

The University of Manchester Alliance Manchester Business School

Alliance Manchester **Business** School Research

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Automation and work

Andy Burnham | Data visualisation | Tackling poverty pay

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Art of the possible lan Funnell from ABB

Sustainable development

Energy transitions Policy impact

Real world research Al and emergency services Alliance Manchester Business School The University of Manchester

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Cover imagery:

YuMi the robot conducts an orchestra in Pisa, Italy. The robot was created by ABB and its performance was developed through a process called lead-through programming.

Image courtesy of ABB.



Greater Manchester's economy is robust, diverse and growing. With more than 124,000 businesses it is already a great place to live and work, but now we need government to give us the powers and resources to go much further.



Greater Manchester's new Local Industrial Strategy is one of the country's first modern local industrial strategies, with the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership and the UK government as key partners.

plan reconfirms the city region as an industrial and social pioneer. In Greater Manchester we led the first industrial revolution - we are now in a position to lead the fourth.

deliver an economy fit for the future, with prosperous communities across the city region and radically increased productivity and earning power.

I want Greater Manchester to break the barriers to advanced manufacturing and digitalisation and the Local Industrial Strategy forms part of the most advanced devolution deal of any city region in England, representing a strong partnership between local leaders and Westminster.

Earlier this summer I was joined by the then Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Greg Clarke, the Chair of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership Mike Blackburn, and the Leader of Manchester City Council Sir Richard Leese, to launch the strategy at The University of Manchester in its impressive new £10m Future Biomanufacturing Research Hub.

We were also joined by Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice Chancellor of The University of Manchester, who has been an important driving force behind the strategy, reflecting our shared belief that our four universities are crucial partners in driving our ambitions forward.

Greater Manchester's economy is robust, diverse and growing. With more than 124,000 businesses it is already a great place to live and work, but now we The bold and innovative joint need government to give us the powers and resources to go much further. We must be able to respond to the economic and technological challenges that the future will bring Undoubtedly another challenge The strategy is designed to our city region is certain to face is the climate change emergency. March saw the second annual Green Summit where we agreed a bold ambition for our city region to be carbon neutral by 2038, 12 years ahead of the government's own target.

I believe that the north can lead the next industrial revolution - the tech revolution. But this will not happen without more local control over skills and training for these new hi-tech businesses.

Earlier this year Greater Manchester Combined Authority and our 10 local authorities issued a major £32m tender request to enable high-speed, fullfibre data connectivity at public sector sites across the city region. As well as revolutionising our online public services, it will also provide a huge boost to Greater Manchester's economy and productivity, cementing our position as one of the leading digital city regions in Europe.

We're also setting out how advanced manufacturing, along with the digital and creative sectors, will now help to grow our economy and help us become a wholly digitally-enabled city region.

Guest welcome: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.

Robust economy

By investing in the city region's global research and industrial strengths, we will pioneer new technology and create new exciting jobs in future industries such as health innovation, low carbon technologies and advanced materials.

There has never been a greater need to rebalance the economy outside of London and give the north of England the power and resources to get firing on all cylinders, and we are making substantial progress on a wide variety of fronts. Truly, I believe that Greater Manchester has very exciting times ahead.

Skills



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Embedding Social responsibility

Our new Director for Social Responsibility Eva Niesten outlines her vision for the role. Eva Niesten has long held a passion for helping to protect the environment and promoting sustainable behaviour.

Indeed to prove the point, when we meet for a coffee she observes that the café has served the drink in a compostable cup. "It's all very well serving the drink in a compostable cup, but there is no compostable store to put the cup in afterwards. Why are we buying these cups if there is nowhere to compost them?"

She says it's just one small, yet perfect, example of the need for more joined-up thinking. "In other countries across Europe, such as the Netherlands where I am from, you see sustainability everywhere, but that isn't the case here in the UK. The UK needs to find more consensus and agreement to find solutions to environmental issues."

Renewable energy

An economist by background, Dr Niesten's interest in sustainability was first sparked by her studies into the deregulation of European energy markets back in 2002. As she explains: "The legislation spawned lots of new, green energy companies and I became very interested in researching these companies because it was clear that they could have a real positive impact on tackling climate change."

To this day she remains very interested in the growth and performance of these companies, and among her current research areas are how firms in the renewable energy sector collaborate and collectively stimulate environmental sustainability.

For instance she is currently working on a paper with colleagues at the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIoIR) on how these companies change their business models over time to remain profitable while also doing good for the environment. "Ultimately if you are a renewable energy company you are creating positive externalities. So the guestion is how can you make money from doing a good thing for society and for the outside world?"

New role

After being Associate Head of Social Responsibility for the past three years, Dr Niesten has now stepped up to become the school's Director of Social Responsibility, and is passionate about further embedding ethics and social responsibility across the Business School.

"Further embedding social responsibility into teaching is absolutely crucial. If we are to produce socially responsible graduates then we need to be embedding this throughout degrees and academics need to be incorporating social responsibility throughout their teaching and making it an integral part of their curricula.'

A key element of Dr Niesten's new role will also be overseeing the Business School's application to become a member of Principles for Responsible Management Education, a United Nations initiative

UN initiative

which aims to promote awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals and develop responsible business leaders.

As she adds: "The initiative is all about sharing best practice and how you can best implement social responsibility into the curriculum. At Alliance MBS we have a large number of academics who are already very active in this area and we want to communicate more widely to the outside world about the work we are doing."

As part of that drive Dr Niesten, who is already a coordinator of an MSc course unit on Sustainability and Social Responsibility. is looking to bring together academics and researchers from across the School for a social responsibility conference to share their research. "Social responsibility is very inter-disciplinary and academics have much to learn from each other."

Eva Niesten is a Senior Lecturer in Innovation, Strategy and Entrepreneurship, and Director for Social Responsibility.

The Annual Grigor McClelland Lecture:

February 2020 Martin Wolf, Financial Times

Marketing value

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More traditional forms of advertising continue to create long-term value for firms.

Amid the march to digital advertising the power of traditional radio. TV. cinema. direct mail and outdoor advertising has been rather sidelined in recent years.

But a study co-authored by Professor Andrew Stark shows that there is still considerable value for companies from these more traditional a marketing point of view.

Specifically, his research shows a positive link between advertising spending and firm performance for persistent advertisers and major media advertisers in general. It concludes that information on advertising expenditures serves as a positive signal about future earnings, and investors could find this information useful in revising their estimates of a firm's valuation.

Media advertising

The paper examines whether major media advertising expenditures help in predicting future earnings. It considered the role of media advertising in firms' marketing efforts and concludes that persistent advertisers are more likely creating long-lived intangible assets.

Employing a sample of persistent UK advertisers over the period 1997-2013, the paper finds that advertising expenditures are significantly and positively associated with firms' future earnings and market value.

Said Professor Stark: "Despite the recent rise in digital advertising budgets, traditional advertising media still appear to be effective in positively influencing firms' performance. These findings have implications for marketers in providing evidence of the general value generated by firms' advertising budgets."

Digital shift

The research theme emerged out of doctoral work at Alliance MBS with two of Professor Stark's co-authors - Sved Zulfigar Ali Shah and Saeed Akbar – two of his former PhD students.

He stresses, however, that they forms of advertising – and not just from were not specifically thinking about a 'digital versus traditional' media analysis when they started out.

As he explains: "Where we came from was a criticism that financial statements were failing to recognise many important yet intangible assets, such as those created by research and development activities and advertising spend, and that they should be included as assets in a firm's balance sheet. We suggest that if companies were to at least provide information on advertising expenditures then, likely as not, that would be useful to investors."

Professor Stark says the study is especially relevant in the current environment which has seen a shift to the digital economy and to firms with future earnings and market valuations largely based on intangible assets.

"Our findings not only have to benefit from advertising activities in important implications for regulators in devising future financial reporting policies with regard to advertising, but also inform investors and other stakeholders (eq analysts, researchers) seeking to understand the nature of advertising expenditures. They strengthen the arguments for expanded disclosure of advertising and other intangible assets in the financial statements of firms."

Caveats

He does though add that there are caveats. "Firstly, we only examine major media advertising expenditures. Therefore, our

analyses do not capture the full extent of other advertising activities.

"Secondly, accounting standard setters would need to deliberate on a common description of what constitutes advertising costs, and also consider whether it might be useful to break advertising costs down into different elements (eg media advertising expenditures, production costs, etc.)."

Starting point

He argues, however, that the results provide a useful starting point for any deliberations that UK or international accounting policy-makers might make over the issue of the disclosure of information on advertising activities.

"It would be interesting for future researchers to explore why, unlike firms in the US that are relatively more inclined to disclose advertising expenditures, firms in the UK are reluctant to voluntarily disclose such information, resulting in the absence of reliable advertising data."



Andrew Stark is the Coutts Professor of Accounting and Finance

Call to action

Alliance MBS is playing a leading role in tackling the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.





Goal: No Poverty Human Development Report

The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were first unveiled in 2016 and build on its original eight Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

poverty, zero hunger, good health, guality education, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation, through to the promotion of affordable clean energy, decent work and economic growth. They also promote innovation, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities, responsible consumption, climate action, and unpolluted oceans and land.

Earlier this year the quality and scale of The University of Manchester's impact against the SDGs was ranked first in Europe in the 2019 Times Higher Education University Impact rankings. Here we detail just four examples of research currently being undertaken at Alliance MBS.

The Human Development Report for Greater Manchester researched inequalities by gender, ethnicity, social class and locality across the city's ten boroughs. It was seen as a first step towards mapping and understanding The SDGs stress everything from zero the factors that shape human development at the city region level.

> It specifically looked at the experiences of Greater Manchester residents throughout their lives, an approach which allows researchers to highlight some of the critical human development issues at different life stages.

> Lead author Professor Jill Ruberv. Director of the Work and Equalities Institute. explains: "Viewing human development through the life course perspective illuminates these challenges as the chances available to individuals at key life stages, and the support they receive from the social and economic environment to make transitions, have longterm consequences."

> The report showed that in all cases the human development indices for Greater Manchester - calculated for working age adults and for six key life stages - are below the national benchmark







Goal: Gender Equality Shared Parental Leave

New rights allowing UK parents to share leave following the birth or adoption of their child came into effect in 2015. But take-up of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) has been very poor since the legislation was introduced.

Our Work and Equalities Institute has conducted interviews with parents about their experiences of SPL and worked with the charity Working Families and the Fatherhood Institute to create video case studies and resources relating to SPL that employers and employees can access. research which has informed a key part of the government's wider SPL campaign.

Dr Emma Banister, Senior Lecturer in Consumer Research, has been spearheading our research around SPL. She said: "As a recent report showed, despite widespread belief that men should be as involved as women in all aspects of childcare, they are both still largely playing traditional gender roles when looking after children. Yet the research found that men under age 35 are significantly more likely to wish to take a more active role in caring for their children than previous generations of fathers."

Jill Ruberv is a Professor of Comparative Employment Systems and Director of the Work and Equalities Institute



Emma Banister is a Senior Lecturer in Consumer Research



Goal: Good Health and Well-being National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work

Founded in 2016, the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work is focused on improving workplace well-being in the UK and globally. It aims to inspire organisations and their leaders to challenge the thinking of what healthy, high performing employees can bring to an organisation and to the productivity of the nation.

The forum was the brainchild of Sir Cary Cooper, 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health, and was borne out of conversations he had with HR directors and chief medical officers during his research into well-being issues.

company culture from the bottom up."

Sir Cary says the wider backdrop is that levels of stress continue to soar among employees, while another big driver behind the forum is talent retention. "Companies come to me and say 'we cannot afford to lose key people'. They want to know how they can create the right culture so that people stay fit and healthy within their business. So this is also about bottom line."





As he explains: "Time and again they kept telling that there was an urgent need for a national body to look at all these issues and what our forum is seeking to do is change



Goal: Responsible Consumption and Production Sustainable Consumption Institute

Our Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI) explores how adjusting consumption and production systems can bring about less resource-intensive ways of life. Our research allows us to better understand human needs, values and practices while exploring sustainable approaches to production, supply and distribution of goods and services.

Frank Boons, Director of the SCI and Professor of Innovation and Sustainability. was also recently appointed to a governmentled Systems Research Programme which will look at some of the UK's most pressing environmental issues.

The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra) has appointed six senior academic fellows from universities across the UK to focus on five key areas: rural land use, food, air quality, marine, and resources and waste.

Professor Boons, who is heading up the latter area on waste and resources systems, said: "This is a unique opportunity for the SCI, Alliance MBS and the University to work with Defra to bring in our academic evidence in a way that makes a real impact and brings it into the heart of policymaking."

Sir Cary Cooper is 50th Anniversarv Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health



Frank Boons is Director of the SCI and Professor of Innovation and Sustainability

Art of the possible

Ian Funnell, Chief Executive of ABB UK and North West Chair of the CBI, on the need for UK manufacturing to be more automated.

How does ABB help companies on their automation journey?

We are experts in electrification, industrial automation and robotics, and look at digitisation across every sphere of business. Most companies we deal with are taking those first small steps in automation and that's the right approach. You want to take steps that are sensible, pragmatic, costeffective and low risk. You don't want to suddenly take one giant leap and pay the consequences because your business isn't ready for it. What we find is that once a company has taken that first step it never goes back. It is bitten by the automation bug and wants to know what else it can do.

How do you dispel the myths around automation in terms of cost, complication and displacing jobs?

It comes down to awareness. The more companies realise how automation is transforming the world of business, the more we can dispel them. I'll give you a perfect example. I recently visited a local blinds company where every individual cell of the manufacturing process has now been automated. The impact on that business has been phenomenal. It has increased its productivity by at least 20%, profits have doubled, and it has had to take on more staff to cope with demand. It has successfully taken that first step on the automation ladder.

But a lot of SMEs are still very sceptical about automation, and one of the things that holds a lot of them back is the 'make do and mend' culture. As a nation we are one of the most under-automated countries in western Europe and we really need to challenge companies about the art of the possible.

How much can ABB realistically do on its own to change perceptions?

Getting the message out is extremely difficult and challenging. But it cannot just be up to one company like us, it has to be driven by business groups and government too. The key is to convey a consistent and coordinated message so that companies are attending the right conferences and exhibitions where they can learn about the opportunities.

Isn't this precisely what the Made Smarter initiative is trying to achieve?

Yes, its aim is to provide a vehicle to help UK manufacturing become more productive. But we must not rest on our laurels. It is up to us as business to continue to persuade or educate government of the benefits of this agenda to ensure we continue on the journey. If we do not do this what else is there? How else can we get UK manufacturing to become more productive? While it is early days for the north-west pilot it is already delivering tangible help to SMEs and this needs to be widened to other areas.

Is automation therefore the answer to the UK productivity puzzle?

Yes, but the technology itself is only one, albeit sizeable, part. The other pieces of the jigsaw are access to finance, lack of knowledge, the 'make do and mend' culture, and skills. If you take finance you would be amazed at how many companies still struggle to even pull together basic business plans. And skills training in the UK remains a huge issue because it is so fragmented. In the engineering sector alone there are more than 600 organisations with a role. Some are excellent at what they do, so why cannot we take best practice and excellence and extend that? At the moment there is often a huge amount of effort going into leveraging nothing, there is no framework underpinnina it.

How will Brexit impact on productivity?

In the post-Brexit landscape, whatever that looks like, frictionless trade is only a good thing as long as you are competitive at your end of the pipe. If you are not, then business will go to the end of the pipe which is more competitive.

The productivity puzzle has only been exacerbated by Brexit with industrial investment falling significantly as everyone plays a 'wait and see' game. Meantime the productivity gap between the UK and our major competitors only further increases. What we are finding right now is that companies are making the minimum investment they have to, taking as small steps as they possibly can. If you export, why commit to something when you don't know what kind of trade deals are going to exist? So whatever the Brexit outcome, increasing productivity is going to become more important to maintain a competitive manufacturing sector.

What core skills do employers need and how can business education help?

The core skills we need are resilience, leadership, creativity, and teamwork. In this regard the relationship between business and education is extremely important. Business needs to be conveying to the education sector what it needs and wants from the education system. One initiative I like is the idea of putting experienced business people back into the education system to help students understand how business works.

Finally, what do you think about the concept of a regional industrial strategy?

Devolved government is a real positive for driving local innovation. If you have autonomy within a region, and you can support that with an industrial strategy, then monetise that innovation. As a business we are also seeing more localisation requirements, building factories where the market demand is.

However I think a regional industrial strategy is only a good idea up to a point. Where it could be less helpful is if every region starts describing itself as a 'centre of excellence' in a particular sector. There must be coordination between the devolved regions so we don't start to dilute the benefits. One good example is skills. We should have a national framework to allow talent to move across the country and not simply duplicate effort and constantly reinvent the wheel. ●

lan recently spoke at our Vital Topics debate on automation.

Disaster planning

Duncan Shaw saw his research on disaster planning spring into action during a visit to South America.

Duncan Shaw was en route to Chile as head of an international peer review team assessing guidelines for community resilience and spontaneous volunteering, when two major where he was travelling to.

For the last year Concepcion, one of the biggest urban conurbations in Chile, has been implementing an international standard on involving spontaneous volunteers (SVs) in disaster response which was initiated by Professor Shaw. The standard provides guidelines on how groups can make best use of the enthusiastic volunteers who jump to the assistance of affected communities during disasters such as flooding, hurricanes or man-made catastrophes.

The standard provides organisations and services with crucial guidance which could make the difference in the event of a major emergency, as following a catastrophe SVs can make a huge difference in terms of relief efforts and support for those affected.

Delegation

Professor Shaw was heading a delegation of seven government officials from countries including the UK, Ecuador, Argentina and Iceland, which was investigating standard.

As he explains: "We literally got off the plane after a 31-hour journey and were immediately taken to the disaster site where we found the army, navy, government, NGOs, and members of the community

coordinating a response to the tornados, such as by boarding up broken windows and placing tarpaulins over roofs.

"Until we arrived the standard was tornados struck Concepcion, the very city just a shiny document. But this was the first time anyone anywhere had actually used its principles to respond to a crisis. As the Mayor said to me, we had travelled to Chile to see how they prepared for a disaster, but we ended up seeing how they actually respond to such an event.

> "On the ground up to 750 houses were damaged by the tornado and the government deployed their SV guidelines and initiated the SV activity. Up to 320 SVs came forth and were deployed on various activities and we met the people who led the emergency response."

Bittersweet

During the rest of the week-long visit

However Professor Shaw says seeing his standard put to actual benefit proved a bittersweet moment. "While it was extremely interesting to witness our research being put into practice, it was tempered by the fact that one person died and Concepcion suffered huge damage from these tornados. What shone through from seeing how people responded on the ground was the fantastic resourcefulness of the local community, how well prepared how Concepcion was implementing the they were in their response, and the general love they had for their community." Professor Shaw and his delegation met a number of senior officials and politicians in the country as part of the peer review. This included a visit to Talcahuano, the scene of a devastating tsunami in 2010, and to the city of Valparaiso which suffered a major forest fire in 2014. The delegation also held a major workshop in Concepcion with NGOs and local politicians.

Professor Shaw is now reflecting on the experience and reviewing the standard. "We learnt a great deal by seeing the standard being put into practice which will further inform our research. As a review team we have a number of recommendations for Chile and our own countries on how to further strengthen SV activity."

Meanwhile, he says the next country his team is going to review is Argentina (Neuquen) which is preparing to translate their SV guidelines into state law. "It was always intended that we would go from one country to the next in terms of implementing the standard. We are getting substantial political support for the standard across many countries. Politicians really see it as a way of connecting with citizens and showing that they are addressing their concerns."



Duncan Shaw is a Professor of **Operations and Critical Systems**

Working together

With the Brexit deadline approaching and a potentially new era for British trade on the horizon, it's a fascinating time for MBA alumna Marian Sudbury.

"Broadly speaking, my team's purpose is to encourage UK companies to export and to encourage foreign investment in the UK," she says. "We focus on constantly understanding what companies need and making sure they can access support in the simplest possible way."

Brexit challenge

It goes without saying that a key area for her team right now is preparing businesses for the changes that will come with an EU exit and helping them make the most of free trade agreements. Her team also works closely with colleagues who are negotiating those free trade agreements with non-EU countries when we leave the EU.

Sudbury was initially attracted to working in the trade sector because it involves three areas she finds interesting - business, economics and politics. She felt that she could use the skills from her MBA to make a difference, and apply her experience of working internationally.

A key part of her role is working with stakeholders both within her department and externally, for example with local enterprise partnerships and combined authorities, and with people who hold resources for exports and investment.

Close relationship

Maintaining a close relationship with companies and stakeholders is crucial, and she says her staff are key to this.

"I need to make sure I have the right people with the right objectives," she says. "It's crucial that they are motivated and listened to so that they understand our mission and have a chance to feed into the business."

The teamwork, skills and confidence that Sudbury gained from studying the MBA still help her in her role today and have boosted her career as a whole.

"The MBA made me realise that you own ideas and when it is going to be more productive to get behind someone else's ideas for the good of the team. Today my core skill is in terms of leading operational teams, and the MBA had a big focus on group work which gave me skills that I still put into practice today when managing teams. The MBA also gave me confidence in a wide range of topics that I hadn't dealt with before, including economics, statistics and world trading systems. Indeed when I was asked to set up an international division within a company in a previous role at a SME, I got out my MBA notes to help me work out what to do. Off the back of this. I went on to become a board director."

Choosing Manchester for her studies came through a prompt from her sister who had noticed an advert for the Manchester MBA offering scholarships for women. The part-time option appealed most to Sudbury, enabling her to continue to raise her children while doing some freelance work alongside her studying. Indeed she found that she could use the skills she learned on the MBA straight away in her freelance assignments.

Reflecting on her MBA journey, Sudbury says it also helped her to overcome some of her fears. "I am someone that really likes to know what I am talking about, so the MBA helped me learn more about the business world and hold more wellinformed discussions at work."

She also enjoyed the broad range of topics on offer during the MBA. "I enjoy learning about the world, so the diverse knowledge and varied subjects were great I particularly enjoyed the organisational psychology course. Not only did this help me with being a manager, but I went on to train as an executive coach and recently completed a psychology degree. Learning about psychology made me reflect on different ways to manage people and consider the impact of the choices I make as a manager."

Manchester

The MBA gave me confidence in a wide range of topics that I hadn't dealt with before, including economics, statistics and world trading systems.



Real world research

365 Response has turned to Alliance MBS to look at how artificial intelligence and machine learning can be integrated into its cloud-based platform.

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365 Response started life providing clinical pathway redesign solutions for patient transport in the NHS. Today it works with acute and ambulance NHS trusts. local councils, and private health and community transport providers supplying digital platform solutions based on the 365 Smart Platform.

Former GP and 365 Chief Technology Officer Dr Chris Jones has a background in primary care innovation and healthcare technology. Co-founders Sarah and Brendan Fatchett also have deep experience in the NHS and private but do not need NHS services." transport and technology spheres.

As Dr Jones explains: "When Sarah launched the business our great frustration was around the transportation of patients and how inefficient and disorganised it often was, with often incorrect resourcing. What mattered to me as a GP was that I would often see patients who were in need of urgent admission but who were then getting a delayed response because their ambulance had been diverted somewhere else.

"So we set up a procurement framework whereby compliant and assured transport providers could fill gaps in provision at short notice. What we quickly found was that there was also a positive impact on 999 response times because we were helping to free up emergency services, so it was a win-win for the NHS."

Growth

As the business grew it digitised its operations and created the 365 Smart Platform as an end-to-end cloud-based transport and logistics solution. A key development was the Digital Transport Marketplace allowing NHS Trusts all over

the UK to access real-time transport resources from procured and compliant providers to keep patient flow moving. The Platform also provides core functions for transport providers such as digital booking and dispatch, apps for drivers, patients and carers, and reporting and KPI monitoring and risk management. As Dr Jones adds: "We have also recently extended our reach into social prescribing. This is about providing health and well-being advice on non-medical

interventions to individuals who need help

Al potential

Dr Jones says the company had established close links with Alliance MBS over a number of years, and during conversations it was suggested that the company should pursue a knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) opportunity.

"The particular spark was that we wanted to bring AI and machine learning onto our platform. The sort of routes and journeys we handle are very complex and have a phenomenal number of potential solutions. We want to apply advanced Al algorithms to these real-world problems to help us make optimal use of finite resources." He adds that there are two essential elements to the KTP. "Firstly, it is about optimising the existing algorithms that we have to improve efficiency, develop capacity planning models and exceed what

expert human operators can achieve.

"Secondly, it is about using machine learning to build a flow model, and using historical data about patient movements across a locality to build up a picture and answer specific questions such as 'where

are the bottlenecks? Are resources in the right place? Should staff rotas be different?' These are the questions we will be able to answer from such an allencompassing model."

Real-world scenario

Manuel Lopez-Ibanez, Senior Lecturer at Alliance MBS, is overseeing the KTP with colleague Dr Julia Handl.

He said the KTP was a perfect example of how trends such as Industry 4.0, machine learning and artificial intelligence can now be transferred from the academic arena into real-world business scenarios. "We are at a point now when companies can benefit from these emerging technologies, and it is great to have a company such as 365 Response, which is making a positive impact in healthcare, looking to partner with Alliance MBS towards that goal.

"One of the reasons for doing research at Alliance MBS is the opportunity to collaborate with companies. For us as academics there are many benefits in seeing our techniques and methodologies applied in real-world scenarios. It is a real motivation for my research."

Joined-up thinking

Manchester paints business HMG is continuing to reap the benefits of a recent knowledge transfer partnership.



Fast forward 60 years and it's a business that is as full of as many opportunities and challenges as it faced back then. "Frankly there are limitless opportunities for a company like us because our customers are people that make things. The world of coatings is massive, everything that is made has a surface coating in it or around it."

To prove the point he says you only have to look around you, in your pockets, or even in the mirror. "Whether it's carpets. wall tiles, hair gel or make-up, they all have coatings. Even your mobile phone has a shield coating to stop it buzzing every time it is next to a computer screen. When people think of coatings they only think of decorative coatings, not functional coatings."

Evolution

Given the vast array of potential markets Falder says HMG is about "evolution, not revolution". "Don't get me wrong, we are a very entrepreneurial and innovative company, and our growth is based on good growth. But arguably our biggest challenge is around focus and research because markets are moving, evolving and changing so fast."

Responding to this challenge was precisely the driver for a knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) that the company initiated with Alliance MBS which looked at systemisation and organisation across the business. "It was all about helping us focus on where we should be concentrating the majority of our efforts," he adds. "The world is changing very fast. When I joined this business there was a scarcity of information in the world, today there are immense and overwhelming levels. So how do we ensure we target the right areas? The danger for us

is that our focus is too narrow when actually we need to be embracing new markets. It is about nimbleness, adaptability, and ensuring our staff have multiple skills."

Focus

The KTP focused on helping the business rewrite its product development process, and as a test example it applied this new process to the development of one of its new Monothane products, a paint used on steel and plastics. Explains Falder: "What the KTP did was ensure that everything was joined-up in terms of the product and product launch, and where we could go to market with it. It has since become one of our top ten best-selling products and sales continue to rise.

"More generally, rewriting the product development process ensured that any product that came out before launch was ready to go and was ready to target exactly the market we wanted to target. It was all about making the company more joined-up, streamlined and efficient."

Niche

With around 1,600 products serving almost the same number of markets, he adds that a major challenge is that products often only serve very niche areas. "Sometimes you can have a product that we think is brilliant. but it can be very difficult to get it moving in the market. So in that situation you look at taking the product to existing customers and seeing if you can tailor it to existing markets and customers."

Reflecting on the KTP, he says it helped the company become a "better business", especially by identifying internal weaknesses. "You cannot be experts at everything and the KTP helped us become more joined-up and systematic. It was not a case of one single transformational, magic bullet. The KTP was more about embedding and ingraining knowledge, and improving our processes, to make us more efficient. It created a level of focus on the general direction that we should be following."

John Falder Managing Directo

The danger for us is that our focus is too narrow when actually we need to be embracing new markets. It is about nimbleness, adaptability, and ensuring our staff have multiple skills.



Addressing poverty pay

Mat Johnson reflects on 20 years of the Living Wage.

Twenty years since it was first introduced in London the UK Living Wage campaign has proven to be a remarkable, if somewhat localised, success.

Today more than 5,000 organisations are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation, ranging from multinational companies in finance and professional services to family-owned SMEs in manufacturing and hospitality, while the Living Wage has also spread across all parts of the UK, and across a wide range of sectors.

The policy has also raised the pay of typically female and often unionised workers at the bottom of the labour market, with few adverse effects in terms of job losses or reduced hours. And from a business perspective it has led to tangible improvements in staff morale, productivity and retention, as well giving companies reputational gains from signing up to the Wage.

From a social perspective the campaign has also successfully mainstreamed the Living Wage into the public debate around pay and inequality, while also providing a solution to the question of how to address poverty pay in the form of an independently calculated hourly wage rate.

Still under-represented

However while the absence of coordinated wage setting in the UK, combined with a relatively large segment of low-wage workers, has created fertile ground for the Living Wage campaign both to emerge and expand, it can be argued that these same deficiencies limit the wider effects of the Living Wage through ripples along the wage structure and diffusion along to negotiate living wages within sector supply chains.

For example, despite the rapid increase in employer accreditations with

the UK Living Wage Foundation, worker coverage is low with fewer than 200,000 workers benefiting from a Living Wage out of a total of nearly six million low-paid workers in the UK.

The positive rate at which employers are signing up to the Living Wage is welcome, but sustained efforts are needed to bring in larger employers in sectors such as retail and hospitality that are so far under-represented among accredited employers.

Furthermore, it appears that many employers adopt the Living Wage largely for the aforementioned reputational gains and/or out of a sense of moral duty, rather than as a result of trade union or grassroots campaign pressure. As such, there is only limited evidence that the Living Wage provides a platform for new or extended negotiations over pay.

Solutions

So while employers increasingly perceive voluntary accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation as an important symbol of business ethics, the Living Wage remains a relatively isolated wagesetting instrument in the UK. As research has shown, this is the result not only of the voluntarist nature of the campaign, but also of the limited scope for direct interaction with other wage-setting mechanisms in the UK.

The reintroduction of wages councils and the development of sectoral collective bargaining agreements are two complementary ways in which coordinated wage setting involving employer and trade union representatives in low-wage sectors could now be developed.

Indeed trade unions have been able collective agreements, and have recently achieved some positive effects in UK local government. Adopting living wage clauses in public contracts for low-paying services such as cleaning, catering and care services should now be a key platform for ensuring the wider spread of the Living Wage in the UK.

Lessons

The lesson from the UK is that where social partners do not have the resources or the political capital to engage in effective 'institution building', progressive wage polices such as the Living Wage, however innovative and disruptive they may be at the level of the organisation, are unlikely to develop beyond non-binding and relatively disorganised forms of private or 'soft' regulation.

As research has repeatedly shown, a living wage in isolation cannot guarantee a route out of in-work poverty. But paying employees the Living Wage or higher is likely to reduce the risk of poverty, especially for single earners and lone parents, while the Wage is also a crucial tool in tackling low wages as a source of gender discrimination in the labour market.

In 20 years we have come a long way in terms of helping to tackle these grievances, but there is still much work to do in order to more deeply embed the Living Wage in the UK labour market.



Mat Johnson is a lecturer in Human Resources Management and Employment Studies

Policy and practice

Jacqueline Austin, a 2012 President's Doctoral Scholar, says her PhD has given her the perfect grounding as she takes on a new role as head of a major college in the Caribbean.



Ask Jacqueline Austin (PhD Business and Management 2015) what benefit she gained from her studies in Manchester and expect an effusive reply. "The impact on my career has been simply phenomenal, it has been absolutely amazing. The tremendous investment made by my supervisors, and the relationships I fostered during my years at Alliance MBS and The University of Manchester, I will treasure forever. My PhD taught me so much about leadership, and that really resonates with me today.'

Opportunity

Austin is from Barbados and was working in career development at Barbados Community College when she was given the opportunity to apply for a Humphrey Fellowship Program which invites midcareer professionals from across the world to visit the US for a year of graduate level study and leadership development.

After successfully applying she spent a year at Penn State University in Pennsylvania, and upon returning to the Caribbean was keen to pursue further educational studies. "I was really keen to improve my skillset further and began exploring opportunities for sponsored PhD programmes across the Commonwealth. I was told that Manchester was an excellent place to try but, to be honest, never thought I would be successful. I was both thrilled and amazed when I got accepted."

Thesis

Austin's thesis was on how education and training systems are preparing human resources for the 21st century. "My PhD was all about the intersection of policy and practice, and what I really wanted to do was be able to apply my studies to understanding what was happening in education and training systems across the Caribbean. For me the central question was whether education and training were meeting the needs of our Caribbean societies. Were people being prepared for the demands of the 21st century workplace, and what exactly were these demands?"

As part of her thesis she also examined best practice in vocational education and training in Singapore, Germany and the UK.

Skills mismatch

Austin says what she discovered was that in Barbados there were conflicting perspectives about what policy action should be taken in order to address specific issues such as high youth unemployment. "Just as in many other parts of the world. there is a skills mismatch among younger workers, and there are challenges in terms of promoting the benefits of technical and vocational education."

Her thesis made three key conclusions. Firstly that in Barbados the 'social partnership' between government, employers and unions was not achieving its goals and needed to speak in a more cohesive way.

Secondly, that in sectors such as banking and manufacturing there remained a strong emphasis on training but that there was still a high reliance on paper qualifications rather than competencebased training.

And thirdly, that there was a need for a stronger focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training focused initiatives.

After completing her PhD Austin returned to Barbados and earlier this year she was offered the role of President of the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College on the nearby island of St Kitts, a college home to 1,000 students taking a range of academic and technical and vocational subjects.

"It's an ideal role for me, and I'm really attracted to it because of the opportunity to influence policies and processes for student development at the grass root level," she adds. "Taking up this role also affords me the opportunity to make that crucial link between policy and practice, which is exactly what I was prepared for by The University of Manchester."

Anne McBride, Professor of Employment Relations and Director of Postgraduate Research programmes at Alliance MBS was Jacqueline's PhD supervisor. She added: "From my first contact with Jacqueline I was struck by her deep interest and commitment to education. Jacqueline's new role is a perfect

Dream iob

opportunity for her to combine her excellent thesis - exploring the development of skills and training strategies across the globe and within the Caribbean - and her desire to give students the best possible opportunity to develop themselves."

• For me the central question was whether education and training were meeting the needs of our Caribbean societies. Were people being prepared for the demands of the 21st century workplace, and what exactly were these demands?



Jacqueline Austin a 2012 President's Doctoral Scholar

Driving transitions

The basic idea of the Multi-Level Perspective is that radical innovations emerge in small niches, but face uphill struggles against existing systems. Transitions therefore often require external pressures that open up the existing system.



The work of Professor Frank Geels is being widely adopted by policymakers.

of the 'socio-technical transition theory' which explains how large-scale system changes in energy, food and transport come about. His work is highly cited, and his research has generated broad interest across both the academic community and among policymakers who are interested in steering transitions to address environmental problems like climate change.

Professor Frank Geels is a chief proponent

He also works closely with key policymakers across the world, and has advised the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the OECD, Climate-KIC, the World Wildlife Fund and the European Environment Agency (EEA) among others.

Award

Little surprise then that earlier this year Professor Geels was named as one of The University of Manchester's researchers of the year at the Distinguished Achievement Awards. However he remains steadfastly modest about his achievements, preferring instead to talk about the wider context and importance of his work.

"Energy, transport and agro-food systems account for up to 80% of global environmental problems in terms of lifecycle impacts. So addressing global environmental problems requires major changes in these systems. There is no bigger grand challenge today than tackling climate change, so bringing my work to the attention of a wider audience and policymakers is vital."

His current work with the IPCC, the UN body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change, is in relation to its Sixth Assessment Report which will be published in 2021.

Professor Geels is editing a chapter within a mitigation report on the social aspects of mitigation. As he explains: "My job is to assess all the literature that has been written on this subject over the past six years, look at how our knowledge has progressed, and assess the policy implications. It is an extremely rigorous review process."

So, having constructed a framework around energy transitions, does he think the world is making these essential transitions quick enough?

He concedes there is much to do. but stresses it's a very complex picture. "It is complex because there is no one single driver of energy transitions. For instance it is not just about technology but as much about political and cultural support too.

"Sustainability policies are traditionally framed around externalities, leading to a policy emphasis on taxes or regulations, targeting particular factories that are bad for the environment. But my work is contributing to changes in that view. Climate change and the depletion of global resources are related to how we live our lives and the associated socio-technical systems (in transport, agro-food, and energy). Policymakers and governments need to reframe the problem and attempt to change these systems.

"Where my work comes in is that I can give the bigger strategic picture about what kinds of policy mixes you need. I can help them answer the questions 'where do we need to go?' and 'how are we aging to get there?'"

Challenges

"If you take transport then "It is also a good example of how

He says one of the problems in some systems (like agro-food) is the lack of clear-cut solutions which makes it difficult to build a coalition for change. However in some systems, such as electricity or transport, the answers are more obvious. electrification is of course an obvious solution. But even here it is not just about the electrification of the vehicle, it is also about the recharging infrastructure, the regulations and - critically - consumer behaviour. Cars are embedded in our lifestyles and most of us organise our lives around them. Cars still equal success, speed and freedom, and these are as much cultural issues that need to be challenged. long these transitions can actually take.

Energy transitions

The automotive industry first began experimenting with electric vehicles back in the 1990s, but it is only in the last five years that we have seen things move very quickly, thanks in large part to disruptive new innovators such as Tesla."

European Environment Agency

Professor Geels' extensive work with the EEA is a good example of the impact and reach of his research.

The EEA's last five-yearly report (2015) concluded that achieving the EU's long-term sustainability objectives required "fundamental transformation of core societal systems" and that achieving such transitions required "profound changes in practices, policies and thinking"

The EEA has since invested in deepening its understanding of transitions research and its implications. and in 2017 appointed Geels to the EEA Scientific Committee. Its next five-yearly report (2019/20) comes out later this year and there is a whole chapter edited by Professor Geels dedicated to societal transitions. "You cannot get much more impact than an organisation basing a whole chapter of a major report around vour work." he adds.



Frank Geels is a Professor of System Innovation and Sustainability

New perspective

New facilities in Behaviour Management and Data Visualisation are set to add to our research strengths.

As part of the recent redevelopment of our School we were awarded £9.7m by Research England to further support our research base. The funding has gone towards the construction of two new facilities, one in Behavioural Economics and Strategic Management, and the other in Data Visualisation.

Data Visualisation

Our new 3D, large-scale visualisation facility is the new home of data-driven research, engagement and teaching activities at The University of Manchester. It will provide a way for us to visualise data on a huge scale via 72 full HD screens, and will help to develop new insights into data and models.

The possible uses for the new observatory are endless, from visualising huge data sets across all areas of research at The University, to simulating digitised processes in industry, or visualising monetary flows in fintech, for example. Nikolay Mehandjiev, Professor of Enterprise Information Systems, said the School's work with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) was a perfect example of where the new laboratory would have major benefits.

"We have been working with TfGM since about 2010 on various projects around Al learning and air quality, looking at how you balance traffic flows by controlling routes and how can you make use of real-time information to reduce pollution levels. So the laboratory will enable us to develop simulation models and create a visual dashboard using real time data. It will also help us analyse various interventions for controlling traffic flows."

Professor Mehandjiev added that the drive towards Industry 4.0 and simulating the movement of goods within factories to deal with increasing mass personalisation was another area where the laboratory would bring major benefits.

"Factory managers will be able to immerse themselves in 3D simulation as they deal with the increasingly challenging environment of processing more and more personalised goods. Today you increasingly find that the order mix in factories can change hour by hour."

and Strategic Management

Over the last generation developments in behavioural sciences have revolutionised our ability to understand and change human behaviour. Integrating psychological insights into existing disciplines has created entire new fields such as behavioural economics, behavioural finance, and behavioural strategy. To capitalise on this growth The University of Manchester has already made several key investments in behavioural science, through a range of individual appointments and strategic investments

in research groups.

Our new laboratory will provide a highquality, dedicated facility for conducting laboratory experiments, and will focus uniquely on the interface of management, economics, and political science. The investment will not only boost our capability for leadingedge behavioural research, but also provide a platform for greater collaboration with practitioners and policymakers.

One of the specific rooms in the laboratory will be for eye tracking studies, containing workstations and specialist eye tracking equipment. The room will also double as a facility for computer mediated communication experiments, or where it is important to control the external environment as far as possible.



Behavioural Economics



The laboratory will focus uniquely on the interface of management, economics, and political science.



Back on track

Getting the Northern Powerhouse back on track in the wake of HS2 delays is the focus of a major report.



A period of "transformative investment" in the north could give the Northern Powerhouse the opportunity to fulfil its purpose, according to a new report.

The paper, written by Alliance MBS academics and sponsored by Barclays, highlights that a core weakness in the north is the lack of investment in transformative infrastructure, which has the potential to improve the region's economic growth.

It also suggests that the region's leaders should also leverage the growing cross-party consensus around the importance of investing in transformative infrastructure, particularly with a general election expected in the near future. The resources released by the potential HS2 delay could also be turned to constructing HS2 Phase Two from both ends simultaneously.

Methodoloav

The report argues that the Treasury's methodology for allocating investment, which follows economic growth rather than seeking to stimulate it, also disadvantages the north. A recent report by think tank IPPR North claimed that the region was set to receive £2,389 less per person on transport spending than London. Current methodology means that faster-growing and more wealthy regions will always be favoured. The experts argue that regional disparities will be reinforced unless appropriate strategic decisions are made.

Professor Graham Winch, lead author of the report, said: "We lack the tools we need to drive transformative change here in the north and the national decision-making process for allocating resources in this area isn't yet fit for purpose. We know that transformative infrastructure projects enable higher growth, and that the higher the rate of growth, the shorter the pay-back period for any given investment. With the tools at

our disposal to stimulate growth, we'd be "There is now considerable

able to guell ongoing economic disparities. cross-party support for infrastructure development in the north, and so we need to grasp this opportunity to take the economic growth of the region to a new level through investment in transformative infrastructure."

Efficiencies

Greater efficiencies in the organisation of project delivery could guarantee stronger infrastructure delivery too. According to the study, current inefficiencies are being caused by a lack of engagement with the supply side by public sector infrastructure owners and operators who are unable to govern their projects effectively as a consequence.

The experts also point out that overcoming additional challenges associated with delivery, such as the need to develop a northern skill base for delivery on site and a cadre of senior project managers and directors, would propel the region forward.

Added Professor Winch: "An overreliance on the supply side, coupled with the fact that the north struggles to attract sufficient on-site labour and management teams from outside of the region, mean that delivering the same scale of infrastructure projects as other parts of the country is challenging. The north needs to develop its own infrastructure delivery skill base, otherwise the growth ambitions set out by the Northern Powerhouse will be compromised."

Northern Powerhouse Rail

Identifying an ownership model for Northern Powerhouse Rail – the planned upgrade of trans-Pennine services - that has the capability to shape and deliver

projects effectively and engages both regional and national stakeholders will also realise the north's potential. Focusing on opportunities involving private sector investment such as the Manchester Airport HS2 Interchange, Northern Powerhouse Rail, and HS2 Phase Two, rather than putting forward a generalised 'ask' of central government, will help to ensure economic benefits are enjoyed in the region.

Henri Murison, Director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, said: "The Northern Powerhouse is of critical importance to the future prosperity of the UK, and leading academics at Alliance Manchester Business School, supported by Barclays, make a strong case for the benefits of transforming connectivity to make a much more significant impact. Without this, it will be impossible to secure a virtual city spanning the north and a more linked economy which can achieve the same advantages available to a city the scale of London including its wider South East labour market."



Graham Winch is a Professor of Project Management

New strengths

New appointments Timothy Devinney and Panos Constantinides bring major research expertise to the School. Professor of International Business Timothy Devinney, who has joined us from Leeds University Business School, is not afraid to challenge orthodoxy.

Indeed if there is one strand that links together his research into fields such as social responsibility, organisational performance, company culture, or the nature of science, it is that he is always willing to take on established thinking and hypotheses.

As he says: "In science you will always, ultimately, be proved wrong. I think one of the big issues around academia today is that too often we study things simply to try and prove what we think is right is right. But the reality is this is a fool's errand. We should be coming at this from the opposite direction. The starting point should be 'why is my theory wrong?' Consumer really exists and whe choices that millennial worke around their careers are actu different to those of older work short answers are "no" and "no". He has also researched response of firms and indivi tackling climate change and co their own behaviours, arguing the

"Many academics write papers which say 'here is my theory and here is the evidence which is consistent with my theory'. Instead we should be saying 'here is what we think is going on, but the reality does not confirm this'. You learn much more from evidence that goes against what you think is right."

Breadth of research

Professor Devinney, who has worked across Australia, the US and Europe during his career, says his research has been strongly defined by its breadth but is rooted in practice. "My background is very broad, and my work generally viewed as

eclectic, even at times bizarre. However, at the heart of what I do is a fundamental desire to understand the realities of the world as it operates. For me a lot of science is about the story you can tell from the models you have created and the data you have collected."

In the area of social responsibility, he has done considerable research into consumption ethics, posing contentious questions such as whether the ethical consumer really exists and whether the choices that millennial workers make around their careers are actually any different to those of older workers. The short answers are "no" and "no".

He has also researched the slow response of firms and individuals to tackling climate change and changing their own behaviours, arguing that people are often reluctant to take meaningful action until it affects something they notice viscerally, such as their insurance premiums, jobs, or health.

Leading journals

Professor Devinney sits on the editorial board of a dozen of the leading international business journals and is a fellow of a number of academic associations and organisations. His contributions are publicly recognised, such as the Academy of Management giving him the Practice Impact Award in 2018 and the Services to the Global Community award in 2019. His research has also been supported by various funding councils, including the Australia Research Council, where he has been awarded over \$11m in funding. His research, teaching and public service has also been recognised in a number of ways, with numerous best paper and teaching awards.

Meanwhile he is very excited about his move to Manchester. "This is a great fit for me. Alliance MBS has serious aspirations, as perfectly illustrated by its new building which has put down a marker of what it wants to be. I want to be somewhere with aspirations and am greatly looking forward to my new role."



Timothy Devinney is a Professor of International Business



How does digital innovation happen, and precisely how do digital platform ecosystems evolve? These are just some of the key questions that Professor Panos Constantinides will be researching after recently joining our Management Sciences Group.

transformative potential of digital technology, including digital platforms, infrastructures and Artificial Intelligence (AI). He is particularly interested in competitive dynamics and the orchestration of platform-centered ecosystems - such as Apple's App Store, Uber, Amazon Marketplace and Facebook.

As he explains: "Typically these digital platform ecosystems are orchestrated by a platform owner or leader like Apple or Amazon, but exactly because digital innovation is complemented by various other ecosystem actors such as thirdparty software developers, partners, and entrepreneurs, ecosystem orchestration is a distributed process. I am very interested in how this orchestration happens and also the governance around it."

Openness of platform ecosystems

His most recent research has been around the concept of 'openness' where a platform ecosystem has to open up its technological architecture and business

boundaries to generate innovation and scalability. Adds Professor Constantinides: "My most recent research has been looking at what we mean by openness and precisely how it can be achieved. How exactly does a platform ecosystem open up their technological architecture in order to allow His research focuses on the third parties to innovate, and what are the trade-offs? To take just one example, a lot of successful game developers market their games across multiple platforms. The reason is simple, because their games can grow much faster when sited on more than one platform."

He adds that this complex web of relationships poses difficult questions when it comes to governance. "How exactly does a platform ecosystem govern open innovation, when should each actor be allowed to join - and leave - and with what access to platform resources?"

Research strengths

Professor Constantinides says he was particularly attracted to Alliance MBS by its existing research strengths in the fields of AI and machine learning, and by its focus on the business importance of Al. Al is a new generation of digital technologies that are increasingly being deployed in different business organisations including platform ecosystems. He is interested in the transformative potential of AI to change the way we think about digital platforms and business strategy.

As he adds: "I have in the past been involved in setting up an Al Innovation Network at a Russell Group University and establishing collaborations with industry, and I am really keen to do research that has relevance to industry. Alliance MBS has a number of academics who are specialists in the fields of machine learning and decision sciences, and that was really appealing to me because I can now link some of the areas I have been thinking about from a business perspective, helping me to extend my own ideas and research further."



Panos Constantinides is a Professor of Digital Innovation

Research digest

This issue we focus on recent activity in the Work and Equalities Institute.

Women's football – FIFPro Global Employment Report

As shown by the recent World Cup, women's football is growing in popularity and status, with increasing participation, professionalisation and media attention across the world. But until recently not much was known about the working conditions for professional and amateur players.

This briefing, which explores the first comprehensive study of the women's game, finds an occupation fighting for a stable footing. It shows that a professional football career for women is hard to sustain in the face of low pay, a lack of contractual support, and commitments away from the pitch. It highlights the need for changes in the way women are supported to play for club and country, and makes recommendations to prevent the majority leaving the game early, which many are forced to do.

The report says there is a lack of support for women footballers and so they struggle to see it as a viable career, while nearly 90 per cent of players say they are considering leaving the game early.

Low pay is also an issue with most salaries well under \$2,000 a month, while players get paid less as they get older and many players working alongside their football commitments. Compared to the men's game, there is also a lack of contractual and agent support, and contracts become more precarious as players get older.

Emotion, stress and burnout – don't write off older workers

People working in organisations are getting older and jobs with direct customer contact are growing; at the same time, people over the age of 50 are subject to ongoing challenges around age discrimination, despite frameworks in place to protect them.

This briefing looks at how older workers in the service sector deal with emotion regulation, stress and burnout. It joins a raft of previous research which supports the notion that people get better at dealing with certain professional situations and challenges with age. They can draw on experience, changing motivations and their professional ability to create more authentic connections with customers and colleagues. The message of the study is clear:

The message of the study is clear: older workers are better at using emotion regulation strategies, are more engaged, and less prone to burn out than younger colleagues. Their life experiences and ability to anticipate situations enable them to respond more authentically, and with more empathy, which reduces the need to fake emotion in challenging situations in front of customers.

The researchers found no evidence that older workers get worse with age. In fact, they suggest the opposite: that people's enhanced emotional competency in the workplace means they are valuable employees and well placed to take on customer service roles as they get older.

Global value chains – South African fruit sector

Global networks of production and consumption have created opportunities for suppliers to source products from around the world, but they have placed pressure on producers, and the workers they employ.

This case study of the South African fruit sector, part of a wider body of work by academics from across The University of Manchester exploring labour agency in global supply chains, provides an indepth exploration of the impact large supermarkets have on supply chains, and how workers are fighting their corner for a greater share of the profits.

While the findings offer some hope for labour agency, and the improvements that can be achieved through worker protest, they show that more systemic strategies are required if the underlying commercial imbalance is to be challenged.

This study found that industry strikes did give workers a pay rise, but ongoing tensions in the system between producers and supermarkets remain unresolved. Action by the workers on multiple levels had brought some gains, but it did little to influence the commercial realities driving the conditions for precarious employment, which continue to be a challenge.

Find out more at alliancembs.ac.uk/wei

ORIGINAL THINKING APPLIED

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