



ESRC RIBEN Doctoral Students Showcase Event

Friday 25 January 2013

SAïD Business School, Oxford

~Book of Abstracts~

Students giving powerpoint presentations:

- Les Dolega (University of Southampton)-**UK High Streets During Global Economic Crisis**
- Andy Newing (University of Leeds)-**Estimating Tourist Demand in Retail Location Models**
- Rebecca Hughes (University of Leeds)-**Exploring the Geography of Food Miles in the UK Retail Sector**
- Gemma O'Brien (University of Southampton)-**Economic Geographies of UK Independent Bookshops: Threats and Adaptations**
- Eleanor Tighe (University of Southampton)- **Non-Governmental Regulatory Frameworks and Institutional Responses**

Students giving poster presentations:

- Chris Thompson (University of Leeds)-**Retail Spending & Store Location During a Recession: An Analysis of Changing Consumer Behaviour & Interaction Patterns**
- Elaine Rust (University of Southampton)- **Evaluating the Economic Impact of Cultural Events on Town Centres**
- Emma Waight (University of Southampton)-**The Role of NCT Nearly New Sales**
- Nick Hood (University of Leeds)- **Understanding and Modelling Convenience Retailing**
- Elena Kirby-Hawkins (University of Leeds)- **E-commerce: Spatial analysis, Effect on Retail Sector and Future Impact in Relation to Social Changes**

Students giving powerpoint presentations

Name	Les Dolega
Title of thesis	UK high streets during global economic crisis
Start of PhD	October 2009
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof Neil Wrigley, Dr Julia Branson, Dr Dionysia Lambiri
Industry/organisation partner	

Abstract

The 2008-09 global economic crisis has impacted UK high streets and town centres in complex and little understood ways. In addition, the vitality of UK high streets has been impacted by three other forces and has become an increasing focus of government and public anxiety. These forces include: (i) the progressive rise of online shopping, (ii) the complex consequences of the implementation of a 'town centre first' policy in retail development and (iii) the rise of convenience culture.

This research investigates the response of UK high streets to these drivers of change, and seeks to make three contributions. First, to provide new descriptive evidence on the differential performance of UK retail centres during and since the economic crisis. Second, to identify the key drivers of town centre performance by using the multivariate analysis at both cross-regional and intra-urban levels. Third, to conceptualise the nature of UK retail centres' complex adjustment to the shock of economic crisis and other forces of change, by exploring alternative interpretations of the resilience of economic systems.

At a time when the economic health of high streets has generated large amount of research, the findings of this study have the potential to contribute to the policy agenda and set a benchmark against future research can be positioned and interpreted.

Name	Andy Newing
Title of thesis	Estimating tourist demand in retail location models
Start of PhD	October 2010
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof. Graham Clarke, Prof. Martin Clarke
Industry/organisation partner	Sainsbury's

Abstract

This PhD aims to develop a spatial decision support system (SDSS) to inform site location planning within the grocery retail sector. The location planning team at Sainsbury's note that some of their stores attract considerable revenue originating from outside their catchment during the tourist season. These stores are located close to major tourist resorts and exhibit a clear seasonal trading profile. Very little is known about tourist demand for food and drink at the level of individual store catchments, and location based decision making therefore lacks insight into the small-area driving factors behind this form of non-residential demand.

Working with stores in Kent and Cornish coastal resorts, the research seeks to estimate small-area (Census OA) tourist demand for groceries at different times within the tourist season. Seasonal tourist demand layers are produced which account for seasonal variations in accommodation provision, utilisation and associated expenditure by visitors. The SDSS also incorporates a spatial interaction model (SIM) which is disaggregated by visitor type (day visitor, visitor using self-catering accommodation etc.). The SIM allocates the available seasonal visitor expenditure to competing stores and can be used to demonstrate the impact of seasonal visitor demand on store revenue under a range of scenarios for location based decision making.


Name	Rebecca Hughes
Title of thesis	Exploring the Geography of Food Miles in the UK Retail Sector
Month & year you started your PhD	October 2009
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof Graham Clarke & Prof Mark Birkin
Industry/organisation partner	

Abstract

Over the last fifty years global economic changes, technological advances and logistical developments have made it possible for foods to be transported longer distances to their final destination. Although the modern food system allows UK retailers to meet consumer demand for high quality, low cost, exotic and out-of-season products, growing concern about the links between food miles and global warming is forcing retailers to reconsider their distribution practices.

In a bid to improve their green credentials, all UK multiples are developing 'local' ranges. Locally sourced foods should, by definition, travel shorter distances to stores. This is not always the case however, because local products tend to be transported via mainstream logistics systems, which are highly centralised and circuitous. Asda is the only major UK grocer to have developed a local-specific distribution strategy. The retailer has delegated responsibilities to eleven independently-operated local hubs, each one serving as a single point of delivery and consolidation for local suppliers from which their products are distributed to nearby Asda stores for sale.

Asda claims that its unique hub system offers an efficient local sourcing solution. However, the associated food miles have yet to be investigated. In order to provide Asda with the means to review its local distribution strategy (as well as to encourage other retailers to adopt similar solutions), this thesis explains how a bespoke Local Food Miles Calculator was developed and utilised to investigate the efficiency of Asda's local distribution strategy (in terms of distances travelled and emissions produced) and to make suggestions as to how it could be improved. Thus, a new method for estimating food miles is presented, along with new techniques for distributing local products to the shelves of major grocery retailers' stores.

Name	Gemma O'Brien
Title of thesis	Economic Geographies of UK Independent Bookshops: Threats and Adaptations
Start of PhD	November 2010
Academic supervisor(s)	Dr Kanchana Ruwanpura, Prof Steven Pinch
Industry/organisation partner	

Abstract

Printed books have long been important in allowing the human race to develop and pass on ideas in a simple, transportable format, quickly and globally. For much of the 20th century, independent bookshops have been vital in providing public access to ownership of books. However, the concentration of capital and the collapse of the Net Book Agreement in the late 20th century, along with the arrival of new technologies such as e-commerce and eBooks have caused severe problems for these bookshops, whose numbers are in decline in the UK. A worst case scenario would see most independent bookshops follow in the steps of record shops, where few have survived. However, books are not necessarily the same as LPs or CDs: many people describe a very strong physical and emotional relationship with a book such that they still want to touch and smell one, rather than read an eBook, and independent booksellers can be highly innovative in finding ways to adapt to very trying circumstances.

Name	Eleanor Tighe
Title of thesis	Non-Governmental Regulatory Frameworks and Institutional Responses
Start of PhD	October 2010
Academic supervisor(s)	Dr. Kanchana Ruwanpura, Prof Peter Sunley
Industry/organisation partner	




Abstract

Based on fieldwork undertaken in Dhaka between November 2011 – October 2012, this research project analyses the problematic nature of stakeholder attempts to eradicate labour rights abuses in global supply chains. It focuses on the challenges international actors face delivering stakeholder governance, through engagement with local actors embedded in localised and institutionalised politics. These issues are framed within Mattli and Woods (2009:1– 43), notion of regulatory capture, whereby governance is caught in a power struggle between a local economic and political elite.

From here the position of third party agencies and NGOs are explored, examining the emergence and role of non-government actors and institutions in ensuring decent work, as well as national economic competitiveness. Data collection comprised 6 month ethnographic fieldwork in Dhaka, Bangladesh, including participant observation and structured and semi-structured interviews with factory owners, managers, mid-level managers, workers and third-party trade unions, NGOs; INGOs and international development agencies. The research explores underlying causation for continuing labour rights abuses, through examination of the position and perspective of the various actors, to the industry and the Bangladeshi state. The role of international actors in steering local regulation is then explored, examining the role international retailers play in improving working conditions through ‘social-compliance’ pressures. Here is also discussed the role ‘multi-stakeholder’ NGOs play in this bi-lateral relationship.

Students giving poster presentations

Name	Chris Thompson
Title of thesis	Retail Spending & Store Location During a Recession: An Analysis of Changing Consumer Behaviour & Interaction Patterns.
Start of PhD	October 2009
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof John Stillwell, Prof Martin Clarke
Industry/organisation partner	

Abstract

The defined thesis contributes to research aimed at trying to understand the impact of the recent recession on the British grocery market – a sector with a new emerging landscape, presenting both challenges and opportunities alike.

In order to unearth the true impact of the recession, the thesis investigates both issues of supply and demand. Initially, the performance and strategies of the main retailers are scrutinised. Particular areas of interest include changing retail formats, market saturation, e-commerce and internationalisation. In conjunction, attention is also given to changes in household expenditure and customer patronage. Since the start of the recession, many consumers have altered their behaviour in order to better manage household expenditure on food. Both elements of supply and demand are then brought together through the development of a disaggregated spatial interaction model (SIM). The model takes the form of a classic singly constrained SIM, yet the balancing factor, demand, supply, and distance terms have been modified to enable disaggregation by household type and retailer store type. As such, the model is utilised to facilitate growth opportunities in the discount market. It is found, despite a difficult economic outlook, the discount retailers still have a seemingly optimistic future.

Name	Elaine Rust
Title of thesis	Evaluating the Economic Impact of Cultural Events on Town Centres
Month & year you started your PhD	October 2011
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof Neil Wrigley, Dr Nick Clarke
Industry/organisation partner	



Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that 21st Century town centres face numerous challenges and are evolving at a time of prolonged economic uncertainty. Many centres are struggling for long term survival, facing threats such as out-of-town complexes and the increase of online retail. Different strategies aimed at reviving the fortunes of declining centres are being sought by local and national government, probably the most well-known being recommendations contained within the Portas Review.

The aim of this research is to evaluate whether the strategy of hosting events and festivals can support town centre vitality. An economic impact assessment study will be undertaken on a selection of small-scale events to determine how such activities support local businesses and whether such a strategy has a place in town centre revival.

The area covered by Test Valley Borough Council forms the location for the research. Three main urban settlements of different sizes and characteristics lie within the borough and one event taking place at each location will be subjected to economic impact assessment. Data will be collected during 2013 from local businesses, event visitors and traders, following a pilot study in the spring to test the research design.

Findings are expected from summer 2013 onwards.

Name	Emma Waight
Title of thesis	The Role of NCT Nearly New Sales
Start of PhD	June 2011
Academic supervisor(s)	Dr Kate Boyer, Dr Nick Clarke
Industry/organisation partner	



Abstract

My PhD research considers second-hand consumption within the context of parenting and localised social networks. NCT are the UK's largest parenting charity and nearly new sales are just one of the services they provide through local branches. Entirely run by volunteers, the sales offer members of the public the chance to buy and sell second-hand baby clothes, toys and equipment.

Having engaged with literature which focuses on the social role of consumption, and on the little researched area of second-hand consumption, I aim to identify who attends these sales, what happens within the locale of the sales and what social, cultural and financial resources participants get out of them. I am currently carrying out participant interviews through two case study branches and plan to strengthen my qualitative findings with an extensive quantitative survey study later in 2013. I expect to find that these sales do have social benefits, particularly for the volunteers, but that they are not necessarily reaching a diverse range of parents as a service.

I started this project in June 2011 and am supervised by Dr Kate Boyer and Dr Nick Clarke, both of the University of Southampton, and Mary Newburn, Head of Research and Information at NCT.

Name	Nick Hood
Title of thesis	Understanding and Modelling Convenience Retailing
Start of PhD	October 2012
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof Martin Clarke, Prof Graham Clarke
Industry/organisation partner	GMAP

Abstract

The aim of this project is to gain an understanding of convenience retailing. Within the research, a broad understanding of what is convenience will be considered looking at a variety of retail sectors including grocery, coffee, gambling, fast food and finance. GMAP have provided store location data for all of these sectors from 2003-2012. This data is being analysed to look at patterns of growth/decline in convenience retailing and being compared to other forms of retailing considered less convenient. Additionally, demographic data will be analysed to assess if changes are being driven by the demand side through shifts in society or if changes are being driven by retailers on the supply side. Furthermore, a variety of methodologies will be investigated in attempting to develop an effective method of location planning for convenience stores including the ratings approach and spatial interaction modelling.

Name	Elena Kirby-Hawkins
Title of thesis	E-commerce: spatial analysis, effect on retail sector and future impact in relation to social changes
Start of PhD	October 2012
Academic supervisor(s)	Prof Graham Clarke, Prof Mark Birkin
Industry/organisation partner	

Abstract

The vast and rapid expansion of internet usage has generated widespread on line sales making the UK one of the leading countries in e-commerce. The purpose of this research to establish quantifiable impact of e-shopping on the UK retail sector, analyse spatial variations of this phenomenon with regard to consumers' attitudes and behaviour, shop accessibility, socio and geodemographics characteristics and product classification. The following concepts of impact of e-shopping on traditional shopping will be examined and evaluated – substitution, complementarity, modification and neutrality. Additionally, the study will investigate relation between two fundamentally different elements of shopping process – product searching and product buying.

The findings will have valuable applications for a number of stakeholders, e.g. retailers, policymakers, land owners, general public. For example, retailers may devise their business strategy to expand physical stores in areas where consumers prefer online shopping and focus on sales via online channel. Furthermore, this study will investigate the effect of existing and future social trends on consumers' attitudes and buying behaviour and to what extent changes in consumers' spatial attributes will have an impact on the retail sector of the economy.



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