



Doctoral Projects PhD and DBA

Note to applicants:

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.

These projects apply to the NBS PhD and the DBA programmes.

Further Information:

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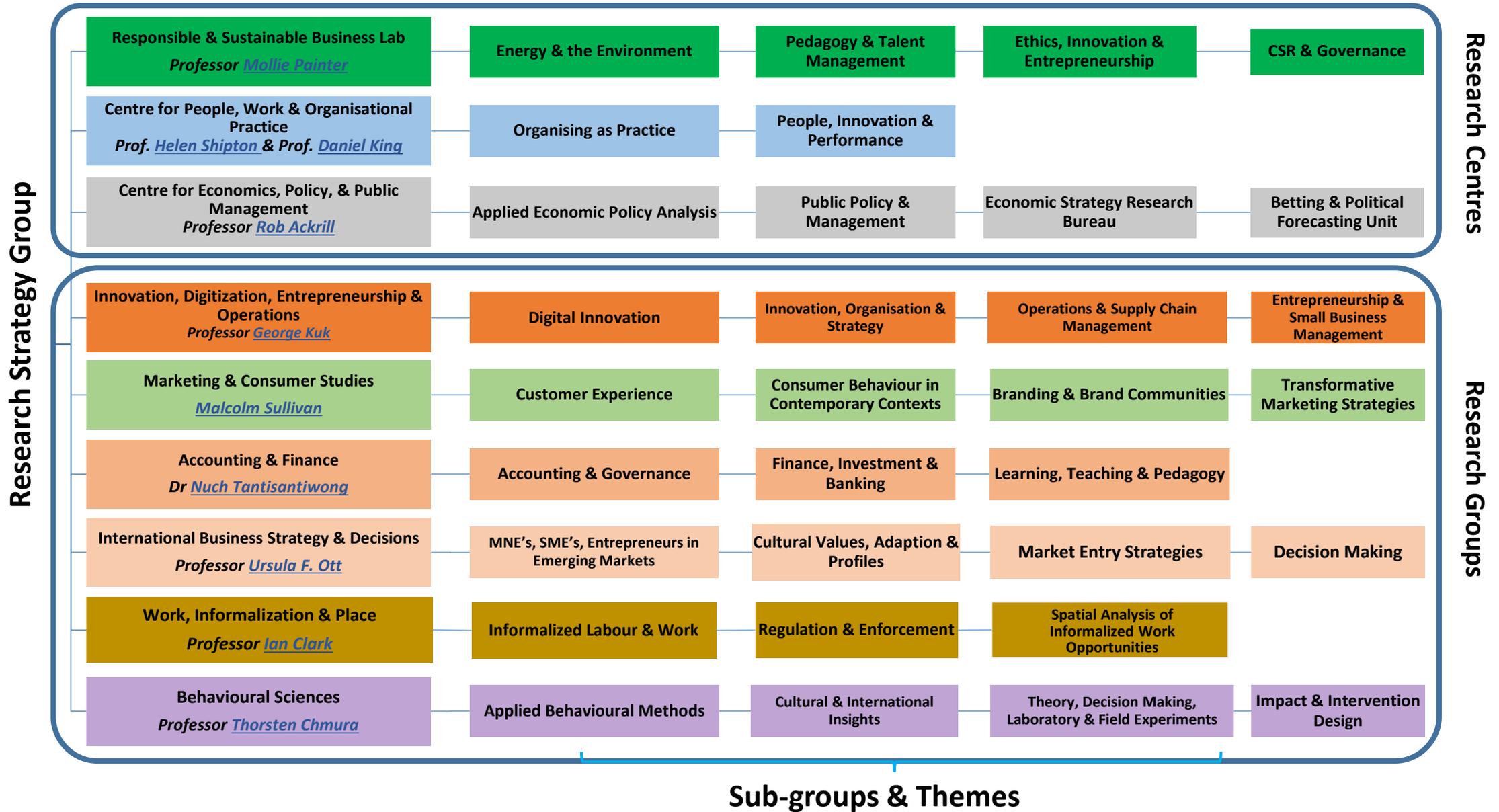
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These projects will be advertised on FindAPhD.com:

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NBS Research Map

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Accounting and Finance	3
Economics	16
Human Resource Management	54
Management.....	67
Marketing.....	96



Accounting and Finance

https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/nbs/about/academicdepartments/accounting_finance.html



**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Cryptocurrencies in portfolio management and optimisation

Director of Studies: Dr. Linzhi Tan

Department: Accounting and Finance

Research group: Accounting and Finance

Project description:

The mean–variance portfolio optimization framework has been argued to be problematic in practices due to extreme weights, corner solutions and high sensitivity to estimation errors in the input parameters (Harris et al., 2017). Several robust optimisation methods have been widely adopted in the literature to mitigate the impact of estimation error (Kolm et al., 2014).

The cryptocurrency market has gained growing interests from investors, regulators and the media since the first cryptocurrency Bitcoin was proposed in 2008. Evidence show that Bitcoin are mainly used as a speculative investment rather than the medium of exchange (Baur et al., 2018), and have diversification benefits to other financial assets (Bouri et al., 2017; Kajtazi and Moro, 2018). Platanakis et al. (2018) claim that there is very little difference in performance between naïve diversification and optimal diversification of cryptocurrencies. Platanakis and Urquhart (2019) suggest using more sophisticated portfolio techniques that control for estimation errors in the input parameters to manage cryptocurrency portfolios to improve performance.

The aim of this research project is to explore the diversification benefits of cryptocurrencies, to apply more advanced and sophisticated portfolio optimization techniques to construct the cryptocurrency portfolios and to examine the portfolio performance in contrast to the traditional benchmark.

The candidate should have:

- A strong interest in financial markets and innovations such as cryptocurrencies and Blockchain
- High level of motivation and intellectual curiosity
- A good background in numerical analysis with reasonable knowledge of and experience in trading strategy and quantitative methods (e.g. regression, portfolio optimisation etc.)
- (Desirable) Coding skills in one or more applications (e.g. R, Matlab)

In addition to the Director of Studies (Dr. Linzhi Tan), the supervisory team will include Dr. Jeremy Cheah and Dr. Thong Dao.

References:

Baur, D.G., Hong, K., & Lee, A.D. (2018). Bitcoin: medium of exchange or speculative assets? *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions & Money*, 54, 177–189.



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Bouri, E., Molnár, P., Azzi, G., Roubaud, D., & Hagfors, L.I. (2017). On the hedge and safe haven properties of bitcoin: Is it really more than a diversifier? *Finance Research Letter*, 20, 192–198.

Harris, R. D., Stoja, E., & Tan, L. (2017). The dynamic Black–Litterman approach to asset allocation. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 259(3), 1085-1096.

Kolm, P. N. , Tütüncü, R. , & Fabozzi, F. J. (2014). 60 Years of portfolio optimization: Practical challenges and current trends. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 234 (2), 356–371.

Kajtazi, A., & Moro, A. (2019). The role of bitcoin in well diversified portfolios: A comparative global study. *International Review of Financial Analysis*, 61, 143-157.

Platanakis, E., Sutcliffe, C., & Urquhart, A. (2018). Optimal vs naïve diversification in cryptocurrencies. *Economics Letters*, 171, 93-96.

Platanakis, E., & Urquhart, A. (2019). Portfolio management with cryptocurrencies: The role of estimation risk. *Economics Letters*, 177, 76-80.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr. Linzhi Tan (linzhi.tan@ntu.ac.uk).

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Please contact the University's Doctoral School for an application pack: doctoralschool@ntu.ac.uk



Project Title: Capacity, governance and policymaking in European local government

Director of Studies: Dr Peter Eckersley

Department: Accounting and Finance

Research Centre/Group: Public Policy and Management

Project Description:

Local governments in many European countries have experienced severe austerity cuts since the financial crisis of 2008 (Lowndes and Gardner 2016; Cepiku et al 2016; Davies and Blanco 2017; Steccolini et al, 2017). These cuts have led to reductions in front-line services (Webb and Bywaters 2018), a wave of organisational restructures (Barbera et al. 2019), and weakened the capacity of local officials to research, develop, implement and enforce policy (Eckersley and Tobin 2019).

At the same time, subnational authorities have confronted a growing number of 'wicked issues': societal problems that require policymakers to engage with a range of different stakeholders, many of whom will disagree about the nature (or even existence) of a problem (Rittel and Webber 1973; Eckersley 2018). Examples include environmental pollution (particularly climate change), obesity, migration, social exclusion and the ageing population. Given that public bodies at all levels cannot deal with these issues alone, and that austerity has led to weaker capacity within local government to develop and enforce policy, we might expect subnational governments to be working increasingly closely with businesses, other public bodies, voluntary organisations and residents to try and address them effectively.

This project will examine how local governments in different European countries have sought to address one or more key challenges in the context of their reduced capacity. The research focus will cover some or all of the following topics:



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- What strategies have subnational governments adopted to try and increase their capacity to tackle wicked issues?
- (How) have councils developed relationships with other actors to try and achieve their objectives?
- (How) have resource constraints shaped the way in which councils seek to work with other stakeholders?
- How do contrasting systems of subnational governance in different countries shape the way in which councils seek to work with other stakeholders?
- How influential are different stakeholders in shaping policymaking? In particular, what role do the following actors play?
 - Elected representatives
 - Officials
 - Citizens
 - Businesses
 - Voluntary groups and civil society
- What are the implications of these evolving governance relationships for democratic accountability? How important is this issue for local policymakers?

The project will rely largely on qualitative techniques to gather data, ideally from two or more different European countries. The successful candidate might come from a variety of social science disciplines, including public policy, political science, public administration, accounting or human geography.

References

- Barbera, C., Jones, M. Korac, S., Saliterer, I. and Steccolini, I. (2019) Local government strategies in the face of shocks and crises: the role of anticipatory capacities and financial vulnerability. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*. DOI: 10.1177/0020852319842661.
- Cepiku, D., Mussari, R. and Giordano, F. (2016) Local governments managing austerity: approaches, determinants and impact, *Public Administration*, 94(1), 223–43
- Davies, J.S. and Blanco, I. (2017) Austerity urbanism: patterns of neo-liberalisation



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and resistance in six cities of Spain and the UK, *Environment and Planning A*, 49(7), 1517–36.

- Eckersley, P. (2018) *Power and Capacity in Urban Climate Governance: Germany and England Compared*. Oxford: Peter Lang
- Eckersley, P. and Tobin, P. (2019) The impact of austerity on policy capacity in local government. *Policy & Politics* 47 (3), 455-472.
- Lowndes, V. and Gardner, A. (2016) Local governance under the conservatives: supra-austerity, devolution and the smarter state, *Local Government Studies*, 42(3), 357–75.
- Steccolini, I., Jones, M. and Saliterer, I. (2017) *Governmental financial resilience: international perspectives on how local governments face austerity*, Bingley: Emerald.
- Webb, C.J.R. and Bywaters, P. (2018) Austerity, rationing and inequity: trends in children’s and young people’s services expenditure in England between 2010 and 2015, *Local Government Studies*, 44(3): 391–415. |

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: |Pete Eckersley: peter.eckersley@ntu.ac.uk|

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Please contact the University’s Doctoral School for an application pack: doctoralschool@ntu.ac.uk



Project Title: [Determinants of bank/organization performance]

Director of Studies: [Dr Thao Nguyen]

Department: [Accounting & Finance]

Research Centre/Group: [Macro, Money and Finance]

Project Description:

This project models the determinants of bank/organization performance using panel data. We use the generalised method of moments (GMM) (Arellano and Bond, 1991) to estimate our dynamic panel data models. The GMM technique controls for unobservable heterogeneity. Our profitability determinants include organization-specific, industry-specific and macroeconomic factors.

Reference:

Arellano, M. and Bond, S. (1991). Some tests of specification of panel data: Monte Carlo evidence and an application to employment equations. *Review of Economics Studies*, 58, 277-297.

Roodman, D. (2009). How to do xtabond2: An introduction to "Difference" and "System" GMM in Stata. *The Stata Journal*, 9(1), 86-136

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Thao Nguyen: thao.nguyen@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Bank/Organization efficiency

Director of Studies: Dr Thao Nguyen

Department: Accounting & Finance

Research Centre/Group: Macro, Money and Finance

Project Description:

We apply an double bootstrap approach introduced by Simar and Wilson (2007) to examine bank/organization efficiency. In the first stage, we adopt DEA to estimate the relative efficiency scores in the sample using, alternatively, constant returns to scale and variable returns to scale. In the second stage, we apply the Simar and Wilson (2007) procedure to bootstrap the DEA scores with a truncated bootstrapped regression. An integral part of the analysis is to explore the determinants of bank/organization efficiency.

Reference:

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.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Thao Nguyen: thao.nguyen@ntu.ac.uk

APPLICATIONS

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Determinants of cryptocurrency returns

Director of Studies: Dr. Thong Dao

Department: Accounting and Finance

Research group: Accounting and Finance

Project description:

Since its advent in 2009, Bitcoin and many other cryptocurrencies have been gaining popularity in recent times and attracting attention from investors and regulators alike. The low entry barrier, together with huge profit potentials, has made cryptocurrencies an attractive option for investors. However, participants in this market are also exposed to a high level of volatility and risk as prices can fluctuate strongly on a daily basis. To succeed in this environment, investors need to develop a solid understanding about different aspects of these digital assets.

Return is one of the most fundamental aspects of cryptocurrencies (and financial assets in general) and one that investors are very interested in because it affects their performance directly. There has been some research in this area. For example regarding price behaviours, Urquhart (2017) finds that Bitcoin prices tend to cluster at round numbers. Regarding the relationship between returns and other variables, Balcilar et al. (2017) show that trading volume can help predict cryptocurrency returns to some extent. In a related study, Bouri et al. (2019) show that volume can help forecast extreme returns (both positive and negative). Also related to trading activities, Koutmos (2018) argues that the number of transactions has a delayed positive effect on Bitcoin returns but this effect is minor and short-lived. On the other hand, Bitcoin returns have been found to be negatively correlated with uncertainty about economic policies (Demir et al., 2018). Panagiotidis et al. (2018) confirm some other important contributing factors to Bitcoin returns including Google search intensity and gold returns.

This project aims to contribute to the literature on return determinants of Bitcoin in particular as well as other cryptocurrencies in general. The starting point could be adapting well-known factors in other asset classes. For instance, we can construct a market index for cryptocurrencies similar to the market index for equity (which is used in CAPM and Fama-French factor models, among others). We can also investigate factors specific to the cryptocurrency market (e.g. related to Blockchain). Findings from this project have direct implications for market participants and practitioners. Understanding the return-generating process will give investors an edge to achieve better results, maximising their profits while managing risks.

The candidate should have:

- A strong interest in financial markets and innovations such as cryptocurrencies and Blockchain.
- High level of motivation and intellectual curiosity



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- A good background in numerical analysis with reasonable knowledge of and experience in quantitative methods (e.g. regression, VAR, cointegration)
- (desirable) The ability to do programming in one or more applications (e.g. R, Matlab)

In addition to the Director of Studies (Dr. Thong Dao), the supervisory team may include Dr. Jeremy Cheah and Dr. Linzhi Tan.

References

- Balcilar, M., Bouri, E., Gupta, R. and Roubaud, D., 2017. Can volume predict Bitcoin returns and volatility? A quantiles-based approach. *Economic Modelling*, 64, pp.74-81.
- Bouri, E., Lau, C.K.M., Lucey, B. and Roubaud, D., 2019. Trading volume and the predictability of return and volatility in the cryptocurrency market. *Finance Research Letters*, 29, pp.340-346.
- Demir, E., Gozgor, G., Lau, C.K.M. and Vigne, S.A., 2018. Does economic policy uncertainty predict the Bitcoin returns? An empirical investigation. *Finance Research Letters*, 26, pp.145-149.
- Koutmos, D., 2018. Bitcoin returns and transaction activity. *Economics Letters*, 167, pp.81-85.
- Panagiotidis, T., Stengos, T. and Vravosinos, O., 2018. On the determinants of bitcoin returns: A LASSO approach. *Finance Research Letters*, 27, pp.235-240.
- Urquhart, A., 2017. Price clustering in Bitcoin. *Economics letters*, 159, pp.145-148.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact Dr. Thong Dao (thong.dao@ntu.ac.uk).

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: University accounting education in the 4th industrial revolution (4IR).

Director of Studies: Dr Vangelis Tsiligiris

Department: Accounting and Finance

Research Centre/Group: Accounting and Finance: Learning, Teaching, and Pedagogy

Overview

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is a term introduced by Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, to describe the disruption caused *“by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human”* (Schwab 2016, 12). Despite the wide array of the exciting opportunities there is the need to raise awareness and aim to proactively address a set of pressing challenges that emerge from the 4IR. One of these challenges is the skills gap which is created by the disconnect between the speed of change in the employment market and the ability of education providers to develop appropriate courses (Gleason 2018). This is particularly apparent in higher education where, Hamilton explains, *“Universities are a bit like ocean liners – they tend to struggle with sudden course changes”* (2018). Essentially, the 4IR challenges the ability of universities to devise courses which respond to the changing needs of the future world of work.

One of the key areas in university education where the 4IR is expected to cause major disruption is accounting. The adoption of digital technologies (i.e. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Cloud computing) by private and public sector organisations are expected to have a substantial impact on the accounting profession (Tsiligiris and WECD 2019; ICAEW 2018; IMA 2019). There is much speculation about the impact of digital technologies on the various roles within the accounting profession. For example, auditing could be fully automated with the use of AI and blockchain, and bookkeeping could be replaced by AI-based cloud accounting platforms. All the evidence points to the future importance of technical skills (i.e. data analytics, understanding of digital technologies). Similarly, a consistent message is the increasing importance of soft skills (i.e. communication, critical analysis, ethical awareness) that will become central to the role of accountants in the future. These messages have been driving suggestions for re-skilling accountants ‘on the job’ and reconfiguring education for new accountants (ACCA and EY 2019). In response, the professional bodies (e.g. CIMA, ACCA, ICAEW) are reviewing their professional qualifications.

Some indicative research questions that could be explored as part of a research project on this topic are:



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- How does the adoption of digital technologies by private/public organisations affect the nature of the accounting profession?
- What are the key challenges for university accounting education that emerge from the adoption of digital technologies and the wider developments in the context of the 4IR?
- What are the skills required to be developed by university accounting education programmes to maximise the success of graduates in the future?
- What are the regional/national disparities that need to be considered by universities when developing accounting education curricula in the context of the 4IR?

We invite proposals to explore these questions and suggest that adopt a mixed methods approach, ideally within a critical realist perspective might be the appropriate methodological approach.

References

- ACCA, and EY. 2019. 'The Impact of Digital and Artificial Intelligence on Audit and Finance Professionals: Harnessing the Opportunities of Disruptive Technologies'. Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; Ernest Young.
- Gleason, N W., ed. 2018. *Higher Education in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Singapore: Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0194-0>.
- Hamilton, M. 2018. 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution: How Can Universities Respond to the Rise of the Robots?' Jisc. Available online: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-how-can-universities-respond-to-the-rise-of-the-robots-11-apr>.
- ICAEW. 2018. 'Understanding the Impact of Technology in Audit and Finance'. Dubai: ICAEW Middle East. Available online: <https://www.icaew.com/-/media/corporate/files/middle-east-hub/understanding-the-impact-of-technology-in-audit-and-finance.ashx>.
- IMA. 2019. 'IMA Management Accounting Competency Framework'. Institute of Management Accountants. Available online: <https://www.imanet.org/career-resources/management-accounting-competencies?ssopc=1>.
- Schwab, K. 2016. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- Tsiligiris, V, and WECD. 2019. 'The Impact of Technology on Accounting Technicians and Bookkeepers'. London: Association of Accounting Technicians.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: vangelis.tsiligiris@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: The impact of board diversity on firm monitoring outcomes

Director of Studies: Dr Yan Wang, Associate Professor

Department: [Accounting and Finance]

Research Centre/Group: Accounting and Finance

Project Description:

The Global Financial Crisis 2007-2008 has led to the Great Recession and also collapses of many high-profile companies due to weak corporate governance mechanisms. Since then, there have been a number of regulatory guidelines issued around the world. It's argued that one way to enhance the governance quality is to increase the number of women and those from an ethnic minority on the governing board. Internationally, US, and Scandinavian countries have required firms to improve board diversity and disclosure practices (Harjoto et al., 2015). While board diversity is documented as one of important mechanisms to improve governance quality, the findings on the effect of board diversity on organisation performance are mixed and inconclusive (Adams & Ferreira, 2009). Previous studies have mainly focused on gender or ethnic (race) diversity and ignored other important dimensions (e.g., tenure and expertise). Little research has examined the impact of the different dimensions of diversity on firm monitoring outcomes.

Applicants interested in conducting research in the areas of corporate governance, executive compensation and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are welcomed. In addition, applicants should submit a detailed research proposal which demonstrates their knowledge in this field, clear motivations, contributions and plans of their studies. Applicants should have a strong background in quantitative analysis and be familiar with econometric software such as SPSS or Stata.

References:

Adams, R., & Ferreria, D. (2009). Women in the boardroom and their impact on governance and performance. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 94(2), 291–309.

Harjoto, M., Laksmana, I., & Lee, R. (2015). Board diversity and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132(4), 641-660.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Yan Wang, yan.wang@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Housing Market Spillovers

Director of Studies: Dr. Chunping Liu

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Macro, Money, Finance Research Subgroup

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.

References

Iacoviello, M., and Neri, S., 2010. Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from an Estimated DSGE Model. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 2(2), 125-64.

Iacoviello, M., 2005. House Prices, Borrowing Constraints, and Monetary Policy in the Business Cycle. *American Economic Review*, 95(3): 739-764.

Sterk, V., 2015. Home Equity, Mobility, and Macroeconomic Fluctuations, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 74, 16-32.



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Roeger, W., and in 't Veld, J., 2009. Fiscal Policy with Credit Constrained Households, European Commission, DG ECFIN, *Working paper*.

Christensen, I., et al., 2009. Consumption, Housing Collateral, and the Canadian Business Cycle, Bank of Canada, *Working Papers*, 09-26.

Kannan, et al., 2009. Monetary and Macroprudential Policy Rules in a Model with House Price Booms, IMF, *Working paper*.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Chunping Liu: chunping.liu@ntu.ac.uk]

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Please contact the University's Doctoral School for an application pack: doctoralschool@ntu.ac.uk



**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: The impact of schooling on housing market

Director of Studies: Dr. Chunping Liu

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Macro, Money, Finance Research Subgroup

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

Brasington, D. and Haurin, D. 2006. Educational outcomes and house values: a test of the value added approach, *Journal of Regional Science*, 46 (2006), pp. 245-268.

Cheshire, P. and Sheppard, S. 2004. Capitalising the value of free schools: the impact of supply characteristics and uncertainty, *Economic Journal*, 114 (2004), pp. F397-F424.

Rosenthal, L. 2003. The value of secondary school quality, *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 65 (2003), pp. 329-355.



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Davidoff, I. and Leigh, A. 2008. How much do public schools really cost? Estimating the relationship between house prices and school quality, *The Economic Record*, 84 (2008), pp. 193-206.

Clapp J., Nanda, S., and Ross, S. 2008. Which school attributes matter? The influence of school district performance and demographic composition of property values, *Journal of Urban Economics*, 63 (2008), pp. 451-466.

Bayer, P., Ferreira, F. and McMillan, F. 2007. A unified framework for measuring preferences for schools and neighborhoods, *Journal of Political Economy*, 115 (2007), pp. 588-638.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Chunping Liu: chunping.liu@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Labour Reallocation and Structural Unemployment in the UK

Director of Studies: Dr Dimitrios Bakas and Dr Amairisa Kouki

Department: Department of Economics

Research Centre/Group: AEPA Research Group

Project Description:

What are the economic effects of workers moving from one sector to the other? There is a revival of the discussion on the effects of labour reallocation in advanced economies after the global financial crisis (see for example Estevão and Tsounta, 2011; Diamond, 2013; Simon, 2014; Bakas *et al.*, 2017 for United States, Basile *et al.*, 2012 for Italy, Bauer and King, 2018 for Germany, and Monteforte, 2019 for Spain). However, while there are several earlier works for the UK (see for example Mills *et al.*, 1996; Pissarides, 2006; Robson, 2009 among others) the recent evidence, especially after the financial crisis and the Brexit referendum, is rather weak.

This research project aims to examine empirically the contribution of labour reallocation among sectors and regions to unemployment in the UK over the recent period at micro and/or macro level. The empirical analysis on the project will be conducted using regional and sectoral panel data for the UK by employing state-of-the-art panel data regression methods. The objectives of this study are a) to provide new empirical evidence about the reallocation of labour and its contribution to changes in the patterns of unemployment at sectoral, regional and national level in the UK, b) to isolate the regional and sectoral effects of labour reallocation on unemployment rate, and c) to present a policy evaluation framework by performing counterfactual exercises which quantify how labour reallocation expected due to Brexit could affect unemployment rate.

Indicative References

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Simon, C. (2014). Sectoral Change and Unemployment during the Great Recession, in Historical Perspective, *Journal of Regional Science*, 54(5), 828-855. |

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: | Dr Dimitrios Bakas (dimitrios.bakas@ntu.ac.uk) and Dr Amairisa Kouki (amairisa.kouki@ntu.ac.uk) |

APPLICATIONS

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Project Title: Finance and Income Inequality

Director of Studies: Dr Dimitrios Bakas

Department: Department of Economics

Research Centre/Group: AEPA Research Group

Project Description:

There is an extensive literature investigating the relationship between finance and inequality. Theoretically, the impact of financial development on income inequality is ambiguous (Claessens and Perotti, 2007; Demirgüç-Kunt and Levine, 2009), while on the empirical side, the numerous studies on the relationship between finance and inequality provide mixed findings (Demirgüç-Kunt and Levine, 2009; Denk and Cournède, 2015). In addition, while there are several empirical papers on the relationship between the two variables there is no work that explores the long-run effects of financial development on income inequality. Finally, there is a renewed interest on the topic following the recent financial crisis.

This research project aims to examine empirically the relationship between finance and income inequality. The first part of the project will be a systematic quantitative review of the empirical literature that aims to explore the dimensions of the observed heterogeneity of the empirical estimates. Additionally, the second part of the project will aim to investigate the long-run relationship between finance and income inequality. The empirical analysis on the second part will be conducted using data on a large sample of developed and developing countries by employing state-of-the-art panel data regression methods.

Indicative References

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Dimitrios Bakas (dimitrios.bakas@ntu.ac.uk)]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: [Voluntary environmental programs and environmental awareness]

Director of Studies: [Dr. Eleni Stathopoulou]

Department: [Economics]

Research Centre/Group: [Applied Economics and Policy Analysis Research Group]

Project Description:

Voluntary environmental programs (VEPs) are instruments for inducing firms to produce environmental goods beyond legal requirements and aim to enhance environmental and social outcomes.

While command and control regulations provide the basic governance framework in most of the world, on their own they seem less appropriate for contemporary environmental challenges. Changing political conditions have made policymakers more sensitive to the backlash against command and control's alleged heavy-handedness. VEPs differ from command and control regulations on two counts. First, while in the context of command and control, government regulators are generally the key stakeholders, with the information and means to reward and sanction firms' environmental stewardship, VEPs allow more and varied stakeholders to join the process of assessing, rewarding, and sanctioning firms' environmental stewardship. Second, VEPs create more nuanced evaluative standards because they are more apt to allow varying stringency levels across programs, allowing firms to venue-shop across programs in the market for environmental virtue. VEPs allow actors to supply programs with different levels of stringency, in contrast with the common command and control scenarios, in which governments are monopoly suppliers of widely understood environmental standards (Prakash and Potoski, 2012),

Understanding what really motivates corporate environmentalism is important for policymakers since the effectiveness of government environmental policies depends in large part on how corporations will respond to them (Lyon and Maxwell, 1999).

Hence, this project would further investigate VEPs and look at the reasons why firms participate in voluntary environmental programs as well as whether consumers' environmental awareness can play a role in promoting voluntary participation.

References:

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Prakash, A. and Potoski, M., 2012. Voluntary environmental programs: A comparative perspective. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 31(1), pp.123-138.



Prakash, A. and Potoski, M., 2006. The voluntary environmentalists: Green clubs, ISO 14001, and voluntary environmental regulations. Cambridge University Press. |

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: | Eleni Stathopoulou
eleni.stathopoulou@ntu.ac.uk |

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Project Title: Social Media and the True State of the World

Director of Studies: Associate Professor Dr Achim Hauck, Dr Florian Biermann.

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Applied Economics and Policy Analysis (AEPA), Behavioural Sciences

Project Description:

It is often claimed that the rise of social media has significantly changed the way people seek, obtain, and process information for forming opinions and beliefs about political, societal and other matters of public interest. This doctoral project aims to evaluate these claims, using the toolbox of information economics, and to identify possible implications for collective decision making.

In a world without social media, the interpretations, assessments, and opinions of only a small group of people, whom we will refer to as *elite*, become known to a wider public. The elite is made up of journalists, politicians, and experts. On the other hand, in a world *with* social media, *everyone* can share interpretations, assessments, and opinions. Under common assumptions of information economics, the latter scenario should lead to a preferable outcome: agents receive noisy signals about the true state of the world, and the true state of the world can be more accurately determined by the agents in the society the more agents share their signals. If, however, the signals received by the elite have a higher quality than those of other agents (i.e., they are less distorted or biased), this result does not necessarily hold true.

The candidate working on this project will be expected to create a model framework that can be used to analyse how beliefs form in a society in scenarios with and without social media. Within that framework, the dissertation could feature multiple model instances, based on different sets of assumptions. Together with the supervisors, the candidate should identify meaningful definitions of what constitutes the “mainstream opinion” in a society, and the candidate should develop criteria to evaluate model outcomes. These could be, for example, (a) the percentage of people who hold a correct belief about the state of the world (if there are only finitely many states of the world); (b) the difference between true state and average belief (if the state of the world is a continuous variable); or (c) the likelihood that an initially false belief will be corrected through information sharing.

The model should take into account how knowledge about the reliability of the signals of *other* agents (which may be common knowledge) affects the mainstream opinion. This aspect could be captured in a dynamic belief updating process: the original signals serve as Bayesian prior beliefs, these signals are then shared (by everyone or only by the elite), and every agent updates their beliefs in view of the



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signals shared by the others and what they know about the reliability of other players' signals. There may be multiple updating rounds and one of the first theorems to be proved could be that the process converges to some belief profile. Various specific topics, to be identified by the candidate and the supervisors, could be analysed within the model framework. For example:

- What are conditions for the formation of so-called *echo chambers*, i.e., subsets of agents whose opinions reinforce each other? How can the phenomenon of *polarisation* be formalised and which model parameters foster polarisation?
- How were the outcomes of the model affected if certain opinions were suppressed? How would asymmetric suppression at different sides of the political spectrum affect the model outcomes?
- Robert Aumann proved that it is impossible for rational agents to “agree to disagree” if they have different priors but common knowledge that they are both rational (i.e., they make optimal use of the available information to infer the true state of the world). Could this result be upheld in a situation where only the members of the elite share their views? (Aumann, Robert J. (1976). Agreeing to Disagree. *Annals of Statistics* 4 (6): 1236–1239)

In a second step, the implications of the informational analysis for collective decision making, in particular elections, could be investigated. Methodologically, the doctorate would be mostly based on mathematical modelling, though it is conceivable that model predictions can be tested against real-world data. There may also be opportunities to conduct economic or psychological experiments. The candidate could be an economist, mathematician, psychologist, political scientist, journalist, or media and communication scientist. Essential would be a strong interest in applying mathematics in political and social contexts and, if necessary, the willingness to acquire proficiency in the relevant mathematical fields. |

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: | Achim Hauck: achim.hauck@ntu.ac.uk, Florian Biermann: florian.biermann@ntu.ac.uk |

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Finding the Determinants of the China's Local Local Fiscal Capacity

Director of Studies: Dr Shang Jiang

Department: Department of Economics

Project Description:

Government's fiscal revenue provides the basic financial support for the states' functions, and its influence in economy and society is profound. Starting from the mid-20th century, numerous scholars have tried to examine such performance by taking the studies on the tax capacity regression modelling approach. Tax capacity, therefore, is defined as the hypothetical ability of a tax authority to raise tax revenue for the purpose of public finance within the existing available tax base. (see Akin, 1973; Bahl, 1971, 1972; Bayraktar, Le, and Moreno-Dodson, 2012; and Xing & Zhang, 2018)

In the existing literature, the tax revenue has been widely used as the indicator of fiscal revenue performance, but since early 21st century, there are few exceptions that began to use a wider indicator to capture the government's true tax-like income or the wider range of fiscal revenue performance, such as Bayraktar, Le, & Moreno-Dodson (2012), Bird, Martinez-Vazquez, and Torgler (2006), Fauvelle-Aymar (1999), and Le, Moreno-Dodson, & Rojchaichanthorn (2008).

Tax revenue is only one of the components in China's fiscal system, and it is not necessarily vital in every stage of fiscal development. The existing revenue capacity studies in China have been focused on mainly tax revenue, and studies attempted constructing the fiscal capacity with the consideration of the salient feature of non-tax source revenue are scant. Moreover, the special social and political characteristics of China have been widely ignored in the relevant studies.

Hence in this research project, building on the bases of existing studies on the tax capacity, we constructed the current revenue ratio as the dependent variable in the regression model to represent the wider fiscal revenue capacity. The explanatory variables are including not only economic and demographic factors, but also social and political factors. Hence, a holistic and comprehensive fiscal capacity study is contextualized.

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Xing, W. & Zhang, Q., 2018. The effects of vertical and horizontal incentives on local tax efforts: evidence from China. *Applied Economics*, 50(11), pp.1222–1237.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Shang Jiang: shang.jiang@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: The Economics of One Belt and One Road initiative

Director of Studies: Dr. Jingwen Fan

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: |

Project Description:

The One Belt and One Road (OBOR) Initiative, launched by the Chinese government in 2013, aims to serve as an initiative of cooperative development that relies on the existing dual multilateral mechanism between Asia, Europe, Africa, neighbouring oceans, and the existing regional economic spheres and platform for regional cooperation. The major goals of BRI involve promoting investments and policy co-ordination, facilitating connectivity, and supporting greater economic and financial integration. In spite of these seemingly positive objectives, since its launch the OBOR has faced significant barriers due to the lack of central coordination mechanism, a clash of different political philosophies, and generally widespread skepticism among other governments who suspect the underlying purposes of OBOR being one of serving the Chinese government in widening its geopolitical influence (Huang, 2016).

Theoretically, Lin and Wang (2017) argued for the merits of OBOR as a new, more effective form of development assistance. They are in favour of the types of development assistance under the broad umbrella of OBOR (namely, a hybrid of commercial loan and project aid), due to the ineffectiveness of traditional aid in promoting sustainable growth, development, and structural transformation in developing economies. They argue that, China, fresh from its own structural reform and economic transformation in the 1980s, is in perfect position to be the learning partner with developing economies, and assists these economies in moving up the income ladder. Indeed, studies such as Herrero and Xu (2017), Du and Zhang (2017), have argued that Central and Western European economies, especially landlocked countries, would benefit in trade expansion due to the significant reduction in transaction costs. Despite these arguments, significant gaps remain in the literature, in terms of understanding in details the nexus and working mechanisms linking development assistance, infrastructure and financial tie-ups, regional production value-chains, and trade integration, notably among the economies along the proposed "Silk Road".

Proposed Structure



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This project aims to adopt a holistic approach in examining the various aspects underlying the broad umbrella of OBOR initiative. As such, we are open to accepting candidates who either (i) have deep theoretical interests and intend to develop (and subsequently test empirically) economic models in explaining the various modes of South-South co-operations observed under OBOR initiative, and their effects on the various indicators and measures of economic development in the recipient economies; or (ii) would prefer adopting primary survey and case study approaches to examine in greater details some specific OBOR initiatives that have been implemented, and consequently their regional implications. For instance, amidst the infamous Sri Lankan debt trap, Malaysia's cancellation of selected projects under the Mahathir administration, and other controversies, the regional effects, be it through knowledge spillover, job creation, or entrepreneurial promotion, can only be understood if primary data collection initiatives are implemented in the relevant locations and regions.

In sum, we are open to supervise either macroeconomic theory-based dissertation, spatial development and regional entrepreneurship-based dissertation, or a dissertation with a combination of both elements, on the OBOR initiatives.

References:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr. Jingwen Fan; Jingwen.Fan@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Infrastructure, Institutions and Foreign Direct Investment

Director of Studies: Dr Marie Stack

Department: Economics

Project Description:

In recognition of the benefits of foreign investment – an important channel through which resources, human capital and technological progress are transferred between countries – understanding the determining factors of foreign direct investment (FDI) in recipient countries remains an important issue from a developing country perspective. Although Africa has undertaken a programme of liberalisation during the 1990s, inward investment remains subdued, partly reflecting increased competition for foreign investment and partly reflecting a lingering objection to foreign capital.

In view of the critical role of the private sector in terms of overall development, a growing literature focuses on the need to prioritise reforms of the business environment. At its core, business environment reforms involve reducing entry barriers and stimulating levels of efficiency and innovation as well as reducing the transaction costs of doing business, decreasing risks and providing greater certainty in terms of laws, regulations and government policies (DCED 2008; Luiz et al. 2019). While economic policy reforms have largely removed the direct barriers to foreign investment, many indirect barriers remain in place with the consequence that inward investment is constrained to levels less than otherwise.

The recent literature assesses a broad spectrum of potential constraints on firms (Dollar et al. 2005, 2006; Ayyagari et al. 2008). Dollar et al. (2006), for example, find that a better investment climate increases the probability to export and invest abroad. More specifically, time and monetary measures of hard infrastructure (such as electricity and telecommunications) as well as soft infrastructure (for example, customs administration) help explain differences in FDI. The importance of institutions for foreign investment and development have also been highlighted (Dollar and Kraay 2003; Glaeser et al. 2004; Rodrik et al. 2004). Institutions create an environment conducive for the creation and operation of firms. This study will focus on the linkages between infrastructure, institutions and FDI.

References

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Marie.Stack@ntu.ac.uk



**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Using Geoinformation Systems (GIS) data to understand human behaviour

Director of Studies: Dr Reinhard Weisser

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Centre for Economics, Public Policy and Management

Project background: All forms of human behaviour and decision-making are influenced by external circumstances, i.e. the time and place individuals find themselves in. Empirical research in Economics and related disciplines takes this into account by applying specific (panel) estimation methods. These approaches are based on the assumption that place-specific conditions do not change over time and time-specific effects are identical across space. Though panel models are a powerful statistical tool they often fail to fully capture place-specific dynamics, i.e. they cannot explain how changing local conditions impact on human behaviour. This is due to a lack of detailed geo-referenced data.

In recent years, however, the increasing availability and an ever-increasing spatial resolution of Geoinformation Systems (GIS) data, e.g. satellite data, has opened up new avenues for research (cf. Donaldson and Storeygard, 2016): Drawing upon night-time light data, we can now measure economic growth (Henderson et al., 2012) or urban development (Small et al., 2016) from outer space. Linking GIS data on mineral deposits and geo-referenced incidences of conflict, it has become possible to investigate the direct relationship between mining activities and the outburst of conflict in the immediate vicinity (Berman et al., 2017). Satellite data has also been used to identify the link between air pollution and infant mortality (Jayachandran, 2009). Remote sensing data also helps to predict the impact of climate change on agricultural production (Costinot et al., 2016). Furthermore, GIS data plays an important role in monitoring compliance with environmental regulations, e.g. near real-time ship traffic data allows to detect illegal fishing activities (Longép   et al., 2018).

Project objective: The goal of any specific project (developed by a potential PhD candidate) would be to quantitatively investigate a relevant research question within the field of Economics or Social Sciences whilst using GIS data. Of special interest are those projects utilising novel spatial databases or GIS datasets, which have not been frequently used in economic research. The chosen type of spatial data has to provide meaningful insights into the researched phenomenon and enrich the respective literature as well as our understanding of human behaviour.

Methods: In order to conduct a quantitative analysis using GIS data, the following major milestones should be considered:

- 1) Interdisciplinary literature review to identify related research and research gaps
- 2) Evaluation of alternative GIS data sources with respect to their applicability
- 3) Implementation of a small feasibility study
- 4) Processing of (potentially very large) GIS datasets or spatial databases
- 5) Quantitative analyses using (spatial) panel methods or other suitable techniques

Given the focus on GIS data applications, potential candidates should either have some experience with (large) datasets in unconventional formats or display the willingness to familiarise themselves



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quickly. Furthermore, prior experience or a significant interest in working with GIS software and statistical software packages, e.g. Stata or R, would be beneficial.

References

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Reinhard Weisser (reinhard.weisser@ntu.ac.uk)

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Happiness, Work Motivation and Engagement in Businesses

Director of Studies: Prof. Thorsten Chmura

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Behavioural Science Group

Project Description:

By conducting a series of experiments to measure participants' personal preferences, we can understand why and how people behave in situations/circumstances in their life. This then enables us to measure shifts towards desired behaviour when we change and design 'nudges' and use this information to shift people's behaviour. How can we use nudges to persuade line managers to take it seriously? i.e. to do meaningful action planning, but also to be an engaging leader (talk to their people one to one, set challenging targets but don't bully etc.) and to give employees a voice, and ensure they understand the strategic narrative. That applies to individual line manager's but also, how do we persuade, through nudges, senior leaders to do more than pay slip service?

This project will look at the role of happiness, work motivation and engagement on work performance and productivity in companies.

Methodology: Experiments, Experimental and Behavioral Economics

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Thorsten.chmura@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Human Behaviour in Traffic Networks

Director of Studies: Prof. Thorsten Chmura

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Behavioural Science Group

Project Description:

This project will analyse human behaviour in networks. An emphasis will be traffic networks. In their analyses, Chmura, Pitz, Schreckenberg and Selten have laid a special emphasis on Route Choice Scenarios of the following type: In 200 periods, the test subjects had the task to decide each time between the main route M and the side road S in order to reach the arrival point B. The travel time is shorter on M than on S if the number of participants on both roads is the same. The described route scenarios will be extended for new complex traffic scenarios. The experiment is on a two-route scenario, in which 18 human players and 18 artificial agents have to choose repeatedly between the two alternatives. The payoff depends on the travel time of each participant. The travel time calculated by a transition algorithm is also used as forecast-algorithm in real traffic information systems. The experiments differ in the quality and quantity of the given information to the participants. Also, in future investigations laboratory experiments will be a main instrument to test human behaviour in traffic forecast systems.

Methodology: Experiments, Experimental and Behavioral Economics

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Thorsten.chmura@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: China and Taiwan, Perceptions and Misperceptions

Director of Studies: Prof. Thorsten Chmura

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Behavioural Science Group

Project Description:

This project will analyse the role of Taiwan, using behavioural economics and experimental Economics methods.

Taiwan's political and legal status and its future remains one of the most contested questions in East Asia. The three main stakeholders regarding Taiwan's current and future status are Taiwan itself, mainland China, and the United States. Their positions on Taiwan's political and legal status are far apart.

The state of the art will start with a brief description of Taiwan's status in international law and the positions of the three main stakeholders on Taiwan's statehood: Taiwan itself, mainland China, and the US. The second part will describe the academic and political relevance of the research topic: it shows how tensions between Taiwan and mainland China have increased in recent years and that no viable solution for the conflict exists at the moment

The enduring academic and political relevance of the research topic lies in the increasing tensions in recent years and the wide gap in the positions. The topic of cross-strait relations attracts a lot of research from scholars in international relations, Chinese studies, and Taiwan studies, but most are applying traditional methods of research concentrating on an analysis of the cross-strait, foreign, and security policies of mainland China, Taiwan, and the US. This project will apply new research methods as game theoretical experiments, that allow for a systematic and comparative assessment of the feasibility of existing concepts and models for Taiwan's future status. So far, such an assessment of the feasibility of the existing models and concepts is missing.

Methodology: Experiments, Experimental and Behavioral Economics

REFERENCES

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Thorsten.chmura@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Strategy Bundle Method - forecasting political situations and analysing business challenges

Director of Studies: Prof. Thorsten Chmura

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Behavioural Science Group

Project Description:

The scenario bundle method: “Scenario bundles” are game theoretical models of potential international conflict situations. The aim of this essay is to describe a systematic way of applying qualitative expertise as a basis for the construction and evaluation of scenario bundles for a specific geographical area. This procedure is the “scenario bundle method”.

The approach is semiformal rather than mathematical although it was inspired by game theory. The main focus is on the modelling rather than on the analysis. Scenario bundles are very simple game structures with simple game theoretical solutions of equilibrium. Once the main task of the modelling is fulfilled, the analysis is easy.

The development of the scenario bundle method is the result of combined efforts of Amos Perlmutter, a political scientist, and Reinhard Selten, a game theorist. The shape of the method emerged during a period of intensive cooperation in the summer of 1973. First experiences with preliminary applications showed the necessity of asking for the help of a brains trust. Eventually, the possibility of realising this idea was offered by the “Research conference on Strategic Decision Analysis Focussing on the Persian Gulf”, which took place at the Hotel Schwaghof in Bad Salzuflen, Germany, in the first week of October 1976.

The social scientist who wants to construct a game theoretical model for a specific sphere of reality has to answer the following questions: Who are the players? What are the motivating factors defining the preferences of a player? Which strategic possibilities do the players have? What are the consequences of the different combinations of strategic possibilities? What are the players’ preferences concerning these consequences?

The scenario bundle method is a systematic way of submitting such questions to a group of competent people. Group discussions produce qualitative judgements which serve as a basis for the construction of the model. Scenario bundles do not demand any specification of numerical parameters. Qualitative judgements are sufficient.



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The method will be applied to analyse political situations and to help businesses to forecast future challenges.

Methodology: Experimental Design – Strategic Discussion Tool

REFERENCES

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Thorsten.chmura@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

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

Director of Studies: [Dr Wenyu Zang]

Department: [Economic Department]

Research Centre/Group: [Applied Economics and Policy Analysis]

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.

References:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Wenyu Zang: wenyu.zang@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

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

Director of Studies: [Dr Wenyu Zang]

Department: [Economic Department]

Research Centre/Group: [Applied Economics and Policy Analysis]

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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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Wenyu Zang: wenyu.zang@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Financial Capital, Human Capital, and Self-Employment

Director of Studies: Dr Zhongmin Wu

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Applied Economics and Policy Analysis

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.

References:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Zhongmin Wu: zhongmin.wu@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Innovation, entrepreneurship and institutional change

Director of Studies: Dr Zhongmin Wu

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Applied Economics and Policy Analysis

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.

In theory, differing characteristics of industries and ownership structures should result in differing levels of innovation efficiency. The existing research lacks the quantitative analysis and tests of the differing levels of innovation efficiency between the different industries. Although some studies have indicated that state-owned enterprises are more innovative than private enterprises due to: externalities in the generation of intellectual property; government encourages and guides the innovation of state-owned enterprises through intellectual property protection, greater resource allocation towards innovation and supply of fundamental knowledge; more effective in alleviating the problem of market failure in knowledge production (Choi et al 2011). However, most research concludes that state-owned enterprise innovation efficiency is lower than that of private enterprises, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan owned enterprises and foreign owned enterprises. The main reasons given are the following: Firstly, the principal-agent problem. The incentive and restraint mechanism of state-owned enterprise managers is imperfect, resulting in state-owned enterprise executives making decisions based on their own interests, ignoring the efficiency of their enterprise including innovation efficiency. This causes waste of state-owned assets and inefficient allocation of resources (Zhang 1997) . Secondly, most state-owned enterprises adopt the pre-bureaucratic supervisory mechanism, which can easily lead to project selection error, and delay innovation. In addition, soft budget constraint can cause innovation efficiency loss (Qian & Xu 1998, Huang & Xu 1998).

References:



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Zhongmin Wu: zhongmin.wu@ntu.ac.uk]

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Project Title: Firm Performance, State Ownership, and Government Regulation

Director of Studies: Dr Zhongmin Wu

Department: Economics

Research Centre/Group: Applied Economics and Policy Analysis

Project Description:

There have been numerous studies on state owned enterprises (SOEs) of China (Holz, 2011; Wang & Judge, 2012; Rong, Wu, & Boeing, 2017; Li & Xia, 2007). This research aims to increase understanding of how firms under different ownership structures respond to business variables and constraints. Our research uses the most recent data available from the World Bank Enterprise Survey to determine firm performance among different ownership types. The results from our research can be used for policy makers in constructing effective industrial strategies.

We construct separate models for state owned enterprise, private foreign owned enterprises and private domestic owned enterprises in order to determine the most effective policy for each ownership type. Researching the differences in ownership is crucial. State owned enterprise, private foreign owned enterprises and private domestic owned enterprises face very different constraints and incentives (Wang & Judge, 2012; Zhang, & Liu, 2017).

References:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Zhongmin Wu: zhongmin.wu@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

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

Director of Studies: Dr Fotios Mitsakis

Department: Human Resource Management

Research Centre/Group: People, Work and Organisational Practice

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” concerning 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).

References:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Fotios Mitsakis, fotis.mitsakis@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA

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

Director of Studies / Co-Supervisor: Dr Fotios Mitsakis / Dr Pedro Mendonca

Department: Human Resource Management

Research Centre/Group: People, Work and Organisational Practice

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.



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Fotios Mitsakis, fotis.mitsakis@ntu.ac.uk / Dr Pedro Mendonca, pedro.mendonca@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project title: HPWS and SME innovation: the indirect effects of leadership, employee voice and trust

Director of Studies: Professor Helen Shipton

Department: Department of Human Resource

Research Centre/Group: Centre of People, Work and Organizational Practice (CPWOP)

Project Description

This proposed study will explore the association between high performance work practices (HPWS) - defined as 'the primary means by which firms can influence and shape the skills, attitudes, and behaviour of individuals to do their work' (Chen and Huang, 2009: 104) and firm innovation. It builds on the expertise of CPWOP co-director, Helen Shipton (Do & Shipton, 2019), and offers the potential to extend and benchmark the ERDF funded 'Enabling Innovation' project, which has supported over 500 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It also progresses research carried out by CPWOP in conjunction with the CIPD investigating Employee Voice, following the publication of the CIPD report 'Talking about Voice' co-authored by the CPWOP team:

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/future-voice/employee-experiences>

The overall aim of the study is to examine when, how and why HPWS influence firm innovation SMEs. This will be achieved as follows:

- (1) Theorizing transformational leadership, trust in management, trust in supervision, employee engagement and innovative behaviour as potential indirect pathways that uncover the relationship between HPWS and firm innovation;
- (2) Examining the cross-level effects of HPWS on both top-down and bottom-up performance outcomes;
- (3) Drawing on social exchange theory to frame direct voice and supervisor support as potential moderators that in turn amplifies (a) the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in management (b) the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in supervision;
- (4) Empirically testing the hypothesized model using a sample of SMEs in an interesting context where innovation is instrumental for their survival, growth and competitive advantage.

By addressing the above aims, this study contributes to the existing knowledge in a number of ways. First, this study will cast new light on the vexed question of how HPWS influence organizational innovation in the context of SMEs (Beugelsdijk, 2008; Shipton et al., 2006). Second, mediating and moderating mechanisms will be addressed carefully to provide a more nuanced understanding of a HPWS-performance relationship in response to conflicting or mixed outcomes (e.g., Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Do and Shipton, 2019; Guest and Conway, 2011). Third, this study contributes to the interlink between leadership, employee voice and trust by highlighting the moderating mechanism of direct voice on the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in management as two-way communication between managers and employees (Holland, Cooper and Sheehan, 2016).



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Finally, the study provides useful implications for practitioners who wish to support and nurture SMEs to progress and innovate.

The study will adopt a mixed methods approach to examine the utilisation of HPWS in SMEs in order to increase the accuracy of their data and yield a comprehensive picture by incorporating information from complementary kinds of data (Denscombe, 2008). Specifically, the qualitative phase aims to explore how and why HPWS practices are pursued and valued within through interviews. Meanwhile, the quantitative phase will be conducted afterwards to help validate the results of the qualitative data. To test the proposed hypotheses, the study will focus on small but highly-skilled and knowledge-based environments such as IT, pharmaceuticals and professional service firms with the scope of 10 - 200 employees (Do and Shipton, 2019). In terms of analytical techniques, SPSS software (Version 25) will be utilised to check the robustness of the studied variables as well as run EFA tests. In addition, MPlus (Version 7.3) will be utilized to test multilevel models, the measurement and structural models (Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013; Preacher, Zhang and Zyphur, 2011).

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact:

Professor Helen Shipton

Email: Helen.Shipton@ntu.ac.uk

Tel: (+84) 965515508

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Understanding informalized business and employment practice: Regulation in alternative economic spaces in Nottingham and the East Midlands

Directors of Studies: Professor Ian Clark

Department: HRM, NBS

Research Group: Work, Informalisation and Place

Project Description:

The work, informalisation and place research group, *WIP*, provides methodologically innovative interdisciplinary studies of contemporary work and employment in sectors such as hand car washes, nail bars, and small-scale garment manufacturing. Work in these sectors tends towards casualisation and informalisation where workers operate under business models that embed patterns of labour market exploitation. This includes wage theft, under payment of the national minimum wage through to modern slavery where employer coercion centres on work for favours, labour bondage and tied labour in unsafe workplaces. Our work is currently themed into three strands exploring informalised labour and work, regulation and enforcement, and spatial analysis of informalised work opportunities.

The project centres on three theoretical themes; Firstly, 'hustle' as a conceptual frame to examine how young workers in precarious urban geographies manage the uncertainty of informality in work and beyond. Allied to this comes the idea of 'waithood' where those in precarious mainly informalized work have to wait to get into more formalized employment where the waiting can be long or indefinite, (Thieme, 2018). Therefore, hustle and waithood become analytical and political frames of reference that affirm and normalize precariousness and uncertainty but in a context of place-based social ties, in a city such as Nottingham where formalized employment opportunities and dominant models such as Fordism and post-fordism experience dramatic contractions. A second spatial theme therefore centres on the necessity to re-conceptualize informal work practices and workplaces and move forward from approaches grounded in modernization and avoidance of regulation towards the lived experience of workers (Rogers, et.al. 2019). Therein, informalization becomes a mode of urbanization where social embeddedness, networks and non-monetary motives



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provide ethnographic explanations of a willingness to accept precarious unregulated work that focus beyond the economic marginalization of some workers (Harris, 2018). Thirdly, then the study of *alternative economic spaces* can extend and enrich research on work and employment as these represent work transitions within contemporary capitalism however informalized and precarious they appear to be, (Strauss, 2018, Krueger et.al. 2019). Our research suggests that in the British context at least, the vast majority of hand car washes and small garment manufacturers re-produce established business practice but informally where they are unregulated (Clark and Colling, 2018, Hammer and Plugor 2019). Following on from this a spatialized study of alternative economic spaces may provide a dispersed theorization of informalization and precarity at work.

To evaluate this theorization empirically we are seeking a PhD student to work on any of the following areas; nail bars where an ethnographic study could complement our work on hand car washes. Our wider team have links to the industry bodies trying to professionalise the industry that will enable initial empirical work. Alternatively, a study may focus on the challenges of labour exploitation in small-scale garment manufacturing in the east midlands. Finally, an empirical study of alternative economic spaces can examine these spaces in a place-based study. This will examine how entrepreneurs who fail to comply with business and employment regulations secure regulatory capture of particular forms of retailing, for example, restaurants, local supermarkets, vape shops, barbers and other forms of innovative retail outlets such as ‘pop-ups’. One end user, impact and regulator friendly aim of these outline projects is to create an informal work predictive map of the region. This will inform the strengths and limitations of local approaches to ‘good work’ and decent work, a United Nations sustainable development goal, where the UK has committed to the delivery of decent work – full and productive employment for all by 2030¹.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Professor Ian Clark, ian.clark@ntu.ac.uk, Dr. James Hunter james.hunter@ntu.ac.uk, Dr. Huw Fearnall-Williams huw.fearnallwilliams@ntu.ac.uk, Richard Pickford, Richard.pickford@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: How is Platform Capitalism re-shaping working conditions and workers' rights?

Director of Studies: Dr Pedro Mendonca

Department: HRM

Research Centre/Group: if/as appropriate

Project Description:

This project aims at exploring and examining processes through which a new employment relationship and HR practices enabled by technology impact on working conditions within the Digitised Economy. Therefore this research project is concerned with answering questions such as: how is technology being used to control workers? what are the risks workers face in the context of digitised work environments? and how are workers responding to these new challenges?

Companies in platform gig-economy are looking for an increasingly individualised employment relationship that is heavily mediated through technology and algorithms, based on precarious work, and minimal contact with the employer. A relationship that is almost virtual, poses new challenges for working conditions and workers' capacity to exercise agency, and bargain for better working conditions. Research has provided insights into the quality of work in these types of jobs (Huws, 2016; Wobbe, et al., 2016). However, there are significant shortfalls in the literature on the exact processes through which technology is used to enhance companies' control over the labour process and how workers are able (or not) to exercise their agency. This project aims at tackling these gaps by exploring the ways in which new work and employment practices promoted by gig-economy companies re-shape working conditions as well as traditional collective and individual forms of worker agency in order to promote better quality work.

De-collectivisation of the workforce in Europe and the US, through declining trends of trade union density and influence, has been a notorious source of concern for academics and policy-makers (Bamber et al., 2016; ETUI, 2016). Researchers have theorised workforce collectivisation as outdated, under the argument that a conflictual employment relationship has been extinguished from the workplace. Earlier theorisations emphasised the change of societal paradigm from collective to a more individualist one (Brown, 1990). Another type of explanation from a unitarist perspective sees trade unions as irrelevant in the new employment relationship that seeks "win-win" situations (Gibbon, 2007). However, there is no convincing evidence that "individualism" has changed workers' attitudes towards trade unions, nor a significant improvement in relations between management and workers (Hyman, 2001). Likewise, Collinson (1994) suggests that resistance in the workplace is still part of the everyday contemporary workplace.

Having this context in the background and building on the Nottingham Trent University's Good Work agenda, and on the Taylor (2017) review's call for better understanding the mechanisms of power and representation in contemporary workplaces, this project aims specifically at examining processes and stages through which new work and employment practices impact on working conditions and constrain



collective agency; as well as how individuals find new strategies to collectively organise and regulate gig-economy companies' behaviours.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: |Dr Pedro Mendonca: pedro.mendonca@ntu.ac.uk|

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

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

Director of Studies: Dr Claudia. M. Bordogna

Department: Management

Research Centre: PWOP

Project Description:

Nottingham Business School (NBS) at Nottingham Trent University has worked hard to develop a personalised student experience, that aims to create opportunities across four axes of learning— Knowledge, Experiential Learning, Learning Styles and Career Development. All students at NBS participate in core modules that focus on personal and professional development, whilst also getting to choose from a variety of extra-curricular activities and events to support their development.

The NBS postgraduate students are a diverse group, with different levels of academic knowledge in their chosen area of study, different cultural and educational backgrounds and varying levels of personal and professional skills necessary to succeed at postgraduate level education in the UK (O'Donnell, Tobbell, Lawthom & Zammit, 2009). Therefore, for some, studying at the postgraduate level can be a significant leap. To support students, NBS offers all students an Academic Mentor who is able to offer support to the students on a range of topics. Having tailored academic support available to the students can make a huge difference to their retention and attainment. Alongside this, all students participate in a 10 credit core module. The aim of the module is to give postgraduate students an increased understanding of how to manage their own continuous personal and professional development in order to enhance their business acumen and success. Personal and professional development in this context involves providing students with academic tools and experiential opportunities to expand their horizons and challenge their actions, attitudes and behaviours.

The aim of this PhD project 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 postgraduate 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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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Claudia Bordogna claudia.bordogna@ntu.ac.uk. Claudia is oversees postgraduate personalisation at NBS.

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA

Project Title: Strengthening e-Government project design processes in developing country

Director of Studies: Dr Diana Frost

Department: Management department, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

Project Description:

Many small economies often face insurmountable challenges in the development and longterm sustainability of e-Government projects. These challenges – to include an inadequate physical infrastructure, insufficient technological capabilities, and ineffective policies governing information and communication technologies - therefore typically contribute to high rates of failure post-project implementation. Thus, implemented e-Government projects in developing countries are derailed not only by institutional procedures, policies and capabilities, but also by extraneous factors such as the technological capabilities of endusers and misalignment between project outcomes and stakeholder expectations. Yet for these countries, technological solutions particularly in sectors such as healthcare and education, present a viable and more cost-effective solution to addressing these perceived challenges.

This research explores the interdependencies and interrelationships among the key components that create an enabling environment for e-Government project development and sustainability. This project will adopt a structured-case approach to explore these components or enablers within the context of an e-Government system in a developing country, focussing on the inherent characteristics these countries leverage to take advantage of the opportunities offered by emerging technologies. The research aims to develop a structured approach to e-Government project design in developing countries and we anticipate that this research will contribute primarily to the e-Government and ICT4D literature examining technology adoption and diffusion within developing countries.

This interdisciplinary research will be conducted in collaboration with the School of Science and Technology, Nottingham Trent University. Therefore an educational background or skills in one or more of the following areas are desired: e-Governance, e-Government, data science, computer science, public policy, information systems or other related areas.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Diana Frost
- diana.frost@ntu.ac.uk;

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA

Project Title: Exploring leadership in community organising and collective action

Director of Studies: Professor Mollie Painter

Co-supervisor of Studies: Dr. Elmé Vivier

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group: Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab

Project Description:

Community-based and collective organising are key ways through which community members seek to access and/or transform public services, shape public discourses and policy decisions, and fulfil their basic human rights. Such collective efforts may be aimed at local, national or global issues, be formal or informal, and take either collaborative or confrontational approaches vis-à-vis other institutions and actors. There are many risks for communities when engaging in collaborative processes led by government or other institutions (Cooke and Kothari, 2001), and thus community-led action remains an important lever to gain influence and work towards social change (Cornwall, 2008).

In this context, community leadership has been identified as an integral aspect of collective organising and action (Drivdal, 2016; Welton and Freelon, 2018). Collective movements are also often described as 'grassroots' and bottom-up processes, operating without clear leaders or a single point of influence driving the process, with leaders potentially emerging over time (Barker et al., 2001). This raises questions about the point at which leadership becomes necessary, what may drive the emergence of leadership, and the form and role that leadership takes in collective processes. Studies on community leadership join a growing field within leadership studies that challenges theories centred on the heroic individual who inspires and motivates followers, in favour of more collaborative, shared, distributed, relational, critical and practice or process-oriented notions of leadership (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Lauzon, 2017). The aim of this project is to explore the role and practice of leadership in contexts of community organising and subsequent collaborative and/or confrontational initiatives, in order to generate insights into how leadership emerges and operates, and what difference it makes to collective organising and agency. This would include an exploration of how certain individuals become formal leaders, the impacts of different forms of leadership on the types of activities undertaken within the community, the relationships formed with external stakeholders, and the effectiveness thereof.

Methods and approach

While the research will be situated in the leadership literature, the PhD student will be able to demarcate the particular leadership approach and theories employed (e.g. distributed, relational, critical, practice, etc.), as well as introduce additional theoretical concepts and frameworks (e.g. collaborative/participatory governance, social movements, gender intersectionality, institutional



analysis, systems theory), depending on their background and case selection, in order to further scope the project.

The research will take a qualitative approach comprising a combination of document analysis, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and ethnography. The research may focus on a single in-depth case study, or multiple cases from different regions or countries for comparative analysis. The PhD student can select to focus on a specific movement (e.g. #FeesMustFall, Extinction Rebellion), on a specific issue (e.g. health, education, sanitation), or on a particular community setting (e.g. neighbourhood or informal settlement). There is also an opportunity to build on existing networks and previous research related to the South African local community context. However, the PhD student will be able to select the region and specific cases for the research depending on their background, contacts and network-building efforts.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Mollie Painter: mollie.painter@ntu.ac.uk; Elme Vivier: elme.vivier@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

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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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: j.israilidis@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Industry 4.0 disruptive business models

Director of Studies: Dr Kostas Galanakis

Department: Management

Project Description:

Objectives: To develop a taxonomy to characterize Industry 4.0 Business Models and scenarios of disruptive business models in a series of sectors (e.g. energy, mobility, creative business) that embrace digitalization.

Expected Results: Typology of business models archetypes based on Industry 4.0; disruptive scenarios for new entrants and incumbents' business models, embracing digitalization.

Industry 4.0 (I4.0) also known as the fourth industrial revolution has emerged for describing the digitalization of manufacturing industries. In practice, the transition to I4.0 is crucial for manufacturing and service firms to sustain competitive advantage and seize new opportunities. Most research focuses on the technological aspects of I4.0 in form of product and process innovations. Despite I4.0's rising attention among both researchers and practitioners, there exists only little research about I4.0 business model innovation (BMI), even though business model (BM) innovators can be more successful than product or process innovators.

The project is based on comparative case studies analysis from different sectors (Yin, 2014). The initial step is to identify the case studies and collect extensive information. Following that on a second step we use Nickerson et al. (2013) methodology to systematically develop a taxonomy for I4.0 BMs. The method allows us to combine theoretical findings of BMs with empirical findings of case studies (Remane et al. 2016). The third step, is based on a cross-case analysis (Yin 2014) in the form of a qualitative cluster analysis, to identify archetypes and related sub-archetypes with similar characteristics of the cases' BMI. Finally, a systems thinking scenario building process will provide disruptive scenarios for new entrants or evolution of incumbents' business models.

CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Kostas Galanakis, Kostas.Galanakis@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Industry 4.0 – energy and mobility sectors: the ‘smart’ factor into urban mobility use

Director of Studies: [Dr Kostas Galanakis]

Department: [Management]

Research Centre/Group: []

Project Description: []

Objective: To generate strategic principles of value generation for sustainable mobility into smart-cities, incorporating the emergent local energy and infrastructure needs.

Expected Results: Design of a typology of sustainable mobility solutions for multiple potential combinations (ultra-low carbon mobility futures) for multiple type of users.

This project focuses in particular on local renewable energy generation in urban settings, to satisfy local energy demand (Tomaschek et al, 2016) from emerging needs such as electric vehicles. There are multiple ways of generating different types of renewable energy; and different types of ultra-low carbon mobility. But what is the optimal mix of energy and mobility types to ensure all mobility needs are satisfied? The focus of this project is on three principal mobility types, and two principal renewable energy types. Mobility is split into individual effort (walking and cycling), individual personal mobility (ultra-low and zero emission cars and motorbikes), and collective personal mobility (ultra-low and zero emission public transport). The principal renewable energy types are electricity and hydrogen fuel-cells. These can be generated by means of solar, wind, anaerobic digestion of wastes, etc. The challenge that this project seeks to address is how best to incorporate these transport requirements into cities, recognising that multiple different potential combinations of mobility types, renewable energy types and renewable energy-generation feedstocks are possible (Bale et al, 2012; Creutzig, 2016).

This project is seen primarily as a qualitative investigation, based on in-depth case studies. As this topic is relatively new and emerging, such an approach allows for the exploration of challenges, barriers and possible solutions, where cities or regions have sought to create multi-modal low emissions zones. Such a small-n approach (Flyvberg, 2001) can then be combined with causal process tracing - CPT (Bennett and Checkel, 2015) to identify the sequence of steps undertaken by the stakeholders, where problems have arisen, and how they have sought to overcome them. In particular, CPT will allow for an analysis of how best the consequences of disruptive innovation (eg Hang et al, 2015) can be captured and exploited. We shall identify a number of cities/regions across UK and Europe, not only to analyse as case studies, but also to include in the project as partners. This will facilitate cross-fertilisation of innovative approaches to the delivery of ultra-low carbon mobility.



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Kostas Galanakis:
Kostas.Galanakis@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title:

Director of Studies: Mollie Painter; Professor of Ethics and Organisation

Research Centre/Group: Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab/ Management Department

Project Description: Critical analyses of sustainability terminologies

The concept of sustainability became prominent in the early 1980s, initially in an attempt to address environmental problems engendered by economic growth. Since then, multiple iterations of the term have not only problematized its primary association with “green business”, but has also led to a series of conceptual slippages that require interrogation (Bonet, 2010; Kambites, 2014). Nearly four decades later, scholars and practitioners in the field are still discussing how to operationalise and assess the concept of sustainability (Fischer, 2017). Over the last decade, sustainability has become an umbrella term incorporating the whole series of ESGE (environmental, social, governance and ethics) issues that businesses face (Painter et al, 2019). This has been largely the case because of the emergence of the need for enhanced corporate responsibility through triple bottom-line reporting, i.e. reporting to stakeholders on economic, social and environmental performance (Hartman & Painter-Morland, 2007; Painter-Morland, 2006, 2008; Kolk, 2008).

Paradoxically, what could have been a meaningful broadening of sustainability beyond environmental responsibility towards integrating social responsibility, good governance and indirect economic benefit to society (Painter et al, 2018), seems to have instead led to a narrow instrumentalism that further problematizes the relationship between business and society. Indeed, for many critical scholars, sustainability is either an idealised illusion that does not have any *real* impact or, at best, have a trivial impact on what businesses are doing in practice. This is precisely reflected in the widespread cynicism about corporations’ use of the term (Banerjee, 2003). The whole debate around sustainability, seems to be directed towards maintaining ‘a particular social order rather than a debate about the preservation of nature *per se*’ (Harvey, 1996, p. 148 quoted in Banerjee, 2008, p. 65). Banerjee elegantly summarises that ‘rather than reshaping [neo-liberal] markets and [capitalist] production processes to fit the logic of nature, sustainable development uses the logic of markets and capitalist accumulation to determine the future of nature’ (2003, p. 153). Ten Bos and Bevan’s (2011) readings of Shell and Exxon-Mobil cases actually show that the *concept* of sustainability rather corresponds to Derridean (Derrida, 1997) ‘non-concept’.

The purpose of this study would be to interrogate the meaning(s) of the term sustainability from a philosophical, socio-political and linguistic perspective in order to challenge both scholars and practitioners to engage in a more nuanced conversation about its operationalisation in practice.



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Mollie Painter: mollie.painter@ntu.ac.uk.

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Gen NeXt and Family businesses succession: investigating challenges and opportunities of intergenerational succession journeys in contemporary SMEs

Director of Studies: Dr Ofelia A. Palermo
Department: Management
Research Centre/Group:

Project Description:

Family business studies have grown significantly over the past twenty years denoting a preference towards practice-oriented methods and interdisciplinary approaches. One of the aspects that has consistently been at the centre of researchers' attention in this field is succession. Specifically, research in family firms suggests that, at some stage, such businesses must address the issue of ownership succession (Bjuggren and Sund, 2001). Independently from the point in which succession decisions are taken (e.g. within the lifetime of the owners or at the time of their death), there is relevant complexity tied to the process. In addition to some of the core contributions to this literature (e.g. Handler, 1994) concerned with the succession process in its own right, the role of the founder, the perspective of the next generation, the different levels of analysis succession offers and the characteristics of effective successions, researchers have been looking at:

- 1) Intergenerational succession as an interactive, dynamic social process (e.g. Lam, 2011). From this point of view, attention falls on the importance of the notion of 'present' during the succession process.
- 2) A processual conceptualisation of communication during succession with particular focus on the moment in which decisions take place (e.g. Helin and Jabri, 2016). From this point of view, the dynamic interactions between the actors involved emphasize the continuous development and transformation of the succession context.
- 3) Succession as a fertile context for decision bias (e.g. Liu, Eubanks and Chanter, 2015). From this point of view, nepotism draws attention on the risks emerging from leaders following judgemental shortcuts and sampling bias.
- 4) The patterns of succession (e.g. Miller, Steier and Le Breton-Miller, 2003) based on the adoption of conservative, wavering or rebellious courses of action in terms of strategy, organisational culture, governance and performance.
- 5) The role of sex and gender in family business succession research (e.g. Nelson and Constantinidis, 2017), with a focus on equality and equity attitudes, gender roles, gender identity, importance of primogeniture and patriarchal power.

Doctoral candidates who wish to conduct their research in the field of intergenerational succession in family business, are invited to develop a proposal centred on one of the two following areas, with particular emphasis on Millennials/Gen NeXt takeovers:

- a) The role of favouritism, nepotism and decision bias in FB succession
- b) The role of sex and gender in FB succession



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It is desirable for candidates to explore either of the two areas by using an interpretivist approach and a case study design. Looking at family business intergenerational succession from one of those two angles, and in relation to Millennials/Gen NeXt, can shed light on dynamics that offer scope for further development.

Key references

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Ofelia A. Palermo at ofelia.palermo@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Dr.Ofelia.A.Palermo@ntu.ac.uk)

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: An investigation into the decision-making logic of Migrating Entrepreneurs

Director of Studies: Prof. Ursula F. Ott

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group: IBSD Research Group

An investigation into the decision-making logic of Migrating Entrepreneurs

Migrating entrepreneurs make crucial decisions that have survival implications to them and their businesses. These individuals make decisions on issues such as: when to leave a current country of residence; host country destination and decisions about new business ventures in the new country. This study will aim to investigate migrating entrepreneurs decision-making process during in the early years of the business (0- 5years) and the decision-making logic that informs their decision-making process. We define migrating entrepreneurs in a broad sense to capture the mobility of entrepreneurs (Wright 2011). Hence, the research may investigate typologies of ‘migrating’ entrepreneurs such as - transnational entrepreneurs, returnee entrepreneurs and/or migrant entrepreneurs. The study will employ a qualitative study research methodology to investigate returnee entrepreneurs, transnational entrepreneurs and/or migrant entrepreneurs. The Fsqa technique will also be employed to highlight the antecedents of decision-making logic of migrating entrepreneurs. The study will seek to make substantial contributions to the migrant entrepreneurship and strategic decision-making process literature. Therefore, successful candidate must be able to demonstrate knowledge of relevant literature in international/migrant entrepreneurship and decision-making. The student will be expected to carry out independent research under the supervision of Dr Olu Aluko and Dr Juliana Siwale with the view to present at international conferences and publish in high ranking journals.

Suggested References

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Cooperation and conflict in International Entrepreneurship – Inside the Mind of the Global Entrepreneur

Director of Studies: Prof. Ursula F. Ott

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group: International Business Strategy and Decisions Research Group

Project Description:

International entrepreneurs are at the interface of multinational market entry and host government rules. Their market knowledge and technological advantage lead to collaborations across borders. Family-oriented cultures show a higher propensity to be corrupt which coincides with the group-centered loyalty typology. International entrepreneurs have all archetypical behaviors with a scope from either individualist entrepreneurship to consensus seeking equality and loyalty (Ott, 2018). For international entrepreneurship behavior, the hierarchy/group perspective provides a good basis to consider the incentives for *group-centered loyalty and individualist entrepreneurship*. The different effort levels considering closeness and distance in terms of hierarchy and group behavior could be connected to the types of cheating. It is more difficult to co-operate for cultures with high individualism and masculinity scores than for cultures with collectivism and feminism. The effort levels for cultural co-operation are higher for individualist and masculine cultures.

The design of the incentive schemes focuses on these effort levels for cultural co-operation. The linear contracts are either based on rewards for relationship or finance, on bonuses for groups and individuals and on the effort level for cultural co-operation. This leads to a clear deviation from classic incentive schemes which encourage high levels of effort to perform better. The incentive schemes to avoid cheating in a cultural environment are targeted to support a co-operative effort in a cross-cultural work group and a deeper understanding of the cultural differences in motivation. The likelihood that people will cheat in this setting is reduced by specifically targeted incentive schemes to encourage co-operation.

The design of these incentives encourages people to put a high effort into a positive group performance compared to individualistic career goals. In the future, developing incentive schemes for international assignments should be dealt with in a more culturally-sensitive way and as a motivation towards a better understanding of cultural behavior such as cheating and co-operating. International conflicts should be seen in the way Boone et al (2010) emphasizes that extrinsic incentive should be offered to encourage cooperation in case trust or in the international entrepreneurship case loyalty cannot be assumed to exist in a group per se.

Methodology: Qualitative and Quantitative Research based on the research questions developed.



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: ursula.ott@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Global Mindsets – Cultural values and decision making of global managers

Director of Studies: Prof. Ursula F. Ott

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group: International Business Strategy and Decisions (IBSD) Research Group

Project Description:

The managers of the 21st century are influenced by their industry standards, global demands and workforce with challenging environments to react to (Chen et al, 1998; Zeng and Chen, 2003). The complexity of the international market place requires managers to make decisions, negotiate and contract under uncertainty about their counterparts (Aharoni and Burton, 1994; Giannetti and Yafeh, 2012).

Are leadership skills such as decision-making and negotiating a result of either learning or nature or both together? Addressing the skills and abilities of managers to make decisions individually, in a group and to negotiate successfully, this article provides an explanation of managerial decision making that moves beyond the managerial mindset with a combination of evolution, emotion and rationality. International negotiation skills are a necessary condition in the global market place and in times of geo-political change even more important. International decision-making scenarios are often characterised by failure to come to an agreement or understanding. Anecdotes of misunderstandings fill textbooks in International Business, whereas research into the decision making and negotiating across culture is still finding out that cooperative elements exist in the global communication patterns and even more interested in finding solutions of an understanding between cultures. Decision making - individual, interactive and international – combines a logical, emotional and even an evolutionary adaptable approach to come to an outcome. In international business, national cultural characteristics (Hofstede, 1985, 2001; House et al, 2004) have dominated research agendas for decades. Nevertheless, cross border activities need to consider managerial decision making with a dynamic pattern which evolves from one's natural environment, upbringing and learning. Decision making goes back to intuitive, transmitted behaviour which has evolutionary explanations, but also it shows the learning of rational and emotional patterns which lead to positive solutions and cooperation. National cultural explanations are too simplistic and in a globalised world do not really reflect the necessary conditions for responding to the complexities in the international market place.

This PhD project will explore differences between decision making across culture and insights into behavioural patterns of similarities and differences of global decision makers.



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Methodology: The topic offers itself to an indepth analysis with qualitative interviews, an international survey, but also to an experimental design. The research group members are in a position to supervise all methodological approaches.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: ursula.ott@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Global Compensation Schemes – An application of incentive theory to international businesses

Director of Studies: Prof. Ursula F. Ott

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group:

International Business Strategy and Decisions Research Group

Project Description:

International assignments have increased over the decades. Organizations have more structured international assignment programs that put emphasis on shortened assignments, hiring locally and eliminating nonessential benefits to manage costs effectively (Hansen, 2010). The current compensation approaches show few changes, some use a host country national approach which saves costs and with the move to low-paying countries this approach cannot be applied and thus there exists a need for more differentiation in policies. It becomes clear that Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) are obsessed with aligning their pay with the market, since there is significant pay dispersion in China which means that an employee in one company can earn three times what another one gets for doing the same job in another company. The effect is that there is a spiraling wage bill with no corresponding return on investment. The way to break this cycle is to design pay schemes that reward performance, which are seen to be fair. An intriguing finding is that MNEs do not differentiate sufficiently regarding base salary increases when it comes to China, for instance. Many authors have asked for changes in the current way of compensating across cultures after finding out the differences in motivation, performance and rewards in MNEs (Baeten, 2010; Gross and Wingerup, 1999; Hansen, 2010; Jeffrey and Shaffer, 2007).

Prior research stressed the relevance of motivation and compensation packages and, in particular, the incentive component of compensation (Devoe and Ivengar, 2004; Kunz and Pfaff, 2002). Compensations in multinational firms are a sensitive subject when it comes to cultural differences and explanations. Tosi and Greckhamer (2004) investigated and integrated the theory of agency and human capital in which tournaments are used to explain CEO compensation. These authors together with Jansen et al. (2009) found that US agency models are not applicable in other cultural contexts. In this regard, DeVoe and Ivengar (2004) emphasized that American managers tend to attribute the motivation of their subordinates exclusively to work-related incentives (e.g. salaries). Whereas, Latin American and Chinese managers are more likely to believe that social incentives (e.g. belonging to a group, building harmonious relationships) are more important sources of motivation for their employees. Dowling (2014) stresses that global rewards are part of integrating globally what is usually seen in local contexts and aligning this as integration tools across MNEs. He highlights the globally and regionally aligned bonuses and benefits such as international sales incentive plans



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regional sales commission plans, expatriate medical plans, international severance pay plans, global profit-sharing plans, cross-border variable compensation/pay-for-performance plans, cross-border equity/stock plans and many more examples. Besides the reward strategies, efforts and performance are aligned to these bonuses and incentives. This leaves us now to ask whether, in the light of relevant global challenges: *Is there a way to combine the different cultural value systems of cultural theory regarding performance-orientation and motivation with incentive theory for MNE compensation analysis?*

Methodology: Dependent on the research questions, all methodological approaches can be considered. The IBSD team is open and able to supervise qualitative and quantitative approaches to answer the questions.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: ursula.ott@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Role of technology in developing resilient and sustainable agri-food supply chains

Director of Studies: Prof Usha Ramanathan

Project Description:

Population from developed nations are generally aware of nutritional food consumption requirements to lead a healthy life and they will appreciate the need for sustainable practices. While food quality, food safety and food security are highly encouraged in the UK food businesses, governmental policies and local councils are supporting the society to have healthy living through educational programmes in community centres and in public arena such as town/city centres. Social media is taking a huge role in disseminating this information to a wider society.

Thus, demand for Agri-food, especially perishable fruits, vegetables and fresh meat, are rising in the UK. Although UK is not self-sufficient in terms of production, it is tackling imports and exports very effectively to meet need of the UK population. However, UK's governmental uncertainty on BREXIT may bring insecurity in supply of fresh food and may affect the imports from European countries. This will lead the UK to be reliant on other nations for fresh food supply, which will indirectly challenge the food quality, security and address the food traceability issues. As a researcher, we will have to find a feasible and sustainable food network without compromising the quality of food.

In your research project, you can explore how can food sectors, with support of smart technology, such as IoT sensors, Block chain, Precision farming and Big data analysis -

- help sustainable and green 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
- create resilience in the global food supply chains

This research can be country specific or region specific. Researchers are encouraged to write a detail proposal with research questions, objectives, methodology and potential contributions.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Prof Usha Ramanathan (usha.ramanathan@ntu.ac.uk)

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Project Title: [Multicultural Business-To-Business Relationships Management]

Director of Studies: [Dr Weixi Han]

Department: [Management]

Research Centre/Group: Innovation, Digitization, Entrepreneurship and Operations Research Group/
International Business Strategy and Decision Research Group]

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 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 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.



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Reading list:

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Dr Weixi Han: weixi.han@ntu.ac.uk]

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Networks, Social Learning and Communities of Practice in physical and digital spaces: the role of boundary spanners in the transfer of sustainability knowledge and practice.

Director of Studies: Dr Wendy Chapple

Co- supervisors: Dr Rachel Welton (Marketing) and Dr Michael Hewitt (Economics)

Department: Management

Research Centre/Group: RSB lab

Project Description:

Sustainability has become a key issue for business, with increasing expectations from stakeholders that businesses act in a responsible and sustainable way. The introduction of the sustainable development goals has ratified this, with many organisations signing up to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), or by more informal alignment to the goals.

Working towards the SDG targets requires businesses to change their practices and behaviours. Signing up to goals, but not changing organisational practices, behaviours and norms runs reputational and social capital risks which results from decoupling, where gaps in rhetoric and reality emerge (Campbell, 2007; Bromley and Powell, 2012; Weaver, Trevino and Cochran, 1999). Increasingly sustainability is seen as a key force shaping future business environments, and hence if only superficial adaptations are made to respond to the SDGs it can result in businesses being “left behind”. Increasingly sustainability is seen as a challenge point or catalyst for innovation, new processes, new business models (Hart, 2005). And hence organisational knowledge creation and transfer, adaptation and adoption of new sustainability practices, and creating spaces for creativity is increasingly important.

Businesses are often structured around divisions and activities, and often in large organisations that are geographically dispersed. This can create “silos” within organisations where knowledge and practices around sustainability are isolated. Crucial to the development of sustainable business practice is the sharing of knowledge and practice across the boundaries of these groups, which are then adapted and adopted for local practice within groups or “Communities of Practice” (Wenger, 1998, 2000). Central to the social learning processes of knowledge sharing, creation of new knowledge and adaptation and is the creation “space” through boundary spanning, which can take the form of practices, objects, rituals and people (Wenger, 2000). Traditionally, boundary spanning has been researched in a physical space (Wenger, 2000; Benn and Martin, 2010); however, within large organisations increasing groups and communities are virtual, and organisations are complex networks based on activity and geography. Therefore boundary crossing can take place in virtual spaces, which might take a different forms of interaction and with different social learning processes at play.

The focus of this project is to explore how sustainability social learning takes place in communities of practice both digital and physical spaces. To understand differences and similarities between the



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precedents and antecedents and learning outcomes in terms of new knowledge creation and knowledge transfer; and to explore the similarities and differences in the nature of social learning, the learning and translation processes.

Central to understanding this process is understanding the role and influence of key boundary spanners within the network structure of an organisation. This is both in terms of how they span boundaries and translate knowledge, but also how they are perceived by others (trust, legitimacy) and how they perceive themselves (identity).

Finally of interest is how sustainability knowledge is translated, adopted and adapted from the boundary spaces to become embedded (or not) into group practices, norms and identity and the differences between digital vs. physical processes.

Research objectives:

1. Apply network analysis to community of practice lens as a more rigorous method of community of practice identification.
2. Within the network analysis identify boundary spanning, and associated boundary spanners, objects and practices.
3. Assess the blend of digital vs physical boundary spanning activity
4. Evaluate the individual attributes and identity of boundary spanners and how this maps to physical vs digital spanning activities.
5. Explore the social learning process and translation within group to understand if there are differences in social learning process and translation resulting from digital vs. physical boundary spanning activities.
6. Explore the outcomes of the different social learning processes: knowledge transfer; changes in practice; innovation.]

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CONTACT



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For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Wendy Chapple wendy.chapple@ntu.ac.uk

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**Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project
PhD and DBA**

Project Title: Country of origin effect on the retailing industry

Director of Studies: Dr Arooj Rashid

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Services

Project Description:

In general, country of origin is defined as 'Made in [...] (Parkvithee and Miranda, 2012), refer to the place where the product was manufactured. However, the concept of country of origin is constructed with several other dimensions such as country of parts, country of design and country of brand origin. This is "in response to the evolving global economy, where Made in [country name] label, no longer fully corresponds to the product and/or brand's country name" (Rashid et al., 2016, p. 230). In other words, a product may be manufactured in one country, the brand origin can be another country and design and parts can be in a completely different country. However, country of origin is still deemed as an effective branding tool, as consumers evaluate the quality of the product based on the place of manufacture, or the origin of the brand.

In part, the country of origin impact on consumers vary, depending on the type of market, type of product, associating with cultural factors, personal knowledge and stereotypical perceptions, and is also linked with emotional, expressive and symbolic factors (Aiello et al., 2009; Fionda and Moore, 2009; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). As a result, country of origin has drawn many researchers attention (e.g. Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Inch and McBride, 1998; Parkvithee and Miranda, 2012). For example, Thakor and Kohli (1996) examined county of brand origin and brand image, suggesting that consumers may have limited knowledge about the origin of the brand (Rashid et al., 2016). In addition to this, authors have examined different dimensions of COO, such as Hamzaoui and Merunka (2006) and Inch and McBride (1998) investigated the effect of country of design and country of manufacturing, whilst Chao (1993), and Ha-Brookshire (2012) examined country of parts and other COO effects. Very recently, authors have also contributed industry perspectives on country of origin, with particular emphasis on the UK fashion industry (e.g. Rashid et al., 2016; Rashid and Barnes, 2017), adding knowledge in relation to branding implication and re-shoring of manufacturing back to the UK.

However, there is still gap in the knowledge from both consumers and industry perspective, in relation to manufacturing and branding with specific reference to both travel and fashion businesses. For example, Thomas Cook has recently gone out of the business, which may have resulted several stereotypical views regarding the economical issues that may be taking place in to the UK, along with the lack of resources, and the impact of political implications. This may also have implications for branding 'British Made'.

From a fashion perspective, many fashion brands are closing stores and becoming more e-tailers with the likes of Fire-Trap. Fire-Trap was originally owned by USC, but USC has been bought by another investor, thereby resulting ambiguity on the corporate brand identity and the brand origin.



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To investigate the country of origin 'effect', previous studies have mainly used the quantitative approach, to measure consumer-oriented research (e.g. Acharya and Elliott, 2001; Samiee et al., 2005; Insch and McBride, 2004). Although, very recently, authors (e.g. Rashid et al., 2016; Rashid and Barnes, 2017; Genc and Bayraktaroglu, 2017) have also used the qualitative approach, to understand the industry and/or consumers perspectives in different business context.

Consequently, this study can use a combination qualitative techniques: observation, projective technique, case study and/or in-depth interviews to gain rich insight into the perception, motivation and attitude.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: arooj.rashid@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Consumer Behaviour and Sustainable Consumption

Director of Studies: Dr Baseer Durrani

Department: Nottingham Business School

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies

Project Description:

Consumer behaviour is an ever-evolving domain, one which has attracted a considerable amount of interest from practitioners, academics and economists alike. However, over the course of the 21st century one such challenge that has consistently reared its head is that of sustainability as we continue to be faced with the impending idea of depleting resources (Lukman *et al.*, 2016).

The concept of sustainable consumption was brought forward during the United Nations conference on Environment and Development in 1992. According to agenda 21, the entire chapter was related to changing consumption patterns. It was stressed, that in order to protect the environment, there is a need to change consumption patterns by adopting a change in lifestyle and overall consumption behaviour (Banbury *et al.*, 2012). It has been noted that issues such as global warming, pollution and depletion of natural resources are of serious concerns among consumers as they increasingly become aware of their own consumption 'footprints' (Guerrero *et al.*, 2013). At the nexus of sustainability and sustainable consumption, research on sustainable consumption is concerned with understanding how different factors influence sustainable consumption and in process identify attitude-behaviour gap toward this important domain. For example, increasing use of natural resources has started to result in a demand (consumers demand) and supply (Earth natural resources) gap, and it will not be long before future generations struggle to have adequate supply of natural resources such as water. It is also argued that to further enhance the concept of sustainability, strategic environmental assessment (SEA) should be adopted, so as to ensure better decisions can be taken to sustain environmental sustainability. It is further highlighted that by the adoption of SEA, different policies and plans can be implemented in environmentally friendly ways (Vespa *et al.*, 2017).

According to EEA the three major areas that accounts for 75-80% towards sustainability are housing (use of heating), food and drink (meat and dairy industry) and transport/tourism. Evidence suggests that consumers are not necessarily keen to take steps towards reducing their energy consumption and adopting a more sustainable life style. The reason for not adapting a more sustainable lifestyle is referred as the energy efficiency gap (Lehner *et al.*, 2015). Apart from the global obesity epidemic, food consumption in the form of food waste and excessive meat consumption is also related to climate change and thus need measures to prevent further environmental damage.



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For this proposed research project religious values and/or practices will be explored from the perspective of sustainable consumption behaviour. Candidates could choose to evaluate religious consequences and broader implications in the context of the extent to which consumers are environmentally aware of the importance of sustainable consumption within different industries/product categories, or the attitude-behaviour gap towards sustainable consumption.

Methodology: The philosophical stance will guide the researcher to seek answers to the research question in a methodological manner (Holden & Lynch, 2004). In order to gather deep insights an interpretivist research philosophy is proposed, meaning qualitative techniques will be used for data gathering and analysis.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact **Dr Baseer Ali Durrani**,
email: baseer.durrani@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Relational approach to the Implementation of Sustainability in Supply Chains |

Director of Studies: Dr. Cagri Talay

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Sustainable Futures |

Project Description:

SME suppliers are generally deficient in resources, skills and bargaining power, which affect their relationships with large buyers (Talay et al., 2018a ; Hingley, M., Angell, R., & Lindgreen, A. 2015). However, unique characteristics of the SME suppliers subsequently attract large firms and governments, which give more importance to increasing SME firms' commitment in sustainability programmes (Jenkins, 2009). On the other hand, how the SME suppliers approach sustainability is different from the large-scale organisations as well as other SMEs in the other sectors due to the differences in their policies, practices and approaches (Meqdadi, et al., 2012). Pedersen, (2009) has presented a clear argument in this context as he states that without considering the heterogeneous characteristics of SME suppliers, it is inappropriate to implement or transfer sustainability programmes from the larger buyers to them (Pedersen, 2009). Investigating the heterogeneous characteristics is necessary because of the range of problems faced by the SMEs in implementing their sustainability practices. These problems include finance, technology, and lack of knowledge, organisational culture, and internal motive (Natarajan & Wyrick, 2011).

Additionally, business relationships are recognised as highly important in the sustainability implementation in supply networks. These relationships also vary for suppliers relative to the large-scale organisations (Chicksand, 2015). The supplier-buyer relationship is vital among different types of relationships. Small suppliers are generally pressurised to follow the requirements of large buyers. Some studies support the use of power source in developing and maintaining supplier-buyer relationships i.e. large buyers exercise coercion to enforce its requirements on the suppliers (Talay et al., 2018b). However, such power-based relationships are always viewed as negative by the other supply chain members (Touboullic, et al., 2014).

In contrary, some studies have supported relational approach as an alternative to this power- based approach in fact relationships help both supplier and buyer in strengthening their bond, regardless of the size of their business (Chiara, 2016). Such relational approach is effective in the situations where environmental performances are the central objective for both suppliers and buyers (Simpson & Power, 2005). Moreover, other studies have emphasised on the trust and co-operation-based approach as vital for sustainability implementation (Geffen & Rothenberg, 2000). However, asymmetric power between the large buyers and small suppliers determine the sustainability of the relationships and sustainable practices in the supply chains (Lee, et al., 2016). These asymmetries require investigation through relational approaches for the implementation of sustainability in the small suppliers' large buyers' relationships (Lee, et al., 2016).

Most of the past sustainability studies have focused on the investigation of partial relational approach such as collaborative relationships in influencing sustainability in the supply chain. The complete relational view



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has been applied to a limited extent in sustainable supply chain research. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence in the academic literature confirming the efficacy of the collaboration in helping the suppliers to achieve the sustainable development goals (Touboulic & Walker, 2015). However, the collaborative paradigm cannot be deemed as the best approach for fostering the sustainable supply chain among the small suppliers and larger buyers. Similarly, it is not a sole approach to managing buyer-supplier relationships in sustainable supply chain management (Talay et al., 2018b; Touboulic, et al., 2014). Additionally, there is a dearth in dyadic relationships from the perspective of the SME suppliers as well as large buyers in the area of sustainability (Brindley & Oxborrow, 2014). The current investigation is designed to bridge this research gap by exploring the dyadic relationships between SME suppliers and large buyers with an underlying aim to enhance sustainability in the overall supply chain system.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr. Cagri Talay, e-mail: cagri.talay@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: When unethical behaviour of consumers has beneficial consequences of online retailers and other consumers: An empirical study

Director of Studies: [Dr Gomaa Agag.]

Department: [Marketing]

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies]

Project Description:]

Consumers often behave in ways that violate the law, transgress widely held moral principles, or disobey retailers' rules or policies. Such behaviours can take many forms (Vitell, 2003; Mazar, Amir, and Ariely, 2008; Kim, Kim, and Park, 2012; Yang, Algesheimer, and Dholakia, 2017; Hunt, 2019). Common instances include shoplifting, returning purchased items for a refund after using them or beyond the return date, accidentally or wilfully damaging in store merchandise, and providing false or misleading personal information such as a telephone number (Harris, 2008; Korgaonkar et al., 2019). Not surprisingly, even when a small fraction of customers engages in such behaviours, it can generate significant ramifications for retailers and its other customers.

Recent psychological research has begun to study positive effects of unethical behaviour on others. Erat and Gneezy (2012) introduce a "Pareto white lie" in which both the liar and others benefit. They provide the example of a physician who lies by giving a placebo to patients, knowing well that the medicine will have no pharmacological effect, but may confer psychological benefits. Therefore, it has been suggested that discover that an initial lawful ethical transgression, defined as a violation of the retailer's policies by signing up for multiple accounts, may have positive longer-term consequences for the retailer and its other customers.

In considering how retailers conceive of and deal with ethical transgressions by customers, two opposing moral philosophies provide a useful starting point. These are the deontological and teleological perspectives on what constitutes ethical behaviour and how we should respond to it (Jones, Felps, and Bigley, 2007; Monnot, et al., 2019). A deontological perspective, exemplified by Kantian ethics (Vitell, 2003), focuses solely on the inherent rightness or wrongness of an action, disregarding its consequences. Emphasis is given to the individual's motives for acting, with the ultimate goal of behaving in a certain way for the right reasons. Contrarily, in assessing a behaviours' ethicality, a teleological perspective, having its conceptual foundations in the Utilitarianism School developed by British philosophers Jeremy Bentham and David Hume (Bentham, 1789), weighs the cumulative positive and negative effects of consequences and does not focus on the nature of the behaviour itself.



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This project advances the idea that when deciding how to respond the retailer should distinguish between unlawful and lawful unethical behaviour. When the behaviour is lawful but unethical, the retailer should consider what makes it unethical and longer-term consequences for itself and its other customers. Consistent with teleological ethics, and customer relationship management principles (Mark et al., 2013; Hunt, 2019), it is suggested that lawful customer behaviours that are unethical because they violate retailer policy can have a range of consequences stretching out over the customer's relationship with the retailer. An example of this unethical behaviour is the customer's violation of a policy set forth by the retailer such as the requirement of a unique telephone number or email address for each account.

Such a perspective of retailer response to unethical customer behaviour requires two conditions. First, the customer's unethical behaviour must be lawful. When the behaviour violates the law (e.g., assaulting a fellow customer in a store, outright stealing, etc.), consequences are immaterial. The retailer must report such customer behaviour and prosecute the customer without any teleological ethical considerations. A greater, more nuanced range of retailer responses that support broader response using teleological ethics presupposes a lawful, ethical transgression that retailing researchers and practitioners have not yet considered. An example is the customer's violation of a policy set forth by the retailer such as the requirement of a unique telephone number or email address for each account. The second condition is that the customer's transgression should lead to measurable positive consequences for the retailer and other customers.

This study will investigate the possibility that in relational retailing settings, an initial ethical customer transgression may open the door to behave in legitimate ways on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, such activities may add substantial value to the retailer and other customers, outweighing the harm of the initial unethical behaviour. When a range of possible outcomes from the negative to the positive is possible, the retailer must respond according to the consequences. It is envisaged that the study will utilise sequential mixed-methods with a qualitative technique of data gathering and analysis to extend on the initial results. The qualitative technique will be utilized to complement the incomplete and inconsistent findings from prior studies.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: **Dr Gomaa Agag, e-mail: Gomaa.agag@ntu.ac.uk**

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Investigating the multifaceted nature of Political Co-Brands across
Contexts: Typologies, Challenges and Tensions

Director of Studies: [Dr Guja Armannsdottir]
Department: [Marketing Department]

Research Centre/Group: [Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Group]

Project Description:

Politics and the political process remains a complex often controversial area of study. Indeed, over the last twenty years, we have seen the use of commercial branding concepts, theories and frameworks applied to politics as a means to simplify the offering put forward by politicians, political parties, campaign groups, movements and governments. This multidisciplinary approach has become the norm within *political marketing*. Furthermore, research within political marketing has demonstrated that political brands come in all shapes, sizes and typologies. For example, it is widely accepted that political parties, candidates-politicians, party leaders, election campaigns, political groups, policy initiatives and legislators can be conceptualised as *political brands*. Political brands act as short-cut mechanisms to communicate desired positioning to a multitude of stakeholders such as supporters, activists, the media, employees and most importantly voters. In addition, political brands are designed to act as points of differentiation from political rivals in terms of policy initiatives, ideology, and values. Furthermore, political brands are constructed to encourage identification and support. Indeed, political brands signify a series of promises and envisaged aspirations, which they will enact if successful at the polls.

One area that has seen limited attention is *political co-branding*. Armannsdottir *et al.* (2019:27) define “*political co-brands as a ‘system of brands’ manifested from the combination of two existing brands including the ‘corporate party brand’ and ‘individual-candidate-local brand’ amalgamated to create a new brand that embodies a unique single identity*”. Political co-branding can be seen as a strategic alliance where both partners develop a single envisaged identity which include both brand names, logos and other identifiable features on all communication touch points of the co-brand to signify a committed partnership (Besharat and Langan 2014; Ronzoni *et al.* 2018). In addition, each party or partner help create the alliance [co-brand] and can bring unique qualities such as consumer awareness, new target markets, expertise, resources or complimentary reputation to the strategic arrangement (Aqeel *et al.* 2017; Baumgarth 2018; d’Astous *et al.* 2007; Kumar 2005; Nguyen *et al.* 2018; Wason and Charlton



2015). For example, Armannsdottir *et al.* (2019), revealed that the political co-brand identities in the context of the UK Conservative Party were initially *created* from individual values, personal ideological beliefs and past personal experiences manifested by the 'figurehead' of each political co-brand. The 'figurehead' became the walking representation of each political co-brand and used individual values, personal ideological beliefs and experiences as intangible cues to develop a core premise designed to capture the mind of the electorate and serve as justification for the desired identity. This core premise or key message was designed to construct a unique narrative to appeal and engage local constituents, translate corporate Conservative 'broad church' values to a local audience and make these relevant and comprehensible to constituents. Therefore, political co-brand identity is strategic in nature in the sense that each identity is tailored to suit the unique settings, wants and needs of the constituency. Further, each political co-brand is supported [by the corporate brand] to determine the political emphasis and agenda for the local community). This demonstrates the complex and multifaceted nature of political brands.

Indeed, political co-brands are difficult to manage. For example, political co-brand identity is tailored to resonate with citizens and developed from the wants and needs of constituents. In addition, the political co-brand identity may be different to the identity of the corporate political brand and this can create tension or misalignment between the two entities. Therefore, who has ultimate control of the political co-brand identity [central or local party] and will misaligned identity have an impact on the political co-brand. This represents a series of challenges and potential tensions not only for political brands in conventional parliamentary systems but also in jurisdictions with coalition governments such as Iceland, UK and Italy where multiple political brands are in play. However, little research has been devoted to investigating political co-brands particularly the challenges and tensions between coalition brands, corporate party brands and localised political co-brands. This will be the focus of the project.

Preferred method: Qualitative method, semi-structured interviews

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Guja Armannsdottir – guja.armannsdottir@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Influence and effectiveness of customer-to-customer interaction in online brand communities

Director of Studies: Dr. Linda Lee

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: MACS

Project Description

Customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions can be pivotal to service experiences and to business performance (Harris et al. 2000; Heinonen et al. 2018; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010; Nicholls 2010; Libai et al. 2010; Schau et al. 2009). C2C interactions can occur face-to-face, such as in a queue at tourist attractions (Grove and Fisk 1997) or in a store (Harris et al. 1997; McGrath and Otnes 1995). They can occur online through word-of-mouth (e.g. Libai et al. 2010) or in online brand communities (Brodie et al. 2013; Schau et al. 2009).

Online brand communities allow for C2C interactions and have benefits for firms, including a better understanding of customers through monitoring the information exchanged (Kozinets 2007), leading to customer loyalty (Thompson and Sinha 2008). Previous research shows that there are positive consequences from identification with online brand communities (Algesheimer et al. 2005; Thompson and Sinha 2008), they produce transformative experiences in members (Muniz and Schau 2005), and the customer-company identification that is often enhanced by online brand communities is the foundation for marketing relationships (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Schau et al. (2009) identify and organise brand community practices into four themes: (1) social networking (welcoming, empathising, governing), (2) impression management (evangelising, justifying), (3) community engagement (staking, milestoneing, badging, documenting), and (4) brand use (grooming, customising, commoditising). Yet, there is still much to be understood about C2C interactions in online brand communities. A potential area of research is the influence and effectiveness of C2C interaction in online brand communities, including (1) the relationship between C2C interaction and the stages of relationship development, particularly the stages in which C2C interaction is most influential (Adjel et al. 2010) and (2) the C2C practices that are most likely to achieve significant value and under which conditions (Schau et al. 2009).

This project involves the study of practices in a variety of online brand communities using mixed methods and could include netnography, interviews, and surveys.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr. Linda Lee, linda.lee@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: [Unlocking the Value of Service Systems. Transforming Uncertainty into Opportunity.]

Director of Studies: [Dr. Michael Ehret.]

Department: [Department of Marketing]

Research Centre/Group: [MACS, IDEO]

Project Description:

Economic research agrees that economies transform into service economies as they grow. But business research has been relatively silent on the impact of service transformation on society and business management (Anderson/ Ostrom, 2015; Barney, 2018; Moorman et al.2019; Ostrom et al. 2015). This project seeks to investigate how service transformation unlocks novel markets, like the sharing economy, internet-of-things, or innovative payment systems (see Ehret/ Wirtz, 2017; Maglio/ Spohrer, 2008). Public policy is putting high hopes in service transformation for enhancing ecological sustainability by reducing emissions of resource use, enhance agility of industries and infrastructures through smart infrastructures, or drive economic development by banking the unbanked through smart mobile payment systems. Business managers are attracted to service markets by the promise of above average profits and relative low volatility of revenues. However, research finds a mixed picture of business performance in service businesses. For example, establishing service businesses frequently leads into cost-traps, promises of smart service business models have been ending in financial and ecological disasters (see NDubisi, Ehret, & Wirtz, 2017).

The purpose of this project is to identify strategic approaches that unlock the potential benefits of service approaches and help to mitigate the downsides.

The project aims to address the following major research questions:

- What antecedents, for example mobile technology platforms or novel business model approaches, drive the rise of service markets?
- What is the role of business models in shaping service markets (e.g. Ehret, Kashyap, & Wirtz, 2013; NDubisi, Ehret, Wirtz, 2017)?
- What are the genuine value propositions enabled by service systems? Initial examples can be found in industrial internet of things applications (Ehret & Wirtz, 2017, resource sharing or the use of mobile payment systems for banking the unbanked (Anderson/ Ostrom, 2015)?

This field offers opportunities for a variety of research approaches, including theory-building case studies, causal analysis using structured equation modelling, and innovative approaches like multi-agent modelling or real-option analysis. The primary criteria for specifying projects will be commensurate knowledge and capabilities of the doctoral candidates and the expected contribution of the research project. In addition to the doctoral training at NTU doctoral school, candidates will be involved in



conferences, summer schools and trainings from the international network of service science researchers with the aim to position contributions for high impact on research, business and society. The project will be connected to a research and publication program of the supervisor network (e.g. see Pattinson et al.).

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: [Michael Ehret: michael.ehret@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:michael.ehret@ntu.ac.uk)

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doctoralschool@ntu.ac.uk



Project Title: Customer engagement in evolving technological environments: the case of the DIY smart-home converter

Director of Studies: Dr. Mojtaba Poorrezaei

Department: Marketing, NBS

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Group

Project Description:

New technology can be used at any stage of the marketing process, including during the segmentation, targeting or positioning sub-processes, to support or transform any of the marketing mix elements, thereby affecting consumer engagement with brands (Hollebeek et al., 2014). For example, product customization options (e.g. personalized Starbucks beverages) can alter the product offering, thereby enabling firms to more responsively cater to customers' unique needs, wants or preferences (Keeling et al., 2019). Technology can also be used for promotional purposes (e.g. social media-based micro-targeting or virtual reality(VR)-based gamification to engage consumers; see Carlson et al., 2019). It can facilitate distribution (e.g. via additive manufacturing or 3 D printing) or influence consumers' willingness to adopt or pay for focal offerings (e.g. via mobile or contactless payments; Kuppelwieser et al., 2014), thereby exerting potential effects on any of the marketing mix elements.

Inherent in the notion of evolving technology is its continuous innovative nature, whether radical or incremental. As such, firms need to prepare for and invest in their own adaptive capability within fast-changing business environments. To do so, knowledge or skill-based resources form an important foundation for customer engagement (CE; Vargo and Lusch, 2016; Hollebeek, 2017), which predominantly reside in human capital, including (internal) personnel or (external) customers who are prepared to exhibit high brand-related engagement (e.g. peer-to-peer user support in Apple Support Communities). Here, the latter group takes on the role of co-producers through their brand- and category-related activities (Xie et al., 2008). Based on these observations, the following key managerial question emerges: How can companies motivate customers to invest their scarce resources in interacting with their (vs competitors') brands or competing activities? To foster insight into this question, companies require a deeper understanding of customers' available resources and those they are willing to invest into particular brand- and category-related interactions and activities. This understanding can, in turn, be converted into marketing mix customization tools to optimally cater for specific customer needs, wants, or preferences (e.g. BMW's Luxury Car Customizer; Hollebeek et al., 2019). Our specific interest is in the smart home, and how consumers work to customise 'regular' homes (i.e. the norm, with no in-built smart capability) into something more interactive (Gram-Hanssen and Darby, 2018). Although smart homes are now being built at an increasing rate these will remain the exception for many years (Harvey, et al., currently under review) and 'smart' will mostly emerge where consumers themselves look to customise



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their homes through individual creativity and access to recipe-based facilities now increasingly available on the web (e.g. www.IFTTT.com).

Research Questions

- a) To what extent are regular customers motivated to 'smarten' their own homes?
- b) What are the smart utilities or innovations that appeal most to do-it-yourself (DIY) smart home converters?
- c) What resources do DIY smart home converters use/call upon to help them create their own smart environment?
- d) How can organisations best exploit the opportunity to providing DIY smart home converters with the resources they really need and value most?

Method and Concepts

A mixed methods approach is recommended to investigate how companies can motivate customers to invest their scarce resources into customising/developing their 'regular' homes into smart/interactive environments. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be necessary to capture the complex insights necessary to address the questions above. A range of theories may be deployed for the investigation and one of the successful candidates' tasks will be to find the best conceptual focus for the work. Potentially useful theoretical lenses include service dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004); customer engagement theory (Brodie et al., 2011) and actor network theory (Latour, 2005)

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact:
Mojtaba.poorrezaei@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Examining the Nexus between Advertising Ethics and Culture.

Director of Studies: Dr. Nazan Colmekcioglu

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies

Project description

At its most fundamental level, ethics is often understood as a reference to “just or “right” standards of behaviour between parties in a situation, based on individual moral philosophies” (Bush and Bush 1994, p. 32). By extension, advertising ethics tends to focus on “what is right or wrong in the conduct of the advertising function, and concerns questions of what ought to be done, not just what legally must be done” (Cunningham 1999, p. 500). Classifications of ad (vertising) ethics differentiate between message (or content) and business ethics (Drumwright and Murphy 2009; Drumwright 2012). Message ethics relates to the ethical parameters surrounding the creation, dissemination and processing of ad messages or the ‘micro’ perspective (Drumwright, 2012) of ad ethics. In contrast, a business ethics approach adopts an organisational or ‘meso’ perspective (Drumwright, 2012) and deals with the ethics of the ad industry. The focus within this stream has been on uncovering practitioner attitudes towards ad ethics (Drumwright and Murphy 2004; Drumwright and Kala 2016) or on how ad agencies should manage ethics (e.g. Hyman et al. 1990; Drumwright and Murphy 2009; Hyman 2009). Linking both these streams is yet a third perspective based on a largely philosophical or ‘macro’ approach (Drumwright 2012) focusing on the aggregate effects of advertising. Here, the debate revolves around whether advertising serves as a ‘mirror’, merely reflecting the values of its target audiences (Holbrook 1987) or instead as a ‘distorted mirror’, and therefore as a manipulator of audience values (Pollay 1986; 1987). Despite the rich stream of studies exploring specific domains of consumer ad ethics, our knowledge of what constitutes ad ethics purely from a consumer’s perspective remains much more limited. As a result, our understanding of the relationship between different audience derived ethical domains is also lacking.

Compounding the aforementioned gap in knowledge is the notable absence of exploring ad ethics from different cultural perspectives beyond Western markets (Drumwright and Kala 2016; Moon and Franke 2000). As Drumwright and Kamal (2016, p. 173) argue this gap in our knowledge “has not received attention commiserate with its importance”. The notion that ethics vary across cultures has a rich and established tradition (Casmir 2013). Consumer perceived ethics are also dependent on cultural variations and by default, perceived ad ethics is also bound by a cultural dilemma since the target audience’s “culture filters our perceptions of what constitutes good or responsible consumption” (Belk et al. 2005, p. 7). Rising concerns of ad ethics in the popular and trade press of other global marketing contexts warrants extending the contextual domain of ad ethics (Drumwright and Kamal 2016). As LaFerle (2015, p. 163) notes, if ad agencies are to succeed in an increasingly diverse marketplace, then “ethical



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behaviour and cultural knowledge are key". This study therefore proposes to extend the domain of ad ethics by seeking investigate the structure of ad ethics from a cross cultural perspective. In doing so, a new understanding is sought on the relationship between ad ethics and cultural values.

Method:

Given that the relationship between ad ethics and cultural values can be assessed at numerous levels and from different perspectives, either qualitative research (e.g. interviews), quantitative research (e.g. structural equation modelling) or mixed methods may be deployed.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: **Dr. Nazan Colmekcioglu**,
email: nazan.colmekcioglu@ntu.ac.uk

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Food Shopping in Later Life; Extending the Lens of Encounter(s) and Value-for-Customers

Director of Studies: Dr Richard Howarth

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Customer Studies

Project Description:

At a time when the UK population is already at its highest level, and it will continue to grow (reaching 74 million by 2039 according to predictions), it is identified that the population is also ageing (GOfS, 2016; ONS, 2017). According to the ONS (2017), 18% of the population is currently aged 65 and over and 2.4% is 85 or older. By 2039 the 65 plus group will make up 24% of the UK population (ONS, 2017).

The issue of access to food through shopping has been recognised for some time (E.g. Bromley and Thomas, 1995; Westlake, 1995; Wilson et al, 2004). Hare (2003), furthered this discussion to comment on, for example, the potential disadvantage for, or exclusion of, older consumers as a result of the growing dominance of multiples/larger retailers at the time and issues of access as a result (E.g. movement 'out of town' and factors such as store layout etc). Meneely et al (2008), supports the importance of the 60 plus segment and their food shopping and well-being needs. With a focus on retailer perceptions, Meneely et al (2009) found some recognition of the needs of this group, and their importance but, apparently, very little work by retailers to address their actual needs. Some go as far as to say that older shoppers have been ignored or their needs only partially met (Moschis, 2003).

Theoretical perspective

The focus of the earlier research in this area appears to have been the retail and (specifically) store 'environment' and issues such as layout. Pettigrew et al (2005), at the time, summed up much of the work and its focus as their 'big 3' issues for food shopping in later life: demeanour of staff, functionality of equipment (baskets etc) and placement of products. As such, much of this work attends to issues of access, navigation and things such as in-store facilities and ease of access to products etc.

Hare (2003), and later work by Meneely et al (2009), support the importance of process and experience elements. This work also begins to consider the exchange from a customer perspective and thus the expectations and experiences of older customers and what leads, and supports, satisfaction in a wider sense as a result. Gzeskowiak et al (2016) engage with the idea of food shopping in later life as a problem solving activity, which supports life 'experience(s)' (it is thus beyond simple/rational needs satisfaction). In doing so, Gzeskowiak et al (2016) also connect the importance of (self) identity, independence and the choice(s) older customers make. Pettigrew et al (2017) suggest also the need to focus on, and consider, the wider value placed on food shopping by those in later life (from the perspective of older customers).

The team wish therefore to propose a PhD in this area reflecting the above with two possible avenues. Both focus on food shopping in later life. There is the potential for pursuing one of these two avenues independently or, alternatively, for conjoining key themes for wider conceptual scope.



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- One route which embraces the challenge from Vorhees et al (2017) and their request to expand their 'lens' of service encounters through service experience(s). This would sit well with the current work in the area and would support deeper and more relevant insights to this important area.
- Another route which seeks to extend current insight beyond the functional, store environment and retailer perspective (and a sense-making view of value for customers, VC – Woodall, 2003). This would recognise that VC (post Woodall, 2003) permits a perspective through which current work in the area can be viewed and older food shopper VC can be more effectively modelled and 'tested'.

Method

Mixed method; 2 phases in each project with qualitative work followed by quantitative.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: **Dr Richard Howarth, email: richard.howarth@ntu.ac.uk**

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Delving into the Sharing Economy |
Director of Studies: Dr Salma Alquezaui
Department: Marketing, NBS |
Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Services |

Project Description:

With the rapid growth of sharing economy platforms like Airbnb and Uber, many industries have been disrupted in different ways. The Sharing Economy, often associated with collaborative consumption, is an economy in which people conduct sharing activities (Möhlmann, 2015). Sharing resources is not a new idea, it has been in existence for a long period of time but more recently people have addressed the notion and came up with the term the "sharing economy" (Teubner and Hawlitschek, 2016). Shareable products and services include rides and vehicles (Uber, Turo, BlaBlaCar), apartments (Airbnb, couchsurfing), tools (1000tools) and may more (e.g. Teubner and Hawlitschek, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016).

The main driver of the development of sharing economy is technology. The sharing economy is transforming accommodations, transport, personal services and other sectors radically (Davidson and Infranca, 2016). In addition, the technologies behind the sharing enterprises are becoming mature compared to the past few years (Cheng, 2019) in that sharing activities have expanded to a big scale (PWC, 2015; Plewnia and Guenther, 2017). According to Plewnia and Guenther (2017), the term 'sharing' can have different meanings. From an economic perspective, it could help to save costs and resources (Benkler, 2004). From a social perspective, sharing can be seen as an activity of giving and receiving (Belk, 2010). John (2013) pointed out that sharing relates to conveying feelings, ideas, knowledge and experiences from a communicational perspective. Although the amount of research on the Sharing Economy is increasing, it is still in its infancy (Lee et al., 2018). Previous literature can be classified into two types: organisational level literature and individual literature (Lee et al., 2018). In the organisational level studies, researchers proposed business models, which are applicable to industries and which established guidelines to small and medium enterprises (Lee et al., 2018). In the individual level



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studies, there are increasing amounts of research about motivations, attitudes and behavioural intentions towards participation in the Sharing Economy from a user's point of view (Hamari et al., 2016; Ert et al., 2016; Möhlmann, 2015; Zhu et al., 2017; Tussyadiah, 2016; So et al., 2018; Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Liang et al., 2018).

Proposed Methodology:

- Mixed methods approach based on qualitative and quantitative (Structural Equation Modelling: SEM) research methodology. The first phase will consist of an exploratory study using qualitative research methods to uncover some variables and constructs that will help design a new model. The second phase will consist of confirming the prior model by conducting quantitative research study and analysing the data using SEM.
- Big Data Analytics is a novel and emerging method of drawing patterns and uncovering new insights from large amounts of data available, for instance, online. This method can help to systematically extract information and knowledge based on publicly available data that are large and complex in nature.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: salma.alquezai@ntu.ac.uk

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Project Title: The retail customer journey: how technology is changing shopping behaviour

Director of Studies: Dr Sheilagh Resnick

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies

Project Description:

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 (Lemon and Verhoef 2016; Voorhees *et al.* 2017). The use of multiple channels for consumer shopping, aided by the availability of internet enabled smartphones and other devices is fast becoming the mainstream shopping model (Beck and Rygl, 2015). Technology driven communication such as social media is also providing the customer with information in order to make informed choices about purchases of goods and services. Added to this, artificially intelligent assistants, such as **Alexa**, are predicted to become the channel by which people access information about goods, and services (Dawar and Bental, 2018). Because this technology will have deep knowledge about individuals' habits and preferences, it will start to be able to anticipate a consumer's needs even better than the consumer herself does. This will influence how companies acquire, serve, and retain customers and how they offer a customer experience. Technology has enabled a change in how, when and where customers shop, and retail models are having to adapt to accommodate a different shopping journey (Verhoef, *et al.*, 2015).

There is currently a gap in knowledge in how customers are using technology to create their retail shopping journey, and how the development of artificial intelligence will change shopping behaviour. This development needs to be viewed from both a customer and a company perspective.

Methods

It is envisaged that a mixed methodology would be adopted using surveys, interviews and social media analysis. Both customers and companies need to be investigated.



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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: **Dr Sheilagh Resnick, email: Sheilagh.resnick@ntu.ac.uk**

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Nottingham Business School Doctoral Project PhD and DBA

Project Title: Exploring the PhD student journey using a perceived personal advantage (PPA) perspective

Director of Studies: Dr Tony Woodall

Department: Marketing

Research Centre/Group: Marketing and Consumer Studies

Project description

Much attention has been paid recently to the university experience, not least in the respect of 'value' as perceived, and co-created, by students (e.g. Dziewanowska, 2017; Ledden and Kalafatis, 2010; Woodall, Hiller and Resnick, 2014). However, the majority of this work has centred on undergraduate students, with only a small proportion of extant research focused on those working for a PhD. Value is a highly complex/conceptually elusive phenomenon subject to a range of definitions and interpretations (references), yet perceptions of value are considered vital in understanding the extent to which students are satisfied, and whether they will recommend their experience to others (Dollinger, Lodge and Coates, 2018). As such, this study takes the perspective of student-as-prosumer, or co-producer (e.g. McCulloch, 2009), a learner who concurrently consumes and produces the 'service' they experience.

The aim of this study is to determine the value perceived by PhD students-as-prosumers in a learning environment, using a very particular, yet thus far under-developed, interpretation of value called 'Perceived Personal Advantage' (PPA: see Hiller and Woodall, 2019; Woodall, Rosborough and Harvey, 2018). This provides for a compound perspective on value that has both longitudinal and cross-sectional elements, and also combines various value meanings. This interpretation is strongly influenced by the work of American pragmatist John Dewey (e.g. Dewey, 1939), and one of the aims of this project will be to help refine and define the nature and scope of PPA with a view to helping establish this is an academically credible construct.

In order to complete this study three very specific outputs will need to be developed. The first is the identification/specification of the PhD experience actor network, and this will likely best be understood in the context of a social theory (e.g. Assemblage theory, see DeLanda, 2016; Actor Network Theory, see Latour, 2005). These encompass a range of ideas, not least that related to the generalised symmetry of human and material actors (Callon, 1986), but this research will focus also on the idea of the individual agent as actor network, continuously in flux as both reference and referent – a product of both how they see themselves and how they are perceived by others (Elder-Vass, 2015). The second is producing a map of the 'personal advantage' perceived throughout and across the student journey, from registration to graduation, noting also the range of student identities likely to be present in that constituency. The third output from the project will evolve from insights derived from both empirical elements of the study which should be used to elaborate, synthesise and configure the concept of PPA. This exists presently as fragments in a number of contributing sources



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(see earlier) and this work will respond to a recent call (Belk and Sobh, 2019) for more theory development in consumer/culture focused contexts.

Method

A recently completed Nottingham Business School PhD project utilised immersive ethnography as a means of tracing the relationships between student engagement and value co-creation in an *undergraduate* student context. Given the insights derived from this study, and a wider appreciation within the NBS Marketing Division of the benefits of ethnography, this same methodology will be applied within the doctoral context. Given combined intrinsic/extrinsic nature of PPA it is envisaged that this will combine elements of both personal (autoethnographic) and collective (group ethnographic) experiences.

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CONTACT

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact: Dr Tony Woodall; tony.woodall@ntu.ac.uk

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