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Alliance Manchester Business School

# Alliance Manchester Business School Research

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Digitalising supply chains

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We hear a lot about automation, machine learning and AI. But many people, and companies, still haven't yet realised the depth and pace of the change.



## Guest welcome: Carolyn Fairbairn, Director General of the CBI, talks about the future of education in the UK.

Over the last three years, Brexit has overshadowed other significant challenges. Challenges more deeply rooted in our society and the world of work.

Today, our employers, customers and competitors are as likely to be based in the next continent as the next town. Many of us can expect to spend as much as two decades longer in work than our parents did because of demographic change. And then there's technology.

We hear a lot about automation, machine learning and AI. But many people, and companies, still haven't yet realised the depth and pace of the change. Every job will be – is being – affected by automation in one way or another. And for many, that means moving to higher-skilled jobs.

We will only meet the challenges posed by these significant trends through lifelong learning. Because only education can prepare us for a world that's more dynamic, more global, more competitive, and more demanding of human skills such as problem solving and creative thinking.

These are the kind of higher-level skills that only a college or university can teach and lead the way on. Manchester, for example, was one of the first two business schools in the UK offering MBA degrees – a leader in its field.

To meet the needs of a flexible modern economy, the education system

itself must become more agile. We need people willing to go on learning, and prepared to return to education, throughout their careers.

Often, companies succeed because they evolve through education. They work with colleges to anticipate their future skills needs, and together design courses to meet them. But our colleges have been underestimated as a resource, historically underfunded and politically neglected. And at the CBI, we're starting to ask whether they could have a new role to play.

We've asked the government to consider giving people an entitlement to an extra qualification between an A-Level and a university degree – an apprenticeship, or technical course based at a college. It could be a year when different backgrounds come together and learn skills they might not otherwise. It could be a profound shift in favour of a higher-skilled economy.

And when it comes to universities, what if they too could offer the same kind of flexible service as many of our colleges? What if it could become possible, later in life, to return to university to study for a period much shorter than three years?

The government should take the idea of flexible university courses seriously, along with the funding mechanisms to support them – and that means ending talk of cutting tuition fees

too. After all, our university sector is one area where the UK punches far above its weight. Not only do they educate people to the highest levels, they are also some of our biggest regional employers and peerless incubators of new businesses. And they are vital if we are to reach the government's 3% R&D target. They are a precious national asset that should be protected and nurtured.

In a post-Brexit world, education will be a home-grown source of strength. By working together with business, the sector must be one of the biggest competitive advantages the UK has.





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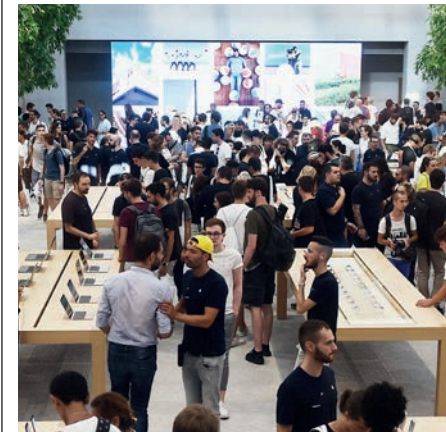


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# Smarter thinking

Juergen Maier, Chief Executive of Siemens UK and Honorary Professor of Engineering at The University of Manchester, is at the heart of efforts to get British business to embrace automation and digitalisation.



**You have been talking about the impact and potential of digitalisation for many years. Is the transition moving fast enough?**

Looking at the national narrative and policy framework, the good news is that we have made a good job at positioning the Made Smarter initiative - which explores how UK manufacturing can maximise benefits from increased adoption of digital technology - as part of the wider Industrial Strategy. The Treasury is on board too and supportive policy actions are coming through. But are we moving fast enough? 100 per cent not, and the reason for that is very simple. We are coming out of 40 years of a very hands-off industrial strategy approach. Learning how to develop a more proactive, impactful and smarter industrial strategy approach will take a couple of decades.

**Is there anything companies can be doing to accelerate the agenda?**

What I have come to realise in recent years is that the fastest way to see automation and digitalisation adopted by companies is for them to start doing things that no one else is doing. For instance, if you have an opportunity to create a data analytics solution for a particular manufacturing process and no-one has thought about that, then that makes this transition much easier. Here at Siemens we have examples of this happening too, for instance we have just scaled up an additive manufacturing company very successfully.

**How does the UK compare to other countries in terms of the transition?**

The global landscape is extremely competitive with the likes of Singapore and Germany at the forefront of the Industry 4.0 revolution, and the US and China not far behind. If you take a country like Germany it has always had a more hands-on industrial strategy approach and a political landscape that understands the value of frontier industries. In the UK the policy backdrop has always been that

'manufacturing only accounts for 10% of the economy', while we also still have an outdated free market thinking which may have benefits in other areas of the economy such as financial services, but in terms of high-tech, high-value frontier industries it is not much help.

**To what extent does the fact that London and the South East is driven by financial services affect this thinking?**

I would say it is quite influential and I think it will take northern leadership to really drive the Industry 4.0 agenda further forward. Indeed you could argue that the South does not actually need the fourth industrial revolution as much as the North. The problem for the North is its reliance on the low-end service sector economy, and its low productivity, and this is precisely the reason why a local industrial strategy for the North is so key. Here in Greater Manchester the focus for Mayor Andy Burnham has to be on putting as much focus as possible on that strategy and creating a very strong local industrial strategy partnership with industry.

**What can major corporates, like Siemens, do in terms of helping companies embrace digitalisation?**

We have a major role to play and I am seeing evidence of a lot of very good work going on, as innovative and cutting edge as anywhere else in the world in areas such as robotics, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. I think we are also now developing a very good ecosystem via our research centres within universities and through the work of Catapult, a network of world-leading centres designed to transform the UK's capacity for innovation. The problem is that we simply don't have enough large businesses and you need to create enough large companies that sit at the top of the food chain that can then feed companies below. Unfortunately that is not something we can solve overnight, but hopefully some of the companies that evolve as part of this fourth industrial revolution can scale up over time.

**What about SMEs. To what extent are they embracing Industry 4.0?**

I'm afraid that here we are doing pretty badly in terms of making these small businesses feel ready to start adopting technologies. We have made some progress through Made Smarter, but this comes back to the point that there are not enough big companies around to help smaller companies along the journey. We also still struggle from a lack of co-ordinated support mechanisms for these smaller companies to get the advice and help that they need. Of course SMEs also have a whole array of other issues to contend with too, not least the impact of Brexit. It all comes back to having a supportive ecosystem around you in order to make the transition.

**What is the role of business schools in further promoting this whole agenda?**

The obvious area is leadership. Here at Siemens we are already work closely, along with a number of other leading tier-one companies, with business schools. One particular initiative we are involved in looks at how we have transformed workplaces by putting employee engagement at the centre of improvement processes. ●

“...I think it will take northern leadership to really drive the Industry 4.0 agenda. You could argue that the South does not actually need the fourth industrial revolution as much as the North...”



# New world

Supply chains in global production networks are likely to become even more complex once the full impact of increased digitalisation is felt. Professor Nikolay Mehandjiev has been studying the challenges and opportunities.



A modern jet liner is, in many ways, a perfect example of the dynamism and complexity of the modern-day supply chain.

Take a Boeing aircraft apart and you will find that virtually every key part of its structure comes from somewhere different in the world. Its nose may come from the US and Sweden, parts for its wings from Japan, Korea and Australia, its engines from the US and UK, and its fuselage from Italy and Japan. The supply chain for Airbus is more geographically concentrated around Europe, yet it is by no means simpler.

Professor Nikolay Mehandjiev has been working with Airbus for many years on EC-funded projects, most recently looking at how to support demand-driven collaborations in such a complex supply chain as the company seeks to reduce the number of its suppliers.

As he explains: "In common with most OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) across both the aerospace and automotive industries, Airbus has been streamlining its supply chain and reducing the number of first-tier suppliers. But at the same time it wants to retain and maintain its innovation levels as highly customised products in the automotive and aviation industry require innovative solutions, mainly developed by small but innovative high-tech companies."

## Challenges

These challenges come at a time of huge flux across the wider manufacturing sector, driven by the immense opportunities afforded by the digital 'Industry 4.0' revolution and the emergence of the 'Internet of Things' (IoT) which allows sensors, actuators and electronics to connect, interact and exchange data. Also, there is the increasing impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics on the factory floor.

As Professor Mehandjiev says: "Manufacturing companies compete in a global knowledge-driven economy and increasingly seek competitive advantage through quality, agility and personalisation based on latest advances in IT."

"This means there are huge demands across the supply chain today, demands which have only been amplified by Industry 4.0 trends. In particular there is a need for rapid assembly of teams of SMEs to pool together capabilities to bid for complex contracts. There is also a need to pool together capacities to handle peaks in demand. And there is a need to change teams and supply networks in order to respond to changes in requirements or technologies, to changes in demand, and to performance issues."

## Personalisation

One of the central challenges of Industry 4.0 is 'lot size of one' - the vision that any product can be personalised for a particular customer to a much higher level than currently possible. Two particular approaches have emerged in order to combat this challenge of flexible manufacturing. As he adds: "Firstly there is a knowledge-based collaborative design approach, mostly applied outside the factory to bring together demand-driven supply networks for highly customised products. Secondly, within the factory we approach flexibility by optimising production facility using mobile machines and a system for co-ordinating product movements."

"One of the big challenges of personalisation within a factory is that different product types will need resources in different sequences. This then leads to facility layout problems and how best to optimise the location of machines. These are very difficult issues to resolve."

## Digicor

To help tackle these complex challenges Alliance Manchester Business School has for the last few years been the UK academic research partner within the EC-funded project DIGICOR (Decentralised Agile Coordination Across Supply Chains).

DIGICOR enables demand-driven collaborations amongst SME suppliers and OEMs like Airbus by providing knowledge-driven coordination support over secured IT infrastructure, using a set of software tools for planning customised products and their demand-driven production networks.

Adds Professor Mehandjiev: "The DIGICOR solution is based on an open platform integrating tools and services, and implementing case specific governance rules and procedures for collaboration, knowledge protection, and security. We aim to break the barriers to collaboration and supply chain entry experienced by small specialised SMEs, and to create a level playing field for them, also increasing innovation levels and hence the competitiveness of European industry. The Manchester team is focusing on the heart of the system, namely the knowledge-based algorithms and modules which enable the creation of teams to deliver complex assembly." ●



**Nikolay Mehandjiev** is a Professor of Enterprise Information Systems.

# Gender equality under threat?

EU driven initiatives have raised awareness of gender equality issues and established a wide range of gender equality rights. Can a Britain outside of the EU continue on this path to equality?



The European Union has been the catalyst for most of the gender equality policies and legal rights enacted here in the UK. Even the UK's 1970's equal pay and sex discrimination laws were introduced in part in anticipation of planned EU directives in these areas. It was also the EU that enforced the amendment of the equal pay law to cover equal pay for work of equal value to meet the EU's more encompassing standard.

Later, universal maternity leave and pro rata rights for part-time workers compared to full-time employees were all introduced through EU law in the face of opposition from the UK government. The EU has also pressed for 'soft law' rights, such as gender impact assessments of general policies, following the recommendations of the 1995 UN Beijing World Conference on Women.

So, can a Britain outside of the EU continue on this path to equality?

## International conventions

Of course, even though the UK has developed its gender equality policy in tandem with or somewhat behind the EU, this does not necessarily mean that an independent UK would not have enacted its own gender equality laws. After all, the UK is a member state of the International Labour Organisation whose international conventions on equality are in many respects similar to EU law.

In some areas the UK also has a reputation for innovative gender equality policy. For example, its implementation of the Agenda for Change pay structure in the NHS is often cited as best practice. The UK has also introduced a right to request flexible working for all and imposed an equality duty on public bodies to actively promote equality. This endorses a more holistic, proactive attitude to equality than the standard complaints-driven approach. The surprise decision to bring in equal pay reporting has also been successful, measured by the sheer amount of publicity generated about the appalling state of gender inequality in the UK.

## True picture

However, closer inspection reveals a less optimistic picture.

Many of the positive actions - for example Agenda for Change - were far from state-initiated actions. They were pushed for by trade unions and followed years of unions taking cases to employment tribunals to demonstrate that the fragmented collective bargaining in the UK's public sector was not delivering equal pay for work of equal value.

The equality duties on public bodies have also so far had limited impact due to the majority of public bodies having to deal with austerity cutbacks. And interest in gender pay gap reporting may also decline once it is recognised there are no legal obligations to address the gaps.

Even many of the UK's rights provided under EU law are little more than empty shells at present.

For example maternity leave is not only paid at a low rate compared to other EU countries, thereby deterring take-up of shared parental leave, but eligibility conditions for access are also stricter.

Rights for part-time workers are also often ineffective due to the concentration of part-time work in firms with few full-time comparators, gender impact assessments are only weakly implemented, and the right to request flexible working is after all only a request.

## Brexit

All of this suggests that even now the UK state tries to minimise the impact of EU equality measures. As such, the question is whether anything will change post-Brexit? As with everything else, it all depends on the deal.

Under some deals employment rights may need to stay aligned to EU regulations, but even so the UK may evade soft law pressures to bring in new policies. It is no coincidence that the UK's gender pay gap reporting policy and its targets for women on boards were introduced at the same time as the EU was debating policies to nudge countries in these directions, backed by the

threat of possible future legislation.

A worse fate, however, potentially awaits gender equality rights if the Brexit deal eventually allows the government to 'take back control' and ignore EU law. And we have seen what has happened to other employment rights that are outside the scope of EU law. Rights to strike, for example, have been continuously restricted and the length of service before someone can claim unfair dismissal has become the veritable political football, yo-yoing between six months and two years.

## Long-term alignment

No political party has - so far - advocated major rolling back of gender equality laws, but the prospect of gender equality laws being burned along with other aspects of 'red tape' is no longer a far-off fantasy.

One of the arguments made for a no deal Brexit was that this would enable Britain to compete for trade and investment by becoming a haven for a less regulated business environment.

It is unclear what lies ahead for women's employment rights following Brexit. What is certain, however, is that without the influence of the EU many of the equality rights we now take for granted would not have been implemented, or implemented as quickly. The best protection for equality rights is likely to be a deal that requires long term alignment of our equality rights with those of the EU. ●

*\*This article was originally published on FT.com.*



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



# Lasting legacy

Our Alan Turing Fellows showcase our strengths in data sciences.

The Alan Turing statue in Sackville Park, Manchester



For Julia Handl, a Senior Lecturer in Decision Sciences with specific expertise in data mining and machine learning, her recent appointment as an Alan Turing Fellow will have significant benefits for her research. In particular she expects her Fellowship to spark discussion and collaboration with academics from across the country. "For me this is very much about expanding my network of collaborators outside Manchester. The Alan Turing Institute (ATI) now has a very large national network and actively works to match academics with experts from other universities, in order to put together strong collaborative funding bids."

## Challenges

Research at the ATI is channelled around a number of ambitious challenges that represent areas in which Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data science can have a game-changing impact for science, society and the economy.

Such challenges include how to revolutionise healthcare, how to deliver safer and smarter engineering, and how to manage security in an increasingly insecure world. They also include how to make algorithmic systems fair, transparent and ethical, and also how to design computers for the next generation of algorithms.

Dr Handl says the ATI network is growing all the time and this is helped by the enduring legacy of the Turing name. "The work of Alan Turing carries so much weight and interest, and his work is as influential today as it has ever been. It carries with it authority and it is therefore a natural entry point for companies which want to explore more collaborations with academia.

"What you sometimes find is that companies get involved with the ATI simply because they have heard about AI and Data Science, but they have no clear understanding of the type of methodology that is appropriate for their problems and how we, as academics, can support them in identifying suitable solutions. So you often start off with quite high-level

conversations with businesses about their data and the business problems they are facing. What are the key questions they want answering? What kind of end product or process do they envisage? How does their data fit these needs? What kind of machine learning techniques are needed to put an appropriate solution into place?"

## Framing problems

Dr Handl says she personally helps organisations conceptually frame problems so they can start implementing them. "With machine learning it is never as simple as just hitting a button," she says.

However she cautions that there is a growing consensus that, as a society, we are not heading to complete automation any time soon. "Instead we are using data science to augment human decision making. In a lot of domains that is where we are going to stay for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, questions around the appropriate use of data and the transparency of the resulting models are fundamental elements of this discussion."

Another Alan Turing Fellow is Nadia Papamichail, a Senior Lecturer in Information and Decision Systems.

She adds: "Diversity of expertise is at the heart of the Turing ethos. People often expect to find data scientists in a maths, statistics or computer science department, but the first time I visited the ATI I was excited to meet other Turing Fellows from schools and disciplines as diverse as engineering, politics, biomedicine and linguistics. There is an understanding and acknowledgment that complex problems require complex solutions that can only be provided from cross-disciplinary teams.

"Business schools are well positioned to add to the methodological rigour of data science and AI solutions, while contributing to the delivery of impactful research. Being part of the Turing community is undoubtedly a privilege. It is a challenge but also an immense opportunity."

## The University of Manchester and the Alan Turing Institute

In 2017 the University of Manchester became a university partner within the Alan Turing Institute (ATI), the UK's national institute for data science.

The Institute is named in honour of Alan Turing whose pioneering work in theoretical and applied mathematics, engineering and computing are considered to be the key disciplines which comprise the emerging field of data science today.

In 1948 Turing was appointed Reader in the Mathematics Department at Manchester and soon afterwards became Deputy Director of the Computing Laboratory. It was here that he worked on software for one of the earliest true computers, the Manchester Ferranti Mark 1.

The University today has 20 Alan Turing Fellows, while it has a wider data science community of more than 600 investigators. ●



**Julia Handl** is a Senior Lecturer in Decision Sciences



**Nadia Papamichail** is a Senior Lecturer in Information and Decision Systems



# Worth its salt

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Tata Chemicals Europe is helping its British Salt subsidiary enter the retail market.



Elle Perschke

Indian conglomerate Tata is probably best known in the UK for its ownership of Tata Steel. But closer to home in the North West its chemicals business also owns British Salt which produces around half of the UK's pure salt from its factory in Middlewich, Cheshire.

Until now British Salt has been exclusively a B2B company. But the company is looking to expand its reach into the UK consumer market in an attempt to mirror the success of its Tata Salt operation in India where its packaged iodised salt is the biggest salt brand in the country.

As Elle Perschke, Brand Development Manager at Tata Chemicals Europe, explains: "In particular Tata wants to market in the UK a salt product that is fortified with iodine and which has been shown to have health benefits. Due to changing diets, as a society we are increasingly deficient in iodine and this has particular implications for pregnant women because iodine deficiency can affect child development. The consumption of iodised salt also has strong benefits for cognitive development."

## Transformation

Having recently completed a Masters in Marketing at Alliance MBS, Perschke was brought on board by British Salt to head up a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Head of Business Development Dr. Richard Diggle who had previous experience of running a KTP project. Adds Perschke: "For any successful KTP what you are essentially trying to do is build knowledge on both sides which then leads to transformation."

She says there were particular challenges posed by this KTP. In particular, although the benefits of iodised salt are well-known in health circles, they are not as well-known more widely among consumers who, generally speaking, see salt as bad for their health.

"One of the first big challenges we therefore faced with launching this product was getting over concerns that 'salt is bad for you' and we've done this by collating existing research into the benefits of iodised salt."



Elle Perschke and Dr Richard Diggle

## Focus groups

One of the first steps of the KTP was to set up a number of focus groups across the UK to establish consumer knowledge in order to formulate branding messages around the new product.

Adds Perschke: "What we found was that consumers know hardly anything about this product and that they are also intimidated by the word iodine itself. The focus groups also talked more widely about nutrition in general, and here it was clear that there was also a general lack of awareness around nutrition too. There is a lot of confusion in the market about what is and isn't good for you, and that makes getting the positive health messages across even more difficult around this product because of the perception that all salt is bad for you."

"For instance, do people know how much salt a day they should be having? For most people the answer is no. The actual answer is six grams, but the average consumption in the UK is nearer eight, most of which comes from processed foods. Given these challenges, the design of the new product and the educational messages on its labelling become particularly important."

## Next steps

Earlier this year Perschke presented a proposal around the product to the British Salt board and has also met with

PR agencies with a view to launching the product by early summer.

Meanwhile for the academic lead at Alliance MBS, Professor of Marketing Hongwei He, the KTP – which runs until Spring 2020 – has already brought tangible benefits.

"The focus groups really help us understand consumer attitudes today and reaffirm the different types of grocery shoppers," he says. "There are commonly five types of shoppers – the price conscious, the health conscious, the hedonic, the sceptical and the detached. And all these different types of shoppers tend to have different attitudes to salt."

"The data that Elle has already collected will help us carry out a major longitudinal study into how companies can make the transition from selling in B2B markets to B2C markets. This will be an excellent case study of how a company should approach this challenge and will offer guidance for other companies in other sectors." Also working on the project is Gary Davies, Emeritus Professor at Alliance MBS, who has wide experience of working on KTP projects.

Perschke adds that she is enjoying both the research challenge and the experience of working in a major corporation. "The KTP is giving me excellent all round development and I am finding the whole venture really entrepreneurial." ●



# New horizons

Alliance Manchester Business School is home to a number of world-leading institutes. Hear about the new Institute for Health Policy and Organisation, and what is next for the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research and the Sustainable Consumption Institute.



## Professors Damian Hodgson and Kath Checkland, Co-Directors of the new Institute for Health Policy and Organisation, outline its vision

The funding and delivery of effective health care is one of the most significant global grand challenges. Old paradigms are proving ineffective in the face of demographic changes, while technological advances and devolved decision-making represent new, but unproven, opportunities.

The University of Manchester has a growing reputation as a world leader in the fields of health services organisation and policy research, and we are excited about how we can build on this potential to make a real step change.

Indeed the current climate creates the opportunity to develop bold and distinctive new ways to conceive healthcare delivery. The creation of our new Institute will ensure that we are front and centre of these important debates both nationally and internationally.

The complex challenges facing the organisation and delivery of health and care also increasingly demands research which is interdisciplinary, synthesising insights from a diversity of fields and disciplines.

This is yet another reason why our cross-faculty Institute is so timely, bringing together expertise that is currently distributed across faculties or specialist groupings.

### Themes

The Institute is built around three broad themes of research:

- **Organisation and workforce** will cover health and care policy and its impact upon service organisation and the health and care workforce.

- **Regulation and leadership** will look at how health and social care is led and governed, including internal and external systems of regulation for holding organisations and individual professionals to account for the quality and safety of services.

- **Health and care in the wider context** will focus on how health and care policy are impacted by social, political and economic contexts.

The Institute brings together a dozen leading professors and around 35 additional academic staff from the University's Faculties of Humanities and of Biology, Medicine and Health.

The combined efforts of this research community have secured £31m in awards and donations for the University since 2011 covering research infrastructure and grants, including major funding to undertake evaluations of a number of large-scale national programmes and reforms in the National Health Service.

The academics have extensive and recognised expertise in the full range of policy-related topics, including health system organisation, leadership and management, governance and regulation, and implementation and evaluation. Few competitor institutions have comparable strength across the broad range of relevant disciplines.

### Global pressures

Recognising sustainable health care as a global challenge, the Health Assembly of the World Health Organisation recently published a five-year plan calling on

countries to view the health and social care workforce as an investment, rather than a cost, and take advantage of the economic benefits of growth in the health and social care sector.

Here in the UK an ageing population and increasing costs of treatment have exacerbated pressures on the NHS as they have outstripped healthcare funding, while funding for social care and public health has been reduced. Recent efforts to confront this challenge include reorganisation and restructuring of healthcare, in the form of new models of care, local devolution of health and care, and efforts to integrate health commissioning and delivery.

Greater Manchester stands at the forefront of such efforts, taking regional responsibility for health and social care budgets of more than £6bn and redesigning care for 2.8 million residents.

As such, researchers across our University are ideally placed to inform, shape and support responses to this pressing global challenge at a regional, national and international level.







# Professor Jonatan Pinkse is the newly appointed Executive Director of the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research.

Sustainability is just one of the many 'grand challenges' that the world faces today. One could name many others including the impact and development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning; emerging technologies, such as nanotechnology and synthetic biology; the effect of digitisation on employment and skills in services and manufacturing; or the rapid emergence of entrepreneurial ecosystems and new sources of innovation around start-ups.

These are precisely the kinds of topics that our world-class academics here at the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIOIR) have been researching and teaching for many years, and I am truly honoured to have been appointed the new Director of such a distinguished Institute, not just here in the UK but across the world.

### Changes

However, as an Institute we cannot afford to stand still, not least because these huge changes in society around us are happening so quickly. I see the impact of this every day when I am teaching my students. They are hungry to embrace the opportunities that stem from these changes, keen to set up their own ventures on the back of trends such as the sharing economy, and realise that technology has – in some respects – made it easier for them to follow their dreams.

That's why one of the first things I will be doing in my new role is to scope exactly what our academics are currently working on and look at what areas they can potentially focus on more in the future as we respond to these challenges.

### Outputs

Such an exercise will further ensure that our research outputs continue to achieve the highest possible grading. As all of us take more collective responsibility and help each other even more, we can recognise where excellence is. Working together we can ensure that we not only publish our research in the best possible outlets but also have impact with our research by addressing issues relevant to society.

Indeed, I would argue that such closer collaboration – not just between our own staff but also with other academics across the Business School and the wider University – is essential in order for us to respond to these global challenges. Across the world we are already seeing a convergence of academic interests from different disciplines coming together to tackle these challenges.

### Business engagement

As we tackle them, so greater collaboration and engagement with business becomes more critical too. As such, another of my key priorities will be to further develop our business engagement agenda and use our research to have much wider conversations.

The Institute already has an excellent track record of working with – and influencing – policymakers. That will remain critical, but we are also home to many academics with a very strong management as well as policy perspective, and one of my jobs is to ensure that they also play an equally significant and powerful role working with business.

Many of these challenges are also central to industrial strategy policy,

especially here in the UK, and I believe the Institute also has a really strong and continued role to play, in particular here in the North West and across Greater Manchester as it seeks the further devolution of powers.



# Professor Frank Boons is the new Director of the Sustainable Consumption Institute.

The Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI) provides a high-quality interdisciplinary research environment that brings together researchers from Alliance MBS and the School of Social Sciences, as well as other parts of the University.

The institute has a rich tradition of making key contributions to the fields of innovation studies and the sociology of consumption, with path-breaking work that addresses sustainability issues as a way to theorise about social practices and societal transitions.

As part of this, we have gained an understanding of processes of social change at different levels, ranging from households, to communities, cities and socio-technical systems. As I see it, SCI research links questions of (un)sustainability to the way in which societies provide in their needs. Our current modes of provision are being reconfigured as a result of three trends.

### Access

Due to changes in the global political landscape, as well as increased ecological pressure, citizens have differential access to (un)sustainable products and services. Linking to the University of Manchester's research beacon of global and local inequality, the SCI is well positioned to develop insight into differential participation in (the decisions shaping) systems of provision, as evidenced through our research on the environmental practices of Somali households in Manchester.

### Circulation

There is increasing pressure on the amount and nature of the resources we use to provide in our needs. Problems like the 'plastic soup' in oceans and climate change indicate that we are crossing planetary boundaries at a rate beyond points of no return. This is a longstanding theme in our research, which is now often discussed in terms of the circular economy.

The more neutral term of circulation helps to understand how practices of production and consumption result in patterns and levels of material circulation through society. Our expertise in this area has enabled us to be a key partner in a University-wide interdisciplinary project that seeks to address the challenge of plastics waste through university/industry collaboration.

### Digitalisation

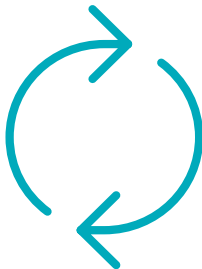
In line with the University's focus on Digital Futures, expertise within the SCI allows a deeper understanding of how digitalisation, in the form of digital technologies and related business models, is reshaping the lives of people. Here we are engaged in international comparative work on the emerging urban platform economy.

Changing access, circulation and digitalisation are fundamental changes, and the SCI is uniquely positioned to provide academic understanding in how they impact on sustainability. SCI members are also well-equipped to help to bring about actual solutions.

In doing so we have a rich network of partners and stakeholders to draw from, which help us to link our work to the Manchester region, to the UK, and to global institutions.

### Research

I see the SCI as a place where researchers also work together to develop skills that are essential for a successful academic career. Ranging from the PhD. to the senior academic level, I have experienced the SCI as a place where colleagues invest in each other and the group. This has helped us to deliver not only on our research ambitions in terms of publications, but also on grants and teaching in both schools. I would like to consolidate the exemplary role of the Institute in this respect, which is made possible by the active involvement of all members. ●





# Making a difference

A serious road accident made Alysha Shivji determined to make a difference in her academic and personal life.



For Alysha Shivji the date is still etched on her memory. It was December 2013 and she had taken a break from her Masters at Stanford University in California to go on holiday with her boyfriend in Costa Rica.

One day while driving a scooter, with her boyfriend riding pillion, they were involved in a head-on crash with a truck. Alysha remembers nothing of the accident, only awaking in hospital with serious injuries. "I broke lots of bones and, to be honest, was very lucky to survive. I had no memory for quite a while and needed extensive therapy to help me walk and talk again. Ever since that day I've wanted to take advantage of being so lucky. It made me determined to do something that mattered in the world, to try and make a real difference."

## Human rights

At the time Alysha, who was brought up in Florida, was taking a Masters in sociology and was developing a growing interest in issues around global poverty and human rights.

Her enthusiasm had been further sparked by some work experience in Uganda with children's charity Unicef. As she explained: "I was working in the education department and spent my time going in to villages which had been affected by conflict and hearing how education was helping communities rebuild their lives. What it reinforced in me was that education is a great avenue in terms of improving your quality of life, it is something that everyone can agree on.

"My experience also taught me not to be judgemental, for instance when a parent sends their child to work on a farm rather than to school. It gave me an insight into the reasons why those families make those

decisions. Often the solution can be about trying to find a middle way."

## African roots

Alysha has roots in Africa herself as her father, who works in global real estate, was originally from Tanzania and when younger she spent some summers in Uganda with her family visiting her father and volunteering at a local orphanage. "It exposed me to issues around childhood poverty from a very young age."

In the summer after her accident Alysha had another stint working for Unicef, this time in New York in the end trafficking department. Then, after graduating, she decided to stay in California and took a job with Apple as a research analyst looking at customer experience research.

As she adds: "It gave me excellent experience in terms of exposing me to the global business community and exactly how a company such as Apple operates. It has a very strong social responsibility focus and the job really helped me develop my research skills and how to talk about and apply research in a business setting. I also spent some time in Hong Kong with the company for a new product launch and worked at one of the factories there."

## Manchester

It was while working at Apple that she saw an advert for an opportunity to take a PhD at Alliance MBS studying modern-day slavery and supply chains. "I looked at the advert and thought this is right up my street and it was an amazing opportunity, so went for it." It also helped that Alysha

has family links to Manchester as her mother, who is a Montessori teacher, is from the city.

After starting the course in September last year, she says there has never been a more opportune moment to be looking at such issues. "This is a particularly exciting time to be researching this field as the wider business and human rights agenda is gaining ever more traction with businesses and governments. Why are businesses so interested in this agenda right now? I think it comes down to the fact that companies can no longer simply turn a blind eye to these issues, whether it's from consumers, stakeholders or investors.

"In particular consumers are asking more and more questions. Brands realise that this has to be core to their business strategy, that they have to extend their sphere of responsibility beyond just shareholders. What we have also seen in recent times is that once one business takes action, others follow."

## Research

Alysha's own research is now concentrating on access to remedy. "There is a big gap in the research in this area. For instance if you take a victim of slavery, the state role could be about providing a visa and allowing that person to stay in a country. The corporate role could be about providing that person with another job.

"What is clear is that states, corporations and NGOs all have to work together, they all need to take shared responsibility for victims, they all need to collaborate. That is the most important thing." ●



# At the heart of business

Following its launch three years ago, The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work has gone from strength to strength.

No issue is higher up the boardroom agenda today than employee wellbeing, and Alliance MBS is at the heart of changing company cultures for good.

Founded three years ago, the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work is focused on improving workplace wellbeing 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 is led by Professor Sir Cary Cooper in conjunction with Dr Paul Litchfield, Chief Medical Officer at BT, and was borne out of conversations Sir Cary began having, during his wider research into wellbeing issues, with HR Directors and company Chief Medical Officers.

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. Although these companies were already looking at these issues individually, for instance by running wellbeing or mindfulness sessions, there was not a sense that this was core to their organisation."

## Stress

He adds that 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."

Professor Cooper says the original aim was to have one organisation from every industry on the group, and that has now been more than achieved with a total of 37 members at present. As well as private sector representation from the likes of Shell, Rolls-Royce, BP, Marks & Spencer, Barclays, Twitter, Microsoft, GSK and John Lewis Partnership, the Forum also comprises of public sector bodies including the UK Government Wellbeing Champion, Health and Safety Executive, NHS employers, Public Health England, the National College of Policing, and the Local Government Association.

## Impact

Some of the topics that have already been discussed at the quarterly meetings of the Forum include:

- The role of line managers in creating healthier workplaces and enhancing productivity
- The impact of work-related technology (i.e. work emails) on people's lives
- The impact of a multi-generational workforce on health and wellbeing
- Compassion at work
- Long working hours culture and its impact on health and wellbeing
- Individual wellbeing interventions e.g. mindfulness, resilience training, mental health first aiders, etc.

Adds Professor Cooper: "The aim is very much for the Forum to hear from experts on particular topics. There are some huge challenges out there for businesses to deal with right now such as the impact of multi-generational workforces, the wider effect of technology and social media, and the potential of AI to transform the workplace further."

PhD student and project co-ordinator Lina Siegl, and Dr Ian Hesketh, a former police officer and College of Policing wellbeing lead, are both supporting the Forum by collating and presenting research and exchanging knowledge with subject matter experts. This is informing discussions in support of Forum subgroups and in the development of useful guidelines, toolkits, policy initiatives with government and private sector organisations, and a range of good practice approaches.

"The next stage is to go into these companies and look at what difference the membership of the Forum is making on the ground and hear how it has helped them in their wellbeing strategies," adds Professor Cooper.

## Future plans

How big could the Forum become? At this stage Professor Cooper is unsure. "For the moment we will carry on doing what we are doing, looking at the issues that the Forum thinks are important. This year is about further cementing the work of the group. But looking further ahead there is a big role here for business schools in terms of teaching executives about these issues, and we want our research to be informing our teaching. Should business schools be training managers more on their social skills so that they can instil better wellbeing in staff? Absolutely, and Alliance MBS has the potential to be an exemplar." ●

“Companies want to know how they can create the right culture so that people stay fit and healthy within their business.”



Sir Cary Cooper is our 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health.



# Thinking differently about audit



## Professor Chris Humphrey reflects on the recent Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee report on the future of audit.

Since the publication of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Select Committee's Future of Audit report in April, commentators have mostly focused on the call for the break-up of the firms and the proposed joint audits.

Yet, a significant part of the BEIS report concentrates on the history of audit, the audit expectations gap, the social role of audit and audit quality, and the conclusions here are important and worthy of further contemplation.

### Acknowledging the past to create the audit of the future

Since the 1970s, commentators and academics have talked about an audit expectations gap, concerns with audit quality and the need to restore confidence in the audit profession. This is why, when giving evidence to the BEIS Select Committee, I stressed that the lengthy history of 'future of the audit' investigations should be treated as an important reference point. Without acknowledging what has gone before it is easy to propose solutions that failed in the past or unintentionally 'recycle' ideas that were rejected for good reason in prior audit inquiries.

What is perhaps most intriguing about today's audit 'crisis', is not the specific nature of proposed reforms but the fact that we have been here many times before with audit and discussions about the future of audit.

Audit is also a function with a history landmarked by notable cases of audit failure. We don't date and remember things in audit by great advances and successes. Instead, we chart and recollect its history through major failures and corporate collapses – we talk of audit post the Asian crisis, post Enron, post the global financial crisis, and we even contemplate the future of auditing in terms of how current proposals will fare when the next crisis breaks.

### Broadening the remit

A key issue of past audit inquiries has been their narrow focus on fixing the current form of audit (that has not been fixed by prior reforms).

To its credit, the BEIS report talks explicitly of improving the social utility of audit by broadening its remit. This includes extending the scope of audit to more future oriented information, improving the usefulness of audit through the issuing of graduated audit findings and greater auditor engagement at company AGMs, and endorsing the fundamental rethink of audit vested in the ongoing Brydon review.

Ruling levels of conservatism, however, should not be underestimated, with criticisms already categorising some of the BEIS' proposals on the scope of audit as being too imprudent, too speculative, too different.



“

When audits fail, we lose faith in audit, when regulation fails we develop more regulations. But is it a strong or a weak profession that requires a strong regulator?

”

#### Will choice really improve quality?

The BEIS report places considerable emphasis and reliance on market competition and regulation. The pursuit of more market choice and greater levels of competition is intended to deliver a more resilient audit market, but a resilient market is a conceptually different phenomenon to a resilient auditor, especially given the difficulties in observing audit quality.

If the desire is for resilient auditors, should the audit market be the immediate starting point, especially given the current scale of concern with the dominant commercial culture in which auditors operate? The case for bolstering the level of choice in the market also assumes that new competitors (whether singularly, jointly or reconstituted) are capable of providing audits of at least an equivalent quality to the existing audit firms.

#### The balance between regulation and professionalism

The relation between regulation and audit professionalism also deserves serious reflection. When regulation fails there is a tendency to give more powers to regulators; when audit fails we look to ban auditors from performing certain activities. When audits fail, we lose faith in audit, when regulation fails we develop more regulations. But is it a strong or a weak profession that requires a strong regulator?

A puzzle in much of the current criticisms of levels of auditing in the UK is that the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the regulatory body whose audit inspections findings are used as a defining measure of audit quality, is the very same body that has been labelled as a regulator in urgent need of reform.

Can the FRC really have been so right on audit quality inspections and apparently wrong on so much else? Furthermore,

should a 'strong' auditing profession not be ensuring that it and its members are the defining knowledge source on audit quality? Can the profession not do more itself to highlight top quality audit in action and illuminate what are overall current levels of audit quality, especially given the questions being posed of its recognised supervisory status in light of the government's commitment to return auditor registration to the regulator?

#### New conceptual thinking on auditing

In seeking to invigorate new conceptual thinking on auditing, I have argued that thinking differently is the fundamental essence of audit.

Audit can be more than just a form of assurance, it can be valuable in itself rather than being dependent on the value of the information that it is assuring. Stripped to its raw conceptual elements, audit is a form of social conscience, an alternative voice that through listening and subsequent action makes a difference that causes people to stop and reflect, to act before an issue arises.

It is about speaking out when others are scared to speak. Audit is not just a voice of reason but a facilitator of change and something or someone that brings a fresh perspective. Rethinking the future of audit means leaving behind phrases such as 'an audit is an audit' and embracing different conceptualisations of audit. Perhaps the real proof of a resilient, publicly interested, professional audit function is when we are readily able to say that 'an audit is something special that made something positive happen'. ●

*\*This article was originally published on FT.com.*

**Chris Humphrey** is a Professor of Accounting and is on the Advisory Board of the Brydon Review.

#### The Future of Audit

In April the House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee published its report into The Future of Audit.

Professors Christopher Humphrey, Brendan O'Dwyer and Stuart Turley, and Dr Javed Siddiqui from the Accounting and Finance Division in Alliance MBS, were all mentioned in the report.

Professor Humphrey was mentioned for his appearance at the committee and sharing his views and expertise with them. Professors O'Dwyer and Turley were mentioned for sharing their views and expertise with the committee, and Dr Siddiqui for his paper 'Are four eyes better than two? An examination of recent empirical evidence on the impact of joint audits', which was submitted to the separate Competition and Markets Authority Statutory audit market study.

The report made a number of recommendations to the forthcoming independent review of the quality and effectiveness of the UK audit market.

This independent review, led by Sir Donald Brydon, will look at audits as a product and what audits should be in the future. It will address the audit expectation gap: the difference between what people think an audit does and what it actually does.

It will also look at the scope of an audit, any changes that may need to be made to it and how it can better serve the public interest. The review is expected to publish its findings by the end of the year.



# US calling

Our research is helping influence a possible move by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the US towards six-monthly corporate reporting.



A paper about Interim Management Statements written by Dr. Thomas Schleicher and Emeritus Professor Martin Walker has been cited in a US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) request for comment following pressure from President Trump to "stop quarterly reporting and go to a six month system".

The SEC has required quarterly reports from US-listed companies since 1971, but in recent years there has been criticism from business leaders saying that it is costly and encourages corporate short-termism, and may even be partly responsible for the dramatic decline in listed companies in the US. They argue that companies are so pre-occupied with the next set of accounts that there is no time left to look at broader strategy.

However those in favour say that the greater transparency protects investors and argue that longer intervals between financial disclosures create more incentive for insider trading.

## Trump tweet

President Trump weighed into the debate with a tweet in August 2018 stating that he had asked the SEC to study whether six-monthly reporting would allow greater flexibility and save money.

Initially the SEC seemed reluctant to do anything on the issue. However, just before Christmas it published a call for comment on earnings releases and quarterly reports, specifically asking for information on how it could "reduce administrative and other burdens on reporting companies associated with quarterly reporting while maintaining or enhancing appropriate investor protection".

As part of this Schleicher and Walker's research was cited in relation to the specific experiences in the EU where the requirement to report on a quarterly basis was removed in 2015.

## EU experience

Back in 2013 the EU announced that it was making quarterly reporting voluntary after nine years of mandatory Interim Management Statements (IMs) for any EU companies admitted to trading on a regulated market.

It argued that IMs were redundant as they were unlikely to contain any additional information not already required by the Market Abuse Directive (MAD).

The paper, published in 2015 in Accounting and Business Research, and already downloaded 6000 times, specifically looked at the argument that quarterly IMs are unlikely to contain any incremental information and therefore have no impact on investor protection.

In their study, Schleicher and Walker analysed the frequency of non-periodic trading statements pre-and post-IMS, providing evidence on the degree to which periodic and non-periodic disclosures interact with one another. Their findings supported the argument that a regulator's decision to increase reporting frequency can lead to a withdrawal of a firm's other disclosures.

They also provided evidence on the extent to which a disclosure regime based on mandatory ad-hoc disclosures, rather than mandatory periodic disclosures, is sufficiently reliable to ensure the release of most relevant information. They found that mandatory ad-hoc disclosures ensure the release of most information which is a "key argument in favour of the decision to formally withdraw IMS in 2015".

## Policy impact

Whilst the inclusion of a financial statement is a key difference between US quarterly reports and the Interim Management Statements previously required under the EU Transparency Directive, the

evidence and findings from Schleicher and Walker's research is clearly of interest to policymakers such as the SEC.

As they are weighing up the costs and benefits of quarterly reporting versus six-monthly reporting this research should go some way to reassure that as long as there are policies in place to require the immediate release of price-sensitive information, six-monthly reporting will ensure the release of most information and be sufficient to protect investors.

Dr Schleicher says there has been a marked interest in their paper since the debate intensified in the US. "The SEC is a key policymaker in the world so this is tremendous profile for Alliance MBS and I am getting dozens of hits every day on the paper online. The interest we have had since the Trump tweet shows the value of our article because there are very few research articles on this subject of reporting frequency.

"This is a really big debate and a big decision for the US to take. Our view remains that quarterly reports can be abolished provided there are requirements in place to report any price sensitive information immediately." ●



**Dr Thomas Schleicher** is a Lecturer in Accounting and Finance



# Original thinking applied

Ismail Erturk's research into the global financial system is an example of how research informs our teaching.

For almost every executive running a major enterprise today the defining moment of their career was the global financial crisis. A decade on, the global business community still talks about 'pre-crash' and 'post-crash' such was its enduring legacy.

At the turn of the millennium academics from Alliance MBS were among the very first to fire the warning signs that all was not well in the global financial system. Among them was Senior Lecturer in Banking Ismail Erturk who wrote a number of articles and research papers which, in many ways, anticipated the crisis that would follow.

## Teaching focus

The growing and continued importance of studying the roots of the crisis and its impact today is illustrated by how the research that Erturk and his colleagues have undertaken now forms a core part of our teaching programme.

In particular, Erturk's teaching has reflected his own specific research interests into the 'financialization' of the global economy - namely the increasing importance of financial markets and institutions in the world economy.

Initially his research formed an elective on our MBA programme, but in the wake of the enduring impact of the financial crisis his work now forms part of a core module - entitled 'Managing and Leading in a Global Business Environment' - on both the full-time MBA and global MBA programmes.

"For me teaching and research are completely intertwined," says Erturk. "My research feeds back into my teaching and vice versa, and this module is based on my specific research into the financial crisis and the role of central banks today, particularly in relation to the social context of business and critiquing the shareholder value approach."

## Trust in business

Erturk says the research also feeds into the wider context of how business schools need to rethink their curriculums in the wake of the financial crisis, and introduce elements about trust and corporate

governance into business teaching.

He says this is an agenda that students are increasingly aware of. "It is now easier to introduce these concepts to students because, since the crash, levels of awareness around them are far greater. Students do not just hear it from our course module but read it in the financial press and hear business leaders discussing these subjects. It has become more or less mainstream."

That said, he says that it is important to find a "new language" to convey these issues and research themes to students who did not live through the financial crisis and who were not materially affected by it. "If you are aged 30 today and now taking a MBA, then 10 years ago you were probably a student so not specifically exposed to the impact."

## New module

Erturk says the new module continues to evolve, and his own teaching continues to be driven by his own research and engagement with practitioners. "At the moment I am looking at particular areas such as fintech, digital finance and ethical finance, and specifically at how you integrate innovation and technological changes in finance, and at the wider social implications of fintech."

"The development of fintech brings with it many questions. For instance is it going to deliver more efficient banking? Is it going to be disruptive? How should it be regulated?"

## New normal

Erturk says another area of research is continued concern over the stability of the financial system and, in particular, its addiction to low interest rates which he says has created "new fragilities" in the system and record levels of corporate debt.

"Low interest rates are also creating ever deeper inequalities between owners of property and financial assets, and those - primarily the young - who do not own such assets. Yet central banks and governments seem reluctant to use other tools at their disposal, such as taxation or infrastructure investment, to help reduce the impact." ●



The development of fintech brings with it many questions... is it going to deliver more efficient banking? Is it going to be disruptive? How should it be regulated?



Ismail Erturk is a Senior Lecturer in Banking



# Retail therapy

Academic research is playing a role in reviving the high street.



## Business to business

Professor Gustafsson is one of a number of recent appointments made in the marketing division at Alliance MBS. He has also been joined by Professor Christian Homburg, an award-winning marketing academic who specialises in marketing management and pricing strategies.

He says the importance of marketing as an academic field continues to rise. "My field focuses on B2B marketing and it's an area with huge academic potential. There are thousands of businesses in the UK and further afield interacting with each other, yet there's little academic research on it and this leaves a lot of unanswered questions. Alliance MBS is very well placed to capitalise on this and with the school recently investing in its marketing management and strategy work, it's an exciting time to join the department."

## Practical research

Professor Homburg says one of the major issues in marketing research is that there can be a tendency for academics to take rigorous academic research too far and lose contact with practical life. "Personally I think this is problematic. Strong academic work needs strong links to practice."

He said one of the reasons for this trend is that it is now so easy to get data from consumers through the internet. "Relevant strategy research has to gather data from companies which is often much more difficult. Today there is also the issue of data security so companies are even more reluctant to give away data. So this may be a reason why people turn away from strategy research and more towards consumer research. Consumer research is important for marketing but it is not everything."

Professor Bryan Lukas, Associate Head of Research and Chair of Marketing at Alliance MBS, added: "Our marketing department is continuing to grow, not only by academic headcount but by the volume of research we're undertaking. Christian and Anders are both renowned experts in their chosen fields, and our students will really benefit from their presence at the School." ●

“ If you build up a picture that is appealing to customers they will ultimately come to your store and do their shopping with you instead of online.”



**Anders Gustafsson** is Professor of Marketing at the Norwegian Business School and Distinguished Professorial Fellow at Alliance Manchester Business School.



**Christian Homburg** is Professor of Marketing and Director of the Institute for Market-Oriented Management (IMU) at the University of Mannheim and Distinguished Professorial Fellow at Alliance Manchester Business School.

The research of Anders Gustafsson, a recently appointed Distinguished Professorial Fellow, looks at in-store customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty. He has worked with some of Scandinavia's biggest businesses, including furniture giant IKEA, to research the direct link between sensory marketing and increased customer sales.

He says retailers with a physical presence are under enormous pressure from their online counterparts, and they need to be investing in and enhancing their in-store customer experiences to compete.

Contrary to common thinking, he says as much as 90 per cent of shopping is still done in physical stores, albeit that consumers will sometimes then make a later purchase online.

"People enjoy using their senses when shopping, whether that's smell, music or touch, and it all plays a role in that customer's purchasing journey. Some stores will survive even if they are exposed to high competition from the internet because people like going into stores and don't want to be without them. But in order to survive these stores need to focus on detail. They need to focus on how they display products, how their employees interact with customers. If you build up a picture that is appealing to customers they will ultimately come to your store and do their shopping with you instead of online."

## Service

Professor Gustafsson said service remains key. "It is very difficult if someone in a store gives you a lot of help to then not buy from them, as long as the difference in price to buying online is not too great. If you help the customer and they enjoy the experience they will buy from you and come back to you again."

He adds that there is now a lot of room for academic research to be a key component in keeping the high street alive. "I'm looking forward to working with staff and students here at Alliance Manchester Business School to understand how we can better support business locally and nationally," he adds.



# Creative economy

Anita Greenhill is involved in a project which shows the power of the creative economy to promote social unity.



A visit to the Niomoume Islands in southern Senegal is a challenge to the senses, admits Dr Anita Greenhill.

After a whole day's travelling from the Gambian capital Banjul, the last part of the journey to reach the remote set of islands is done by dinghy. On arrival, among the sights that greet you are villagers digging holes in rice fields to tap into their daily water supply.

Here-in lies one of the key issues facing the region which is dealing with significant poverty as well as major social, environmental and economic problems.

As Dr Greenhill explains: "Global warming is having a major impact on this region, and one of the most damaging impacts is that the water supply in the ground is becoming increasingly salinated, which also damages crops. Among the other challenges are that because it is such a remote region there are also no doctors or healthcare."

Added to this list is also a lack of basic infrastructure, especially digital infrastructure, which she says creates a further set of challenges.

## Artistic link

Dr Greenhill recently visited the islands on the back of her collaboration with Manchester-based Senegalese artist Sens Sagna.

As she explains: "I have previously worked a lot with digital campaigns and social movements and have been working with the Digital Creativity project in Manchester for some time where we use creative skills to bring people together. It was through this network that I first started working with Sens on the positive impact that creativity can provide in the development of ecotourism.

"Sens was then approached by the organisers of an inaugural music and arts festival in the Niomoume Islands to be their cultural ambassador. The idea behind the festival was to help unify the region given these huge social problems that it faces, and it was the first ever artistic and cultural gathering for the islands and its people. The aim was to combine the creative industries and ecotourism under the umbrella of 'peace and unity' to



come together to solve the islands' social, environmental and economic problems."

## Creative benefit

Dr Greenhill was among more than 1,000 people who attended the event last Christmas which she says was a resounding success. "Given all these problems facing the area, it really brought people together as they celebrated their traditions.

"But it also really showed the value that the creative economy can have far beyond any commercial benefit," she adds. "Earlier feasibility studies have demonstrated the impact the creative industries sector can have on social unity and the integration of marginalised groups, and this festival strongly reinforced this. For us a university attending the festival has also helped to build links and opened up potential routes for international collaboration and research within West Africa."

The project will now look to learn from these Senegalese initiatives and the stakeholders involved, in order to develop and join together similar work being carried out in South Manchester.

Dr Greenhill says this will be achieved by looking to establish a prototype for a

structured process to creative production that generates social, cultural and economic value by focussing on community-driven innovation, with an initial emphasis on the creative industries and technology. "This comes back to the power of bringing people together, of creating and sharing."

And she stresses that there is a strong business element to these ideas too. "If you are putting on a festival or major gathering in a remote corner of the world you need water, need places to sleep, need management and organisation. You cannot just throw a party." ●

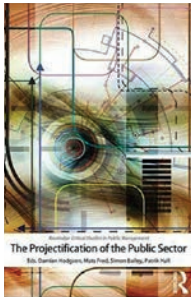


Dr Anita Greenhill is a Senior Lecturer in People Management and Organisation



# Bookshelf

## A guide to recent publications by our academics

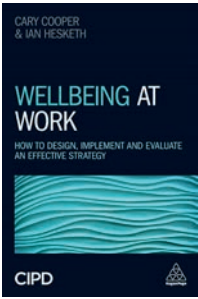


**The projectification of the public sector**  
Edited by Damian Hodgson, Mats Fred,  
Simon Bailey, Patrik Hall

In recent decades we have seen the increasing use of projects and other more temporary ways of organisation across the public sector in both Europe and further afield. While some argue this is a welcome development which unlocks entrepreneurial zeal and makes public services more flexible and accountable, others argue that this makes policy initiatives increasingly technocratic and that the project organisations formed offer fragmented and unsustainable short-term solutions to long-term problems.

This volume sets out to address public sector 'projectification' by drawing together research from a range of academic fields to develop a critical and theoretically-informed understanding of the causes, nature, and consequences of the projectification of the public sector.

This first part of the book centres on the politics of projectification, while the second relates to the reframing of the relationship between policymaking and implementation. The third brings a focus upon the tools and techniques through which public sector projectification is constructed and delivered.



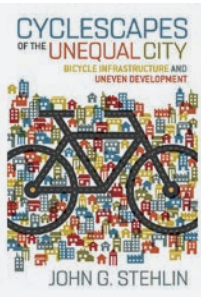
**Wellbeing at Work: How to Design, Implement and Evaluate an Effective Strategy**  
Cary Cooper, Ian Hesketh

The authors, who have previously worked together on a guide to best practice in managing health and wellbeing in the public sector, join forces again for a broader look at promoting wellbeing in the workplace.

With stress at work rising year on year, long hours are becoming the norm and presenteeism is increasing across all industries. This is not only having a detrimental effect on employee health, happiness and productivity, but is also impacting the bottom line.

Against this backdrop HR professionals are uniquely placed to manage this modern workplace crisis by implementing a wellbeing strategy, and this book offers a practical guide to designing and implementing an effective strategy that will reduce employee anxiety, increase staff engagement and improve overall performance.

The book takes readers through the entire process, explaining why a wellbeing strategy is necessary in a fast-changing world of work, and also identifying common pitfalls and problems and how to avoid them.



**Cyclescapes of the Unequal City: Bicycle Development and Uneven Development**  
John Stehlin

Not long ago few cyclists braved the streets of most American cities. But today city leaders undertake ambitious new bicycle infrastructure plans and bike share schemes to promote the environmental, social, and economic health of the city and its residents.

Stehlin, a research associate at the Sustainable Consumption Institute, traces cycling's rise in popularity as a key policy solution for American cities facing the environmental, economic, and social contradictions of the previous century of sprawl.

Using in-depth case studies from San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Detroit, he argues that the mission of bicycle advocacy has converged with, and reshaped, the urban growth machine around a model of liveable, environmentally friendly, and innovation-based urban capitalism. Grounding its analysis in both regional political economy and neighbourhood-based ethnography, the book uses the bicycle as a lens to view major shifts in today's American city.

# **ORIGINAL THINKING APPLIED**

