

Grippa Working Paper

Customer Perception of Safety and Risk

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Customer's perceptions of safety in bars

As part of the customer survey, participants were asked to mark on a floor plan locations that they thought were particularly risky in terms of the possibility of bag theft. In the bar featured below (Moon Under Water, Leicester Square), there were 27 respondents who indicated their thoughts on risky locations. These locations were geocoded (digitally located in space) using a Geographic Information System using the digital layout of the bar produced by Spike Spondike at Central St Martin's college. The locations were then submitted to the crime mapping software CrimeStat III which produces a kernel density plot of risk using the individual responses. In this case, the bar was split into a grid of 40 columns, and the bandwidth used was 1.5 meters. Kernel density estimation is the extrapolation of data from a sample to an entire population. In mapping, this involves the production of a smoothed hotspot from individual discrete points. The bandwidth and cell size determine the extent of and degree of smoothing of the risk surface produced. For more information see Chainey and Ratcliffe (2005) Map 1 shows the summary of all the responses as a whole. It is obvious that the outside tables were seen as being at particularly high risk, as were the seats just inside the bar close to the entrance. Other more subtle locations where there was the perception of increased risk included those next to the fruit machines and seats next to the television screens. Interestingly, the bar area is not perceived as particularly high risk here.

Map 2 separates the sample of respondents into those that saw the safety of their belongings as one of the top three concerns they had when selecting a place to sit or stand in the venue, from those that saw this as being one of the bottom three concerns. Essentially, this divides the respondents in those for whom safety of belongings was more of a concern from those for whom it was less of a concern. There are no major differences between the locations these groups thought were risky, and it was not possible to do any statistical testing of differences. However, it is interesting to observe that those who were more concerned about the belongs thought the risk was more widely distributed within the bar- and not just located outside and at the entrance, possibly reflecting their perceptions that crime risk is more general.

Implications

An interesting question that this mapping exercise raises is whether more needs to be done to secure the outside spaces of bars or not. With the new smoking laws, these outside spaces have recently changed function- they are used frequently for short spaces of time. Furthermore, many have been fenced, gated or cordoned off to give the bars and customers within them some ownership of the outside space. The frequency of use might attract offenders and increase crime risk- particularly because get-away does not even involve leaving a premises. On the other hand, increased territoriality might lead to an increase in factors protecting people against crime. What is clear is that the customers in the sample perceived that outside space to be vulnerable. More information is needed to establish whether or not this is in fact the reality.

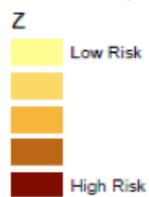
Reference

Chainey, S. and Ratcliffe, J. (2005) GIS and Crime Mapping. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

Customer Perception of Bag theft Risk in Bar 1

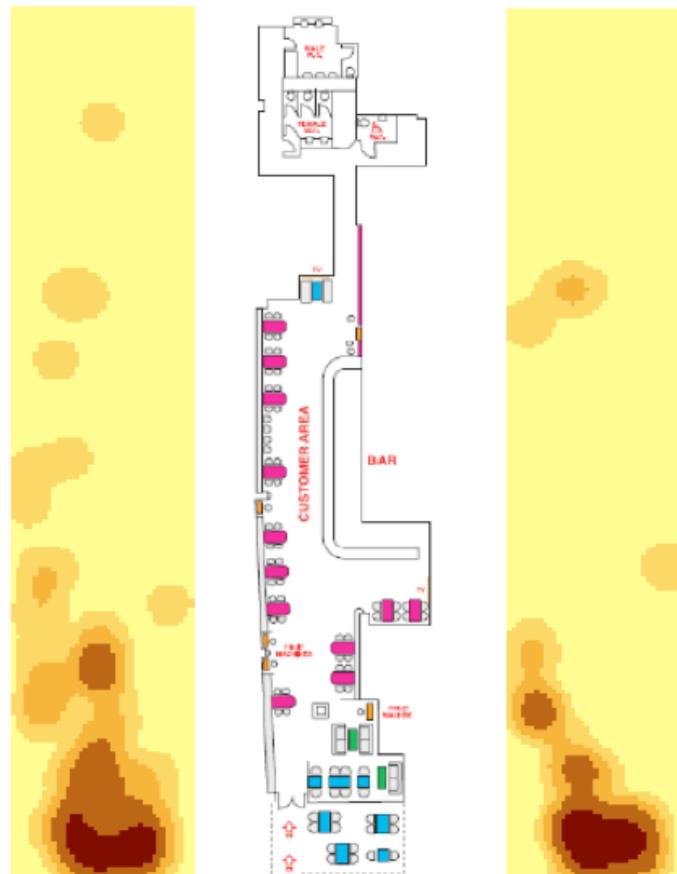


Customer perception of bag theft risk



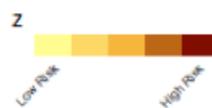
Map 1

Customer Perception of Bag theft Risk in Bar 1 by extent to which safety of belongings is important



Customers to whom safety of
belongs are more important

Customers to whom safety of
belongs are less important



Map 2