade in these three broad categories is examined cartographically, it appears that convenience goods sales are most ubiquitous in terms of accounting for a consistent percentage of retail trade in every Major Retail Center (Figure 4). However, convenience goods are the dominant contributor of sales in only nine cases.²⁰ Shopping goods trade is significant in CBD's and larger shopping centers alike, and is the principal sales contributor in the majority of cases. A comparison of Figures 3 and 5 reveals a strong relationship between centers that rank high in total retail sales and those that rank high in shopping goods sales. This is especially true of MRC's located south of the Los Angeles CBD, in the San Gabriel Valley, and in northern Orange County. By the same token, the meshing and lack of differentiation of the proportional circles in Figure 5 indicates the dominance of shopping goods relative to convenience and specialized goods in MRC's throughout the study area. (Compare Figure 5 with Figures 4 and 6).

The specialized goods group is literally a "Catchall,"²¹ and in the majority of Major Retail Centers specialized goods outlets are small sales contributors (Figure 6). They are strongest in individual CBD's, and surprisingly, dominate the Central Business Districts of Anaheim and Santa Ana. This dominance is traceable to the prominence of automobile sales, a condition not repeated in the other CBD's.²² Such significance might be related to the rapid population increase in northern Orange

¹⁸ S. B. Cohen and G. K. Lewis, "Form and Function in the Geography of Retailing," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 43 (1967), p. 4.

¹⁹ Cohen and Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

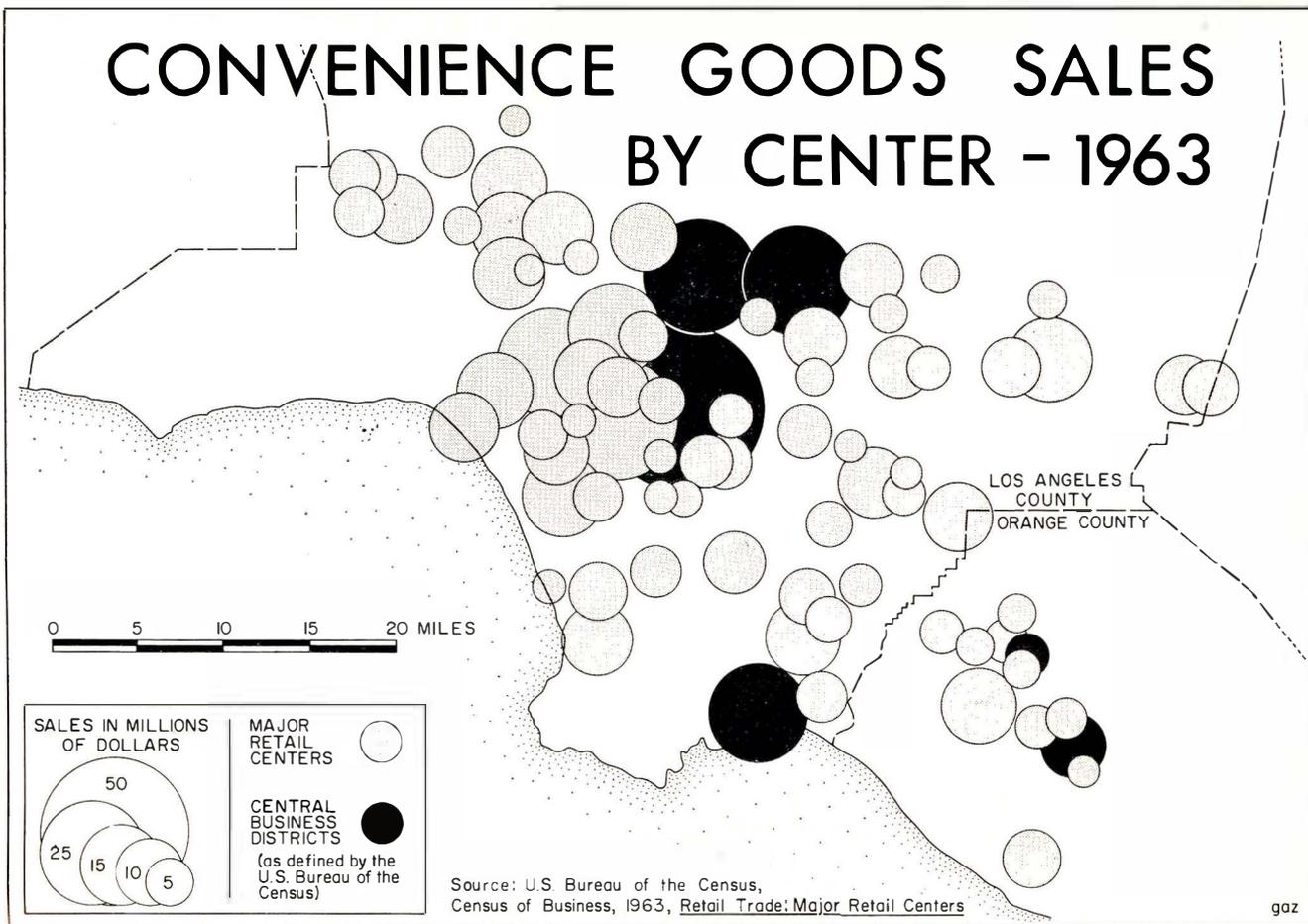
²⁰ Data for retail trade sub-groupings were frequently omitted for individual shopping centers because of the Census Bureau disclosure policy. The following method was used to interpolate sales figures for those centers. Sales figures for centers unaffected by the disclosure rule were used to construct an average shopping center sales profile for each subdivision of convenience, shopping, and specialized goods. The percentage contribution of each subdivision of this profile was then applied to the total sales for the undisclosed center and an "average" figure derived for the convenience, shopping, and specialized goods sales of that center.

²¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers*, *op. cit.*, Appendix A.

²² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California, SMSA*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7, 10-12.

CONVENIENCE GOODS SALES BY CENTER - 1963

10

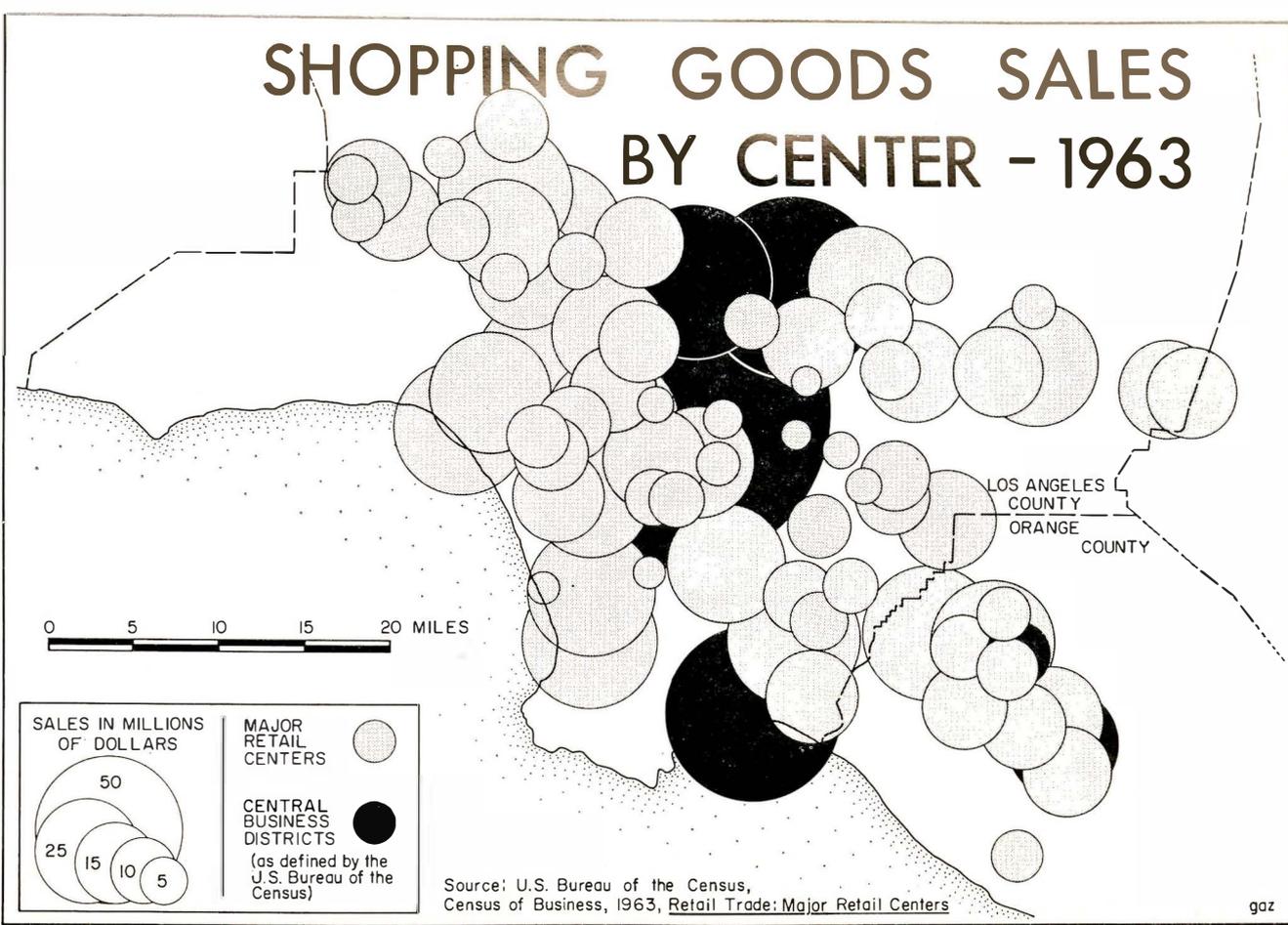


gaz

Figure 4

SHOPPING GOODS SALES BY CENTER - 1963

11



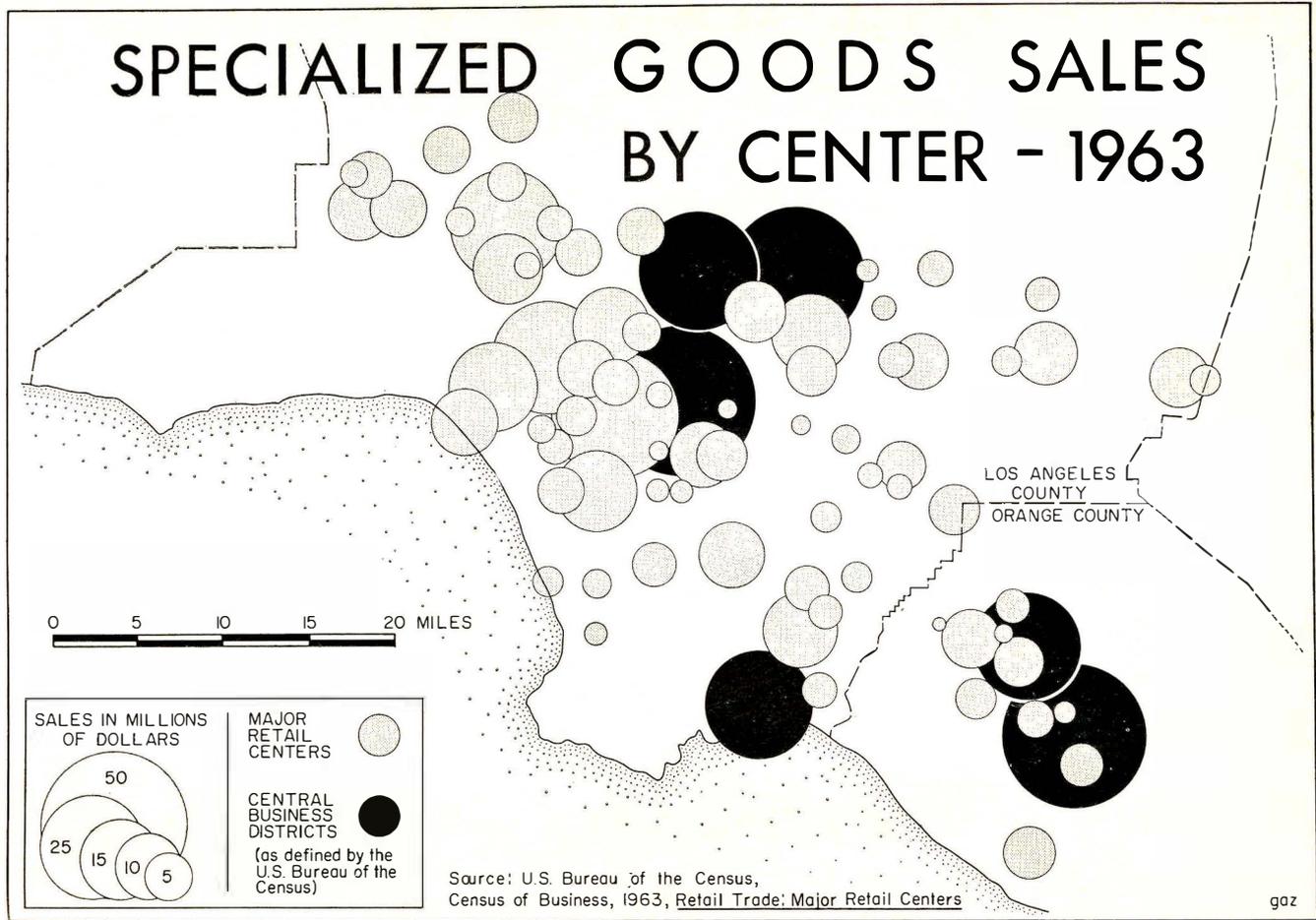
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers

gaz

Figure 5

SPECIALIZED GOODS SALES BY CENTER - 1963

12



gaz

Figure 6

County, and the Anaheim and Santa Ana CBD's, being located in the middle of this expansion, include space consuming functions such as automobile sales rooms and lots which are excluded from the core areas of older CBD's elsewhere in the study area.

In addition to the general findings presented above, at least one other fact is revealed; namely, that despite a wide range in the volume of trade conducted in individual centers, there is a marked consistency in retail mix. Major Retail Centers in the Los Angeles area do not fall into a neat three-part classification, each part of which is dominated by either convenience, shopping, or specialized goods. "One stop" customer shopping demands have stimulated cross-shopping in which higher-order goods (shopping goods) are brought into association with lower-order goods (convenience goods) in the same shopping centers, and even in the same stores.²³ Appropriately, Vance has stated that "a more mobile population with a greater influence of mass media for news and entertainment has shown an increasingly standardized taste in goods bought."²⁴ The fact that centers with similar retail mixes are of different sizes has also been recognized by Cohen and Lewis.²⁵

AREAL ARRANGEMENT OF EACH CLASS OF CENTER

(See Table 1)

Of the six Central Business Districts, three are centrally located in the study area, while the others are concentrated in the southeastern portion (Figure 7). The Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Glendale CBD's are surrounded by unplanned-string and unplanned-compact shopping centers, while the Long Beach, Anaheim, and Santa Ana Districts are ringed with planned centers of the compact type. This difference is certainly associated with the long established nature of residential development around central Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Glendale, in contrast with the recency of massive urban growth in the vicinity of Long Beach, Anaheim and Santa Ana.

Major Planned-Compact centers form the most numerous type of retail concentration, and the majority of these are newly constructed and have developed in association with suburbanization. Accordingly, they are located at the periphery of the continuously built-up area at points accessible to major freeways. The greatest single concentration is in the southeast and is associated with recent population growth in Orange County.

Major Unplanned-Compact and Major Unplanned-String centers are primarily older centers, and are located between the peripheral ring of Major Planned-Compact centers and the older Central Business Districts. These centers tend to encircle downtown Los Angeles, to form a distinct corridor to the west, to lie on important surface streets, and to have immediate proximity to freeways. Where these centers do exist in outlying sections they usually form business cores in older established towns. With

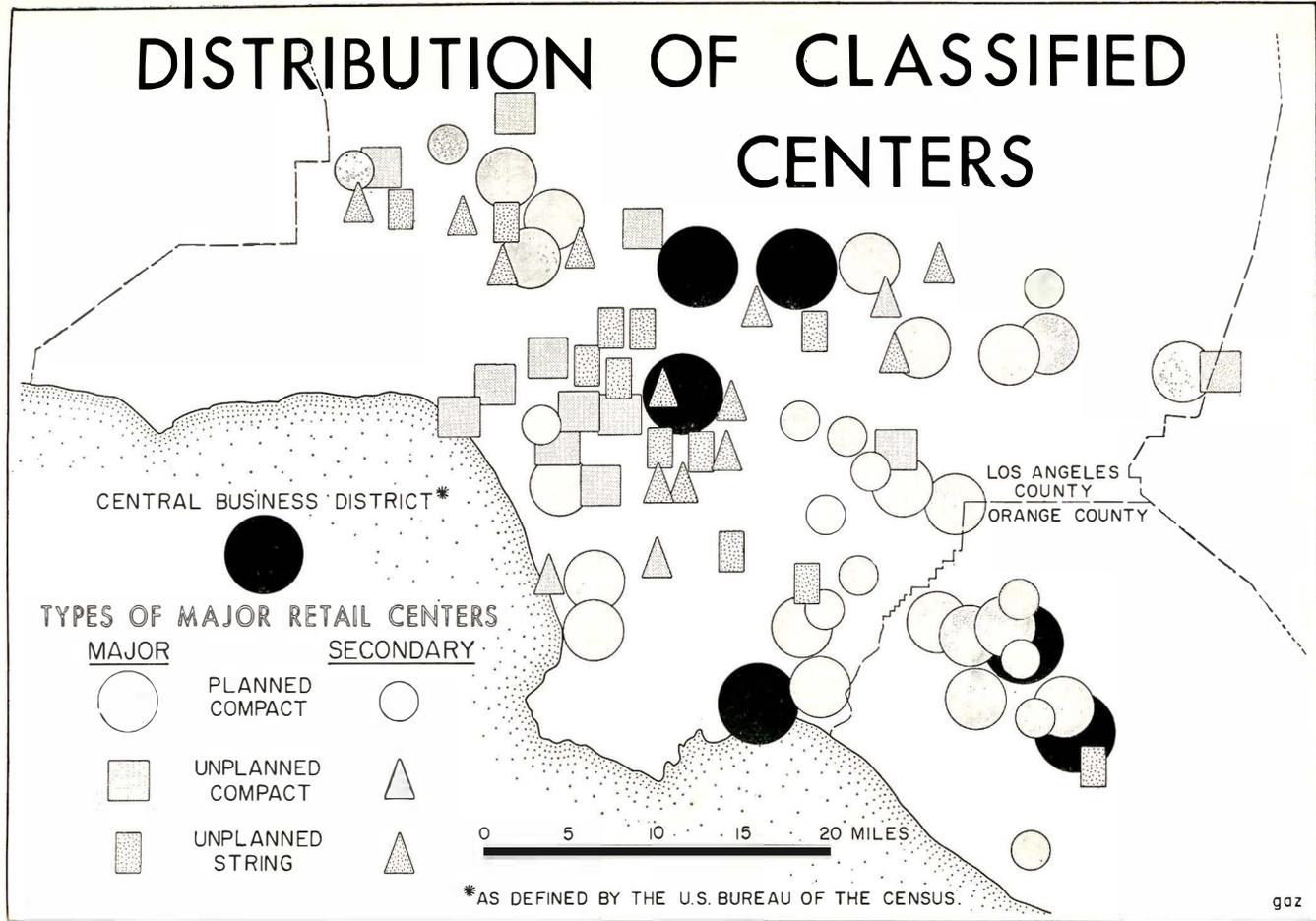
²³ Cohen and Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.

²⁴ J. E. Vance, "Emerging Patterns of Commercial Structure in American Cities," *Proceedings of the IGU Symposium in Urban Geography*, K. Norborg (Ed.), (Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerups Publishers, 1962), p. 486.

²⁵ Cohen and Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.

DISTRIBUTION OF CLASSIFIED CENTERS

14



gaz

Figure 7

the exception of west Los Angeles, the market areas of the unplanned and older concentrations are being penetrated by newer, planned, shopping complexes.

Secondary Planned-Compact centers, like their Major Planned counterparts, are new. They have developed both as suburban adjuncts to already established shopping centers, and as the "first stage" of retail trade in some newly suburbanized areas. Secondary Planned-Compact centers tend to duplicate the overall pattern formed by Major Planned-Compact centers in that they are located near the periphery of the built-up area, and have their greatest concentration in the southeast. Many Secondary Planned-Compact centers are located where they can share the markets of existing Major Planned-Compact centers, so although they are small at present, most will probably attain Major status.

Secondary Unplanned-String and Secondary Unplanned-Compact centers tend to locate between the Los Angeles CBD and the peripheral ring of Major Planned and Major Unplanned centers. Secondary Unplanned-String centers are concentrated around downtown Los Angeles, in the eastern section of the San Fernando Valley, and in the western part of the San Gabriel Valley, areas that have been built-up for decades. Secondary Unplanned-Compact centers are fewer in number than Secondary Unplanned-String centers, and are more scattered areally. Commercial string developments tend to be contiguous to Major Planned and Major Unplanned centers. Some achieve MRC status and some do not; also, some were present before the Major Planned-Compact centers were established, and some developed along with and after planned centers were built. In any case, almost every CBD and Major center in the study area has at least one unplanned string complex associated with it.

It has been established that the overall location pattern formed by Major Retail Centers in the Los Angeles area is one of dispersed clusters, each of which is comprised of several centers of various types and sizes with similar sales mixes. This matter of clustering can be at least partially explained by the nature of competition between shopping goods outlets, the pattern of highways, and the political composition of the study area. All MRC's have a strong shopping goods component, and since shopping goods retailing is held to be active (as opposed to monopolistic) competition, because of the great variation in price and variety of shopping goods, people want to shop around in a restricted area for the best price.²⁶ In a spatial sense this calls for a clustering of competing Major Retail Centers. There are at least four more factors reinforcing such a pattern. First, large shopping goods outlets draw numerous related and dependent special purpose shops around them. Second, major shopping goods stores do not always allow a chief competitor to locate in the same planned shopping center. Third, large supermarkets are increasingly found in larger shopping centers and serve as secondary traffic generators; this is especially the case at the urban fringe. And, fourth, unplanned string centers tend to associate areally with planned shopping centers.

Tied in with the nature of competition for shopping goods is the fact that freeways, when considered as land restricting phenomena, create points

²⁶ Cohen and Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

of maximum accessibility, so simple competition for such points within suburban markets causes large shopping outlets, and their associated stores to cluster along, and at key intersections of important radials. This pattern is also supported by the restrictive nature of commercial zoning in built-up areas.

Another partial explanation of the clustered pattern stems from the political composition of the study area. In 1966, Los Angeles and Orange Counties contained some 100 independent cities and numerous others that were once independent but have been annexed by the city of Los Angeles. Regarding political fragmentation, it has been observed that:

Retail distribution responds to political organization in that political multiplicity encourages greater numbers and spread of shopping areas The tangible pressures of political forces, responding to the needs of towns to help mould their physical cores by developing retail areas, and to enhance their tax and parking bases, and intangible pressures, stemming from town pride and town identity, continue to influence retail distribution . . .²⁷

Still another factor that helps explain clusters of centers is the tendency of location experts to locate some new centers next to older centers.

ESTABLISHMENT PROFILES FOR EACH CLASS OF CENTER

Individual Central Business Districts possess a greater number of establishments than the other classes of centers (Figure 8). In CBD's the number of stores is equally divided between convenience goods, shopping goods, and specialized goods outlets, and each group has one store type that is far more numerous than any other in its category. Eating places dominate the convenience category, apparel the shopping category, and "other" stores are most numerous in the specialized goods category.

In the Major Planned-Compact centers over one-half of the stores are in the shopping goods category, with only 26 percent and 20 percent in the specialized goods and convenience categories, respectively. By comparison with other types of centers, Major Planned concentrations include fewer stores and 8 percent general merchandise stores; this represents twice the percentage accounted for by these stores in the average Central Business District. The establishment profile for the Secondary Planned-Compact center is similar to that of the Major Unplanned centers.

Major Unplanned-Compact centers and Major Unplanned-String centers are analyzed together because of their similar establishment profiles. Shopping goods outlets account for 44 percent of the stores in each class, specialized function shops for roughly 30 percent, and convenience goods stores approximately 25 percent. The similarity between these two classes of unplanned centers extends to the sub-divisions within each category, an aspect elaborated in the percentage breakdown shown in Figure 8.

Like the Major Unplanned centers, Secondary Unplanned-Compact and Secondary Unplanned-String centers are considered together because of their similar establishment profiles. Shopping goods outlets account for 42 percent of the stores and dominate sales in both types of centers. Spe-

²⁷ Cohen and Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STORES IN THE CLASSIFIED MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS

17

KEY

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| F — Food Stores | Ms — Miscellaneous General Merchandise Stores |
| E — Eating Places | A — Apparel Stores |
| D — Drinking Places | Fu — Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores |
| Dr — Drug Stores | |
| <hr/> | |
| G — General Merchandise Stores | Lm — Lumber, Hardware, Farm Equipment Stores |
| Dp — Department Stores | Au — Automotive Sales |
| L — Limited Price Variety Stores | Gs — Gasoline Stations |
| | O — Other Stores |

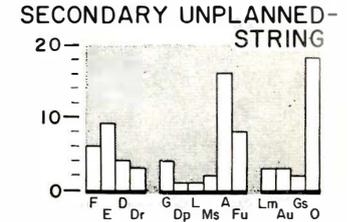
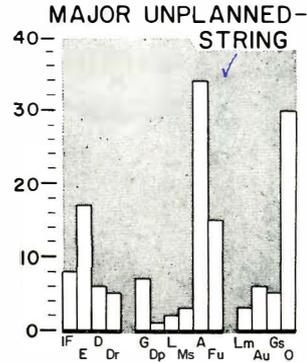
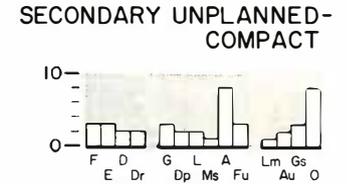
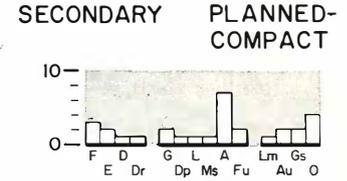
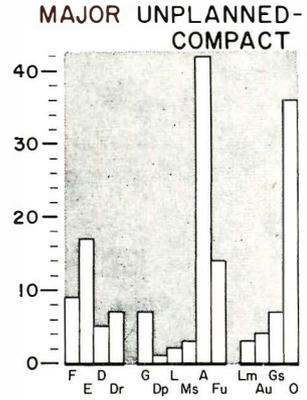
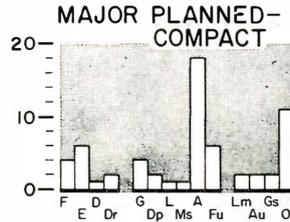
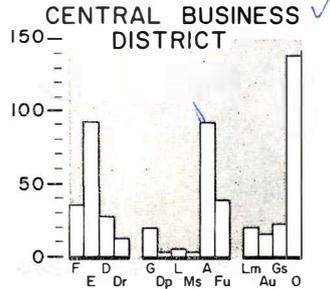


Figure 8. Source: Same as Fig. 2.

cialized goods stores are next at 31 percent, and convenience goods are fewest at 27 percent. Although the overall profiles are nearly identical, they differ somewhat in composition; for example, general merchandise stores, department stores, and variety stores are considerably more significant in the Secondary Unplanned-Compact centers.

Two findings emerge from this part of the study. First, in the Central Business Districts establishments are divided equally between convenience, shopping, and specialized outlets, giving the Districts a greater balance than any other class of MRC. Second, the six classes of larger shopping centers are all dominated by shopping goods stores, and in every class such establishments account for more than 40 percent of the stores. It can be inferred, therefore, that in all of the larger shopping centers the stores attracting the largest number of shoppers are department stores, and that the stores attracting the second and third highest number of trips are limited price variety, miscellaneous general merchandise, apparel, and furniture stores.²⁸

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS

The final objective of this study was to identify changes in the structure of retail trade in the study area between 1958 and 1963. Data for these time periods were comparable;²⁹ however, in order to proceed with an examination of change, it was necessary to organize the Major Retail Centers present in 1958 in accordance with the classification developed for 1963.

The six Central Business Districts enumerated in 1963 were recognized by the Census Bureau as well in 1958, and were classed as such for that year.³⁰ The remaining larger shopping centers present in 1958 were divided, as in 1963, into Major and Secondary classes depending on whether an individual center was above or below \$10,000,000 shopping goods sales in 1958. Also, if a center was classed as planned in 1963, and the center was present in 1958, it was assumed to have been planned at this earlier time.³¹ The same assumption was applied to centers that were unplanned in 1963; they were classed as unplanned in 1953. The determination of whether a center was compact or string in 1958 was handled by making a sketch map of each larger shopping center from the descriptions given in the 1958 Census of Business, and comparing each map with the sketch maps made for each center from the descriptions given in the 1963 Census of Business.³²

²⁸ These inferences are supported by findings presented in G. W. Fairnan, T. Inuzka, and J. W. McBride, *Preliminary Results of the 1961 Shopping study* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Regional Transportation Study, 1962), pp. 18-21.

²⁹ Frequently, however, the 1958 retail center boundaries were enlarged in 1963. The extent of enlargement can be determined by comparing the areal descriptions of individual MRC's given in the 1958 Census of Business with those given for the same centers in the 1963 Census of Business.

³⁰ The Anaheim and Santa Ana Central Business Districts were not formally recognized until 1963. However, by reconstructing these centers for 1958, the Census Bureau conferred *de facto* status. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California*, SMSA, *op. cit.*

³¹ This distinction was aided by the 1958 Census of Business in which 13 MRC's were designated as "planned".

³² See footnote 29.

CHANGE IN RETAIL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

In 1958 the total volume of retail trade generated in the study area was approximately nine billion dollars, three billion less than in 1963.³³ There were forty-three MRC's in 1958 and they contributed 27 percent, or \$2,368,522,000 of the retail trade conducted in the study area. So although the number of MRC's increased between 1958 and 1963 from forty-three to eighty, and overall MRC sales increased from \$2,368,522,000 to \$3,079,981,000, the percentage contribution of MRC's to total retail trade dropped from 27 percent to 26 percent. This means that an increasing percentage of total retail trade is being conducted in retail establishments located neither in recognized CBD's nor in nucleations which include one or more general merchandise or department stores. One explanation for this situation in the Los Angeles agglomeration lies in the proliferation of a recently emergent form of retail center. These centers are planned in that they have architectural uniformity and abundant off-street parking. However, the pivotal store and major traffic generator is not a general merchandise or department store but a large super-market. Also, and this point must be emphasized, in these centers small convenience, shopping, and specialized goods stores of all types cluster around large super-markets in the same manner that such shops cluster around department stores in traditional unplanned and planned retail centers. Such new "department store-less" centers provide a high degree of convenience for automobile oriented shoppers; for example, abundant easy parking, gasoline stations adjacent to parking lots, and by remaining open all day Sunday and approximately four and one-half hours beyond the normal closing time of 5:00 to 5:30 on weekdays. A recent study has shown that the increase of business hours on weekdays from eight to twelve results in approximately 60 percent more vehicles entering a given center. Also, the increase in potential customers is significant because the average car occupancy is approximately 10 percent higher in the evening hours than during the day.³⁴ It should be noted, however, that all larger shopping centers are increasing the number of evenings per week that they remain open. The number of super-market oriented shopping centers is increasing rapidly in the Los Angeles area as increased construction of apartment houses drives population densities upward.³⁵

CHANGE IN THE NUMBER AND AREAL ARRANGEMENT OF EACH CLASS OF CENTER

Numerical change in the six classes of Major Retail Centers between 1958 and 1963 is shown in Table 2. Thirty-six centers were added.³⁶ How-

³³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Business, 1958, Vol. VII, Central Business District Report, *Los Angeles-Long Beach, California*, Area-BC58-CBD-55 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 15.

³⁴ Fairman, Inuzka, and McBride, *op. cit.*, Introduction and pp. 1-12.

³⁵ See and compare the following maps for Los Angeles and Orange Counties produced by the Marketing Research Department of the *Los Angeles Times*: Selected Retailers: 1962; Chain Grocery Stores: 1962; Department, General and Variety Stores and Selected General Merchandise Stores: 1964-1965 (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Company).

ever, only four centers were upgraded from Secondary to Major status; that is, only four centers that were recognized as MRC's in 1958 but totaled less than \$10,000,000 shopping goods sales in that year rose above that value in 1963. Three of these graduated from Secondary Planned Centers in 1958 to Major Planned-Compact in 1963, and one from a Secondary Unplanned center to a Major Unplanned center. Except for the Central Business Districts, every class of center experienced an absolute numerical increase, with the greatest increase in the Major Planned-Compact centers. In fact, if the "planned" centers are considered as one group, they account for over 50 percent of the total increase in the number of MRC's.

**CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF CENTERS IN EACH CLASS OF
MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS BETWEEN 1958 AND 1963**

Type of Center	Number— 1958	Change— 1963
Central Business District	6	0
Major Planned—Compact	8	+15 ¹
Major Unplanned—Compact	6	+ 7 ²
Major Unplanned—String	9	+ 3
Secondary Planned—Compact	7	+ 7
Secondary Unplanned—Compact	1	+ 2
Secondary Unplanned—String	6	+ 6

¹Includes three Secondary Planned—Compact centers in 1958. ²Includes one Secondary Unplanned—Compact center in 1958. Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-54* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965); U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Business, 1963 *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California, SMSA, BC63-MRC-7* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965); U.S. Bureau of Census, U.S. Census of Business, 1958, Vol. 7, *Central Business District Report, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, Area-BC58-CBD55* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961); and field survey conducted during 1965-1966.

Table 2

Most new centers are located at the urban fringe in sections that are undergoing rapid suburbanization (Figure 9). The peripheral location, of course, reflects the existing and expected population, consistent highway improvement, land cost, and difficulty of assembling large tracts of land in built-up areas, and the Southern Californian's optimistic view of future possibilities. More fundamentally, however, this increase in planned centers reflects the reality that the arrangement of business districts in an unplanned-compact or unplanned-string fashion, as in the past, is no longer

³⁶ U.S. Bureau of Census, U.S. Census of Business, 1958, Vol. VII, *Central Business District Report, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, op. cit.*, pp. 4, 28-49; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, SMSA, op. cit.*, pp. 4, 24-56, and, U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Business, 1963, *Retail Trade: Major Retail Centers, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California, SMSA, op. cit.*, pp. 2, 13-17.

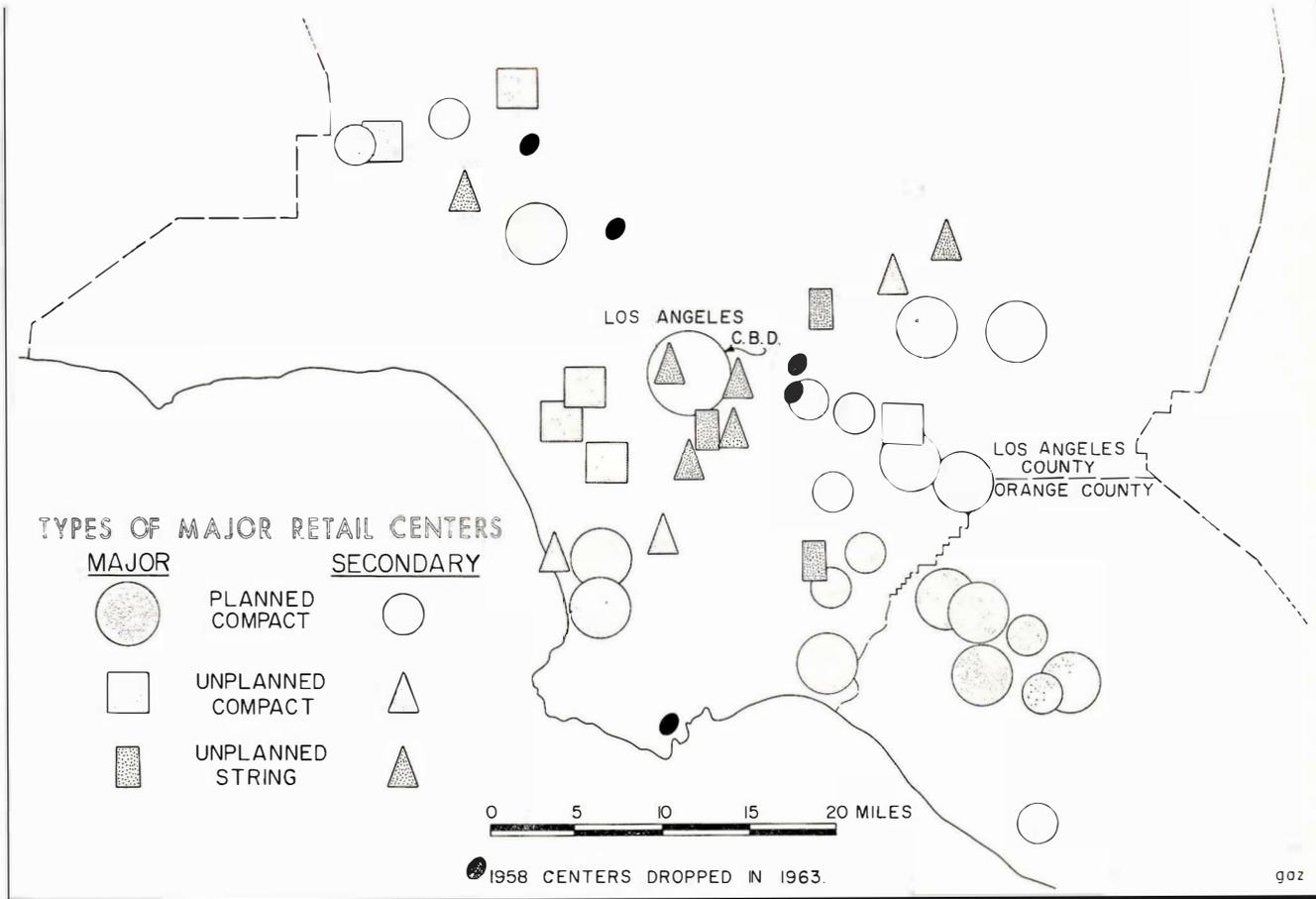


Figure 9. Major Retail Centers gained and lost between 1958 and 1963. The Los Angeles CBD is shown for locational reference. Source: Same as Table 2, plus field survey conducted during 1965-1966.

compatible with the spatial needs of convenient, self-service operations, which require large stores and vast parking areas.³⁷

All parts of the study area recorded some increase in number of centers, but the section south and east of the Los Angeles CBD was the principal area of growth. Five concentrations of retail establishments recognized as MRC's by the Census Bureau in 1958 were dropped in the 1963 survey. Field work and interviews revealed that the general merchandise or department store was no longer present in the deleted centers in 1963.

CHANGES IN THE AREAL ARRANGEMENT OF RETAIL SALES

Central Business Districts were the principal generators of retail sales in 1958 (Table 3), but in 1963, after experiencing nearly a 15 percent sales decrease, they were supplanted by the Major Planned-Compact centers. In particular, the Los Angeles Central Business District declined as a retail trade center. Concerning this decline and the associated suburbanization of retail trade, the Research Division of the Security First National Bank of Los Angeles observed in 1964, that:

The trend is most dramatically illustrated by the changing pattern of department store sales in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. A trend towards suburbanization of department store sales has been evident for fully 30 years and has been particularly marked during the past 17 years. Department store sales in downtown Los Angeles reached a peak in the final months of 1946. Since 1954, they have held about level in dollar terms. On the other hand, for the two-county area as a whole, department store sales have moved sharply upward. In 1964, department stores in downtown Los Angeles accounted for approximately half the total department store sales in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Last year, their share was only about one-eighth. Downtown Los Angeles currently has four major department store locations, compared with 55 (with several more planned) in the balance of Los Angeles and Orange counties.³⁸

Anaheim and Santa Ana CBD sales, while proportionately less than in 1958, fared much better than the older CBD's in Los Angeles and Long Beach. The same can be said for Pasadena and Glendale, although to a lesser degree. The greatest increase in percentage contribution was in the Major Planned-Compact class. A basic reason, undoubtedly, was the role played by the department store. For example, in 1958 eleven Major Planned-Compact centers had fifteen department stores; in 1963, twenty such centers included forty department stores for an average of two per center. The remaining Major classes declined in relative standing, but were still significant retail contributors. By 1963, the three Major classes accounted for nearly two-thirds of all Major Retail Center sales, while accounting for only 50 percent in 1958.

CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF RETAIL TRADE IN EACH CLASS OF CENTER

A more detailed picture of change in retail sales is gained from Table 4. The Central Business District's changing position is clearly evident in

³⁷ For a discussion of the differing roles of planned and unplanned shopping centers in urban growth, see, B. J. Epstein, "The Trading Function," in J. Gottmann and R. A. Harper (Eds.) *Metropolis on the Move: Geographers Look at Urban Sprawl* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), pp. 93-101.

³⁸ Economic Research Department of the Security First National Bank of Los Angeles, "Suburbanization Trend," *Monthly Summary of Business Conditions in Southern California*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (1964).

**PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION AND CHANGE OF
CONVENIENCE GOODS, SHOPPING GOODS, AND SPECIALIZED GOODS SALES
IN THE CLASSES OF MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS, 1958 - 1963**

	Percentage Contribution and Change								
	Convenience Goods			Shopping Goods			Specialized Goods		
	1958	1963	Change— 1958-1963	1958	1963	Change— 1958-1963	1958	1963	Change— 1958-1963
Central Business District	33.2	22.0	- 11.2	41.3	24.1	- 17.2	45.6	32.9	- 12.7
Los Angeles	15.2	9.0	- 6.2	21.7	11.6	- 10.1	14.3	8.0	- 6.3
Pasadena	4.6	3.9	- 0.7	6.0	4.3	- 1.7	5.0	4.7	- 0.3
Glendale	5.3	4.1	- 1.2	3.9	2.7	- 1.2	8.3	5.2	- 3.1
Long Beach	5.4	3.1	- 2.3	6.1	3.6	- 2.5	7.4	3.4	- 4.0
Anaheim	0.8	0.6	- 0.2	0.8	0.4	- 0.4	5.1	4.1	- 1.0
Santa Ana	1.9	1.3	- 0.6	2.8	1.5	- 1.3	5.5	7.5	+ 2.0
Major Planned—Compact	18.3	25.3	+ 6.8	15.8	33.4	+ 17.6	7.6	10.8	+ 3.2
Major Unplanned—Compact	20.3	18.4	- 1.9	18.1	17.4	- 0.7	22.1	23.8	+ 1.7
Major Unplanned—String	16.1	14.7	- 1.4	17.2	15.6	- 1.6	15.7	17.9	+ 2.2
Secondary Planned—Compact	6.5	10.1	+ 3.6	3.4	5.0	+ 1.6	2.2	5.0	+ 2.8
Secondary Unplanned—Compact	0.2	1.7	+ 1.5	0.7	0.8	+ 0.1	0.9	1.3	+ 0.4
Secondary Unplanned—String	5.4	8.0	+ 2.6	3.5	3.7	+ 0.2	5.9	8.3	+ 2.4

TABLE 4

the loss in sales in almost every category in every District. Especially striking is the relative loss in shopping goods sales. By contrast, the increase in shopping goods sales in the Major Planned-Compact centers is equally out-standing. Also of interest are losses by Major Unplanned centers in convenience goods and specialized goods, especially since all types of Secondary centers gained in these categories. The Secondary centers also recorded increases throughout all sales categories with the Planned-Compact centers featuring the greatest increases. These changes are certainly related to increased cross-shopping in Secondary Planned and Unplanned centers and to the proliferation of, and cross-shopping in, super-markets and discount stores.

**PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION AND CHANGE OF
TOTAL RETAIL SALES IN THE CLASSES OF
MAJOR RETAIL CENTERS,
1958-1963**

Type of Center	Percentage Contribution		Percentage Change—
	1958	1963	1958-63
Central Business District	40.0	25.3	— 14.7
Los Angeles	18.6	10.3	— 8.3
Pasadena	5.5	4.3	— 1.2
Glendale	5.1	3.5	— 1.6
Long Beach	6.1	3.4	— 2.7
Anaheim	1.6	1.2	— 0.4
Santa Ana	3.1	2.6	— 0.5
Major Planned—Compact	14.8	27.4	+ 12.6
Major Unplanned—Compact	19.5	18.8	— 0.7
Major Unplanned—String	10.6	15.8	— 0.8
Secondary Planned—Compact	3.9	6.1	+ 2.2
Secondary Unplanned—Compact	0.6	1.1	+ 0.5
Secondary Unplanned—String	4.6	5.5	+ 0.9

Source: Same as Table 2

Table 3

SUMMARY

The areal pattern of Major Retail Centers in the Los Angeles area is one of dispersed clusters, each of which is composed of several centers of various classes and sizes, all of which have similar sales mixes. This geographical pattern can be at least partially explained by (1) the nature of competition between shopping goods outlets, (2) the pattern of freeways and their main feeder streets, (3) the political composition of the study area, (4) the restrictive nature of commercial zoning in built-up areas; (5) the tendency of location experts to place planned centers close to unplanned centers; and by (6) the areas historical geography.

The eighty MRC's located in the study area in 1963 were grouped in a seven element classification of the basis of value of retail sales and aspects of morphology. Each class of centers displayed a particular locational pattern and a distinct retail sales mix. An analysis of establishment

profiles for each class of center showed that in Central Business Districts establishments were divided equally between convenience, shopping and specialized goods outlets, while the six classes of larger shopping centers were all dominated by shopping goods stores.

A brief examination of changes in the structure of Major Retail Centers between 1958 and 1963 revealed that: (1) both retail sales in MRC's and number of MRC's increased; (2) that the percentage contribution of MRC's to the study areas total retail sales dropped slightly; (3) that the position of CBD's, with the possible exception of those in northern Orange County, declined; (4) that the Major Planned-Compact centers replaced the CBD's as the major contributor of retail sales; and that (5) planned centers as a group dominated most aspects of MRC growth. By way of prediction, it appears that Allpass's general observations apply directly to the Los Angeles area, namely, that the future commercial "... structure will eventually come to be a more even, loosely knit dispersion of urban activities over the whole urban region, located at points in the region with especially high accessibility," and that, "The traditional center structure will give way to a system of different networks for the different businesses and institutions . . ."³⁹

³⁹ J. Allpass and others, "Urban Centres and Changes in the Centre Structure," *Ekistics*, Vol. 22 (1966), p. 220.