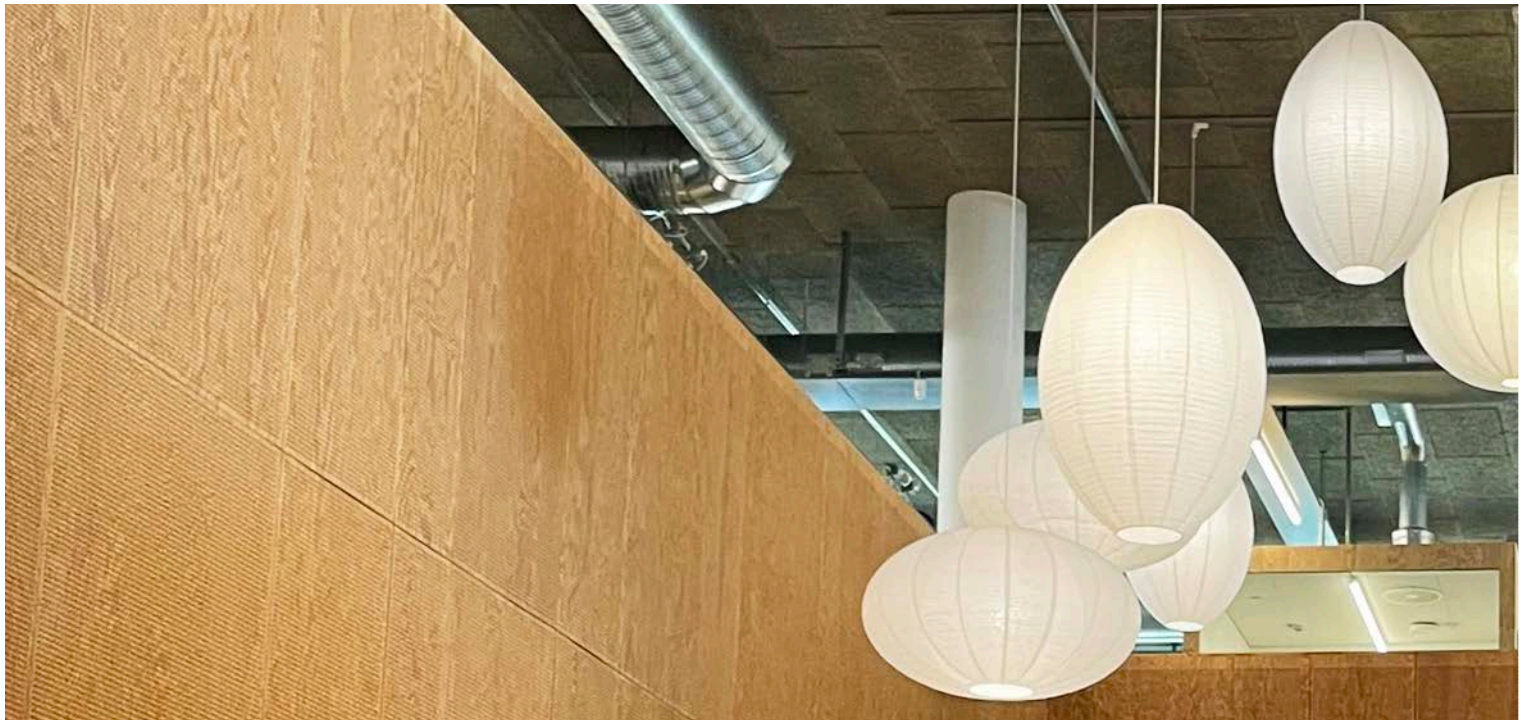




Centre for Retail Research at Lund University

ANNUAL REPORT | 2023



Introduction

Centre for Retail Research – 2023 the tenth year

You are now browsing the Centre for Retail Research at Lund University's 10th annual report! For those of us who have been involved since the beginning, this feels a little surreal. In our fast-moving world, 10 years is an eternity. It is surely a sign that we are doing something right and fulfilling a need.

Researchers at the Centre continue to conduct relevant research and to disseminate the research findings to the industry. The latter deserves extra attention because that is what makes us unique. We don't just share our research with participating organisations. Instead, we employ an open approach to knowledge sharing where everyone is welcome to participate.

Ten is a ripe old age for a research centre but we have no intention of retiring yet. There are many more years of retail research ahead at the Centre. While the future is far from certain, it is clear that what we do is appreciated and that is a good foundation on which to build a future.

Let me take this opportunity to stop my reflections and to introduce you to a few of the things that you can read more about in this report.

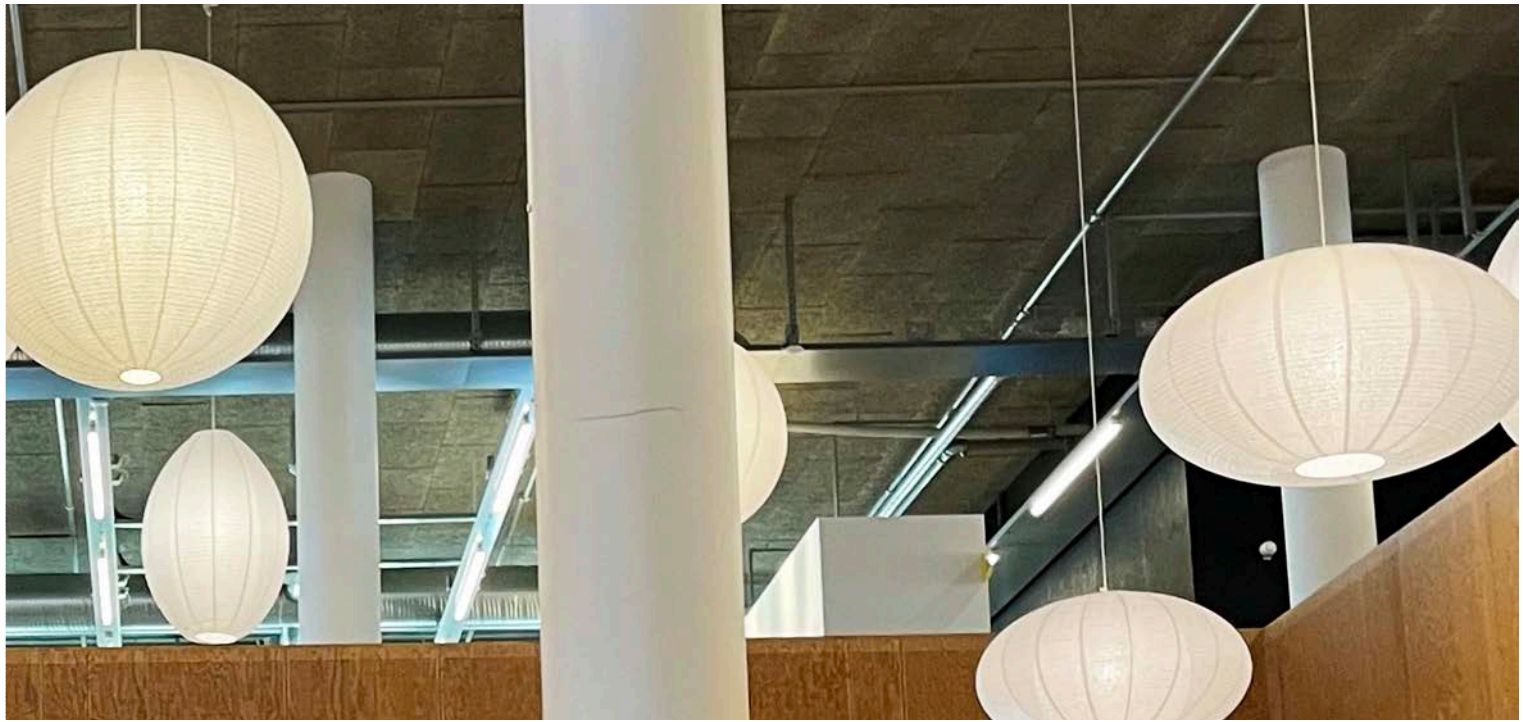
2023 was another busy year at the Centre. In March, we focused on supply chains and last-mile delivery. We arranged a well-attended webinar which, among other things, dealt with how supply chain challenges can be transformed. George Maglaras from the University of Stirling visited us and spoke at another seminar in March about the uncertain times we live in and the implications for retail supply chains. George

Maglaras was followed by Jens Nordfält, professor of strategic retailing at the University of Bath. Jens talked about the role of the physical store in the future of retail as well as how our mobile phones affect our customer journeys.

In May, we hosted the leading supply chain researcher Heleen Buldeo Rai from the Mobilise research group at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels. Among other things, Heleen spoke to our supply chain students at Campus Helsingborg and met colleagues in Lund to discuss ongoing projects.

In June we released a report called Retail as Unusual – which focused on how retail can handle challenging conditions such as inflation, fluctuating access to products, geopolitical threats, etc. – and held a webinar on the same theme. The report built on work done by master's students studying retail in autumn 2023. We were also visited by Dr. Haozhe Chen, from Iowa State University in the USA in June. Dr Chen presented, among other things, an ongoing project about the challenges of engaging consumers in the circular economy. The Consumer Culture Theory Conference also took place in Lund in June, just before the summer break. About 300 researchers from all over the world participated and our affiliated researcher, Sofia Ulver, was conference chair.

The autumn was also full of activity, starting in September, when John Olsson defended his doctoral thesis on the challenges of climate change within the retail industry faces. Much is being done but John makes it clear that the retail industry must become more active. Read more on page 6. In November, our international marketing students worked on live cases for Skånemejerier and TePe, which featured a variety of shopper marketing challenges. Look out for a report



(to be published spring 2024) that summarises the results of these cases and highlights important learnings for shopper marketing on a more comprehensive level.

As mentioned above, 2023 was the Centre's tenth year, which some of you will already know because you were there to celebrate with us in November. We hosted an anniversary



party in Magle Konserthus in Lund and took the opportunity to launch our latest book at the same time. Read more on page 4. In November we were also visited by Ashleigh Logan McFarlane from Edinburgh Napier University, who presented research on how social media shapes markets of various kinds. Finally, two excellent seminars closed the year. One was about customer journeys where Patrick Stoopendahl presented results from his upcoming doctoral thesis. In December, Cecilia Cassinger, Ola Thufvesson, and Jonas Nordström were all speakers at Handels Dag in Stockholm. And last of all, it is worth mentioning that Klas Hjort and John Olsson visited the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona as part of the delegation from Helsingborg. More about this will come in 2024 in terms of, among other things, a seminar hosted by the Centre.

As I sit and write this – February 24th – it is two years since Russia invaded Ukraine. The ensuing war has, of course, been a humanitarian disaster but it has also had a less obvious effect in that it has fundamentally changed how people see their future. Since the future is a function of how we experience the present, alternative visions of the future have difficulty gaining a foothold. One can only hope that, in 2025, when I introduce our 11th annual report, I can focus on something other than war and misery.

I believe and hope that we will see each other digitally or analogically in 2024!

Best regards

Ulf Johansson
Professor and Centre Director

Ten years of retail research

In October 2023 the Centre for Retail Research at Lund University celebrated its ten-year anniversary. We marked the event with a party at Magle Konserthus in Lund, where Centre Director, Professor Ulf Johansson, reflected on the Centre's inauguration and its greatest achievements. We also launched our latest book on *The Future of Consumption* and the party guests got to experience the future with shopping in virtual reality, a robot delivery dog, and a lego model showing future last-mile delivery possibilities.

In conjunction with the Centre's ten year anniversary, consumption researchers Carys Egan-Wyer and Emma Samsioe were asked to describe developments in retail research over the past ten years.

"In one of our recent reports, we call it retail as unusual. There is no longer a normal state in trade, no business as usual. Everything has become more uncertain," said Carys Egan-Wyer, Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Lund University School of Economics and Management (LUSEM).

Alongside Kristina Bäckström, Carys Egan-Wyer and Emma Samsioe are the editors of the recently published anthology *The Future of Consumption*, which highlights three megatrends in retail. "Technology, sustainability, and consumer well-being are all in focus," explained Emma Samsioe, Associate Senior Lecturer in Service Management at the Faculty of Social Sciences. "Our starting point was the topics that researchers and practitioners have discussed at the Centre's seminars in recent years. But we also have contributions from the USA and Australia, so there is an interesting breadth of material."

Retail trends

The topics addressed in the book are forward-looking but the trends are very much having an effect on retail research and practice today. The chapters focus on a range of subjects from buying happiness to overproduction and the future of the physical store in the digital age. "We have long studied how digitalisation affects retail. But some things that were news ten years ago are standard now, such as being able to pick up your orders in parcel lockers," said Carys Egan-Wyer. "Customer experience has always been important in retail research and will continue to be important," added Emma Samsioe.

A lot changed during the pandemic

The pandemic led to an increased focus on mental and physical well-being and this was reflected in our consumption. The pandemic also changed the ways in which many researchers were able to go about their research. Methods needed to be adapted, and some projects shifted focus when researchers were no longer able to go to physical stores and interview customers or retail staff. "In some cases, we had



to change our plans completely and highlight new and relevant issues, like how pandemic restrictions affected physical stores. Rapid adjustments allowed us to capture some important data on that," explained Carys Egan-Wyer. "There were probably many in the public who thought that the pandemic would be an opportunity for society and consumers to rethink and change our attitudes towards consumption," added Emma Samsioe. "But we are probably not quite there yet, at least not today."

The pandemic shed a lot of light on global supply chains, and they have stayed very much in focus with all the contemporary geopolitical unrest in the world. "The attitude towards globalisation and retail have shifted somewhat as a result," said Carys Egan-Wyer. "They were more positive ten years ago," she concluded.

FIVE TRENDS IN RETAIL RESEARCH

- 1. From multichannel to omnichannel.** To ensure that the customer receives a seamless and consistent shopping experience, regardless of whether the customer, for example, switches between shopping in a company's physical store, through the website, or the company's app.
- 2. From a focus on green environmental issues in retail to social and ecological sustainability,** and in some cases, anti-consumption.
- 3. From digitalisation in innovation and technology to AI, the metaverse, and data analysis.**
- 4. Logistics and returns have shifted** from a focus on efficiently handling returns to the customer experience regarding delivery, i.e., how companies communicate various transport options to the customer.
- 5. Both the pandemic and geopolitical unrest** have allowed more space for mental and physical well-being in consumption, but have also caused disruptions in the global distribution chain.

Focus on events – a selection

MARCH – REIMAGINING FULFILMENT AND LAST-MILE DELIVERY

In March, the Centre for Retail Research hosted a 90-minute webinar on the transformation of last-mile delivery. Three excellent presenters shed light on several themes that are radically reshaping delivery services, namely, sustainability, a seamless customer journey, and the delivery experience. International guest researcher, Heleen Buldeo Rai from Vrije Universiteit in Brussels kicked off the webinar by presenting her work on the environmental impact of e-commerce. Based on the studies she has reviewed, Heleen concluded that online purchases generally generate a lower carbon footprint than store purchases, but only in the case of car-dependent lifestyles. Next up was Yulia Vakulenko, from the Centre for Retail Research who described her study of 100 million orders, ratings, and reviews from Amazon US, the findings of which highlight that online retail logistics are crucial for creating a positive e-consumer experience. Finally, John Olsson, doctoral student in packaging logistics, discussed the importance of creating a superior last-mile experience while maintaining profitability.

MARCH – RETAILING IN THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

George Maglaras, from the University of Stirling in the United Kingdom, visited the Centre for Retail Research in March 2023. During his visit, George presented ongoing research about the effects of increasing uncertainty on retail supply chains and what retailers can do to make them more resilient. George's presentation inspired a deep and creative discussion among the gathered academics and was followed by a traditional Swedish lunch in Helsingborg. The following day, George continued on the same theme when he gave a guest lecture on service logistics for students at Campus Helsingborg.



MARCH – THE PHYSICAL STORE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Professor Jens Nordfält, from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom, also visited the Centre for Retail Research and, on 27 March, held a well-attended online seminar for practitioners about the role of physical stores in an increasingly digital world. Jens was clear that the physical store

will continue to exist for the foreseeable future but that it will change in many ways. He described a number of studies about the role of inspiration in stores as well as what happens when customers use their mobile phones. In all cases, his results go against what we might expect. Inspiration creates more purchases than discounts. And mobile phone use leads to longer shopping trips and bigger spends.



MARCH – INSPIRATIONAL VS DEAL-ORIENTED IN-STORE COMMUNICATION

Following his seminar for practitioners, Jens Nordfält presented more of his research at a seminar for the Centre's affiliated research at Campus Helsingborg. Jens described a recently published article in which he conducted several field and laboratory experiments to delve deeper into the impact of inspirational versus deal-oriented in-store communication on spending. His findings suggest that it is important to activate consumption goal-completion.



APRIL – THE CENTRE ON TOUR

The Centre's management team were invited to the University of Stirling, in the United Kingdom, in April 2023. The team spent several days visiting the University, which is renowned for its retail research, and sharing ideas and best practices with the University's researchers.

MAY – LEADING LOGISTICS RESEARCHER VISITS

In May, the Centre for Retail Research at Lund University had the pleasure of hosting Heleen Buldeo Rai from the Mobilise research group at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium. During her stay Heleen got the opportunity to visit both Lund and Campus Helsingborg and to hold seminars where she presented her research on e-commerce, urban logistics, and sustainability. Heleen also gave a lecture on sustainable supply chain management to master students at Campus Helsingborg. And she was able to meet many of our colleagues to discuss ongoing projects and potential future collaborations. “We are so grateful to the Centre for Retail Research for making this happen,” explained packaging logistics researcher Yulia Vakulenko. “And we are looking forward to future visits and collaborations with Heleen!”



JUNE – RETAIL AS UNUSUAL

At a 60-minute webinar, researchers and guests discussed the main findings of a new report that explores the challenges of retailing in a time of extreme uncertainty. In the Retail as Unusual report, the key disruptive macro-environmental challenges of recent years are identified and the consequences for retail organisations are discussed. The branches analysed range from grocery to gas stations. Webinar participants learned about the most disruptive challenges and how to mitigate them.

JUNE – ENGAGING CONSUMERS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY THROUGH SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Dr. Haozhe Chen, from Iowa State University in the United States visited the Centre in June and presented a working project about engaging consumers in the circular economy. The circular economy has garnered a lot of interest in recent but, as yet, not enough research has been done to explore how to effectively engage consumers in circular economy initiatives. Dr. Chen’s study seeks to rectify this. The study aims to better understand how consumers view the circular economy and provides meaningful suggestions on how to encourage consumers’ active participation in the circular economy.

JUNE – CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY CONFERENCE

Many of the Centre’s affiliated and international guest researchers presented their ongoing research at the Consumer Culture Theory Conference, which was hosted in Lund this summer. Sofia Ulver, Peter Svensson and Jakob Östberg chaired the conference, which was attended by several hundred consumption and marketing scholars hailing from all over the world.

SEPTEMBER – JOHN OLSSON’S DOCTORAL DEFENCE

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of climate change and place ever higher sustainability demands on retail. Retail, which constitutes a critical link between producers and consumers and plays a significant role in production and consumption patterns, seeks to find innovative solutions to reduce its environmental impact. But despite ongoing sustainability initiatives in retail, more comprehensive changes are required to limit climate change and its effects. This is what John Olsson, doctor in packaging logistics at LTH, suggests in his doctoral dissertation. On 29 September 2023, John successfully defended his dissertation, Last-mile logistics services in retail: A consumer-centric approach, at LTH. The opponent was Chee Yew Wong, Professor of Supply Chain Management, from Leeds University Business School in the United Kingdom.

NOVEMBER – SHOPPER MARKETING CHALLENGES

Students in the International Marketing and Brand Management masters programme got the chance, in November, to hear about real-life retail challenges faced by Skånemejerier and TePe Oral Hygiene Products. The students got to hear detailed presentations from brand and category managers about real-life retail-related challenges in their categories. They then worked in small groups, using the theories and models they learned in the programme, to identify solutions to the challenges. Before the winter break, they presented the brand and category managers with shopper marketing interventions to help address those challenges. The most interesting solutions will be published in a short anthology edited by Carys Egan-Wyer, Ulf Johansson and Martin Moström. It will be published early in 2025.



NOVEMBER – INFLUENCERS, BLOGGER-PRENEURS, MOMS AND FESTIVAL GOERS

The Centre was delighted to welcome Ashleigh Logan McFarlane from Napier University, in Edinburgh, to the Centre in November. At a seminar for the Centre's researchers in Helsingborg, Ashleigh presented her research on how emerging behaviours in social media spaces shape market. She also took part in the panel discussion at our event to celebrate our ten year anniversary.



NOVEMBER – CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF RETAIL RESEARCH

At a double celebration in November, the Centre for Retail Research at Lund University marked its tenth anniversary and the release of a new book on the future of consumption. 100 people, including local and international researchers, retail professionals, students, and friends joined the Centre's affiliated researchers at Magle Konserthus in Lund to mark the tenth year since it was founded. Mats Johansson and Andreas Hedlund were present to represent The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council, who provided the initial funding for the Centre in 2013. "It was really nice to hear an overview of the Centre's history from Professor Ulf Johansson," commented one guest. The large lego model that demonstrated the potential for future underground last-mile deliveries was also a big hit with the public, as was the robot delivery dog that strolled through the party. A few lucky guests got to experience the future of retail in a virtual reality store. And all got to hear a little about the new book during a panel discussion on the future of consumption, which included international guest researchers from the Centre as well as leading retail practitioners.



NOVEMBER – CAPTURING CONTEMPORARY COMPLEX CUSTOMER JOURNEYS IN RETAIL

At a research seminar in November, the Centre's researchers presented work on contemporary customer journeys from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. In an era of omnichannel retailing, where consumers seamlessly transition between online and offline touchpoints, understanding these intricate customer journeys is paramount for retailers seeking to thrive in a competitive market. This seminar brought together thought leaders and scholars (including Patrik Stoopendahl, Carys Egan-Wyer, Yulia Vakulenko, and Ulf Johansson) to discuss the latest research findings, methodologies, and insights on how to effectively capture, map, and optimize these complex customer journeys.

DECEMBER – HANDELNS DAG

Cecilia Cassinger, Ola Thufvesson, and Jonas Nordström were speakers at Handels dag in Stockholm. Handels dag is a chance for retailers, and anyone who works in the retail sector, to share knowledge and best practices developed in research projects funded by the Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council. Cecilia and Ola presented findings from their research on how to make retail in vulnerable areas safer, while Jonas discussed how consumers can be encouraged to make more sustainable choices.

DECEMBER – SMART CITY EXPO WORLD CONGRESS

The Smart City Expo World Congress is the world's leading event for smart and sustainable cities, where actors from business, academia and cities meet to drive development towards smart and sustainable cities. Klas Hjort and John Olsson from the Centre for Retail Research participated in this year's congress in Barcelona, as part of the Helsingborg city delegation. They took a deep dive into the smart city of the future and the technological innovations that will shape our cities and their retail possibilities. Examples included smart charging infrastructure, innovative vehicles for mobility and urban deliveries, sensors and camera systems, as well as digital twins and cyber security systems.

A consumer-centric approach to last-mile

“What really interests me is being able to research different aspects of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. These are areas that I would like to be able to contribute to with my research.”

You would never guess from talking to him that John Olsson has only been in Sweden for a few years. Although John grew up in Germany, he inherited his Swedish surname and excellent pronunciation from his father.

After completing his bachelor's and master's degrees in Germany John decided to continue his education in Växjö and, eventually at the Division of Packaging Logistics at Lund University doing his doctoral research on last mile logistics. “When we talk about Last Mile in these contexts, we mean the last part of the supply chain, i.e. from the last distribution channel to the end customer,” John explained. Fast forward a few years to September 2023 and John has just successfully defended his PhD dissertation, Last-mile logistics services in retail: A consumer-centric approach.



Understanding last-mile has become increasingly important in recent years as the volume of e-commerce has increased. In brick-and-mortar retail, the customer typically takes care of last-mile distribution themselves, by taking home the purchased item from the store. In e-commerce, there are three main players involved in a purchase: the e-merchant, the end customer

and what is called the logistics service provider, that is, the person responsible for some form of shipping.

“When you buy something from an e-retailer that has its central warehouse, for example, in Germany, there are good solutions for shipping the goods from the warehouse to a terminal in, for example, Malmö. The next step – out to the customer – is more complicated, and it's important to implement it in the most cost-effective way possible, while at the same time it's important to minimize the impact on the environment and society” explained John. “So, this is where the big last-mile challenges lie. In balancing price pressures against, among other things, environmental impact.”



Despite ongoing sustainability initiatives in retail, more research is required to limit climate change and its effects. In fact, last-mile delivery has been described as the most expensive, least efficient, and most polluting part of the supply chain. So John's dissertation, which compiles the results of four papers from four separate studies, should be extremely welcome. By exploring changing consumer perspectives on last-mile, John's work provides an important foundation for more sustainable retail business models.

Text: Peter Wiklund & Carys Egan-Wyer

Safer retail in vulnerable areas

Retail can play an important role in community building. Something that does not receive enough attention in retail research and practice, according to Cecilia Cassinger, docent in strategic communication at Lund University.

Cecilia is one of the authors of a 2023, research report on new forms of cooperation to make retail in vulnerable areas safer. The report summarises the results of a research project funded by the Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council which sought to enhance our understanding of the location-specific aspects of retail. The project focused on retail in areas that the Swedish Police Agency classifies as vulnerable and included ten vulnerable areas in seven municipalities around Sweden. "There are currently 59 vulnerable areas in Sweden. According to the Swedish Police Agency, vulnerable areas are characterized by a combination of problems, for example a lack of resources, crime, and a culture of silence," explained Cecilia.



The project focused on how retail employees perceived security in the workplace and how that affected their work. It also looked at ways to promote safer retail in vulnerable areas. Cecilia Cassinger and her co-authors worked with qualitative methods such as participant observation, ethnographic walks, and in-depth interviews with managers and employees in food stores, for example Ica, Willys and Coop. "We investigated how retailers work collaboratively around security issues and how employees experience security in their everyday work," said Cecilia. "We found that store employees

in these areas have to deal with a lot that falls outside their job description. Everything from trying to control unrest to performing CPR on affected people in connection with acts of violence." As a rule, there is too few security guards on site in the shopping centres where the stores are located, which means that the employees have to be responsible for a lot.

The research findings suggest that employees experience high insecurity in the workplace. Some of them cannot bear it in the long run and choose to change workplaces. Those who remain develop strategies for dealing with violent and threatening situations and feel that through their work they contribute to making the area better. "Some stores' strategy



is to build relationships with those who live in the area by recruiting employees locally and supporting local football teams," says Cecilia. "If there is a risk of unrest, knowing your customers can be an advantage. It can have a calming effect, with a reduced risk of threats and violence."

The findings also suggest that grocery stores that operate in marginalized, and in some cases stigmatized, areas can become important social actors. The society-supporting role of retail is something that has not been highlighted enough in previous research, according to Cecilia Cassinger. Grocery retail plays an important role in building communities and should be more involved in projects to revitalise vulnerable areas.

Text: Peter Wiklund & Carys Egan-Wyer

The future of retail is always a hot topic. To guide our research and to frame our research and practitioner-focused activities, the Centre

for Retail Research launched two future-oriented themes in 2020. These themes continued to guide our work throughout 2023.

Theme: Future Retail Forms

As early as 2018, the Centre for Retail Research held a series of workshops on the future form and function of the physical store. In 2020, we launched a new theme that would allow us to focus on this topic in even greater depth. Throughout 2023 we continued to work with important questions from this theme. What is the future of what we call retail? What will be the forms, the governance, the offer? What influence will digitalization wield and what elements will remain analogue? Will we travel to stores or will they come to us? How will new store formats fit into the customer journey?

This year, researchers from the Centre for Retail Research wrapped up a research project on the evaluation of new store formats with a trip to the University of Stirling in Scotland, where they discussed their findings with local experts. The findings, which suggest that new types of value are derived from different store formats and that different store formats fit into different kinds of customer journeys, will be published in 2024.

"... the physical store will continue to exist for the foreseeable future..."

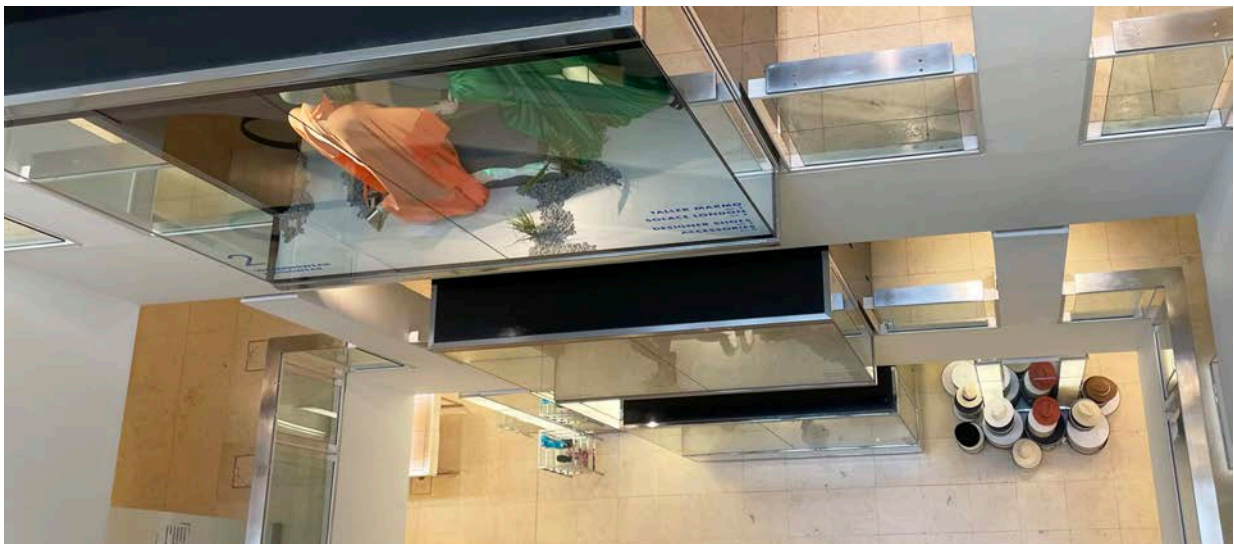
Retail formats were also in focus when Professor Jens Nordfält, from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom, visited the Centre. At a well-attended online seminar for retail practitioners, Jens presented his research on the role of physical stores in an increasingly digital world. Jens was clear that

the physical store will continue to exist for the foreseeable future but that it will change in many ways as a result not only of e-commerce and digitalization in-store but also because of the ways in which shoppers interact with their mobile devices while they shop. The good news for retailers is that, while we might expect mobile phone usage to reduce customer spend, studies show that mobile phone use actually leads to longer shopping trips and bigger spends.

Research in this theme has also focused on how to make supply chains more resilient. Retailers' capacity for resilience has been sorely tested in recent years by several geopolitical, climate- and health-related supply chain disruptions. The problems and potential solutions were discussed by Dr. George Maglaras, which visited the Centre to present his research in March and again, in June, when we launched a report on the challenges of retailing in a time of extreme uncertainty, *Retailing As Unusual*.

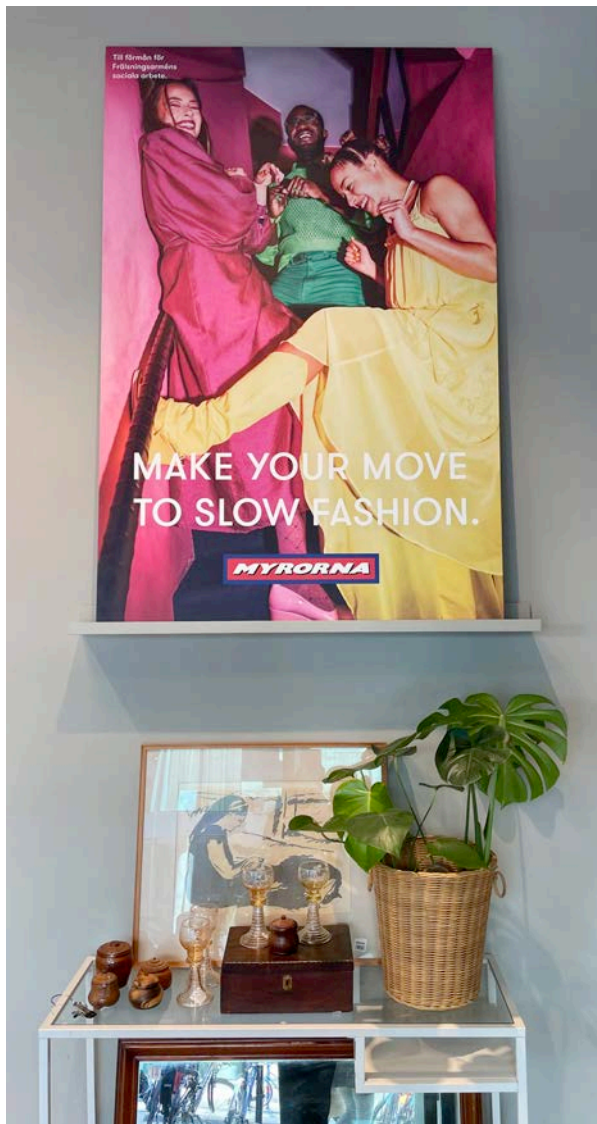
Several projects tied to the Centre also investigated future retail forms in 2023. For example, a project on the influence of automation and new technologies seeks to provide recommendations on how retailers should approach automation projects and the implementation of smart warehouses. And numerous projects focus on the logistical and data-related challenges and opportunities of the e-commerce and platform-based retail formats of the future.

Text: Carys Egan-Wyer



Theme: Future Consumption

The future of retail is closely related to the kinds of consumption that will take place in the future. Current modes of consumption – in which retail is responsible for selling high volumes of products and services to consumers – are not sustainable. Neither are they responsible. So how will consumption develop? What will be important to the consumers of the future? Will sustainability continue to shape retail offerings? And how will consumer wellbeing be affected by retailers? And how will technological developments affect our ability to consume more sustainably and in ways that benefit our wellbeing? These are the questions that are in focus in the Future Consumption theme.



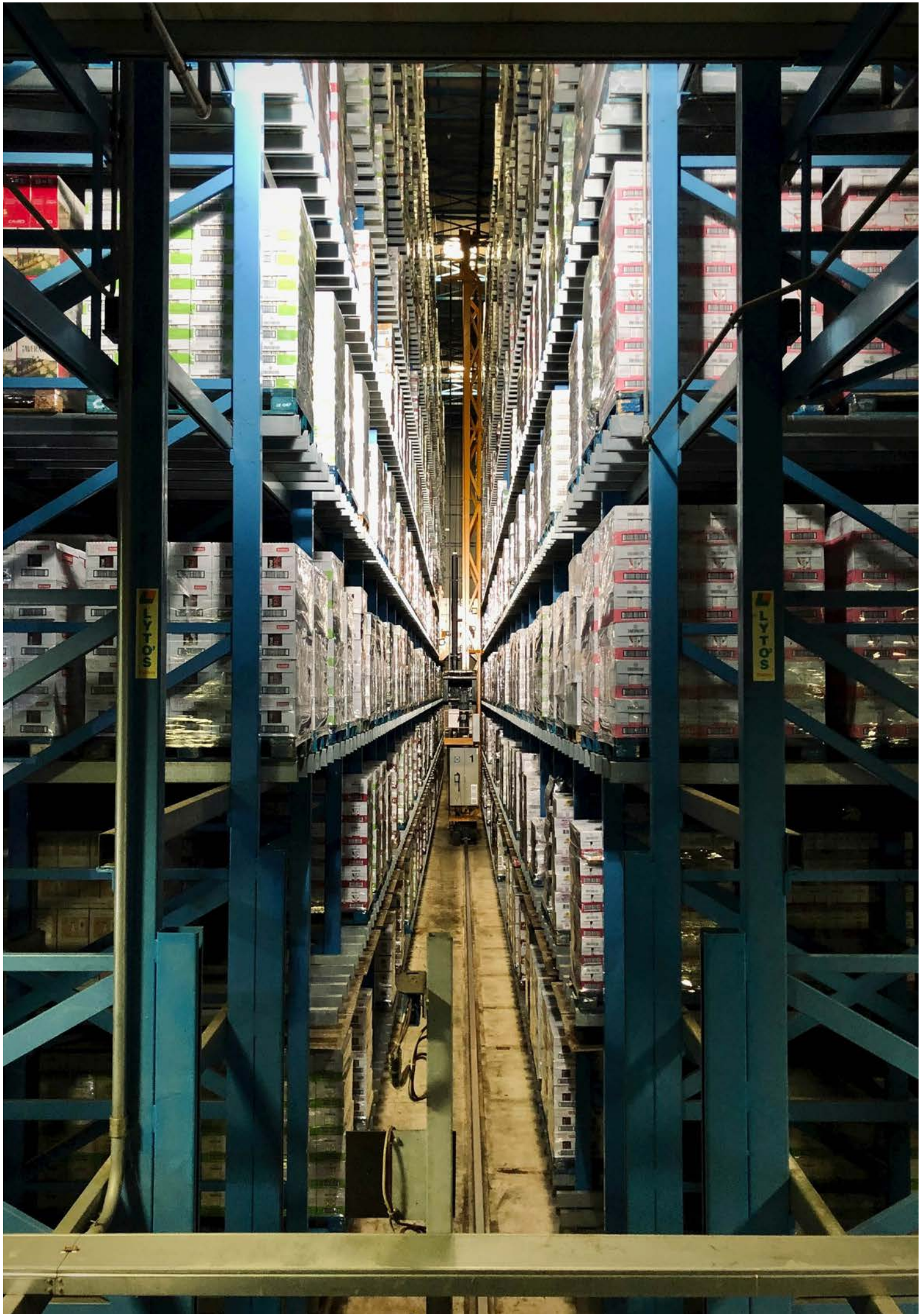
These questions are addressed in various research projects connected to the Centre. Some focus on questions of sustainability in retailing and examine, for example, how to reduce unnecessary volume and weight in packaging in order to make supply chains more sustainable, how to encourage zero emission last-mile logistics, or how to support fossil-free deliveries and returns. A new project in 2023 has investigated how stores can be used as circular logistics nodes in the circular economy of the future. Learnings from all these projects will help retailers address future consumption trends in positive and sustainable ways.

"A new project in 2023 has investigated how stores can be used as circular logistics nodes in the circular economy."

The Centre hosted numerous research seminars on the theme of future consumption in 2023. Heleen Buldeo Rai from the Mobilise research group at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium visited in May and presented research on e-commerce, urban logistics, and sustainability. Sustainability was on the agenda again, this time in the context of, circular supply chain management, when Dr. Haozhe Chen, from Iowa State University in the United States visited the Centre in June. And in September, John Olsson defended his PhD dissertation, which highlights innovative ways to reduce the environmental impact of last-mile logistics.

In October 2023, the Centre launched its long-awaited book, *The Future of Consumption*, published by Palgrave Macmillan with financial support from the Hakon Swenson Foundation and Lund University Libraries. The anthology explores how technology, sustainability and wellbeing will transform retail and customer experience in the near future. It combines academic and practitioner perspectives on future consumption trends, with each chapter authored by a leading scholar in their field of research or a retail practitioner who is already working towards the consumption of the future. *The Future of Consumption* is available open access, which means that you have free and unlimited access via our website. We launched the book at a very well attended event where a panel of retail and consumption experts discussed the book's key findings.

Text: Carys Egan-Wyer



Affiliated projects – a selection

The Centre for Retail Research is as a platform for researchers to meet and share knowledge. We arrange research seminars and workshops as well as supporting research networks and retail research applications from researchers at Lund University. Below you will find a selection of the research projects that are affiliated via our platform.

Circular economy and sustainable consumption: The store's future role as a circular logistics node

Today we consume far more than our planet can handle and society faces a major challenge in the transformation to sustainable consumption. Retail is important to succeed in this transition and several companies are testing different circular models. A common denominator for these projects is that the store plays a key role in getting close to the end customer and enabling circular flows. In other words, the stores are transformed to, so-called, circular logistics nodes to handle not just marketing/selling but also online order picking, returns handling, repairs, rentals, and second-hand sales. Despite the rapidly increasing relevance, the area is still relatively unexplored.

We address this gap and contribute to theory and practice by investigating how stores can be used as circular logistics nodes. The research project is carried out in close collaboration with retailers taking a leading role in this transformation. To understand opportunities and challenges with the circular transformation, a large number of stakeholders are also interviewed such as municipalities, urban planners, technology suppliers, and property owners. This enables a deeper understanding of what is required to use and scale up stores as circular logistics nodes. The study provides valuable knowledge and guidance by identifying driving forces, challenges, and solutions, as well as insights into how workplaces, processes and technology are changing to support circular flows. It also contributes to knowledge of how the surrounding society is affected and can contribute to facilitate the transformation towards sustainable consumption and circular economy within retail.

Participants: Joakim Kembro, Ebba Eriksson, Monica Mora Chaves

Duration: 2023-2026

Funder: Hakon Swenson Foundation

Changing consumption in times of crisis: Effects of rising food, energy and housing prices

In recent times, we have seen sharply rising prices, e.g. for food and energy, and higher interest rates, which have eroded consumers' purchasing power. The project will study how these price rises affect food consumption. Detailed scanner data will be used to study consumption shifts within and between product groups, for consumers in different regions of Sweden. For example, how have price rises affected the

sale of Swedish-produced and organic goods.

Participants: Jonas Nordström, Christian Jörgensen, Rebecca Swärd

Duration: 2023-2025

Funder: The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council

Transformed logistics networks for circular economy and sustainable consumption in Swedish retail

Circular retail involves a number of new flows, for example second hand and repairs, for which current logistics networks with associated warehouses and information systems are not designed. The transformation to circular retail means that the customers not only consume but also become a kind of supplier. Companies must therefore adjust their logistics for new flows and activities such as: pick-up and delivery of goods; inspection, quality assessment, handling and storage of used items; as well as the sale, rental and/or delivery of repaired products. To succeed in the transformation to circular retail, retailers are faced with several questions such as how circular material flows should be designed, and which material handling nodes are needed to handle different circular flows.

This project addresses these challenges and investigates how logistics networks should be designed and what types of material handling nodes and information systems that are required to support a transformation to and scale-up of circular retail.

Participants: Joakim Kembro, Ebba Eriksson

Duration: 2023-2025

Funding: The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council

Fossil-free deliveries: Industry agreement for e-commerce

In the autumn of 2021, ten e-commerce companies and ten transport carriers gathered for a workshop to discuss the conditions for forming a common definition of what a fossil-free delivery is. A year later, an industry agreement was finalized and available for endorsement at Svensk Handel. Becoming part of the agreement is free of charge and is based on an agreement between e-retailers and transport carriers, which in turn makes it easier and more transparent for consumers who e-shop to choose a fossil-free delivery. The industry agreement for fossil-free deliveries clarifies the concept of fossil-free delivery and requires that other environmental concepts used at check-out be removed. A few exceptions are made for certifications such as the Nordic Ecolabel's upcoming label for sustainable e-commerce transports.

To transform e-commerce into a sustainable system, more of this kind of collaboration is needed, where engaged traders and transport carriers join forces. Hopefully, the industry agreement for fossil-free delivery is the first of many joint concrete policy initiatives for more sustainable e-commerce.

Projekt participants: Daniel Hellström, Josephine Darlington, Klas Hjort, Kristoffer Skjutare
Project duration: 2021-2024
Funder: Swedish Government Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova)

Smart fossil-free returns

Returns have long been considered a necessary evil in e-commerce. Return levels today have led to that many retailers are hit hard financially, which has led companies trying to limit the amount of returns but also reviewing the effectiveness of the return process. Part of this work is to digitize the return process and get a better flow and cost control. At the same time, it is discussed how we can transform today's linear economy into circular economy where resources are re-used or shared. We have two similar return flows where we want to limit today's returns, but at the same time build systems to increase the circular return flow. In one flow, it is mostly an internal, company, cost/profitability focus, while in the other, the environment, sustainability and the transition are in focus. This project tries to understand how we can do both and improve profitability but not at the expense of the environment.

Participants: Klas Hjort, Daniel Hellström
Duration: 2023-2023
Funder: Triple F (Fossil Free Freight)

Transport efficiency and fill ratio: Analysis and action proposals for increased resource utilization

The overall goal of the entire project is to develop and operationalize appropriate, reliable, accessible and cost-effective efficiency measures (key figures) for an analysis of the Swedish freight transport system. These key figures will be developed taking into account the varying conditions of different subsystems and the different needs and roles of different stakeholders. The overall goal of the project is to generate new and vital knowledge that facilitates a reliable evaluation of the Swedish freight transport system's transport efficiency and efficiency potential, as well as the development of models and tools to study effect relationships as a basis for policy measures for increased sustainability.

Project participants: Daniel Hellström, Henrik Pålsson, Jessica Wehner, Sara Rogerson, Vendela Santén, Dan Andersson, Marta Gonzalez-Aregall
Project duration: 2021-2026
Funder: Trafikverket

National initiative for sustainable e-commerce: Accelerate innovation

To be able to achieve the sustainable development goals, there is no doubt that we need to transform e-commerce into a sustainable system. Individual efforts are not enough. We need changes at the system level. We also know that innovation are crucial for tackling this global and complex societal challenge. To be able to achieve these comprehensive system changes, there must be national coordination of efforts to

accelerate innovation. The aim of this initiative is to create a successful arena for collaboration and a competence centre for sustainable e-commerce.

Project participants: Daniel Hellström, Josephine Darlington, Klas Hjort, Kristoffer Skjutare
Project duration: 2021-2024
Funder: Swedish Government Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova)

Safe and accessible deliveries for elderly people

Many users are either unable to or, during the age of the pandemic, unwilling to visit service points or open the door to deliveries of items such as groceries. This means that vital social functions are not accessible to all. By eliminating personal interaction with home deliveries and other services, the risk of spreading infection is minimised. At the same time, care providers are able to significantly increase their flexibility, enabling more time with the person receiving care. Similarly, delivery of other items, such as those for healthcare in the home can be made to a delivery box connected to the internet and close to the user's home, thus minimising the need to travel to different service points. Home help staff can use an electronic key to collect the goods from the delivery box and take them to the user. The overall aim of the project is to investigate and describe elderly people's experiences of new services such as contactless food delivery, and in what way these services can be developed to increase accessibility to other vital public services.

Project participants: Klas Hjort, John Olsson, Daniel Hellström
Project duration: 2021-2023
Funder: Familjen Kamprads Stiftelse

Towards zero emission last mile distribution in omni-channel retail

Last mile logistics is an emerging research area with growing interest from scholars and practitioners, especially over the past five years. The rapid growth is mainly driven by increasing urbanization and population growth, e-commerce development, changing consumer behavior, innovation, and growing attention to sustainability. Many definitions of last mile logistics exist, yet a common view is that it concerns the last stretch of the supply chain from the last distribution center to the recipient's preferred destination point.

The last mile is often described as one of the most expensive, inefficient, and polluting parts of the supply chain. Therefore, a fast and efficient transition towards more sustainable last mile distribution is required. Little is known about the transition towards zero emission last mile distribution, therefore a more comprehensive understanding of this transition is required. The aim of this dissertation project is to contribute to enhanced understanding of the transition towards net-zero emission last mile distribution in omni-channel retail and its effects.

Project participants: John Olsson, Daniel Hellström, Henrik Pålsson
Project duration: 2018-2023

Retail and anti-consumption

Being a good consumer was once synonymous with being a good citizen. When individuals shopped, they supported local farmers, national manufacturers and contributed to economic growth (Cohen, 2003; Coskuner-Balli, 2020). A good citizen, today, appears to be one that forgoes material desires rather than indulging them. And some consumers are using anti-consumption rather than consumption as way to construct their identities.

This trend obviously has consequences for retailers, but how exactly should they respond? This is an especially pressing question for those retailers whose business models are based on volume and unnecessary replacement of items, such as fashion retailers. But, in order to understand how retailers can respond to the anti-consumption trend, we must first understand the trend from a consumer perspective.

This research will use qualitative methods and a socio cultural approach to understand anti-consumption trends because consumer choices inside the store are not isolated from life outside the store nor from the kind of selves we want to present to the outside world.

Project participants: Carys Egan-Wyer

Project duration: 2021-2023

Funder: The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council

Climate and cost effective packaging: A decision-support tool

There is no doubt that packaging is a part of making a better everyday life. Packaging can also help to cut carbon emissions and generate less product waste, playing an important role in keeping the planet healthy. In overall, this project will emphasise that packaging protect and adds value to products, but it is necessary to integrate the processes of designing, evaluating and producing packages, in order to successfully fulfil these tasks. The purpose of this project is to develop and disseminate new knowledge and a novel decision-support tool to tackle the complex issue of managing the design and selection of consumer and transport packaging for sustainable development. The project is based on design science research, co-creation with IKEA, Tetra Pak and WWF.

Project participants: Henrik Pålson, Daniel Hellström,

Project duration: 2020-2023

Funder: Familjen Kamprads stiftelse

The influence of automation and new technologies on the performance and sustainability of warehouse operations

The rate of implementation of automated warehouses has increased rapidly in recent years. This has effects on retail profitability and competitiveness as well as on sustainable work life and society. This project develops a framework for decision support and provides recommendations on how retailers should approach automation projects and the implementation of smart warehouses. It also contributes with knowledge development about the role of staff role and need for future skills in automated warehouses.

Project participants: Joakim Kembro, Andreas Norrman

Project duration: 2020-2023

Funder: The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council

New formats for the physical store of the future: How to evaluate and manage new store formats

This project's departure point is that the physical store is changing and a growing number of retail chains are experimenting with new store formats, such as show rooms, pop-up stores etc. These concept stores are a complement to traditional stores and they allow retailers to tailor their offerings to customer needs. Store performance is traditionally evaluated on the basis of sales but new format stores need to be evaluated and managed according to different variables. But which ones? And how? This project will answer these questions by studying new and established retail chains and their customers in Sweden and in the United Kingdom.

Project participants: Ulf Johansson, Jens Hultman, Steve Burt, Carys Egan-Wyer

Project duration: 2019-2024

Funder: The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council

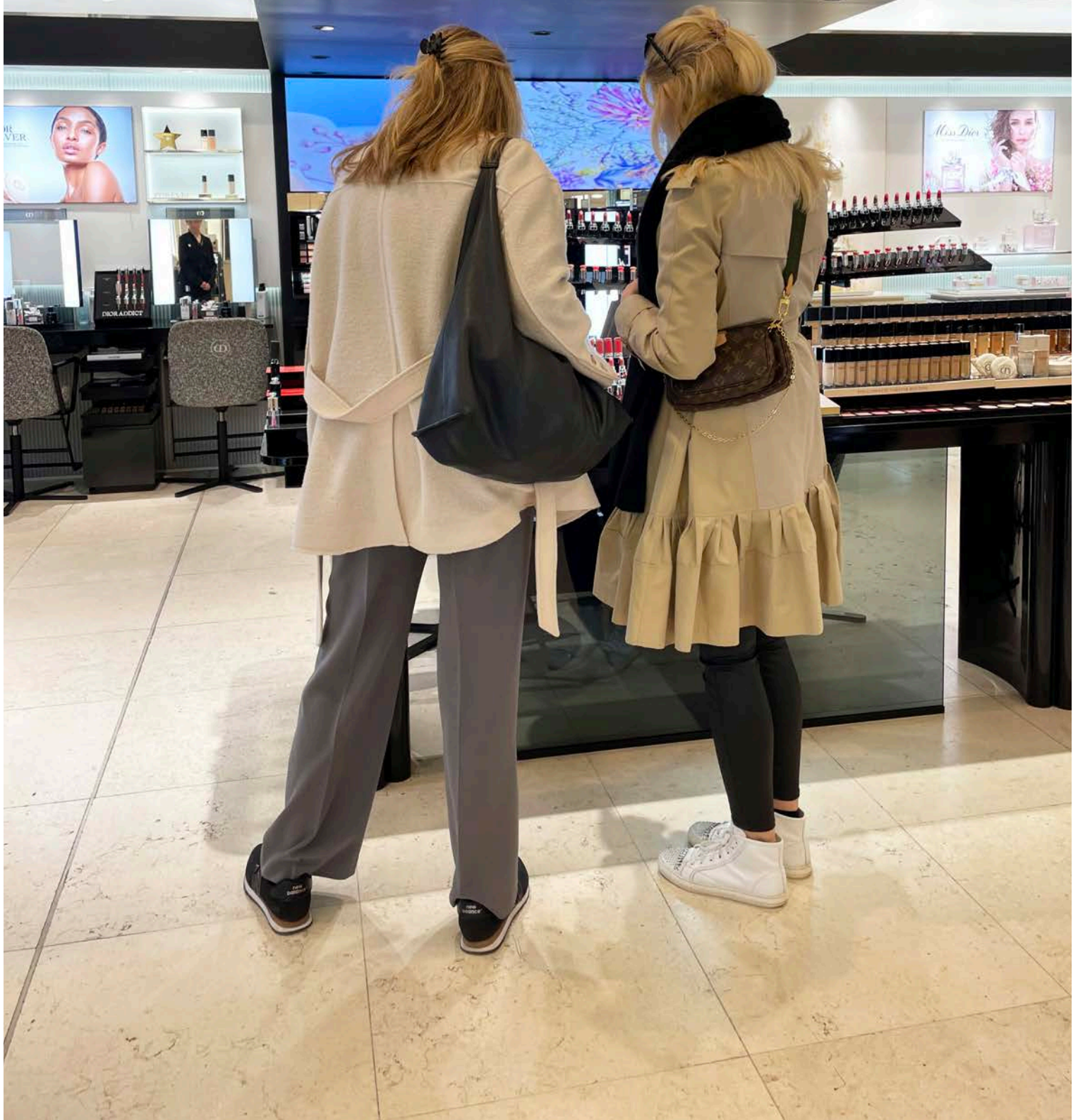
Towards sustainable supply chain practices – Investigating packaging efficiency

The purpose of this project is to highlight the volume and weight losses created by packaging and occurring along the entire supply chain, and make assessments of their magnitude.

Project participants: Noor Faizawati Badarudin, Daniel Hellström, Henrik Pålsson

Project duration: 2019-2024

DIOR



People at the Centre

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ELEONORA PANTANO	UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
FRANCESCA SERRAVALLE	UNIVERSITY OF TURIN

TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN: 31, TOTAL NUMBER OF MEN: 32

Funding

RESEARCH GRANTS AT THE CENTRE FOR RETAIL RESEARCH AT LUND UNIVERSITY

The Centre for Retail Research's initial five-year funding from the Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council (of 5 million Swedish crowns per year) ended in 2018. In 2023 we received 1 mil-

lion Swedish crowns from Lund University. These funds have been used to arrange research seminars and workshops and to support research networks and retail research applications.

Popular science publications and visibility in the media – a selection

New EU rules will prevent returns worth over 200 billion being thrown away every year	Interview, Market magazine, Sweden	January	Klas Hjort
Generative AI from a consumer perspective	Economic News, TV4, Sweden	January	Stefan Larsson
Sustainability in a broader perspective	Presentation, Network Trust Logistics Conference, Helsingborg, Sweden	January	Klas Hjort
Sustainable tourism in the cities of the future	Presentation, Folkuniversitetet, Sweden	February	Cecilia Cassinger
Making it matter: the societal relevance of research into brands, consumption, and places	Workshop, Helsingborg, Sweden	March	Cecilia Cassinger & Jon Bertilsson
Learning mechanisms, activities and initiatives in workplaces	Presentation, Competensum AB, Helsingborg, Sweden	March	Pernilla Derwik
Circular textiles – Can tech scale and consumer behaviour change fast enough?	Webinar, Lund University School of Economics and Management, Sweden	April	Carys Egan-Wyer
What is it like to be a researcher and influencer?	Malmö International School Careers' Fair 2023, Sweden	April	Carys Egan-Wyer
How Swedish Residents Navigate Global Medical Markets	Blog post, BMJ Publishing Group	May	Rui Liu
The research meeting - A podcast from the Swedish Trade Council	Podcast, The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council (Handelsrådet), Sweden	May	Cecilia Cassinger
In Depth - How to avoid accepting cookies	Interview, Scientific Radio, Sweden	May	Stefan Larsson
Anti-consumption and sustainability in retail	Presentation, The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council (Handelsrådet), Sweden	May	Carys Egan-Wyer
The art of navigating in uncertain retail terrain. Trendspaning i Malmö, Turning Torso 17/5	Trendspotting, The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council (Handelsrådet), Malmö, Sweden	May	Ulf Johansson
The research meeting – a podcast from the Swedish Trade Council	Podcast, The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council (Handelsrådet), Sweden	May	Carys Egan-Wyer
AI, Robotics, Law, Norms and Transparency	Seminar, Meiji University, Japan	June	Stefan Larsson
Retail as Unusual	Presentation, online public seminar, Lund University, Sweden	June	Carys Egan-Wyer, Ulf Johansson
Change and change-leadership	EFL Hotspot networking event, Lund University, Sweden	June	Ulf Johansson
Perceptions of AI and robotics in Japan and Sweden	Keynote, AI Lund, Sweden	August	Stefan Larsson
Transformation of returns management process in e-commerce	Keynote, Svensk Handel: D-Logistics, Gothenburg	September	Klas Hjort, Daniel Hellström
E-commerce Packaging Wrapped: Big Data, Stars, and More	Presentation, Logistics & Automation: Future Logistic Arena, Kistad	October	Yulia Vakulenko, Daniel Hellström, Henrik Pålsson
Experience the future: Virtual reality shopping	Demonstration, Celebrating ten years of retail research, Lund, Sweden	October	Hossain Shahriar

Decision support for climate and cost-effective packaging	Presentation, EMPACK: The Future of Packaging, Kista	October	Daniel Hellström, Henrik Pålsson
D-logistics: Returns – the key to a sustainable transition	News article, Svensk Handel	October	Klas Hjort, Daniel Hellström
Analyzing real life eye tracking data using realistic computational models of cognition	Presentation, eSENCE: The e-Science Collaboration, Uppsala, Sweden	October	Annika Wallin, Kerstin Gidlöf
Economic report extra: Stefan Larsson is interviewed about the UK AI Safety Summit and AI regulation.	Swedish Radio, Sweden	November	Stefan Larsson
Mobility – The Road to Futureproof Urban Logistics – where does it lead?	Presentation, Smart City Business Forum, Barcelona, Spain	November	Klas Hjort
Power, Politics and Policy of Artificial Intelligence	Panel discussion, Standing Group on Knowledge and Policies Online Seminar Series: Power, Politics and Policy of Artificial Intelligence, Sweden	November	Stefan Larsson
Lund researchers recognized for circular business model for textiles	Presentation, Future by Lund, Sweden	December	Daniel Hellström, John Olsson
The Foundation Models in AI and the European Regulation of a Moving Target	Presentation, International Conference on Artificial Intelligence: Risks, Regulations and Roadmaps, Copenhagen, Denmark	December	Stefan Larsson
Integrated Ecosystems: The path to tomorrow's smart and sustainable cities?	Blog post, Centre for Retail Research at Lund University	December	Klas Hjort, John Olsson
Svensk dagligvaruhandel: sluta gnälla! Var transparent istället!	Blog post, Centre for Retail Research at Lund University	December	Ulf Johansson





Retail as unusual

RETAILING IN A TIME OF EXTREME UNCERTAINTY



Edited by:

Carys Egan-Wyer
Ulf Johansson
Martin Moström



Publications

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Bäckström, K. (2023). **New technology and in-store service encounters: an analysis of coping practices and work experiences among frontline employees.** *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 33(5), 494-518.

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Edenbrandt, A. K., & Nordström, J. (2023). **The future of carbon labeling - Factors to consider.** *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review*, 12, 120.

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Thus, a successful store manager focuses on employees and makes them feel like important cogs in the wheel.

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berg Karlsson, E., & Wendin, K. (2024). **A sense of seaweed: Consumer liking of bread and spreads with the addition of four different species of northern European seaweeds. A pilot study among Swedish consumers.** *Future Foods*, 9, 100292.

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Kervall, M., & Pålsson, H. (2023). **A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective on Barriers to a Fossil-Free Urban Freight System.** *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(1), 186.

Liu, R. (2023). **Care in the air? Atmospheres of care in Swedish pharmacies.** *Journal of Material Culture*, 28(3), 409-425.

Loodin, H., & Thufvesson, O. (2023). **Which architectural style makes an attractive streetscape? Aesthetic preferences among city centre managers.** *Journal of Urban Design*, 28(1), 25-43.

The two streetscapes that city centre managers deemed most attractive are those that feature buildings from before 1910.

Loodin, H., & Thufvesson, O. (2023). Which architectural style makes an attractive streetscape? Aesthetic preferences among city centre managers. *Journal of Urban Design*, 28(1), 25-43.

Norrmann, A., & Prataviera, L. B. (2023). **Revisiting postponement: The importance of cross-functional integration to understand tax implications in global supply chains.** *Journal of Business Logistics*, 44(4), 693-718.

Olsson, J., Hellström, D., & Vakulenko, Y. (2023). **Customer experience dimensions in last-mile delivery: an empirical study on unattended home delivery.** *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 53(2), 184-205.

Otterbring, T., Folwarczny, M., & Gidlöf, K. (2023). **Hunger effects on option quality for hedonic and utilitarian food products.** *Food Quality and Preference*, 103, 104693.

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Schaumann, J. M., & Tarnovskaya, V. (2023). **Market shaping MNCs in emerging markets - stakeholder engagement and the role of embeddedness**. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 114, 64-79.

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Sullivan, K., Rennstam, J., & Bertilsson, J. (2023). **Sycomorphism in city branding: The case of Amazon HQ2**. *Marketing Theory*, 23(2), 207-223.

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Cassinger, C., & Eksell, J. (2023, June). **Consuming the city: Spatial implosion-explosion in urban spectacles**. Presented at the Consumer Culture Theory Conference 2023 (CCTC2023), Lund, Sweden, June 2023.

Cassinger, C., & Gyimóthy, S. (2023, June). **Finding and making place in consumer culture theory research**. Presented at the Consumer Culture Theory Conference 2023 (CCTC2023), Lund, Sweden, June 2023.

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Hellström, D., & Olsson, J. (2023, June). **Let's go thrift shopping: exploring circular business model innovation in fashion retail**. Presented at the 18TH Academy of Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Knowledge Conference (ACIEK), Madrid, Spain.

Kavaratzis, M., Pasquinelli, C., Medway, D., Cassinger, C., De Jong, M., & Hanna, S. (2023). **Marketing for better cities: Setting the agenda for responsible, inclusive, smart and equitable places**. Presented at the 2023 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference (AMS), New Orleans, United States, May 2023.

Mont, O., Lehner, M., Richter, J. L., & Plepys, A. (2023, July). **Sustainable lifestyle choices in food and their rebound effects**. Presented at the 5th SCORAI, 21st ERSCP, and Wa-

gingen University Conference: Transforming Consumption-Production Systems Toward Just and Sustainable Futures, Wageningen, Netherlands.

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BOOKS

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We have learned to think of ourselves as consumers, rather than citizens, in a variety of situations.

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Olsson, J. (2023, Aug 21). **Last-mile delivery services in retail: a consumer-centric approach**. Lund: Packaging Logistics, Lund University. 97 p. Doctoral dissertation.

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Askanius, T., & Ulver, S. (2023). **Selling Far-Right Extremism: New Forms of Far-Right Merchandise and Online Consumer Subcultures in Sweden**. In: *Violent Extremism: A Nordic Outlook*. Lexington Books.

Bäckström, K., Egan-Wyer, C., & Samsioe, E. (2023). **Introduction: The Future of Consumption**. In Bäckström, K., Egan-Wyer, C., & Samsioe, E. (eds.), *The Future of Consumption: How Technology, Sustainability and Wellbeing will Transform Retail and Customer Experience* (p. 1-18). Palgrave Macmillan.

Bertilsson, J., Sullivan, K., & Rennstam, J. (2023). **A critical typology of "good place branding": Lessons from**

place-branding expertise. In Mabillard, V., Pasquier, M., & Vuignier, R. (eds.), *Place branding and marketing from a policy perspective: Building effective strategies for places* (p. 213-226). London: Routledge.

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