Attitudes and Shopper Mobility in a Small City

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The decentralization of retail trade or shift in activity from the CBD to suburban areas has been a strong trend for the past two decades. Cities under 50,000 in population faced with the problem of decentralization are in a unique position. Different shopping trip patterns, greater dependence on the private automobile, and strong retail competition from metropolitan areas that are now more accessible due to new and improved highway systems make approaches to studying the decentralization problem somewhat different.

This study compared shopper attitudes in a small city to those in larger cities so that differences in attitudes peculiar to the size of the city could be found; shopper attitudes are generally held to be the key factors in determining preferences for shopping areas. Data published by the HRB in its 1955 project Parking in Relation to Business was used as a basis for comparing attitudes. This study was also concerned with habits, use of the small CBD, and shopper mobility to places away from the small city.

Parking was considered the most important disadvantage of the CBD in the small and in the larger cities, but inadequate parking in the larger CBD's was minimized or negated by the possession of more important advantages. Advantages of the small city CBD were not as decisive as those in the larger cities. In general, the advantages of the small city suburban areas were positive considerations rather than the negative factors of the CBD as they were in the larger cities.

Shoppers were classified on the basis of demographic characteristics and were shown to be oriented toward an area by virtue of their attitudes and their buying behavior. Small city CBD shoppers tended to be older, be persons of modest means, or be persons in the upper income levels. Suburban shoppers were generally in the middle groups in terms of age, education, income, and family composition characteristics. Estimates of purchases of shopping goods items indicated substantial shopper mobility from the small city. A group of shoppers evidencing high mobility was composed of younger, higher income, and "white collar" employed persons.

•THE vast growth of population that followed World War II exploded into the suburbs of the American city and with the expansion of suburban population came the corresponding shift or decentralization of retail trade. Throughout the country, the suburban shopping centers have and are taking an ever-increasing share of the retail expenditure.

During the past two decades, a great deal of material was published that speculated on the ability of the retail facilities to sustain themselves or to compete effectively with suburban stores. Concern over the decentralization of retail trade went well beyond the

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confines of the retail community; at stake was the 15 to 25 percent of the typical city's real property assessment that is found in the central business district (CBD).

In relative terms, many data were furnished concerning the cities and metropolitan areas that are part of a standard metropolitan statistical area. Relatively meager information is to be found concerning the smaller city, here defined as a city under 50,000 in population, that is troubled with many of the same problems of decentralization of retail trade. Smaller cities face similar concomitant problems of physical deterioration, congestion, and lack of parking facilities.

Ample evidence would indicate that small cities are unique in many respects and are not necessarily large cities in miniature. As Voorhees, et al observed, unlike large metropolitan areas, shoppers in small cities are largely dependent on the CBD for both convenience and shopping goods (1). In cities up to 50,000 population, estimates show that 80 percent of the total retail sales are found in the CBD. The dependence on the private automobile was shown by Burrage and Mogren who estimated that in terms of traffic entering the CBD's per 1,000 population, the vehicular volume of small cities is nearly fourteen times that of large cities (2). Further, the small city does not have the mass of people necessary to support a mass transportation system.

The small city presents an added dimension to the general problem of retail store decentralization. In larger cities, the competitive situation is one in which the stores in the CBD are pitted against a variety of suburban centers or stores. However, in the smaller city, the downtown stores compete not only with the suburban facilities, but also compete with larger metropolitan areas that are within a few hours' driving distance.

Therefore, this study was concerned with the problem of uncovering some of the differences in shopper attitude peculiar to the size of a city, as a necessary step in studying the specific nature of small city CBD's and their interrelationships with their suburban shopping areas.

The significance of shopper attitudes was demonstrated by C. T. Jonassen (3). Shopper attitudes were shown to be based on attraction to or rejection of a shopping area in view of the area's advantages or disadvantages. The advantages and disadvantages were given in terms of cost, time, energy, and physical conditions. Thus, shopper attitudes were held to be the key factors in determining preferences for shopping areas.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECT CITY

The setting for the study was Middletown, N.Y., which is in many respects a typical small city. The city's population has remained somewhat stable at about 22,000 persons for the past four decades. Approximately 70 miles northwest of New York City, Middletown is in Orange County, which is the outermost fringe of the counties comprising the New York Metropolitan Region. While the County is one of the least densely populated in the Region, it has experienced great population growth within the past decade. Although a handful of persons commute daily to the New York City metropolitan area, the city may in no way be considered a suburban community. The area is designated a "light commuting" county, that is, relatively few residents work outside of the county.

The Chamber of Commerce lists 33 manufacturing firms which employ a total of 2,600 employees. Of these manufacturing firms, only 13 employ 100 or more workers. Principal industries are apparel and leather goods; the surrounding area has considerable dairy and vegetable farming. By far, the largest employer is the Middletown State Hospital with approximately 1,400 persons. The greatest majority of the retail stores are owner-managed.

Retail sales have risen at a much faster rate in the county, and the city's share of the county's retail sales declined from a high of 21.7 percent in 1939 to a low of 15.7 percent in 1963. The continuing percentage decline in retail sales of the city in relation to the county indicates increased business activity in the county's unincorporated areas. Suburban shopping outlets and stores are of course located in the unincorporated areas. At the time of the study, there were no controlled suburban regional shopping centers in the immediate Middletown area. Suburban stores consisted mainly of traditional supermarkets, a supermarket with a very large nonfoods operation, variety stores, service retailers, and a discount clothing and housewares operation.

THE PROCEDURE

A random sample of residents of the city of Middletown and the immediate surrounding area were interviewed by community college students in order to determine their attitudes towards the CBD and the suburban shopping areas. The author, Associate Professor of Business Administration at Orange County Community College, used students in his marketing and retailing classes to conduct the shopper interviews.

Students were given intensive instruction both in and outside of the classroom in the techniques of interviewing. Interviews were carefully checked and validated, the questionnaire was coded, and the information was punched into IBM cards. About 90 students participated as interviewers in the study; others edited questionnaires and assisted in the compilation of the data.

The composition of the total Middletown sample was remarkably similar to the samples in Columbus, Houston, and Seattle. With the exception of data on family income, the various proportions within each subdivision of the sample (such as age, education, marital status, sex, home ownership, occupation, and number of children under 12 per family) either fall within the limits of the large city samples or very close to the limits. Aside from income levels, there were no significant differences in the samples. No doubt pressures of inflation have raised income levels in the intervening time between the large city studies and the Middletown study.

In the Jonassen study, a base of 600 shopper interviews was used in each of the larger cities; for ease in making comparisons, the same number of interviews were conducted in Middletown. Two schedules of statements were taken from the Jonassen study. The first schedule of statements was a list of 23 satisfaction factors or items that related to shopping situations. The second schedule of statements consisted of a list of criteria that required shoppers to rank the advantages and disadvantages of the downtown and suburban shopping areas.

It was felt that the identical schedule of statements should be used so that exact comparisons could be made to the larger cities. Further, it was understood that a few questions were not germane to a small city and that possibly dramatic changes had occurred in the intervening time in the larger cities so that current responses may have been somewhat different. However, the advantages of using the identical statements tended to outweigh the drawbacks.

Additional questions that dealt with shopper use of the CBD were asked and estimates were also requested for purchases of six different shopping goods items in the CBD, the suburban area, and in the metropolitan areas away from Middletown. Demographic profiles were composed of shoppers who showed strong preferences for either the downtown or the suburban areas. These shoppers were designated as downtown-oriented or suburban-oriented based on their beliefs of superiority, their shopping frequency, and their actual buying patterns in the particular area. Another demographic profile was composed of a group of shoppers who estimated substantial amounts of purchases in the metropolitan areas away from the home city.

FINDINGS

Table 1 gives the schedule of items and the responses by the Middletown sample to the 23 satisfaction items. Responses are listed in the order of most highly favored responses to least favored responses to the CBD. Respondents indicated whether in their opinion the downtown area or the suburban area held the advantage for the particular item. As an alternative, shoppers were able to designate an item as "no concern" to them, or in cases where the respondent did not believe that either the downtown or suburban area clearly had the advantage, they indicated "undecided." For example, a childless respondent would mark the item "easier to take children shopping" as "no concern" or NC. A respondent who was not sure if the downtown or suburban areas offered "cheaper prices" would indicate "undecided" or UN.

Remarkable consistency of response was found in the results of the same schedule of questions in Columbus, Houston, and Seattle. Table 2, in which the Middletown responses are added to those that appeared in the Jonassen study, illustrates the differences and the similarities in response.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGES OF SAMPLES INDICATING SUPERIORITY OF DOWNTOWN OR SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS
(N = 600)

Shopping Satisfaction Factors	DT* (%)	SSC* (%)	UN* (%)	NC* (%)	No Data (%)	Total (%)
Better quality goods	76.8	8.7	12.0	2.3	0.2	100
Takes less time to get there	66.3	19.3	9.0	5.2	0.2	100
More dependable guarantees of goods	66.1	9.4	18.6	5.4	0.5	100
More convenient to public transportation	65.6	4.5	6.5	23.4		100
Goods more attractively displayed	63.8	18.3	13.3	4.6		100
Better place to establish a credit rating	61.2	4.2	13.3	21.3		100
Cost of transportation less	60.0	9.5	11.0	19.2	0.3	100
Better delivery service	59.7	3.5	9.5	27.3		100
Easier to return and exchange goods bought	59.1	12.5	19.0	9.2	0.2	100
Better place to combine different kinds of shopping and other things one may want to do	52.6	40.5	5.4	1.5		100
Easier to establish a charge account	51.8	5.0	15.7	27.3	0.2	100
Greater variety of styles and sizes	51.5	35.7	10.2	2.6		100
Greater variety and range of prices and quality	42.8	44.0	11.7	1.5		100
Less tiring	41.5	35.3	17.0	6.2		100
Less walking required	39.9	47.0	9.1	3.7	0.3	100
Better places to eat lunch	38.7	36.0	11.1	13.7	0.5	100
Best place to meet friends from other parts of the city for a shopping trip together	37.2	34.8	8.2	19.3	0.5	100
The right people shop here	28.6	9.5	22.5	38.4	1.0	100
It is the better place for a little outing away from home	25.1	46.8	10.0	16.7	0.3	100
More bargain sales	21.5	58.0	12.7	7.5	0.3	100
Easier to take children shopping	14.0	32.6	8.3	44.6	0.5	100
Cheaper prices	10.3	67.4	17.3	0.5		100
Keep open more convenient hours	9.0	77.4	5.0	8.3	0.3	100

*DT—downtown, SSC—suburban shopping center, UN—undecided, NC—item is of no concern.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGES OF SAMPLES INDICATING SUPERIORITY OF DOWNTOWN OR SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS
(N = 600)

Shopping Satisfaction Factors	Columbus		Houston		Seattle		Middletown	
	DT*	SSC*	DT*	SSC*	DT*	SSC*	DT*	SSC*
DT advantages:								
Greater variety of styles and sizes	86.3	2.3	87.6	4.0	90.0	1.3	51.5	35.7
Greater variety of range of prices and quality	81.1	1.7	83.1	5.0	84.6	2.6	42.8	44.0
More bargain sales	65.5	2.7	70.8	6.7	68.4	1.5	21.5	58.0
Best place to meet friends from other parts of the city for a shopping trip together	66.9	11.5	65.1	16.0	66.4	12.4	37.2	34.8
Better places to eat lunch	61.3	7.9	49.0	26.7	68.3	8.6	38.7	36.0
Better places to establish credit rating	38.5	4.8	50.2	8.4	29.5	4.8	61.2	4.2
More convenient to public transportation	52.5	14.2	44.4	17.8	61.3	6.8	65.6	4.5
Better delivery service	37.2	5.4	44.5	8.0	37.5	3.2	59.7	3.5
Cheaper prices	46.6	7.9	51.5	8.6	49.0	3.8	10.3	67.4
Goods more attractively displayed	44.1	16.3	67.9	6.5	51.6	4.8	63.8	18.3
Better place to combine different kinds of shopping and other things one may want to do	56.3	29.7	72.3	20.6	71.6	16.8	52.6	40.5
Easier to return and exchange goods bought	39.5	13.3	31.0	37.7	29.3	12.3	59.1	12.5
Easier to establish a charge account	30.1	5.2	33.5	7.3	27.2	3.5	51.8	5.0
More dependable guarantees of goods	34.2	10.0	38.8	14.4	27.5	4.3	66.1	9.4
Better quality of goods	27.3	15.0	42.0	7.7	49.0	3.8	76.8	8.7
It is the better place for a little outing away from home	38.5	33.2	50.2	28.5	42.4	35.6	25.1	46.8
SSC advantages:								
The right people shop here	10.3	21.5	15.3	15.5	2.1	7.3	28.6	9.5
Cost of transportation less	15.7	59.3	4.0	72.4	10.0	53.1	60.0	9.5
Keep open more convenient hours	16.3	62.6	9.1	51.6	8.3	44.9	9.0	77.4
Less walking required	16.3	69.9	13.6	72.4	14.0	67.8	39.9	47.0
Easier to take children shopping	2.5	47.6	1.6	60.9	2.1	47.4	14.0	32.6
Less tiring	9.3	75.0	9.0	75.4	9.5	70.8	41.5	35.3
Takes less time to get there	12.3	78.9	9.6	78.8	25.3	65.1	66.3	19.3

*DT—downtown; SSC—suburban shopping center.

The Downtown Areas Compared

Shoppers in the three larger cities appeared quite sure that the downtown area offered "greater variety of styles and prices." They responded with preferences of 86.3, 87.6, and 90.0 percent. Middletown respondents appeared less sure, only 51.5 percent felt that "greater variety of styles and sizes" were found in the CBD. The Middletown suburban area received a preference of 35.7 percent on this statement compared to a 2.3, 4.0, and 1.3 percent response in the larger cities.

The downtown areas of the three larger cities were favored by the statement "greater variety and range of prices and quality" by percentages of 81.1, 83.1, and 84.6 as compared to only 42.8 of Middletown shoppers. The Middletown suburban area was favored by this factor by 44.0 percent of the sample. Responses in the three larger cities indicating the advantage for the suburban area were 1.7, 5.0, and 2.6 percent.

"More bargain sales" were found in the downtown area of the three larger cities by percentages of 65.5, 70.8, and 68.4; only 21.5 percent found this to be the case in Middletown. Significantly 58.0 percent thought there were "more bargain sales" in Middletown's suburban area compared with 2.7, 6.7, and 1.5 percent in the three larger cities. Closely related was the statement "cheaper prices" that were found to be favored by 46.6, 51.5, and 49.0 percent in the larger cities in the downtown area. Only 10.3 percent of the Middletown choices indicated "cheaper prices" in the downtown area while 67.4 percent thought the suburban area had "cheaper prices." Only 7.9, 8.6, and 3.8 percent thought "cheaper prices" existed in the suburban areas of the larger cities.

Several other factors when grouped together indicate an important difference between large and small city attitudes toward the CBD. One of the strengths of a downtown area is its diversity. Along with shopping, the downtown area generally provides many related business activities, professional services, municipal and governmental agencies, various forms of entertainment, and a greater variety of eating places. The diversity of facilities may be considered an environmental factor. Middletown is somewhat weaker than the larger cities in this environmental factor.

The statements "best place to meet friends from other parts of the city for a shopping trip together," "better places to eat lunch," "better place to combine different kinds of shopping and other things one may want to do," were heavily favored in Houston and Seattle. Middletown shoppers did not think that the downtown area was as superior on these three statements since the opinions are close to being evenly divided. "It is a better place for a little outing away from home" favored by the larger cities by percentages of 38.5, 50.2, and 42.4 for the downtown area, was indicated by only 25.1 percent of the Middletown shoppers. On this statement, the suburban area was the preference by 46.8 percent. However, in regard to the statement "it is a better place for a little outing away from home," it should be noted that the samples in the larger cities covered a much wider geographic area.

Statements indicating a preference by both the larger city and Middletown shoppers for the downtown area were: "better place to establish a credit rating," "more convenient to public transportation," "better delivery service," "easier to return and exchange goods bought," "easier to establish a charge account," and "more dependable guarantees on goods." While 27.3, 42.0, and 49.0 percent of the large city samples thought that the downtown area had "better quality goods," an impressive 76.8 percent of the Middletown shoppers felt this was the case. Only 8.7 percent of the Middletown sample thought that the suburban areas had better quality goods.

The Suburban Areas

Shoppers in the Jonassen study indicated that the suburban shopping centers had the advantage on these seven factors: "the right people shop here," "cost of transportation less," "keep open more convenient hours," "less walking required," "easier to take children shopping," "less tiring," and "takes less time to get there." On four of these seven factors, "the right people shop here," "cost of transportation less," "takes less time to get there," and "less tiring," the Middletown opinion is the reverse of that shown in the larger cities.

Middletown shoppers favored the downtown area on the statement, "cost of transportation less" by a total of 60.0 percent while the large city shoppers showed preferences for suburban centers on this item by percentages of 59.3, 72.4, and 53.1. "Takes less time to get there" was chosen by 66.3 percent of the Middletown sample as a downtown advantage while shoppers in the three large cities thought just the opposite. Since the greatest part of the sample resided within the city of Middletown, responses to the statements "cost of transportation less," and "takes less time to get there," would probably not be typical of shoppers within the extended trading area.

Shoppers thought that "less walking required" was a downtown advantage unlike shoppers in the three larger cities who indicated this statement as a suburban area advantage. Also Middletown shoppers thought the downtown area was "less tiring," again the reverse sentiment of the large cities.

With regard to the statements "keep open more convenient hours" and "easier to take children shopping," Middletown shoppers favored the suburban areas as did large city respondents. "The right people shop here" was not a clear-cut advantage of the suburban area in the three large cities, but Middletown shoppers felt that in this case, the downtown area held the advantage.

The Comparative Importance of Factors

In addition to identifying factors of concern, the relative weight given to the factors is also of great importance. Shoppers were asked to rank the advantages and disadvantages of both the downtown and suburban areas. The present section analyzes responses to the question, "Which do you think are the most important advantages of shopping downtown, starting with the most important advantages first, the next most important next, and so on, numbering them '1', '2', '3' in order of importance?" This question was repeated for disadvantages of downtown and for advantages and disadvantages of the suburban shopping areas.

To determine the rank order of advantages and disadvantages, a composite rank was calculated for each factor by giving a weight of three for the first choice, two for second choice, and one for third choice. Percentages indicated for each item were then multiplied by the appropriate weight, the sums of the products of each item determining its rank in the list of advantages and disadvantages. This procedure was the same as that used in the Jonassen study.

Table 3 compares the ranks given to various factors by Middletown shoppers regarding the advantages of downtown to those in the larger cities.

"Large selection of goods," "can do several errands at one time," and "cheaper prices" were ranked first, second, and third, respectively, in the larger cities. Middletown shoppers gave first rank to "close to home," while all of the larger cities assigned this factor to eighth or last place. Assignment of the top rank to "close to home" in Middletown is probably, in a large part, a result of the greater geographic concentration of the sample. "Can do several errands at one time" ranked second in Middletown as

TABLE 3

RANKING OF CERTAIN ADVANTAGES OF DOWNTOWN SHOPPING
(N = 600)

Advantages	Composite Ranking			
	Columbus	Houston	Seattle	Middletown
Larger selection of goods	1	1	1	4
Can do several errands at one time	2	2	2	2
Cheaper prices	3	3	3	8
Convenient public transportation	4	5	4	5
Stores close together	5	4	5	3
Enjoyable place to shop	6	6	6	6
Better delivery service	7	7	7	7
Close to home	8	8	8	1

TABLE 4

RANKING OF CERTAIN DISADVANTAGES OF DOWNTOWN SHOPPING
(N = 600)

Disadvantages	Composite Ranking			
	Columbus	Houston	Seattle	Middletown
Difficult parking	1	1	1	1
Too crowded	2	2	2	6
Congested traffic	3	3	5	2
Too far to go	4	5	6	8
Takes too long to shop there	5	4	4	3
Poor public transportation	6	6	7	5
Unfriendly service	7	8	8	4
Cost of transportation too high	8	7	3	7

well as the three larger cities. Third rank in Middletown fell to "stores close together," while the larger cities ranked this factor as fifth, fourth, and fifth place, respectively.

The most dramatic differences in ranking of advantages of downtown between Middletown and the larger cities were the two items, "large selection of goods," and "cheaper prices." As stated, "large selection of goods" was ranked first in all of the large cities but ranked fourth in Middletown. "Cheaper prices" ranked third in all of the large cities but ranked eighth or last in Middletown.

Table 4 compares the ranks given to various factors by Middletown shoppers to those in the large cities in regard to disadvantages of downtown shopping. "Difficult parking" was the greatest disadvantage of downtown in the view of Middletown shoppers as well as the number one disadvantage of the three larger cities. "Too crowded" ranked second in the three larger cities but ranked sixth in Middletown. While "congested traffic" ranked third, third, and fifth, respectively, in the three larger cities, it ranked second in Middletown. Third rank in disadvantages of downtown in Middletown went to "takes too long to shop," whereas this item was ranked fifth, fourth, and fourth in the larger cities. One of the more important differences in rank is the item "unfriendly service" that ranked fourth in Middletown but ranked seventh, eighth, and eighth in the larger cities.

The greatest advantage of the suburban area (Table 5) according to Middletown shoppers was "more convenient hours." "More convenient hours" ranked third, fifth, and fifth, respectively, in the three larger cities. "Parking easy" ranked second in Middletown and was ranked second, fourth, and second, respectively, in the large cities. Third rank in Middletown went to "clean and modern stores"; this item ranked eighth in all of the three larger cities. Interestingly, "closer to home" ranked as the first or greatest advantage in all of the larger cities but ranked seventh in Middletown.

The greatest disadvantage of the suburban areas according to Middletown shoppers was "poor public transportation." "Poor public transportation" ranked fourth, fourth,

TABLE 5

RANKING OF CERTAIN ADVANTAGES OF SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS
(N = 600)

Advantages	Composite Ranking			
	Columbus	Houston	Seattle	Middletown
Closer to home	1	1	1	7
Parking easy	2	4	2	2
More convenient hours	3	5	5	1
Less crowded	4	3	4	5
Do not have to dress up	5	2	3	4
Friendly and courteous clerks	6	6	6	6
Less noise and confusion	7	7	7	8
Clean and modern stores	8	8	8	3

TABLE 6

RANKING OF CERTAIN DISADVANTAGES OF SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS
(N = 600)

Disadvantages	Composite Ranking			
	Columbus	Houston	Seattle	Middletown
Lack of large selection	1	1	1	5
Not all kinds of business represented	2	2	2	3
Prices too high	3	3	3	7
Poor public transportation	4	4	5	1
Poor delivery service	5	5	6	4
Too far to go	6	6	4	2
Hard to get credit	7	8	8	8
Bus fare too high	8	7	7	6

and fifth, respectively, in the larger cities. "Too far to go" ranked second in Middletown but this item ranked sixth, sixth, and fourth in the large cities. The third greatest disadvantage of suburban areas according to Middletown shoppers was "not all kinds of business represented." This item ranked second in all of the larger cities. "Prices too high" ranked third in all three large cities but this item was ranked seventh in the Middletown sample. "Lack of large selection," ranked first in all three large cities, was ranked seventh by Middletown shoppers. Table 6 gives the ranked disadvantages of Middletown and the three larger cities for the suburban area.

Summary of Similarities and Differences

Both similarities and differences in shoppers' attitudes exist between the Middletown study and the Jonassen study. In addition, a number of similarities in the findings vary in degrees of intensity. For example, a given item may be found to be an advantage of the downtown area in the larger cities as in Middletown but the response to the item in the Middletown area may be far less or far more decisive.

The Middletown data may be summarized and compared to the three larger cities, by a discussion of the following key factors:

1. Quality of Goods. The Middletown downtown area enjoys the advantage of offering better quality merchandise in the view of the shoppers by a far greater degree than in the larger cities or in the suburban locations. An impressive 76.8 percent of the sample thought the downtown facilities offered "better quality goods" compared to 27.3, 42.0, and 49.0 percent of the larger cities.

2. Depth of Merchandise Selection. "Greater variety of styles" and "greater variety of range of prices and quality" are generally conceded to be downtown advantages. Over 80 percent of the shoppers in all of the three larger cities felt that the downtown area had the advantage of having greater variety and range of merchandise selection. In Middletown, only 51.5 percent of the sample thought that downtown had "greater variety of styles and sizes," while more people (44.0 percent) felt that the suburban area gave "greater variety and range of prices and quality."

3. Prices. Generally, the downtown area is the area of greatest price competition. Large city shoppers all thought that downtown had "cheaper prices" and "more bargain sales" by extremely wide majorities. The term "cheaper prices" as used in this study denoted competitiveness of prices, and the term "more bargain sales" meant the propensity to run sales, special promotional events, etc. Just the opposite is true in Middletown. Shoppers in Middletown overwhelmingly felt that the suburban area had the advantage in providing lower, more competitive prices, and conducted more promotional events.

4. Services. Downtown stores have always given a wide range of services. Shoppers in the three large cities indicated that in terms of establishing credit, receiving deliveries, exchanging merchandise, and reaching public transportation, the downtown area held the advantage. Middletown shoppers agreed with their large city counterparts in favoring the downtown area for better services but by far smaller margins.

Middletown shoppers also agreed with large city shoppers that the suburban stores keep "more convenient hours." A very high 77.4 percent of the Middletown sample thought that suburban stores' hours were more convenient.

5. Environmental Factors. Usually one of the drawing powers of a downtown area is its diversity of offerings and its facilities. Middletown shoppers recognized and appreciated the diversity of the downtown area but to a lesser degree than the large city shoppers. The importance of diversity was pointed out by Voorhees, et al who mention that in Kansas City, "40 percent of the persons who made purchases in 14 downtown stores came to the central business district for some reason other than shopping."

Shopper Profiles

Analysis of the questionnaires showed that some respondents were strongly disposed toward either the downtown or the suburban area. Shoppers were considered oriented toward an area according to a formula that took into account the shoppers' opinions regarding the superiority of the area, the shopping frequency in the area, the location of the most recent shopping goods purchase, and the estimates of the amount of various shopping goods purchased in the area. Of the total sample of 600 respondents, 266 were designated downtown-oriented, 78 were designated suburban-oriented, and the 256 respondents who showed no clear tendency toward either area were designated unclassified.

In terms of demographic characteristics, downtown-oriented shoppers tended to be older, to be persons of modest means, or to be persons with above-average incomes and educational levels. For example, the heavy proportion of older persons was indicated since 50 percent of all persons age 54 to 65 and 68 percent of all of those over 65 in the entire sample were downtown-oriented.

Persons of modest means were well represented in the downtown-oriented group. About 40 percent of the workers in the age 25 to 49 who earned from $4,000 to $6,000 a year and over 64 percent of all those who earned less than $4,000 a year were downtown-oriented. At the other extreme, slightly less than one-half of those earning over $10,000 and 48.5 percent of those with a college education were also classified as downtown-oriented.

Because there were far fewer suburban-oriented shoppers, the profile is less sharply defined. The suburban-oriented shopper appears to be a midgroup in the following sense: in terms of age, most are found in the 25 to 49 age group; in educational achievement, the greatest numbers are found in the 9 to 12-year level; in income, most are found between $4,000 and $10,000 level; and in terms of family composition, most have one or two children below 12 years of age.

Shopper Mobility

As an indication of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the facilities in the Middletown vicinity, shoppers were asked to estimate their purchases in the downtown area, the suburban area, and in the metropolitan areas away from Middletown. Estimates were requested for purchases of men's wear, women's wear, women's accessories, children's wear, home furnishings, and electrical appliances.

In practical terms, shoppers have great difficulty making accurate estimates of purchases. Consequently, only judgments by shoppers of one-half or more purchases were considered to be indicative of a substantial amount of buying. Table 7 gives the number of shoppers and corresponding percentages of the shoppers who estimated one-half, three-fourths, or all of their purchases in either the downtown area, the suburban area, or the areas away from the Middletown vicinity for each of the shopping goods items.

Responses in Table 7 are duplicated, that is, an individual respondent who agreed to make the estimates may have mentioned that he purchased one-half of his men's wear in the downtown area and the other half in the suburban area, three-fourths of his children's wear purchases in the suburban area, and all of his home furnishings purchases away from the Middletown area, etc.

In order to gain a clearer view of shopper mobility, an additional classification of shoppers was delineated called the "away" group. The "away" group consisted of an unduplicated group of shoppers who estimated at least one-half or more purchases of at

TABLE 7

RESPONDENTS' ESTIMATED PURCHASES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA, SUBURBAN AREAS, AND AREAS AWAY FROM MIDDLETOWN

Purchases	Number*	DT Area (%)	SSC Area (%)	Away Area (%)	Total (%)
Men's wear:					
1/2	130	46.9	43.8	9.2	100
3/4	148	58.1	23.6	18.2	100
All	218	80.3	15.6	4.1	100
Women's wear:					
1/2	170	50.0	30.0	20.0	100
3/4	175	61.1	14.9	24.0	100
All	237	74.3	15.2	10.5	100
Women's accessories:					
1/2	158	47.5	38.0	14.6	100
3/4	117	56.4	21.4	22.2	100
All	254	81.1	12.2	6.7	100
Children's wear:					
1/2	116	44.8	37.1	18.1	100
3/4	90	42.2	38.9	18.9	100
All	143	62.2	28.7	9.1	100
Home furnishings:					
1/2	95	45.3	31.6	23.2	100
3/4	96	59.4	22.9	17.7	100
All	218	81.7	6.9	11.5	100
Electrical appliances:					
1/2	105	49.5	37.1	13.3	100
3/4	79	68.4	20.3	11.4	100
All	223	77.6	13.0	9.4	100

*Table reads that 130 persons indicate one-half of their purchases of men's wear were made in one of the three areas; 46.9 percent of the 130 persons indicated the downtown area, 43.8 percent the suburban area, and 9.2 percent the areas away from Middletown. No doubt many of the same persons were represented in other shopping goods categories.

least one of the six categories of shopping goods items away from the Middletown area. In all, there were 166 "away" shoppers of whom 50 were already classified as downtown-oriented.

In demographic terms, the "away" shopper tended to have greater representation in the younger age levels, to have higher educational achievement, to have above-average income, to have a greater share of professional and managerial position, and to have children under 12 years of age.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Disadvantages of the CBD are similar for both large and small cities, but the small city CBD has fewer of the offsetting advantages. For example, difficult parking was the number one problem in both studies, but the data indicated that this problem was minimized in the large CBD since it offered a better chance of meeting needs and getting products for less money.

2. In the large cities, the higher socioeconomic group tended to be loyal to the downtown area since this area furnished the highest quality and greatest selection of goods. In Middletown, a good portion of the higher socioeconomic group tended to be loyal to the CBD as well, but many of this same group tended to be mobile and do substantial amounts of shopping in the New York City Metropolitan Area.

3. Because of its relatively weak shopping goods position, the small city CBD is more susceptible to the inroads of suburban and metropolitan area competition.

4. The future of the small city CBD is probably more uncertain than its large city counterpart. There would appear to be less opportunity for younger persons to develop the habit of shopping downtown.

5. Renewal, rejuvenation, improved traffic control, and an influx of progressive merchants are just as sorely needed in the small city CBD for its future development as in the large city CBD.

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