

Retail Competition and Consumer Choice, 2002-2004

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Introduction

This study addresses the implications of the growth in concentration in food retailing in the UK with reference to its impact on consumer choice.

The main reference point is the UK Competition Commission (2000) conclusion that the degree to which consumers will have adequate choice will depend on local circumstances.

Research is carried out by exploring changing retail provision between 1980 and 2002 in an 'average' situation (Portsmouth).

The study combines extensive, large-scale surveys of shopping behaviour with qualitative studies in order to provide a richer understanding of different households' uses and experiences of local retail provision.

"What do you like about supermarket xxxx?"

There's so much variety and it's always fresh.

It has nothing to do with the store, with the ambience?

It's a nice friendly atmosphere in the store but I like it because there's so much to choose from and they - for instance last week I went and they didn't have the packets of 24 rolls so I said to the baker have you got those 24 rolls and he said not for a half hour and he said give me two 12 packs off the shelf and I'll put them in the 24 pack for you.

Can you see a difference in your shopping when you compare it with many years ago when you started Moneywise?

If I'm really skint and that xxx yeah, there's more variety now, you haven't got the plain basics, you can choose - variety is much better.

You have more variety so you spend more money?

Yes, of course."

(Interview 06)

Method

The research consisted of four consecutive stages.

Phase I consisted of 2,500 interviews, which were conducted at the main food stores in the study area. In Phase II, 2,150 at-home questionnaires were distributed to homes in four contrasting neighbourhoods. Phase III focused on the exploration of particular aspects of retail choice through four focus groups in each of the contrasting neighbourhoods.

Finally, in Phase IV, in-depth qualitative household research was carried out using a combination of householder shopping diaries, accompanied shopping trips, household interviews and kitchen visits.

Archive resources: Digitised shopping trip and kitchen visit transcripts

From the gathered data, the second shopping trip and kitchen visits have been anonymised and archived.

This includes the following digitised material: eight shopping trip transcripts, eight kitchen visit transcripts, and eight summaries of the first shopping trip and shopping diary of each participant.

The material is available for download from Discover.

User documentation

User documentation for [Retail Competition and Consumer Choice, 2002-2004](#) can be downloaded in PDF format from the catalogue record page.

Publications and other resources

Clarke, I., et al. (2003) 'Real choice in food grocery shopping' in Britain, *The European Retail Digest*, Oxford Institute of Retail Management, 39:7-13.

Clarke, I., et al. (2003) 'Real competition and consumer choice are located: experiencing long-term retail change' paper presented at Lancaster University, Sociology Department seminar series.

Jackson, P. (2003) Consumption and identity: how households choose, paper presented to the Working Group on Health and Low-Income Households, Sheffield, 14 July.

Kirkup, M., et al. (2003) Down my street: intra-suburban 'neighbourhood' perspectives on retail choice, paper presented at CIRM Manchester Metropolitan.

Clarke, I., et al. (2004) 'Real' choice is located: contextualising the 'food deserts' debate', special edition of *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management* on 'Food Deserts', 32(2): 89-99.

Clarke, I., et al. (2004) 'Retail re-structuring and consumer choice 1: long-term local changes in consumer behaviour: Portsmouth, 1980-2002', paper presented at Association of American Geographers conference: *'Unpacking Retail: Globalization, Competition and Local Consumption'*, Philadelphia, 15-19 March.

Jackson, P., et al. (2004) 'Retail re-structuring and consumer choice 2: understanding consumer choice at the household level', paper also presented at Association of American Geographers conference: *'Unpacking Retail: Globalization, Competition and Local Consumption'*, Philadelphia, 15-19 March.

Hallsworth, A. (2004) 'Twenty years of retail change', paper presented at Institute of Directors/Pro-Manchester, Manchester, 26 February.

Retail Competition and Consumer Choice (2004), presented at Workshop for Business and Policy-makers, Canada House, 8 June.

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