

Nottingham Business School

Doctoral (PhD & DBA) Projects **Self-funded**

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Please revise the following doctoral projects according to your academic background and research interests; each project provides a basic bibliography for further clarification.

You must prepare a research proposal **closely related** to one of these projects. Please do not 'copy and paste' from any project description, as this will disqualify your application. We would like to appreciate your understanding of the topic and of the bibliography, and your own research ideas.

You may contact the Academic Project Lead (Director of Studies) of any project for further clarification. It is possible to submit a research proposal that is not related to one of these projects, but only if explicitly advised by an NBS academic beforehand.

Full applications (application form, supporting documents, research proposal) must be submitted to the NTU Doctoral School.

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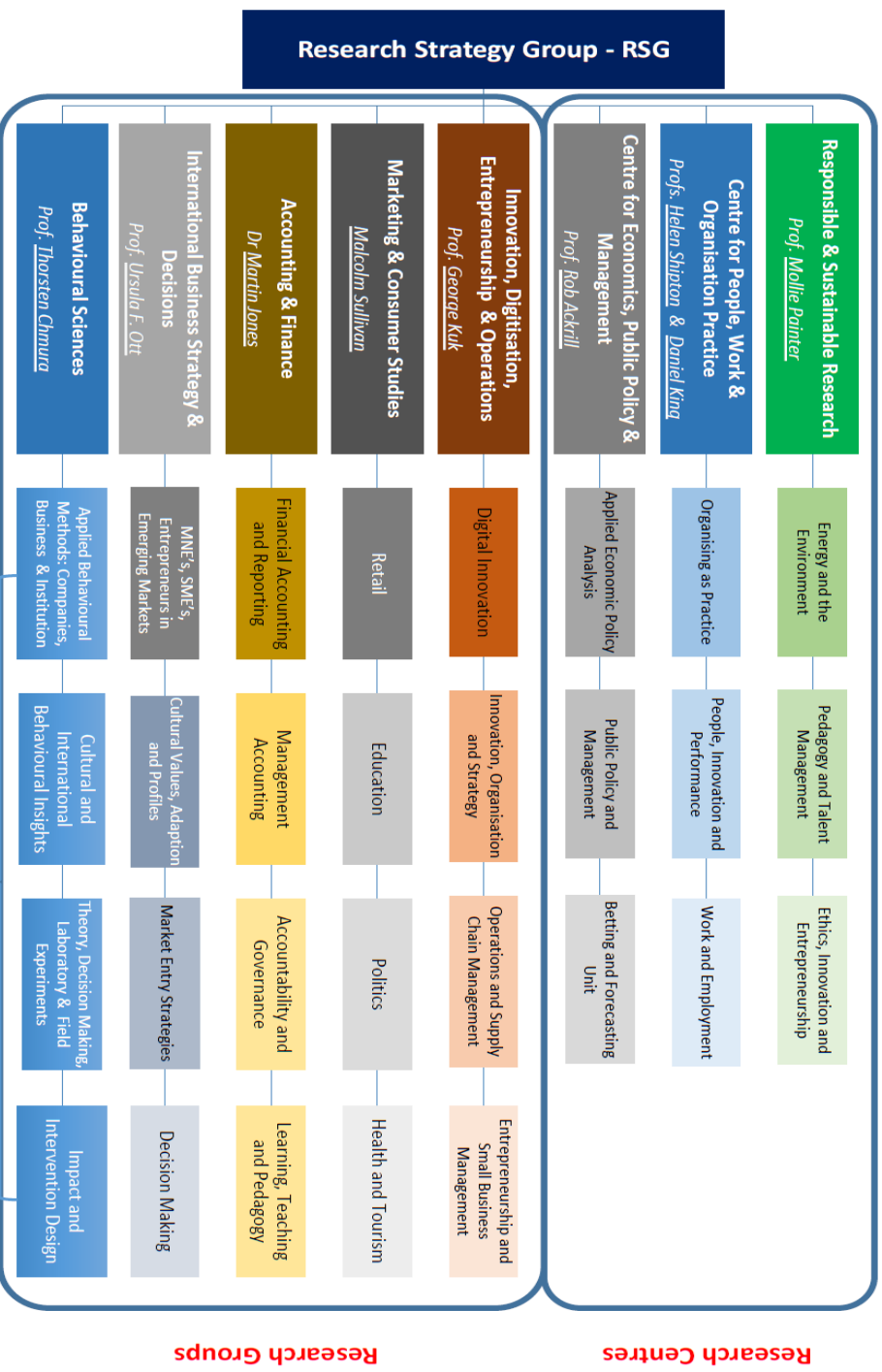
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NBS Research Map

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Accounting and Finance

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Bank performance]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Thao Nguyen]

Project Description:

Based on the non-structural model – disequilibrium approach (Goddard and Wilson, 2009), this research presents an empirical assessment of the degree of competition within the banking system. We examine a greater number of environmental covariates and different dependent variables compared to previous applications of this model. Moreover, we use lagged input prices (to avoid endogeneity) and exclude assets (to avoid specification bias) in our models.

Goddard, J.A. and Wilson, J.O.S. (2009). Competition in banking: A disequilibrium approach. *Journal of Banking and Finance*, 33, 2282-2292]

CONTACT

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Bank efficiency]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Thao Nguyen]

Project Description:

This study analyses bank efficiency. We apply an advanced methodological approach introduced by Simar and Wilson (2007) to examine bank efficiency. The objective of our study is threefold. First, we analyse bank efficiency in by applying an advanced semi-parametric two stage method introduced by Simar and Wilson (2007). Second, we identify the determinants of bank efficiency. Third, we provide a detailed analysis of bank efficiency for different ownership structures and bank size. PhD/DBA candidates can apply this method to a single country or a panel data. An advanced knowledge of R software would be an advantage.

Simar, L. and Wilson, P.W. (2007). Estimation and inference in two-stage, semi-parametric models of production processes. *Journal of Econometrics*, 136, 31-64]

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-Funded**

Project Title: Managerial Incentives and Corporate Ethics

Academic Project Lead: Dr Athanasios Tsekeris

Project Description:

Since the seminal work of Jensen and Meckling (1976) on the separation of ownership and control and the associated agency costs, a significant volume of research has focused on corporate governance practices that can potentially align the interests of managers (agents) with those of shareholders (principals) (Shleifer and Vishny, 1997). One of the most important, and often controversial, corporate governance mechanisms used to mitigate agency costs is the structure of executive compensation contracts. Indeed, there is empirical evidence that linking the wealth of managers with that of shareholders via the provision of incentive compensation can reduce information asymmetry (Bernardo et al., 2009), prevent value-destroying managerial actions (Edmans et al., 2009), motivate innovation (Manso 2011), exert managerial effort (Dodonova and Khoroshilov, 2014) and improve the quality of investment decisions (Datta et al., 2011; Minnick et al., 2011; Croci and Petmezas, 2015) increasing firm value and benefiting shareholders.

On the other hand, unsuitable executive compensation structures can destroy firm value. For instance, it is known that high proportions of cash compensation can lead to managerial entrenchment and risk aversion (Berger et al., 1997; Duffhues and Kabir, 2008). Equity-based compensation does not always create value either. Its effectiveness may depend on a number of firm characteristics (Kuo et al., 2013; Balafas and Florackis, 2014) and under certain circumstances it can also result in higher risk aversion (Lambert et al., 1991, Brisley, 2006). In addition, it has been documented that executive compensation rises following investment decisions that increase firm size irrespectively of whether these investments create value or not (Schmidt and Fowler, 1990; Kroll et al., 1990; Bliss and Rosen, 2001, Harford and Li, 2007). Therefore, powerful managers are likely to pursue size-increasing investments (Grinstein and Hribar, 2004) and rig their compensation contracts for their own benefit (Duffhues and Kabir, 2008; Morse et al., 2011).

However, the above discussion focuses on the interests of shareholders only ignoring those of other groups of stakeholders (e.g. employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, environmental groups, government). In the modern societies profit maximisation may not be the only corporate objective. Quite a few companies often recognise the need to act in a socially responsible and ethical way following more altruistic strategies (Watson and Head, 2016). In addition, an increasing number of studies highlight the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in corporate governance and the necessity to take stakeholders' interests into account in strategic corporate decisions (Porte and Kramar, 2006; Arora and Dharwadkar, 2011; Young and Thyil, 2014). Given the trade-off between financial performance and social-environmental strategies (Walley and Whitehead, 1994; Jaffe et al., 1995) managers may need to be provided with appropriate compensation incentives in order to pursue non-financial goals (Gabel and Sinclair- Desgagné, 1992). Nevertheless, very little research has been conducted in this area so far. Mahoney and Thorne (2005, 2006) argue that long-term compensation incentives can align the interests of executives with those of the society strengthening CSR. Similarly, it is found that the provision of CSR-related incentives can lead to greater levels of social performance (Hong et al., 2016) while higher proportions of cash-based compensation is negatively associated with CSR (Karim et al., 2017). Regarding the impact of socially and environmentally responsible behaviour on managerial compensation, the evidence is mixed: some studies document a positive relation between environmental factors and CEO wealth (Campbell et al., 2007, Berrone and Gomez-Mejia, 2009) while others advocate an adverse impact of

CSR on CEO compensation (Cai et al., 2011).

The main problem with these studies though is the way managerial compensation and the associated incentives are measured. Simplified measures of incentive compensation such as the value and volume of new options and stock grants, scaled and unscaled numbers of options and stock held and the sum of these are only noisy proxies and cannot properly capture incentives provided to managers via their compensation contracts (Core and Guay 2002, Coles et al., 2006). Therefore, this project aims to examine the structure of executive compensation contracts that can maximise social and environmental benefits using appropriate measures of managerial incentives. In doing so, the diverse interests of the different groups of stakeholders should be taken into account as "one size fits all" approach is unlikely to be a suitable solution to such a complicated issue.

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Economics

<https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/nbs/about/academic-departments/economics.html>

**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [HOUSING MARKET SPILLOVERS]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr. Chunping Liu]

Project Description:

The housing market has been argued as the main driving force of the 2008-2009 financial crisis. In U.S., the past decade initially saw a rapid growth in housing prices and residential investment, followed by the collapse of housing market and frozen credit market. This led many economists to raise the issue that housing market is not only a passive reaction of other economic and financial activities but the causing factor of business fluctuations. Therefore, we wish to expand this study further by undertaking empirical research, firstly by modelling housing market either in a dynamic stochastic general equilibrium (DSGE) framework or a reduced form VAR model. Secondly, we will examine the sources and consequences of housing market.

The earlier literature attempts to incorporate the housing market are Iacoviello (2005) and Iacoviello and Neri (2010). Building a dynamic stochastic general equilibrium (DSGE) model, they found that housing market spillovers cannot be ignored. Over the business cycle, housing demand and housing technology shocks explain one-quarter each of the volatility of housing market. Similar versions of this model have been used in different central banks and economic organisations, such as Riksbank (Sellin and Walentin, 2015), European Commission (Roeger and in 't Veld, 2009), Bank of Canada (Christensen, et al., 2009), and IMF (Kannan, Rabanal and Scott, 2009).

Proposed Methods

The method can be two directions. If we focus on the reduced form model, we need to build a VAR model based on the DSGE framework of Iacoviello (2005). The impulse response functions can explain the housing market responses after a shock. The variance decomposition allows us to see how much each shock contributes to the volatility of the housing market. If we need to build a DSGE framework, we can use Bayesian estimation method. All the analysis will be based on these estimation results.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [The impact of schooling on housing market]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr. Chunping Liu]

Project Description:

When a family decides to buy a house, there are many factors could step in, such as the total floor area, number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, environment, availability of public transport, etc. One of the most interesting area is to see if schooling has any impact on housing prices. The key aim of this research is to assess how much a family is willing to pay to live in an area, which has a better performing school.

There are many studies trying to investigate this link. The literature varies in terms of the empirical methods. Most of the literature based on the regression based estimates, parametric and non-parametric modelling of unobservable factors, and instrumental variables methods (see Brasington and Haurin, 2006, Cheshire and Sheppard 2004, and Rosenthal, 2003). However, these studies suffer from the omitted variable bias. More recent works use discontinuity methods, difference-in-difference methods and combined different methods, such as Davidoff and Leigh (2008), Clapp et al. (2008) and Bayer et al. (2007), etc. The impact of schooling on house prices is significant in these studies. Kane et al. (2006) even found the schooling could affect house prices by 10% in Mecklenberg, US.

Proposed Methods

We will base on the traditional hedonic housing price model, including the characteristics of the house. Then a measure of schooling will be added to the model. We also need to control the policy changes in recent years, such as stamp duty, help to buy, etc. We will use regional data to show the effects of this link.]

References

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Environmental information disclosure policies

Academic Project Lead: Dr. Eleni Stathopoulou

Project Description:]

Environmental information disclosure policies, where governments release information to the public, have been increasingly popular in recent years. They first emerged in the U.S. but were soon implemented in Europe, and then gradually in Asia. These right-to-know policies (Mastromonaco, 2015) help consumers make informed choices and policymakers design a market-based regulation where the main objective is that firms will be incentivised to mitigate the pollution they produce because of public pressure.

In most cases, there is coordination in information release between countries (such as within the European Union) or between constituent members of larger jurisdictions (such as within the U.S.). That said, there are also cases where countries or regions have adopted unilateral policies. For instance, in the European Union, France has developed its national legislation framework whereas Denmark has adopted the UN Global Compact which encourages firms to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation. In the U.K., the Companies Act 2006 obliges firms with shares listed on a regulated market in the European Economic Area to disclose non-financial information in their business review. Additionally, while some member states adopted compulsory non-financial reporting, others adopted the "comply or explain" system giving the option to some firms not to report environmental information in circumstances where it is difficult to compile all necessary data in a timely manner to comply with reporting requirements.

There is a growing literature on the various aspects and consequences of information disclosure (Tietenberg, 1998). Hence this project would look at international coordination in pollution information release and investigate how it affects social welfare, firms' strategies and pollution.

References

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: One Belt and One Road initiative

Academic Project Lead: Dr Jingwen Fan

Project Description:

One Belt and One Road "is not an entity or a mechanism". Rather, it is a concept and initiative of cooperative development that relies on the existing dual multilateral mechanism between Asia, Europe, non-mainland China, neighbouring oceans, and the existing platform for regional cooperation. It borrows the concept of the ancient "Silk Road", takes the initiative to develop economic cooperation and partnership with other countries and regions along the route to jointly build a community of mutual trust in politics, economic integration and cultural tolerance. Huang (2016) argues that such an initiative faces significant barriers due to lack of central coordination mechanism and clash of different political regimes. India and Japan are not enthusiastic about this project. In Europe, anti-globalisation sentiments typified by Brexit and influential far-right political leaders such as Marine Le Pen could also create roadblocks for China's Belt and Road project. Nevertheless, Herrero and Xu (2017) argue that EU countries, especially landlocked countries, will benefit in trade in terms of significant reduction in transaction costs. Du and Zhang (2017) have found that China's overseas direct investment rose significantly in the belt-road regions and Central and Western Europe will benefit from large Chinese OFDI. However, most of the work concentrate on political issues and challenges that China faces and nothing much has been done on concrete impacts and the like.

Proposed Structure

This project will comprise three individual papers that will examine the consequences of OBOR initiative. The first paper will look at the how OFDI has impacted on the economic growth of the Belt-Road countries. The second paper will examine whether there is a possibility of single currency within the region. The last paper will employ the gravity model to investigate whether and how a reduction in transportation costs associated with the construction and improvement of transport infrastructure affects trade flows for Belt and Road countries.

Du, J. and Zhang, Y. (2017) "Does One Belt One Road initiative promote Chinese overseas direct investment?" *China Economic Review*, Available online 5 September 2017

Herrero, A. G. and Xu, J. (2017) "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Can Europe Expect Trade Gains?" *China and World Economy*, vol. 25, issue 6, p84-99

Huang, Y (2016) Understanding China's Belt & Road Initiative: Motivation, framework and assessment. *China Economic Review*, vol. 40, p.314-321

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Economic modelling of female participation in a mixed health care system of developing economies

Academic Project Lead: Dr King Yoong Lim (Lecturer in Economics)

Project Description:

Physician dual practice has long been documented in the Health Economics literature as a prevalent feature in the national health system of developing countries. For example, Gruen et al. (2002) documented that more than 80 percent of the government physicians in Bangladesh engage in private practice, while Russo et al. (2013) show that 55 percent of physicians surveyed in three African cities engaged in dual practice. Even though thorough reviews of the existing literature of physician dual practice have been conducted by various studies, such as, non-exhaustively, Eggleston and Bir (2006) and Socha and Bech (2011), studies that explore female participation in dual practice and its growth and welfare implications in a developing economy with mixed health care system, remains very limited. Agénor and Canuto (2015) and Agénor et al. (2014) develop growth models to examine the impact of gender equality (within a collective family decision-making and time-allocation context) on children's health and consequently, growth. While these studies show that the lack of gender equality in a developing country can cause lack of attention paid to child-rearing, and consequently adversely affecting the health status and productivity of an adult (due to health persistence as a children grows to become an adult), it pays no attention to the intricacy of a mixed health care system. As such, these studies do not bring any insight into female decision's to become a physician, and related issues. The research would likely involve both theoretical and empirical components. The candidate would develop a macroeconomic model with gender and physician markets. Based on this model, primary data collection or survey similar to Russo et al. (2013) or the various waves of the Indonesia Family Life Survey [see, for instance, Strauss et al. (2016)] is conducted in a relevant developing country, which is then used to implement econometric estimation/testing of the theoretical propositions developed.

This study therefore involves the candidate having to develop skills in survey design and the development of questionnaires or structured interviews. The learning outcome will be threefold as (i) the candidate will benefit from the training of writing a theoretical model, (ii) the candidate will develop expertise throughout the preparation process of Page 8 of 8 implementing a primary surveys; (iii) the candidate will then learn to analyse the data collected using applied econometric techniques implementing a primary surveys; (iii) the candidate will then learn to analyse the data collected using applied econometric techniques.

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Strauss, John, Witoelar, Firman, Sikoki, Bondan, 2016. The Fifth Wave of the Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS5): Overview and Field Report. March. WR-1143/1-NIA/NICHD.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [What factors attract FDI into a country?]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Wenyu Zang]

[Project Description:]

The rapid increase in inward FDI and the recognition of the benefits of inward FDI have motivated the studies on the determinants of FDI locations. According to the eclectic paradigm introduced by Dunning (1977, 1988 and 1993), firms will engage in foreign production when they perceive location advantages in a foreign country. Otherwise, firms would serve domestic markets by domestic production and foreign markets by exports (Dunning, 1988). The location advantages in a host country might affect the amount of inward FDI that the country receives, which includes labour cost, trade union density, employment protection legislation, wage bargaining coordination, R&D expenditure, market size, economic growth, agglomeration, trade barrier, trade openness, exchange rate, inflation rate, corporate tax, human capital, infrastructure, political instability, country risk, corruption and rule of law etc.

A large number of studies on developing countries have been conducted on the determinants of inward FDI, but the effectiveness of developed countries in attracting FDI using aggregate country-level data has not been analysed sufficiently due to limited studies on this area. Current studies on developed countries employ firm level FDI data, industry level FDI data or bilateral FDI data. However, there are a limited number of studies using aggregate FDI inflow data from the rest of the world, including Bajo-Rubio and Sosvilla-Rivero (1994) on Spain, Billington (1999) on 7 developed countries, Globerman and Shapiro (1999) on Canada, Lipsey (2000) on 22 developed countries, Yang *et al.* (2000) on Australia, Kottaridi (2005) on 10 developed countries, Wijeweera and Clark (2006) on US, Radulescu and Robson (2008) on 19 developed OECD countries. Using secondary data from World Bank or OECD sources, the study would use statistical and econometric analysis to examine the determinants of inward FDI in developed countries. This study would extend prior work to ascertain whether the determinants of FDI depends on the type of FDI (technology seeking FDI, resource seeking FDI etc) and different industries.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Inward FDI and domestic entrepreneurship in China]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Wenyu Zang]

[Project Description:]

Inward FDI can make a positive contribution to the host country by supplying advanced technology, product and process innovations (Dunning, 1994). The entry of foreign firms might stimulate domestic enterprises to protect their market shares and profits, which leads to severe competition (Dunning, 1994; Blomstrom and Kokko, 1997; OECD, 2002; Hill, 2009). Increased competition may force local enterprises to use resources more efficiently, to develop product and process innovations and to promote technological upgrading, etc (OECD, 2002; Hill, 2009). Therefore, the productivity of local enterprises can be improved by imitating the more advanced technology brought by inward FDI, by exploiting existing technology and resources more efficiently or by seeking for more advanced technology (Blomstrom and Kokko, 1997, Saggi, 2000). Furthermore, inward FDI may create forward and backward linkages as foreign firms transfer technology to local suppliers of intermediate goods and customers (Blomstrom and Kokko, 1997; Saggi, 2000; OECD, 2002). However, the potential drawback is that foreign firms might out-compete local enterprises and drive local enterprises out of business (Blomstrom and Kokko, 1997; Hill, 2009). What also needs taking into account is that foreign firms may choose to locate their businesses based on the domestic enterprises and overall economic conditions present locally.

There is some literature examining the relationship between inward FDI and domestic entrepreneurship (Backer and Sleuwaegen, 2003; Javorcik, 2004; Haskel *et al.*, 2007; Barbosa and Eiriz, 2009; Kim and Li, 2014). Equally, foreign firms might be motivated to locate in areas due to the local enterprise economy. However, there are no studies on the causal relationship in China.

Using secondary data from China Statistical Yearbook, the study would use statistical and econometric analysis to establish the causal links between inward FDI and domestic entrepreneurship in China.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Financial Capital, Human Capital, and Self-Employment in the UK]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Zhongmin Wu]

Project Description:

Why become self-employed and what are the key factors causing the utility from self-employment to exceed that from paid employment? Mark Taylor (1996) has shown that higher expected earnings in self-employment relative to paid employment are a major attraction. The independence and freedom offered by self-employment are clearly appealing. However, there are those who desire job security and therefore prefer paid employment. Ajayi-Obe and Parker (2005) mentioned that "the self-employed enjoy a non-pecuniary benefit from work itself (e.g., independence) that makes a given amount of work in that occupation relatively less unattractive than the same amount of work would be in paid employment". Schmitz (1989) presents a model in which endogenous entrepreneurial activity is the key determinant of economic growth. The theory also differs from standard model in that growth is driven by the imitative activities of entrepreneurs.

Evans & Leighton (1989) found liquidity constraints play a role when setting up a firm, as the availability of capital is a significant barrier to self-employment. However, the human capital model indicates that the more educated and skilled self-employed are likely to find it easier to raise external finance for their business. Therefore, Cressy (1996) has argued human capital and not finance is the main constraint on self-employment. This project will test whether financial capital and/or human capital is the main constrain of self-employment in the UK.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Innovation, entrepreneurship and institutional change of China

Academic Project Lead: Dr Zhongmin Wu

Project Description:

The proposed research aims to inform public policy concerning the role governments can play in fostering innovation in commercial enterprises. As part of the plan for post-Brexit Britain, the UK Government has spearheaded a new "modern industrial strategy" and published a Green Paper, Building our Industrial Strategy. At its core, the government wants to understand what role it should play in fostering innovation in commercial enterprises and how to help them develop into the next Arm Holdings. Four decades of laissez faire economics means that there is very limited data on industrial strategies in the UK. China on the other hand is a treasure trove of information. Previous research on this topic has been limited and the existing work does not differentiate between industries. By looking within specific industries, we can compare like with like thus yielding results that are more accurate. Our research will focus on the data rich manufacturing and technology sectors to determine the magnitude and effectiveness of innovation between state owned enterprise and private enterprises

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Firm Performance, State Ownership, and Government Regulation: Evidence from China

Academic Project Lead: Dr Zhongmin Wu

Project Description:

Using most recent data from China, this research shows that ownership structure has a significant impact on firm performance and firm characteristics. Our results show the importance of getting to grips with government regulation. Another key finding of this paper is that China has very good economic institutions that are conducive to doing business. It is far easier to conduct business in China than the other BRIC countries. We conclude that partial privatisations of SOEs on its own is unlikely to bring huge gains in efficiency. Reforms must also include better incentives and monitoring of management. Our findings are robust and consistent to various controls, alternative measures of firm performance, and different estimation methods including quantile regression.

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Human Resource Management

https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/nbs/about/academic-departments/human_resource_management.html

**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Public sector social value]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Ani Raiden

Project Description:

Social value in public sector organisations – who owns it and who takes ownership for it? Within this project we ask questions about the fundamental ways of organising within public sector organisations that may help and/or hinder the creation of social value. Some local authorities tend to see social value as an issue specific to the procurement team only; something to consider as part of supply-chain management (akin to social procurement). Other local authorities take a more holistic view, bringing in multi-functional teams to consider how to best create social value. Ultimately, our aim is to critically review current practice and engage with practitioners in this area to develop an in-depth understanding of what works well in managing and delivering social value projects.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Co-creating social Value]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Ani Raiden

Project Description:

Co-creating social value involves multiple project partners in a network of operations working together to make a difference. Such networks may involve public sector bodies, private sector organisations, and third sector enterprises. Often the partners' priorities and mission vary widely, and it may be challenging to maintain focus and momentum on creating social value, especially when other pressing business concerns (such as economic constraints) are brought to fore. How do project partners then negotiate and re-negotiate the terms so that the potential social impact is not compromised?

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Measuring Social Value]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Ani Raiden

Project Description:

Measuring social value and assessing social impact remains one of the most controversial and challenging topics in this space (Raiden et al, 2019). Thus, it is an imperative that we continually and critically examine and reflect on how numbers are produced and used (or misused) by policy-makers, practitioners and/or researchers. Management thinking is often dominated by quantitative metrics and rankings – how useful is this? What are the key challenges in moving away from such a focus on numbers? Does the current problem with ‘fake news’ and mistrust in experts (and the stats they produce) allow us to open up discussion and debate about qualitative ways of considering impact?

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Social Value orientation]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Ani Raiden

Project Description:

Social value orientation is a construct rooted in social psychology that tells us how much weight a person attaches to the welfare and needs of others in relation to their own. Research shows that social value orientation is predictive of important behavioural characteristics such as cooperative behaviour in social dilemmas, helping behaviour, donation behaviour, pro-environmental behaviour, and negotiation behaviour. It follows that cooperative social value orientation may also be predictive of interest in and commitment to creating social value, and thereafter the success of organisational initiatives.

Determining the social value categories (i.e. cooperative/prosocial, individualistic, or competitive social value orientation) and social value orientation angle (within a social value orientation slider scale) of two groups of respondents vis-à-vis their contributions to social value and social impact is one of the objectives of this research project. We will compare and contrast the responses from active practitioners in this area (i.e. those engaged with social value) and people yet to be convinced of the project.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [The Post-BREXIT referendum Human Resource Development Era: An Investigation into the UK Banking Sector]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Fotios Mitsakis]

Project Description: [This research study will examine the effect of the BREXIT referendum onto the Human Resource Development (HRD) practices of the UK banking sector. For many national economies, the banking sector is considered as one of their main pillars. Concurrently, the sector is characterised as “knowledge-intensive” and “people-oriented” with regards to its competitiveness, success, growth and change (Froehlich, 2017; Kor, 2016; Mitsakis, 2017; Mitsakis & Aravopoulou, 2016). Thus, it is important to examine how HRD practices in UK banks have been affected by the BREXIT referendum outcome. Lately, there are many commentators associating BREXIT with the make of a new global economic crisis. Amongst them, the Bank of England governor Mark Carney described the post-BREXIT era as a new financial crisis (Elliot and Stewart, 2017; Gold, 2017; Chu, 2017; Rachman, 2016). Following such assertions, organisations reported extensive budget cuts within their HR interventions, including relevant budget allocations to their HRD strategies and practices.

Methodology:

A longitudinal survey would allow prospective applicants to examine the effect of the BREXIT referendum (and its aftermath) to the HRD practices within the UK banking sector. Following the relative lack of relevant literature on BREXIT and its effect on HRD, the project aims to offer new insights to both HRD scholars and HRD practitioners by collecting data through a multi-constituent research perspective (different stakeholders across banking organisations).

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Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project

Self-funded

Project Title: [The role of diversity training in an era of business and socio-economic uncertainty: Managing migrant workers' social integration at the workplace in UK organisations]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Fotios Mitsakis / Dr Pedro Mendonca]

[Project Description:]

This research study will examine the extent to which diversity training is implemented in UK businesses as an attempt to facilitate their migrant workers' social integration at the workplace. The study will try to address the perceived challenges and benefits that diversity training could produce for individuals and the business in an era of economic and social uncertainty and insecurity. The large majority of brain outflows across European countries were recorded as brain inflows for UK. Precisely for the latter, brain inflows aimed at filling in the gap of severe labour market shortages, particularly in low skill and low paid sectors, such as manufacturing, hospitality and construction (McDowell, 2009). However, following the results of the UK referendum to leave EU, these developments have recently fostered political debate about the role and flows of migration within the UK. Considering all that, such a social phenomenon becomes increasingly a matter of concern within the EU, as in many cases, this brain mobility is not entirely exploited and for the benefit of both countries. In some other cases work migrants' overflow from one country to another has also resulted to workplace-related problems such as lack of individuals' social embeddedness in the workplace (David et al., 2012). Various immigration theories (e.g. Neoclassical, dual labour market, world systems, and network) will inform this research study. All suggest that brain mobility do not just occur owing to social and economic circumstances (and/or due to the push and pull factors), but because of many other factors which could also be at play (e.g. government policies etc.) and of similar importance (Kubursi, 2006; Jennissen, 2006; IOM, 2004; Bonifazi, 2001). Concurrently, it is widely suggested that diversity training could support the creation of a supporting climate of all employees' social integration at the workplace so to contribute collectively to organisational goals (ibid). It further represents an important social network and structural aspect that can determine social support, cohesion and social capital (CIPD, 2017; Herring and Henderson, 2015; Song, 2012).

Methodology:

A longitudinal survey would allow prospective applicants to examine the extent to which diversity training is offered in UK organisations as part of their efforts to facilitate their migrant workers' social integration at the workplace. Following the relative lack of research focusing on the experiences and perception of social integration at the workplace on behalf of those who have been able to enter the labour market, this research study will shed light as to how diversity training could facilitate the social integration process through the respective perceptions of our research participants.

References:

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: The Role of Trust in the Globally Mobile Workforce

Academic Project Lead: Dr Maranda Ridgway, Senior Lecturer

Project Description:

As organizations expand into the global market place, there is an increasing need for a globally mobile talent pool. The trust placed by an individual in their employing organization is fundamental in the decision to relocate globally. Similarly, the trust between expatriate workers and local counterparts is critical to successful international work. Despite trust and global mobility being well established topics, the intersection remains under-researched.

The global mobility literature has grown exponentially in recent years as globalization becomes a reality for many organizations (Guo and Al Ariss, 2015), pointing to an ever-shifting context in which people are managed. A feature of this shifting context is the need for a globally mobile workforce. We continue to witness changing forms of expatriation, for example self-initiated expatriates (Suutari and Brewster, 2000), hidden expatriates (Haak-Saheem and Brewster, 2017) and inpatriates (Dickmann and Baruch, 2011) to name but a few. A shared feature among these workers is the significance of undertaking international work and the trust placed in an employer.

In the context of global mobility, trust fosters a willingness to engage with cultural differences, whereas a lack of trust may lead to ineffectual international work. There is a need to develop our understanding of the role that trust plays in international work to surface practices which influence trust.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [The role of diversity training in an era of business and socio-economic uncertainty: Managing migrant workers' social integration at the workplace in UK organisations]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Fotios Mitsakis / Dr Pedro Mendonca]

Project Description:]

This research study will examine the extent to which diversity training is implemented in UK businesses as an attempt to facilitate their migrant workers' social integration at the workplace. The study will try to address the perceived challenges and benefits that diversity training could produce for individuals and the business in an era of economic and social uncertainty and insecurity. The large majority of brain outflows across European countries were recorded as brain inflows for UK. Precisely for the latter, brain inflows aimed at filling in the gap of severe labour market shortages, particularly in low skill and low paid sectors, such as manufacturing, hospitality and construction (McDowell, 2009). However, following the results of the UK referendum to leave EU, these developments have recently fostered political debate about the role and flows of migration within the UK. Considering all that, such a social phenomenon becomes increasingly a matter of concern within the EU, as in many cases, this brain mobility is not entirely exploited and for the benefit of both countries. In some other cases work migrants' overflow from one country to another has also resulted to workplace-related problems such as lack of individuals' social embeddedness in the workplace (David et al., 2012). Various immigration theories (e.g. Neoclassical, dual labour market, world systems, and network) will inform this research study. All suggest that brain mobility do not just occur owing to social and economic circumstances (and/or due to the push and pull factors), but because of many other factors which could also be at play (e.g. government policies etc.) and of similar importance (Kubursi, 2006; Jennissen, 2006; IOM, 2004; Bonifazi, 2001). Concurrently, it is widely suggested that diversity training could support the creation of a supporting climate of all employees' social integration at the workplace so to contribute collectively to organisational goals (ibid). It further represents an important social network and structural aspect that can determine social support, cohesion and social capital (CIPD, 2017; Herring and Henderson, 2015; Song, 2012).

Methodology:

A longitudinal survey would allow prospective applicants to examine the extent to which diversity training is offered in UK organisations as part of their efforts to facilitate their migrant workers' social integration at the workplace. Following the relative lack of research focusing on the experiences and perception of social integration at the workplace on behalf of those who have been able to enter the labour market, this research study will shed light as to how diversity training could facilitate the social integration process through the respective perceptions of our research participants.

References:

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Exploring employee engagement in context

Academic Project Lead: Dr Sarah Pass

Project Description:

Employee engagement has long been popular in the public and private sector (see MacLeod and Clarke, 2009; Rayton et al 2012), but has only recently become an academic 'hot topic' (Purcell, 2014). Since MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) report on employee engagement (and subsequent Government backing), there has been a flourish of research activity to uncover both what is meant by employee engagement and how we can capture and harvest it. In essence, it has become the (new) Holy Grail. The interest in employee engagement is not surprising, given its potential impact on organisational performance (MacLeod and Clarke). Engaged employees are argued to be more committed to the organisation, go beyond what is expected of them (commonly known as discretionary effort) and be highly motivated. Yet the antecedents that facilitate engagement are still unknown, along with a defined definition of engagement (Purcell, 2014).

In more recent years there has been increasing academic support for the benefits of workforce engagement (Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013; Truss et al., 2013), arguing that engagement 'is not simply a case of repackaging existing ideas' (Yalabik et al., 2013: 2817). However, opinions regarding employee engagement are diverse and there are more questions than answers (Truss et al., 2013), insufficient evidence (Yalabik et al., 2013), and limited critical scrutiny (Guest, 2013; Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013; Keenoy, 2013; Purcell, 2013). Questions remain regarding the implementation and development of engagement initiatives i.e. 'doing' engagement and 'being' engaged (see Truss et al., 2013). Research has also predominantly focused on an over-arching concept of engagement, and there are few (if any) studies that have deconstructed the relationship between employee engagement or specific processes and practices. It is imperative that we start to ask; engaged with what? In addition, research has largely focused on quantitative survey-based research asking employees questions about engagement through a managerial discourse. As a result, there is a lack of employee voice. Although employee voice was identified as significant by MacLeod and Clarke (2009), it has received little attention (Purcell, 2014). Instead employees 'are viewed in a passive role [with] engagement seen as something that is driven by the organisation, rather than something that is largely under the control of employees' (Francis and Reddington, 2012: 272). This has left several questions. Further research is needed to uncover the fluctuations in engagement (Fletcher and Robinson, 2014) and the impact of contextual issues (Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013).

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Exploration of the long-term antecedents of diversity training]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Stefanos Nachmias

Project Description: Discrimination on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and other factors is still a major organisational issue. The challenge for organisations is to develop strategies that would enable organisations to address the changing employment relationships (Ehrke, Berthold and Steffens, 2014). Although diversity training is key method in addressing those challenges and developing individual skills (Pendry, Driscoll and Field, 2007), evidence suggests that current training activities fails to deliver change at organisational and individual level (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010). However research on diversity training is disappointing, particularly around the long-term outcomes of diversity training at organisational level (Alhejji et al., 2016). It is upon this backdrop that the project aims to fulfil this knowledge gap by exploring the impacts of diversity training at organisational level. Of course organization-level outcome is complex theoretically and methodologically because of the need to establish causality. Nevertheless, the project aims to address those challenges by exploring the outcome of diversity training at organisational level and how long the outcomes of diversity training will be evident or observable. It offers the opportunity to create critical framework by providing the 'badly needed credibility and value of diversity training' (Combs and Luthans, 2007:115) and provide a more rigorously explore diversity-training outcomes in a multiplicity of contexts, including different organizational types, sectors and categories of employees.]

Methodology: A longitudinal survey is required to explore the effect of investment in diversity training and develop a robust framework on organisational outcomes. The measurement of diversity-training outcomes by simply asking participants does not capture the complex effects of diversity training at different levels within the organisation (Alhejji et al., 2016). Thus, the project aims to collect data from both participants and managers.

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Management

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: A study of informal enterprising amongst marginalised migrants

Academic Project Lead: Angelo P. Bisignano

Project Description: Migrants risk deadly sea crossings across the Mediterranean to seek refuge from conflicts as well as economic opportunities in Europe. Little is however known about the immediate post-arrival dynamics of these migration processes (Castles et al., 2014). Recent research has focused on recorded migration in the formal economy, overlooking migrants' activities in the informal economy (Dustmann and Frattini, 2014). Some categories of migrants are in fact more likely to work under exploitative conditions in the informal economy (Anderson, 2007) as their uncertain status and transitory domicile often prevent them from seeking formal work in the short term (Shelley, 2007). In addition, the transitory status of marginalised migrants means they are also more likely to suddenly relocate. This implies that the available opportunities for such research are few and often require urgent action immediately after arrival (Zontini, 2010). Thus, this project will increase knowledge on the informal activities of marginalised migrants such as asylum seekers, over-stayers, irregular, unauthorised, and undocumented migrants (Düvell et al., 2008). This is important in order to understand social integration's dynamics of the increasing number of marginalised migrants in European society. In spite of structural difficulties, migrants traditionally thrive in promoting enterprise (Smallbone et al., 2003). The notion of *Gemeinschaft* helps to explain how migrants are able to mobilise social ties within tightknit communities to access resources and competences (Ram and Jones, 2008). If this is critical for the survival of marginalised migrants, it also means that their enterprising activities often take place within the shadows of the formal economy (Ram et al., 2007). Nevertheless, informal enterprising of marginalised migrants remains an unexplored reality, (Colombo, 2013; Webb et al., 2014). Therefore, looking at migrants' post-arrival integration processes, our interest is in addressing the question: how do marginalised migrants start, promote, and sustain enterprising activities in the informal economy?

In spite of policy makers' renewed interest in the impact of informal enterprising (Williams, 2015), the attention of European governments remains focused on the macro-level (Europa, 2014). Yet, understanding the informal economy is also critically relevant at micro and meso-level (Faist, 1997).

At the micro-level, we will welcome projects that explore how informal enterprising activities shape the lives of marginalised migrants. Proposals can focus on how individuals make sense of enterprising (Cohen and Musson, 2000); on how they construct an enterprising self (Watson, 2008); and on how they make sense of social expectations (Vazquez del Aguila, 2014) or of the factors preventing formal work (Dayton-Johnson et al., 2009). At the meso-level, we will welcome projects that investigate how the enterprising activities of marginalised migrants relate to and transform local social communities. We welcome proposals that explore how informal enterprising activities are embedded and how they shape societal meanings, expectations, and practices in the communities affected by migration. Proposals can draw upon theories such as Migration Systems (Castles et al., 2014) or Social Networks (Granovetter, 1973) to evaluate how social capital in these communities is capable of producing access to enterprising opportunities (Massey et al. 1993), of shaping, or preventing them (de Haas 2007).

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: International Postgraduate Students and their Perceptions of the Effectiveness and Value of Personal and Professional Development Modules.

Academic Project Lead: Dr Claudia. M. Bordogna

[Project Description:]

The aim of this investigation would be to support academic staff tasked with the development of postgraduate personal and professional development- both inside and outside of the formal classroom environment. We wish to understand the effectiveness of current taught modules that focus solely on post graduate student CPD. We wish to understand how our international cohorts perceive the effectiveness and value of these modules. We wish to analyse and evaluate the type of developments made by students who undertake these modules. For example, do these modules positively correlate with an improvement in student employability and academic performance? Do these type of modules translate to the different cultural traditions that our students come from? Are they therefore applicable, are they sensitive to the different cultural needs of students from a range of cultural backgrounds? The study could take either a qualitative or a quantitative approach. Moreover, candidates wishing to engage in a project of this nature will have access to a relevant research sample, supported by senior academics, with ethical approval from the Schools ethics committee.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: To what extent are International Academic Staff (IAS) able to use their international teaching experiences to influence diversity in pedagogical policies and procedures within an HEI?

Academic Project Lead: Dr Claudia M. Bordogna

[Project Description:]

Internationalisation is an important strategy if HEIs are to survive in a turbulent global environment. Competition is fierce, where Countries traditionally known for sending international students, are now receiving, and recruiting global talent. One strategy used by HEIs in quest for global diversification is the recruitment of IAS. Whilst initially the recruitment of IAS may be viewed wholly positively by stakeholders, it seems many HEIs simply see the recruitment of IAS as "ticking a internationalisation strategic box"- thereby creating a veneer of internationalisation. The fact is, internationalisation is more than just a "tick box". It requires a shift towards ethnorelativism and a willingness to change the institutions culture to enable IAS to meaningfully contribute to the development of the institution, its research, and its pedagogy. The wealth of experience brought to any HEI by its IAS needs to be recognised and acknowledged. This acknowledgement comes from institutions actively encouraging and supporting their IAS to contribute towards changes within the institution. From a pedagogical perspective, as HE cohorts become more complex and learning cultures more diverse, it seems logical to allow IAS who have experience of teaching and supporting students from their culture to offer ideas and process to enhance international student learning; whilst retaining the educational characteristics of the Country in which they are working. This is therefore not to suggest that the home learning culture is subjected to "otherness". It simply means allowing IAS to offer innovations that can transform the learning environment for the benefit of all the students, creating a more dynamic and integrated learning experience.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Organisational knowledge networks

Academic Project Lead: Dr John Israilidis, Senior Lecturer in Project Management

Project Description:

Although organisations recognise the strategic importance of managing knowledge, employees often struggle to form healthy knowledge networks finding it difficult to access and use known knowledge. This in turn can limit opportunities to explore unknown knowledge, an important ingredient of problem identification, efficient project execution and learning.

This project aims to investigate knowledge sharing and exchange mechanisms within and between business units to explore knowledge dynamics of organisational networks. Mapping of knowledge networks will be performed using Social Network Analysis (SNA) and extensive elaboration on the challenges faced by organisations in implementing such methods is expected to be undertaken. In addition, part of the project will be to map interactions and incorporate concepts that are presently underdeveloped in the literature such as ignorance and/or the illusion of knowledge. A case study can be used to help answer the research questions and test some of the assumptions and validity of the model to be generated. This study contributes to current theoretical debates in the areas of knowledge management (KM), organisational learning and performance. It has also been designed to help practitioners operationalise KM by making best use of organisational knowledge networks.

The successful applicant is expected to have good knowledge of network theory and will have had experience in using Ucinet/NetDraw or other similar SNA tool.

Keywords: knowledge networks; organisational learning; knowledge management; knowledge dynamics; SNA

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Users as change agents: User driven business model innovation for Positive Energy Districts

Academic Project Lead: Dr Kostas Galanakis

Project Description:

Objectives: Identify exploitation opportunities comparing new venture propositions between people living and working in Positive Energy Districts (PEDs) and those that do not, by considering differences in energy consumption, its antecedent decision-making factors and behaviour change over time.

Expected Results: Trigger change in PED citizens and user energy consumption behaviours through technology (e.g., via habit changes through the opening of “windows of change”), the spread of shared economy, and/or social influences (e.g., normative group influences) in the PED environment. Explore opportunities for energy providers to tap into new expectations and behaviours differentiating their business models designing.

Verplanken, B. and Wood, W. (2006). Interventions to break and create consumer habits. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 25(1), 90-103.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Business Model Archetypes for Value Generation by Positive Energy Districts]

Academic Project Lead: Dr Kostas Galanakis

Project Description:

Objectives: To identify and codify innovative business models. To formulate competitive strategies utilising value chain needs.

Expected Results: Develop a framework of commonly understood set of business models archetypes, patterns and visualisations of possible combinations. Provide clarity for managers regarding '*what*' key stakeholders' expectations are and '*which set*' of expectations should be prioritised for future scenarios.]

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: Experiential learning, behavioural competencies, and entrepreneurial intentions

Academic Project Lead: Dr. Marco Furlotti

Entrepreneurial intention is "a self-acknowledged conviction by a person who intends to set up a new business venture and consciously plans to do so at some point in the future" (Thompson 2009: 676). Such intention is important, because scholars have demonstrated that the preference for self-employment is an important indicator of actual involvement in new venture creation.

Because entrepreneurs face complex, emergent, multifaceted problems in resolving uncertainty and exploiting opportunities, they require a set of competencies that enable them to activate the appropriate behaviors in various situations. In particular, emotional, social, and cognitive competencies have been highlighted as critical to many key entrepreneurial processes.

Accordingly, those persons who are endowed with such competencies may believe they will be better prepared to meet those challenges, and may exhibit stronger entrepreneurial intentions.

Due to the nature of competencies, experiential learning (Kolb 1998) is likely to be critical to their development, especially if the experience is developed in the workplace (Sørensen and Fassiotto 2011).

Recognizing the importance of experiential learning for the development of work-related competencies, NTU and many other universities, allow students to perform extended internships as part of their academic curriculum. Casual observation suggests that those internships raise students' motivation and academic performance above those of students who did not take advantage of such experiential learning opportunity. However, this intuition needs to be corroborated by more rigorous investigations. Moreover, the effect of the learning experience needs to be purged from the effect of confounders such as individual and environmental factors. Furthermore, it needs to be established whether the internship also affects entrepreneurial intentions.

The type of curricula that exist at NTU allows implementing quasi-experimental research designs, or well-matched comparison group designs that are reasonably powerful for establishing possible evidence of the learning experience effectiveness.

Complemented with qualitative investigations, such quantitative investigations would yield valuable insights into how universities can foster entrepreneurship among students.

Similar methods can be applied to the same research settings for inquiring into the effect of internships (and of other forms of experiential training enacted within an academic context) on other work-related competencies an attitudes, and academic outcomes. Predictably, this research program may produce a suite of interesting studies at the intersection of entrepreneurship research and pedagogic design.

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [The analysis of China's NEV policies and technologies: Imitation or innovation?]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Michael Zhang]

Project Description:

China became the world's largest car market in 2009, overtaking the United States. China's vehicle stock grew from 16 million in 2000 to 154 million in 2014, registering an annual growth rate of 17.5%. The rapid growth of vehicle ownership in China in recent years raises such concerns as urban traffic congestion, energy security, air pollution and climate change. In big cities like Beijing, vehicles are responsible for 31.1% of PM2.5 emission from local sources, topping any other single source ([Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau, 2014](#); Zhao, Hao and Zhang, 2015).

Following the French and UK government initiatives to ban sales of new diesel and petrol cars by 2040, the Chinese government is also considering seeing a deadline to end the manufacturing of vehicles powered by internal combustion engines (ICEs) (Financial Times 2017). The formulation of such a policy is underscored by a previous government policy promoting alternative energy mixes and technologies to design and produce new energy vehicles (NEVs). In the "Industry Development Plan for Energy Saving and New Energy Vehicles", the accumulated sales of battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles were projected to reach 5 million in 2020 ([Chinese State Council, 2012](#); Zhao, Hao and Zhang, 2015). Actual sales of NEVs reached 507,000 including buses and commercial vehicles in 2016, accounting for 45 percent of the world total (China Association of Automobile Manufacturers).

The process of decarbonising transport is multi-dimensional, but the specific focus of this project is the critical analysis of specific business strategies in response to the Chinese government's NEV policies. Decarbonisation efforts can be split into two types – changes to the fuel used, and changes to the powertrain unit, the engine. Both strategies have been tried and implemented in many developed economies in recent years, with various degrees of success and failure. Given the nature of the Chinese economy as an emerging economy, we are motivated to understand the underlying rationale for the Chinese government, and businesses, embarking on a technological transition to decarbonise the transport sector in general and the car industry in particular.

From this we derive three key research questions:

- What are the key factors underlying China's recent developments of NEV policies and technologies?
- Are the developments of China's NEV policies and technologies to be regarded as imitation or innovation?
- What will be the lessons from the Chinese experiments in policy and technology changes in developing NEVs?

In recent years, a growing volume of research has been published on the drivers and consequences of the 'Biofuels Frenzy' (Ackrill and Kay, 2012; 2014) since the start of the 21st century. Within this, however, there has been relatively little attention paid by the social science research community to the role of the automotive industry, despite its centrality to technological innovation and implementation. The *Journal of Sustainable Mobility*, launched in 2014 and edited by one of the supervisors, has only just begun to correct this (Zhang, 2014; 2015; Zhang and Yazdani, 2014; Zhao et al., 2015). The focus of this project, however, extends beyond this gap in the literature, to explore the challenges faced by companies who must respond to policy by making choices between different existing and possible future technologies. Moreover, with policy evolving over time, carmakers and fuel companies must try to 'get ahead of the curve', and be ready to

accommodate future, tighter, emissions and efficiency goals, rather than simply catch up with existing policy targets.

This project is conceived of as multi-disciplinary, involving inputs from management science (in particular strategy and innovation studies), institutional economics, and policy science. The research will involve extensive use of fieldwork interviews with policy-makers and representatives of the automotive and fuel industries in China.

The proposed research method for this particular project is a mixed method. The successful candidate will engage in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The project will explore co-evolution and the nature of links between the car industry, the fuel industry and policymakers in China. A grounded theory approach, via these specific instruments, will allow for novel theoretical contributions in this under-researched area. (678 words)

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Exploring the emergence of new forms of resistance to the implementation of socio-ideological controls in the workplace]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Ofelia Palermo]

[Project Description:]

Concepts of organizational control mechanisms and forms of resistance to them have been at the centre of organizational studies research. This project would focus on investigating actors' resistance to contemporary organizational control mechanisms in the workplace. Although, an expansive and well established literature documents contemporary control mechanisms, little empirical research has been devoted to the understanding of new forms of resistance to them (Fineman, and Sturdy, 1999; Gabriel, 1999, 2008; Raelin, 2011). This is surprising given that organizational scholars have long noted that new organizational control mechanisms always give rise to new forms of resistance (Braverman, 1974; Burawoy 1979, 1985; Gabriel, 1999; Ashcraft, 2005; Gabriel, 2008; Lonsdale et al. 2015). Ashcraft (2005) argued that control and resistance are intertwined. Similarly, over a decade ago, Gabriel (1999, p. 192) noted that "new forms of control generate new forms of resistance, resistance which may go un-noticed if one goes about looking for it in the way that earlier sociologists did". Gabriel (2008) suggested that new forms of resistance may take new forms that are subtle and often hard to detect. He further added that "in spite of the formidable disciplinary mechanisms ... today's workplace creates its own possibilities of opposition, with employees displaying a bewildering range of responses which qualify, subvert, disregard or resist managerial calls for flexibility, commitment and quality... At times, fear and insecurity may dominate their responses, yet frequently they show ingenuity in supplanting and contesting management discourses, turning them into objects of amusement, cynicism or confrontation". Although Gabriel (2008) touched on a number of possible 'new' forms of resistance, he did not investigate them empirically, nor did he explore how the 'new variants of opposition and dissent' are used by employees. Therefore, it is not at all clear what forms the resistance is taking and how it is used by employees. Against this background, this project is designed to uncover and explore de novo forms of resistance in response to new control mechanisms. The study would focus on the workplace as well as on the 'uncontrolled spaces' or what Gabriel (2008) calls "unmanaged and unmanageable" spaces because they are "the natural starting point for understanding how, why and when workers contest" (Roscigno and Hodson, 2004, p. 15).

This project is driven by one significant theoretical observation. Extant studies that have highlighted the presence of new control mechanisms (Braverman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979; 1983; 1985; Edwards, 1979; Knights, 1990, 1992; Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994; Marsden, 1993; Barker, 1993; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Mumby and Putnam, 1992; Fineman, 1993; Kets de Vries, 1988; Krantz, 1989; 1990; Oglensky, 1995; Lonsdale et al., 2015) mainly looked at the different modes of those new controls (e.g. personal vs. impersonal), and the different levels at which they can occur (e.g. at the level of the customer-provider relationship; at the level of the manager-employee relationship). Research on employees' resistance and dissent to new forms of control mechanisms is very limited and represents no more than anecdotal observations. For instance Gabriel (1999 and 2008) carefully articulated why new forms of resistance have emerged, but did not elaborate in details on the forms of this resistance. Furthermore, the limited studies that have focused on organizational actors' response to new control mechanisms (Collinson, 2003; Fleming, 2005) particularly looked at the implications of those mechanisms on individuals' subjectivity. These contributions show a notable lack of focus on actors' collective responses to new control mechanisms. This project aims to close this gap by exploring actors' collective response to new control mechanisms.

CONTACT

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Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project Self-funded

Project Title: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the NHS England: The impact of policies on strategies and processes

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Petra Molthan-Hill]

Project Description:

The aim of this PhD/DBA project is to map and evaluate the different policies, strategies and processes of the NHS England with regards to climate change adaptation and mitigation and to measure and suggest improvements on how the health sector contributes to two of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 7, Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and SDG 13, Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

The latest report from the Sustainable Development Unit of the NHS England (2016) estimates that the carbon footprint of the health and care sector represents 39% of public sector emissions in England. At the same time the health sector is strongly contributing to the National Adaptation Programme making sure the health system is resilient and adapted to climate change (Healthcare System Adaptation Report Working Group 2015). NHS England is therefore committed to policies and processes in relation to climate change mitigation ("Technological change and substitution that reduce resource inputs and emissions per unit of output. Although several social, economic and technological policies would produce an emission reduction, with respect to Climate Change, mitigation means implementing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance sinks" IPCC, 2007: page 84) and adaptation ("Initiatives and measures to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects " IPCC, 2007: page 76).

In 2015, countries adopted the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Two of the seventeen goals are dedicated to climate change mitigation and adaptation and each sector is encouraged to contribute to these global goals. This project seeks to develop models representing the efforts of the health sector in England and developing frameworks on how the health sector could contribute successfully to climate change mitigation and adaptation.]

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: [Multicultural business-to-business relationship management]

Academic Project Lead: [Dr Weixi Han]

Project Description:

The position involves the conduct of research projects with multicultural organisations in the supply chain sector and their partners.

Multicultural business-to-business relationships are adaptive systems which operate in complex business environments. Inevitably, in today's economic world, diverse cultures exist within various countries and nationalities which increase the likelihood that cultural clashes will arise. A strong focus beyond that of the international multicultural supply chain perspective is required to explore, explain, develop, and test aspects of supply chain management. Studies exploring the dynamics of organisational culture have acknowledged that it provides direction, cultural adaptation, as a learning process, can mitigate the negative impacts of cultural differences in business-to-business relationships by generating benefits for the organisations engaging in those relationships. The supplier skill complementarity, supplier goal compatibility, supplier financial soundness and information systems compatibility are accessed once partners confirm that they are ready to cooperate. Future research could focus on the management and measurement of multicultural collaborative business to business relationships. The PhD/DBA programme undertaken when conducting the research concentrated on a strategy process perspective in addressing the linkages inherent in multicultural cooperation through partnering relationship management, utilising evaluation and refining criteria in examining the processes of renewal and business advantages.

Specifically, research can use combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods or qualitative methods over time to better capture the variables and outcomes of interest. Hence the research would be focused on the field of supply chain management both practically and theoretically. A strong focus beyond that of the international multicultural supply chain organisations perspective is required to explore, explain, develop, and test aspects of supply chain management.

It also implies the publication of the output of the research in academic and professional journals. More specifically, the research will mainly focus on humanitarian supply chains design and management for effectiveness and value creation purpose. The main duties of the PhD/DBA candidate are gathering and analysing data from the partnering organizations, designing, exploring and developing a modelling framework, and running experiments. The student will spend some time with the partnering organizations to understand their operations and supply chain processes.

Reading list:

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**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-funded**

Project Title: (Working title) Mothers in Business
Academic Project Lead: Dr Su Beesley

[Project Description:]

The main purpose of this research is to gather evidence to understand why women give up work after having a child to focus on setting up their own business. The project will be divided into two stages. The first stage will be the identification stage to identify and understand the demographic and specific individual personality traits and situations. This work will be part of a pilot study and concentrated in the UK. During the second stage the researchers will apply experimental measures derived from game theory to gain incentivised decisions that link together with the data from stage one so as to develop a full set of attributes. The methodology is a combined procedure of Theoretical Triangulation (as opposed to data or investigator triangulation) and behavioural economic measures. Theoretical Triangulation will involve a combination of three methodologies:

- Surveys (Nardi, 2018).
 - Behavioural Interviews (Grimm et al., 2014).
 - Comparison of literature and statistics (Collett, 2015).
- Interviews and surveys will be developed for women in their mid 20s – late 30s, and these women will be selected using the criteria that the women will have (recently) had children and left a paid position in industry, and are either embarking upon, or have started up, their own business. Recent literature suggests that women will start up their own businesses for the following reasons:
- a) Self-realisation (Ullah, Abbas & Akbar, 2010; Marti et al 2014).
 - b) Propensity for risk (Bennett & Dann, 2000; Marti, et al 2014). (Boden & Nucci, 2000; Krasniqi, 2010).
 - c) Finding a work/life balance (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003).
 - d) A desire to seek and obtain business skills (Mroczkowski, 1997; Dhaliwall, 1998; Akehurst, 2012).
 - e) Earn more [than in a paid position in order to contribute further to the household finances] (Welsh, 2014).
 - f) Need to seek self-employment [to merge parenthood and work] (Marti, Pacor and Mas-Tur 2014).

In Stage 2 we will design a series of experiments and surveys to measure participants' personal preferences (risk, trust, time, honesty, and equity) to compliment the data collection in stage 1. Building on the ongoing work of Cameron and Shah (2015), and in line with Hofmann et al., (2014) WPM will deploy the technological advances that the Web data collection, via Qualtrics, offers. The team will design and tailor games to address and measure differences in the countries, based on the GF-analysis, income, religion, technologies, status and diversity. We will design measures for:

- Risk and Loss Preferences (Binswanger, 1981; Eckel and Grossman, 2002, Puzon & Willinger, 2016, Kocher et al., 2016)
- Time preference (Andreoni, Kuhn and Sprenger 2013; (Kamijo et al. 2016; Grolleau et al. 2016)
- Equality - Social Preference Games (Chmura et al., 2005; Chmura and Bryce, 2017)
- Ultimatum Game/Dictator Game: (Roth et al., 1991)
- Trust Game (Investment Game): (Berg et al., 1995; Eckel & Wilson, 2004, Willinger et al. 2003)
- Public Good Game: (Gächter et al., 2010; Grolleau et al., 2016; Kocher et al., 2016)

**Nottingham Business School PhD/DBA Project
Self-Funded**

Project Title: [Socio-economic and policy impacts of technology in Food Sector]

Academic Project Lead: Prof Usha Ramanathan

Project Description:

Technology plays a great impactful role in our routine life and also in profit-making businesses. This technology has been adopted successfully in different sectors such as health care, manufacturing and service sectors to enhance overall performance. Growing demand for food necessitates the use of technology in production, distribution and preservation of food to increase supply and to maintain a sustainable food flow. Recently, we also see some applications of technology namely, Internet of Things (IoT) in maintaining food quality such as temperature monitoring and odour sensing (Porter and Heppelmann, 2014). Some of these IoT applications are widely used in food storage, warehouses and logistics (vans and trucks).

Gross domestic product of any growing nation is partly dependent on their level of export. In the last few decades, globalisation in businesses has brought opportunity for food producers and distributors to export their excess home-grown food products. However, in this context, food quality, food security and food traceability are some main concerns of food exporters and consumers. Nations with huge capacity of food production struggle to export their excess food production due to lack of compliance with quality and security regulations from [Food Standards Agency](#) of various nations. To tackle this situation, it may be important to have food policy in place and also to use appropriate level of smart technology applications effectively in production and storage to convince the local Food Quality Control Associations in order to join the global food supply chain. Some practitioners are using simple technology such as RFID and bar code scanning to enhance tracking and traceability.

In your research project, you can see how food policies with support of (smart) technology can -

- help sustainable food flow locally and globally
- empower the food sector with traceability
- help building social and economic status of the local community
- help building necessary infrastructure and capacity

Porter, M. E. and Heppelmann, J. E., (2014). How smart, connected products are transforming competition. *Harvard Business Review*.

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Marketing

https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/nbs/about/academic-departments/marketing_retail_operations.html

Area No. 1: Project Description: Customer Experience to Customer Engagement: Tracking the Consumer Journey

Academic Contact: Dr Sheilagh Resnick

The increasing complexity of the customer journey, which involves interaction with organisations through multiple touchpoints and channels, has raised the need to understand the customer experience within this journey (Resnick *et al.*, 2014). Customer Experience encompasses cognitive, affective, and emotional responses and involves the whole journey across different touchpoints and multiple channels (Verhoef *et al.*, 2015). However, moving the customer experience to one of customer engagement has become the next organisational goal as this has the potential for enhancing consumer relationships, profitability and growth (Hollebeek, 2011). Engagement is a customer's experience of active connection or participation with a brand, an organisation or a website and building this connection requires some adaptation of the existing marketing mix to take advantage of new technologies or platforms (De Vries and Carlson, 2014). The increasing use of multiple channels to access goods and services, aided by the availability of technology through internet-enabled smartphones and other devices (Beck and Rygl, 2015) has resulted in changes in business models to accommodate this technology. The use of social media, the integration of channels both online and off line, and the multiplicity of customer touchpoints, are presenting challenges for the management of customers across different touchpoints and channels and their engagement with multiple channels and with technology is a wider sense, requires investigation (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006)

Project proposals: We are looking for a range of research projects and context to include customer experience in education, the role of technology in online/offline retailing, customer experience models, social media engagement, C2C experiences in online communities, the role of theatre in the customer experience, customer value, smart technology and AI in customer experience.

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- De Vries, N. J. and Carlson, J. 2014, "Examining the drivers and brand performance implications of customer engagement with brands in the social media environment", *Journal of Brand Management*, vol 2 (6), pp 495-515.
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Area No.2: Project Description: Consumer behaviour in contemporary contexts

Academic Contact: Dr Tony Woodall

We are inviting proposals from those who wish to investigate how consumers interact with markets, products and/or services in contemporary contexts: whether theoretical, situational or subject-related. Consumer behaviour research is of especial interest in marketing and consequently has a long and varied history. Much of the research to date has focused on individual/psychological perspectives (see Jansson-Boyd and Zawisza, 2016) that assume a high degree of personal agency in decision-making. And whilst this remains both a viable and frequently applied approach, more recent ideas have drawn on sociological and anthropological foundations noting, for example, the importance of external and/or historical context (Arnould and Thompson, 2005 – consumer culture theory); the impact on our lives of material ‘things’ (e.g. Woodall *et al.*, 2018); and the role of habits and routine (Warde, 2005 – practice theory). As our understanding of the factors underpinning and influencing consumption expands, so do our conceptual horizons, and this leaves free rein for those with an inquisitive and creative approach to theorising. Consumer behaviour is relevant to pre-consumption, intra-consumption and post-consumption activities in market space, and is applicable equally to both goods and services, normatively now assumed to be interdependent and subject to the institutional logics of everyday life (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). Consumer behaviour is now as much a political as it is a market construct (e.g. Datta and Chakraborty, 2018), and both ‘consumer’ and ‘consumption’ are increasingly negotiable terms; we might even consider marketers as consumers of opinion, paradoxically subject to the influence of society’s concerns (e.g. Woodall, 2012)

Situationally, the field is wide; topics currently of interest to our consumer behaviour research team include cultural/identity barriers to utility cycling; the impact of mindful consumption for wellbeing; the proliferation and diversity of online selves; ethical and sustainable purchasing; perceptions of advertising ethics across cultures; substance use, abuse and reference groups; food and clothes shopping in later life; the paradoxical choices of millennials; and pragmatism as a foundation for ethical decision-making. Note that this list is illustrative, and not a limitation on proposals you can suggest.

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- Woodall, T., Rosborough, J. and Harvey, J. 2018, “Proposal, project, practice, pause: developing a framework for evaluating domestic smart product research”, *AMS Review*, 8(1-2), pp 58-74.

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Area No.3: Project Description: Investigating Branding and Brand Communities

Academic Leader-Contact: Dr Christopher Pich

A brand can be seen as a communication device, which represents the functional and physical touchpoints such as logos, packaging and signage yet also includes intangible elements such as symbolic values, personality and an organisation's vision (Kapferer, 2008; Pich *et al.*, 2018). Indeed, brands are co-created by multiple stakeholders including both internal and external to the organisation with the aid of tangible and intangible elements (Baumgarth, 2018). The application of branding concepts, theories and frameworks can provide products, services, organisations, individuals and communities with an emotional dimension with which consumers' can identify and allow brands to differentiate from competitors (Baumgarth, 2018; de Chernatony, 2007). Nevertheless, despite significant work on the application of branding concepts, theories and frameworks to different settings and contexts, branding remains a topical, complex, under-researched and under-developed sub-discipline. This is particularly the case with research on brand communities. Brand communities are often conceptualised as a "specialised, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001:412). Brand communities have the potential unite advocates or opponents around an entity by structuring a group of people with a common interest in the brand's culture, heritage and the potential to create and share tangible and intangible brand artefacts (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). Further, a 'brand community' only exists if three elements are present; conscious of kind, rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). Existing research in this area, call for more understanding on offline and online brand communities particularly in different settings and contexts. Subsequently, future research should focus on how brands are co-created, strategically managed and structured and how brand communities are created, developed and managed from a multi-stakeholder perspective. This in turn will enhance our understanding of branding and brand communities, which in turn will advance knowledge development in this area. There is a clear opportunity for future research in branding to fuse insights from different research areas, perspectives and disciplines, which will support and develop the research on branding and brand communities.

Project Titles Can Include:

- Personal brand creation;
- the case of prospective graduates and marketing alumni;
- customer-to-customer interaction in online brand communities;
- exploring political brand communities;
- creation, development and engagement from an offline and online perspective;
- Brand Architecture;
- factors affecting consumers' intention to participate in online community;
- understanding consumers' willingness to pay more for green vehicles;
- managing creative outcome in advertising and new product development.

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Area No. 4: Project Description: Transformative Marketing Strategies

Academic Contacts: Dr Michael Ehret and Dr Lisa Siebers

Marketing and Business activities are in the process of fundamental transformation: Public debate and service research raise awareness that business activities destroy as well as create value. Digital transformation and institutional change undermine established industry structures (Teece, 2018). Economic development offers novel opportunities for combating poverty, technological innovation and economic growth (Anderson and Ostrom, 2015; Siebers, 2017). Researchers operating at the interface of strategy and marketing have been identifying substantial changes driving the transformation of marketing strategies: (1) The strategic stage moves from navigating the firm within industry competition towards immersing business models in business-eco-systems of connected firms and society stakeholders (Ehret *et al.*, 2013; Kamoche *et al.*, 2014; Wieland *et al.*, 2017), (2) a substantial share of future markets emerges beyond existing customer bases calling for engaging neglected stakeholders in business model development (Barney, 2018), (3) Sustainable marketing needs cocreation across organizational boundaries, most notably supply chains and broader domains of business eco-systems (Talay *et al.*, 2018; Wieland *et al.*, 2017), (4) The rise of business-eco systems opens the inroad to novel cocreation opportunities, offering business firms the opportunity to position themselves as resource integrators of cocreation (Ehret *et al.*, 2013; Filieri & Alguezaui 2012).

We especially consider proposals addressing the following topics, but also welcome proposals that show potential for a contribution to the overall research agenda outlined above:

Transformative marketing strategies in emerging economies, in particular China, Africa, and Latin America (in particular Brazil).

Transformative marketing strategies for enhancing the economic, social, or ecological sustainability of value eco-systems.

The role of stakeholders, in particular government, organisations, employees, suppliers, complementors and institutional collaborators in the formation of implementation of transformative marketing strategies.

Systematic studies in the role of governance and/ or technology in transformative marketing strategies, for example the rise of sharing or service platforms.

Internationalisation strategies and international marketing strategies in the post-digital era.

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