

## Introduction

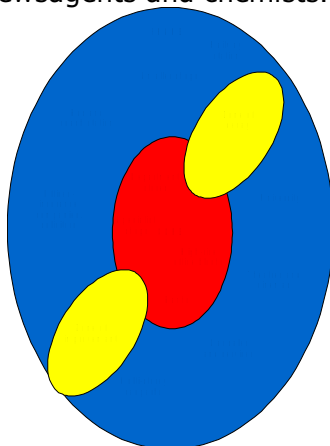
The title of the investigation is '**Blackpool's C.B.D has the characteristics of a typical high order shopping centre**'. The aim of this project is to prove or disprove this hypothesis by carrying out various geographical techniques to help build up a picture and understanding of what characteristics Blackpool has. I will also be comparing Blackpool with a nearby town, Poulton-le-Fylde, to help us develop ideas on what a high order centre is. If the hypothesis is proven to be correct Blackpool should show all the characteristics set out in the following introduction.

Firstly, to define whether or not Blackpool has the characteristics of a high order centre I must first establish what the typical characteristics are:

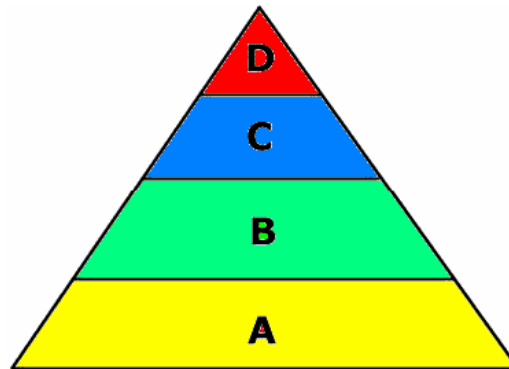
### Geographical theory behind my hypothesis

The typical '**Central Business District**' dominates the commercial and cultural activity in a town or city. Usually the central area of a town, which contains the main concentration of shops, offices, places of entertainment and public buildings. The C.B.D is the most accessible part of the town, being at the focal point of the transport network. Many shops and offices need to be easily accessible to as many people as possible and regard a C.B.D site as very desirable. As a result of this competition for space, land values are at their highest in the C.B.D. The most valuable site, which should be the site with the highest pedestrian density, is called the '**Peak Land Value Intersect**' (P.L.V.I). Although the residential population is only very small, during the day and night the C.B.D is crowded with people working, shopping and seeking entertainment.

**Main functions of a C.B.D:** The C.B.D is usually at the top of the shopping hierarchy in a town. It has the widest range of shops and the largest department stores. Shops mainly sell comparison or high-order goods and they draw their customers from a wide **sphere of influence**. The highest land value is in the C.B.D. Here in the **core** of the C.B.D (see diagram 1), are found large department stores and branches of many national chains of shops. Smaller often privately owned, shops are located in the fringe area called the **fringe**. Some shops, such as clothing, shoes and jewellery shops, tend to cluster together to take advantage of competition, while others are more dispersed, such as newsagents and chemists.



**Diagram 1**  
**What is a shopping hierarchy?**



**Key**

**A - Corner Shops** - These services sell low order goods in old inner city areas and are often located on their own in residential streets or in a small row of shops. Goods are sold in small amounts, but at higher prices than they would be found in other shopping areas and more often (people may go in everyday to purchase bread, milk and newspapers). These shops are small in size and stock a small range of convenience goods. The sphere of influence / range of these shops is quite small and there are lots of them, hence their position at the bottom of the shopping hierarchy.

**B - Shopping Streets** - There are two types of shopping streets. The first can be found near the CBD in the low class residential areas, and sell anything from low order goods to specialist goods. The second types are found in the city suburbs and serve a local housing estate. People may visit several times a week, and the sphere of influence is bigger than a corner shop. There are less of these than corner shops and they cover a wider area, hence their position on the hierarchy diagram.

**C - Out-of-Town Shopping Centres** - These modern shopping facilities are found on the edges of towns and cities and cover a much wider population than the previous two types of shopping service. The edge of town location means the land is cheaper and bigger and large car parks and other facilities can be added to the stores. The sphere of influence of these types of centres is much bigger, as the stores themselves are much larger and can cater for a larger population than the previous two. People would probably only visit once or twice a month to buy in bulk, where all needs are met in one building.

**D - Shopping Malls** - These can be found in city centres or on a huge out-of-town location, with indoor shopping and car parking and protection from the weather. These cover a huge area and the sphere of influence is much larger than the previous three types of shopping service. The range of goods is the biggest and a huge amount can be stocked on these sites, to

cater for the huge amount of customers every day. Because of their size, there are not a huge amount of them

### Sphere of influence

The **sphere of influence** of a settlement describes the area that is served by a settlement, for a particular function. It's sphere of influence for different functions may cover vastly different areas. For instance a supermarket may attract people from a 20-mile radius, whilst a leisure activity, such as going to the theatre may attract them from far further away.

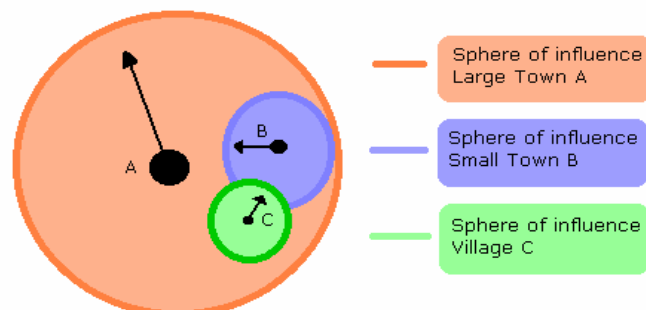
The larger a settlement is the greater its sphere of influence is likely to be, as it has a wider range of services and functions to attract people to go there. A small village may only have a village store selling the daily newspaper and food such as bread and milk. People will only travel the shortest distance they need to buy these products. They are described as being **convenience goods**. In other words, something that you can buy easily and for the same price all over the place.

A larger town would have a wider sphere of influence because it would have shops and services that are more specialist, and so people would be willing to travel further to use them. An example might be a furniture shop. This sells **comparison goods**, in other words products that you might shop around for before going ahead and buying something.

There are two major ideas to consider when looking at the sphere of influence of a shop or service. These are called the **range** and **threshold population** of a good.

The **range** of a good or service describes the maximum distance that someone would be willing to travel to obtain that good or service. A newspaper shop has a small range because people will not travel far to use them. A cinema has a much wider range as people are prepared to travel much further to go to it.

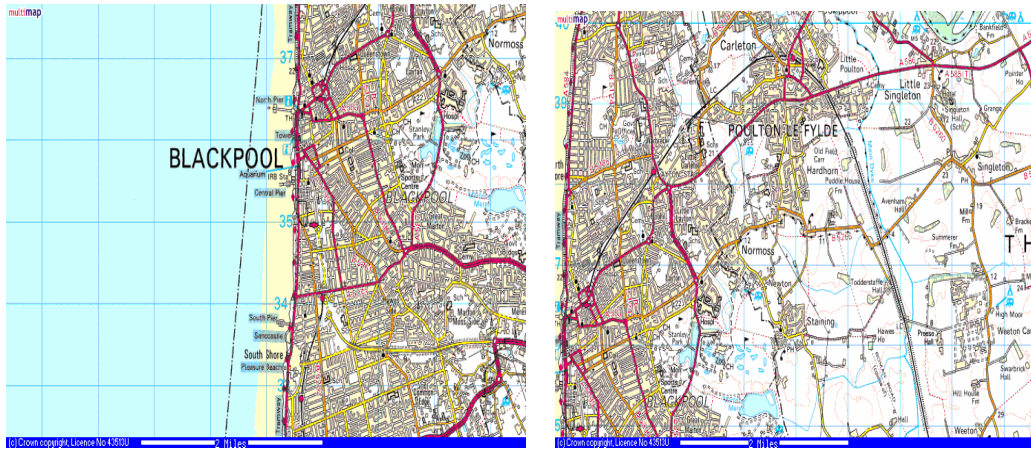
The **threshold population** of a good or service is the minimum number of people needed to allow that shop or service to be successful. The more specialist a shop is the larger its threshold population is. A newsagent will have a small threshold, where as a supermarket like Tesco's needs a much larger population before it can consider opening a store



**This geographical terminology is going to be used throughout my investigation relating to Blackpool's town centre**

This project will aim to either prove or disprove the original hypothesis 'Does Blackpool's C.B.D show the characteristics of a typical high order shopping centre?' by carrying out various geographical techniques, both qualitative and quantitative to help define if Blackpool shows the characteristics. Blackpool was chosen for this study as it is currently undergoing economic problems resulting in Blackpool's C.B.D falling into decline.

**Areas to be studied**



I will also be comparing Blackpool with my local town, 'Poulton-le-Fylde' to help define the difference between a 'high-order centre' and a 'low-order centre'.

**What are the predicted results?**

The predicted results are that Blackpool will have the characteristics of a C.B.D. The small town I will be comparing it to will show us that 'Poulton-le-Fylde' is a low order shopping centre and Blackpool will show the characteristics of a high order centre. I predict this because through preliminary investigations I have carried out it would suggest Blackpool has many obvious characteristics of a high order centre. For example, to help me predict what my results would be I went to Blackpool's town centre and looked at the type of shops present. I found many high order services such as the well known jewellers Beaverbrooks, women's fashion chain Next and the main department store Marks and Spencers. I also predict that these stores will be located in the P.L.V.I. From walking through the town centre it is clear that Blackpool attracts many visitors. Pedestrian density is at a high mainly at peak times like Saturdays. There are little or none convenience or low order stores (for example newsagents) located in Blackpool's town centre which is a contrast compared to Poulton-Le-Fylde where the main land use is for low order stores. Pedestrian density is far lower in Poulton, obviously taking into consideration the size difference compared to Blackpool. Pedestrians I observed seemed to be mainly in Poulton visiting low order

services (Butchers, Newsagents, and Post Offices). Further investigations will now be taken into proving or disproving my predicted results.

## **Aims**

I aim to either prove or disprove my original hypothesis '**Blackpool's C.B.D has the characteristics of a typical high order shopping centre**' by conducting the following investigation using the following techniques

- Land-use classification maps
- Location of the C.B.D
- Location of the P.L.V.I
- Shopping quality survey
- Parking restriction maps
- Heights of buildings
- Pedestrian counts
- Questionnaires as to why people are there.
- Secondary Data: - rateable values from the rates web site
- Catchment area
- Photographic evidence of my results

**I have selected such a variety of methods to give a fair indication and avoid bias in my results.**

