

Chapter

12

Services and Settlements



Why is this man carrying raw pig meat on his back? Page 440



Why are these farm fields long and narrow rather than square? Page 449

KEY ISSUE 1

Where Are Services Distributed?

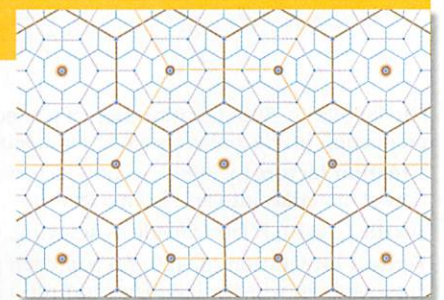


More and More Services p. 431

Most jobs—and most of the growth in jobs—is in services.

KEY ISSUE 2

Where Are Consumer Services Distributed?

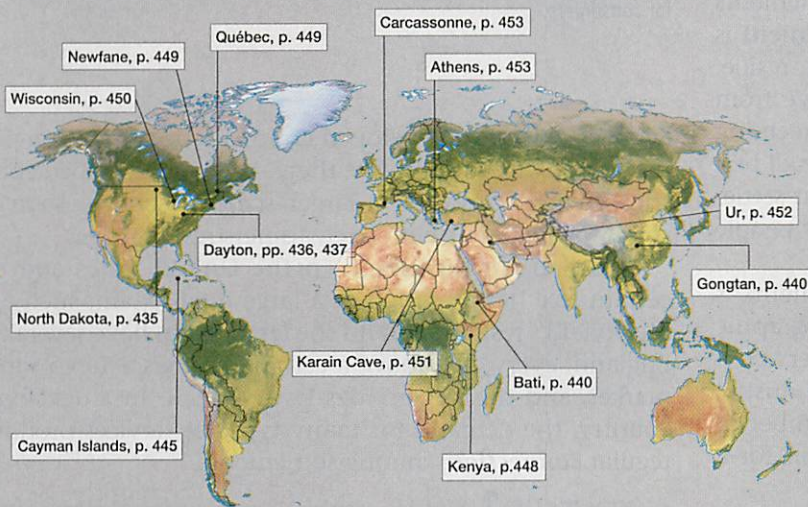


Services for People p. 434

Services for people are located where the people are.

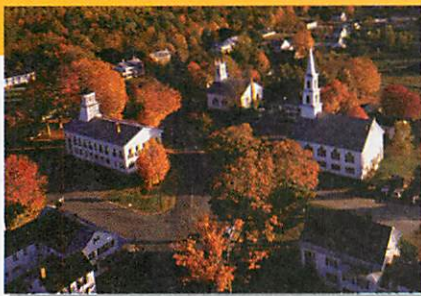


▲ Need to have your computer fixed? Correct a mistake on your credit card bill? Change your plane reservation? The company whose name is on the computer, credit card, or airplane may not actually employ the person who answered your call. Instead, the call-answering job may have been contracted out to another company known as a call center. Call centers are one of the fastest-growing services in the global economy. Many of them are located in India, including this one in Kolkata.



KEY ISSUE 3

Where Are Business Services Distributed?



Services for Businesses p. 442

Most business services are in very large settlements.

KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do Services Cluster in Settlements?



A World of Urban Services p. 448

Settlements can be rural or urban; the urban ones are growing.

Introducing Services and Settlements

In developed countries, most people work in such places as shops, offices, restaurants, universities, and hospitals. These are examples of the tertiary, or service, sector of the economy.

A service is any activity that fulfills a human want or need and returns money to those who provide it. A smaller number of people work on farms or in factories, the primary and secondary sectors.

In sorting out where services are distributed in *space*, geographers see a close link between services and settlements because services are located in settlements. A **settlement** is a permanent collection of buildings where people reside, work, and obtain services. Settlements range in size from tiny rural villages with barely 100 inhabitants to teeming cities with 20 million people. They occupy a very small percentage of Earth's surface, well under 1 percent, but settlements are home to nearly all humans because few people live in isolation.

Explaining why services are clustered in settlements is at one level straightforward for geographers. In geographic terms, only one locational factor is critical for a service—proximity to the market. The optimal location of industry, described in Chapter 11, requires balancing a number of site and situation factors, but the optimal location for a service is simply near its customers.

On the other hand, locating a service calls for far more precise geographic skills than locating a factory. The optimal location for a factory may be an area of several hundred square kilometers—such as Honda's factory, described in the Contemporary Geographic Tools box in Chapter 11—whereas the optimal location for a service may be a very specific *place*, such as a street corner (Figure 12-1).

Service providers often say that the three critical factors in selecting a suitable site are “location, location, and location.” Although geographically imprecise, the expression is a way for nongeographers to appreciate that a successful service must carefully select its precise location. Industries can locate in remote areas, confident that workers, water, and highways will be brought to the location if necessary. The distribution of services must follow to a large extent the distribution of where people live, within a city, country, or world *region*.

However, if services were located merely where people lived, then China and India would have the most, rather than the United States and other developed countries.



▲ FIGURE 12-1 CLUSTERING OF RETAIL SERVICES

Retail services cluster at places, such as freeway exits, that maximize accessibility for consumers.

Services cluster in developed countries because more people able to buy services live there. Within developed countries, larger cities offer a larger *scale* of services than do small towns because more customers reside there.

Every urban settlement in the United States above a certain size has a branch of a large retail chain, such as a McDonald's restaurant, and the larger cities have several. In England, every city above a certain size has a Tesco supermarket, and the larger cities have several. In a developed country, the demand for many types of services produces regular *connections* among settlements.

- **KEY ISSUE 1** divides services—consumer, business, and public—and discusses changes in employment in these main types of services.
- **KEY ISSUE 2** examines *where* services targeted primarily to consumers are located.
- **KEY ISSUE 3** looks at the distribution of services targeted primarily to businesses. Within developed countries, fast-food restaurants may be located in every settlement, but business services cluster in particular locations.
- **KEY ISSUE 4** explains *why* a disproportionately large share of services cluster in large settlements. As in other economic and cultural features, geographers observe trends toward both globalization and local diversity in the distribution of services. In terms of *globalization*, the provision of services is increasingly uniform from one urban settlement to another, especially within developed countries. At the same time, *local diversity* is alive and well in a settlement's distinct mix of services.