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Dimensions of Fashion Retailer Internationalisation “A UK snapshot”

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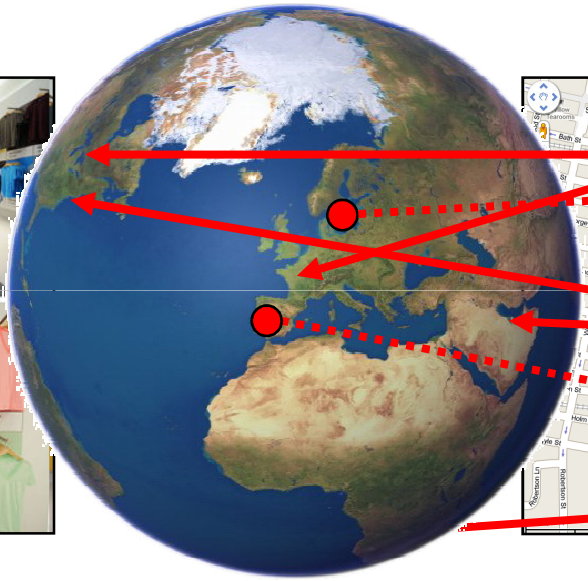
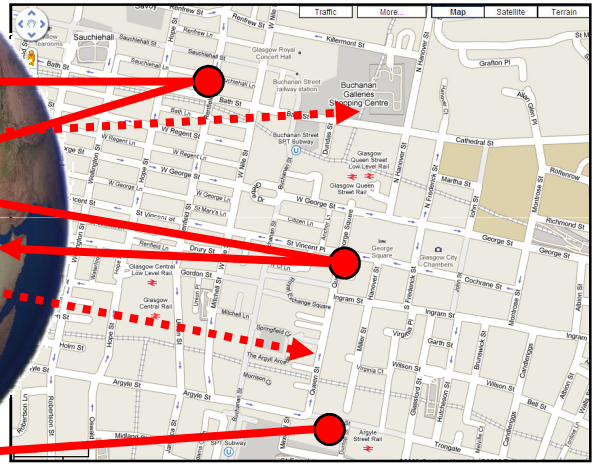
Dimensions of Fashion Retailer Internationalisation

"A UK snapshot"





Stephen Wigley

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Introduction

Three problems…

- RI literature derived from wider sources.
- RI literature generalist in approach.
  - Specialist sectors = specialist demands.
  - Complex markets = complex conceptualisations
- FASHION RI literature too focused?
  - Considers specific cases.
  - Fails to represent a distinctive research area.

Background

Uppsala School:

- Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul (1975)

  Incremental & chronologically evolving model.

Retail application:

- Treadgold (1991); Salmon & Tordjman (1989)

Three strategies defined by:

Capital investment & ownership.

Control & management structures.

Consistency of formats, offer & marketing.

Background

Fashion context:

- Superficial 'global' approach.
- Suitability to franchising & licensing.
- Brand appeal vs. international variances.
- Diversity with the market…

  …diversity within business models.

→ Time to reconsider the models?

Aims

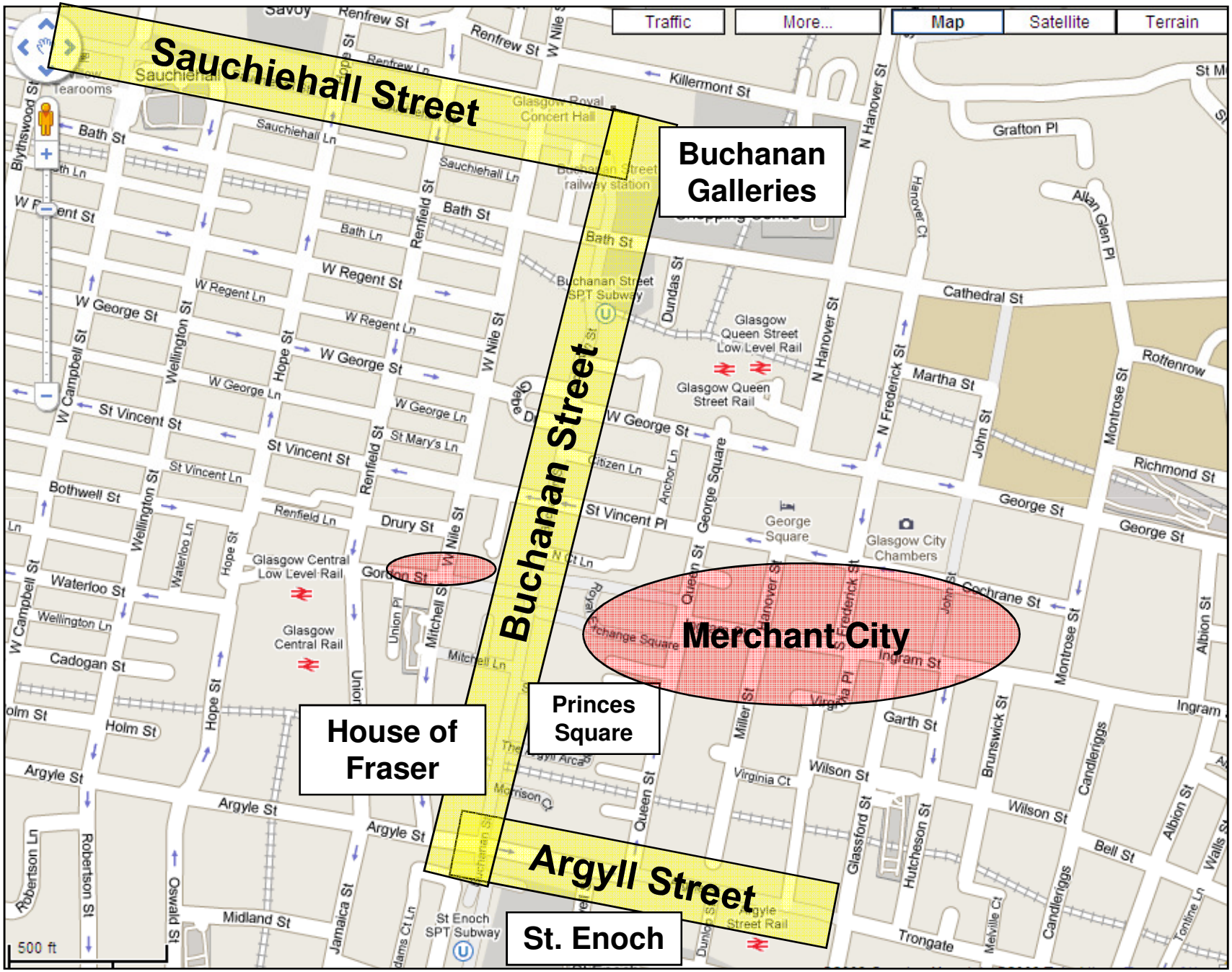
Aims:

- Build contemporary view of fashion retailer internationalisation in UK.
- Conceptualise according to existing frameworks and evident patterns.
- Identify emergent themes & issues in order to inform conceptual framing.

Method

- Build snapshot of Glasgow market.
- Classify according to existing frameworks.
- Identify contemporary practices.

- Observational data collection.
- Content analysis.



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Analysis

- 147 fashion "retailers" identified.

UK - 111	USA – 14	France - 4
Italy – 4	Spain – 3	Germany – 3
Denmark – 2	Ireland – 2	Sweden - 2
Hong Kong - 1	Netherlands - 1	

- 36 'import' to the UK
- 34 'export' from UK (31%)

Data

- Breakdown of retailers by type:

Type	Foreign	UK
Product Specialist	6 (17%)	7 (21%)
Fashion Designer	7 (19%)	8 (24%)
Gnrl. Merchandise	3 (0.1%)	2 (6%)
General Fashion	20 (56%)	17 (55%)

Data

- Breakdown by foreign mkt. entry method:

Entry Method	Foreign*	UK
Internal Expansion	29 (81%)	11 (32%)
Merger	0	0
Franchise	6 (17%)	15 (44%)
Joint Venture	1 (3%)	2 (0.6%)
Non-controlling interest	0	0
Mixed Methods	0	6 (18%)

* To UK market and this store specifically

Initial Findings

- Classifications need refinement.
- Market entry methods simplistic.
- General Merchandisers most prolific.
- Franchising preferred UK export method.
- Internal expn. preferred UK entry method:
  - 12 of 14 US, 2 of 3 German, 3 of 3 Spanish.
- Increasing importance of mixed methods.

Conclusion / Future Research

- Need for further detailed study.
- Replication in other UK/European cities.
- Develop classifications of fashion retailer.
  - Market position.
  - Product portfolio.
  - Market entry method.
- Revise market entry categories.
- Analyse according to product sectors, nationalities, market positioning, etc…