Central Place Theory
Walter Christaller
AP Human Geography

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Period 6
Walter Christaller

- A German geographer
- Studied urban settlements in Southern Germany
- Developed the Central Place Theory
- His theory involved the use of central places that had nodes and links in an idealistic situation
- The theory was originally published in 1933 in Germany
- He wrote a book called, “Are there rules that determine the size, number and distribution of towns?”
Central Place Theory (CPT)

- This theory attempts to explain the reasons for the size, number, and distribution patterns of cities, and towns.
- It also tries to produce a framework for geographers to study areas for historic reasons and for locational patterns of areas today.
- After testing, he concluded that people usually gather in cities to share goods and ideas and that they exist only for economic reasons.
Visual Representation of CPT

Central Place Theory
Assumptions Made By Christaller

1.) Humans will always purchase goods from the closest place that offers the goods
2.) Whenever demand for a certain good is high, it will be offered in close proximity to the population
3.) The world is an isotropic plain and that resources and people are distributed equally
Real World Example

Bangko, Meragin District, Sumatra
Real World Example-Part 2

- The capital of the Meragin District is Bangko. Surrounding the capital are smaller towns and villages. The district has some industry but specializes in agricultural goods. Every village has a place to buy instant noodles or cell-phone credit. Towns act as transportation places, and the capital city functions as an financial, administrative, management center. What makes this district significant is that the planners have adapted Christaller’s idea in their development planning. The planners use this framework to help plan what sorts of projects need to be developed in various places like transport facilities in the district capital. It helps the planners determine the strengths and weaknesses of the sub-districts. In lower-order centers, small-scale projects such are built to improve certain economic aspects.
Strengths of the Theory

- The theory helps us understand the organization from a theoretical perspective and the spatial distribution
- Important in policy-making
Weaknesses of the Theory

- The theory doesn’t incorporate the temporal aspect in the development of central places
- The theory is good for agricultural regions but not industrial or postindustrial regions
Sources

- Wikipedia.com
- About.com
- Geografika Nusantara.com
- Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science.org