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Alliance Manchester Business School

Alliance Manchester Business School Research

Issue 03

Employee ownership | Climate change inaction | Shared parental leave | Making a gesture

Research in practice

Soaring demand for knowledge exchange

A new vision for Manchester

Is the developer-led strategy working?

From Santiago to Manchester

PhD focus

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Cover imagery:

Artist's impression of the Ferranti Building high-voltage (HV) Lab before construction. The Lab was opened in 1958 to support industry in finding innovative solutions to energy challenges. It is located in the former UMIST building on Sackville Street, now part of the University of Manchester.



This issue is full of examples of how we are prepared to think differently but also do business for good



Welcome

A new way of thinking

This month Alliance MBS is hosting a major lecture with the British Academy entitled 'The future of the corporation', which looks at the need for a fundamental rethink of both the local and global economy.

Never has there been such a need for this debate as people from all over the world lose faith in their political and economic systems. As the Academy say, there is need to rebuild ethics in our economies. A need to close the growing divide between the haves and have-nots which is, in part, being driven by the increasing value attached to high skilled jobs and declining value of manual skills. Globalisation, technology and automation are all conspiring to only widen the gap.

So how do you close it? Surely this is precisely where business schools such as Alliance MBS have a key role to play. How? By challenging the consensus with our critical thinking. By bridging the gap and engaging with businesses. By creating the right environment for a step-change in thinking that enables changing frameworks and models. By giving tomorrow's business leaders the skills they need to embrace change and new ways of thinking.

Our research

This latest issue is full of examples of how we are prepared to think differently but also do business for good.

For instance in our main feature our Head of Business Engagement Richard Allmendinger looks at the growing demand for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and the rising interest from businesses which want to work with us. Do please get in touch with us if you would like to discuss a project with your company.

We also report on Joseph Lampel's research into the John Lewis model of business ownership, a model which is gaining growing political traction. And Jonatan Pinkse discusses his award-winning paper which has been looking at why companies are not responding quick enough to the threat of global warming.

Closer to home, we report on the work of Karel Williams and others who have been looking at Manchester's economic transformation over the last 20 years, and asking whether the city's housing and transport infrastructure is really matching its social needs today. Their conclusions can be applied to cities all over the globe, as does our research in so many other areas.



Professor Ken McPhail,
Director of Research.

Contents

06

Research in practice



10

Valuable dividends



12

Future of the corporation

14

Manchester rethink



16

Heart of the action



18

Under the microscope

20

Heads in the sand



30

All points south



22

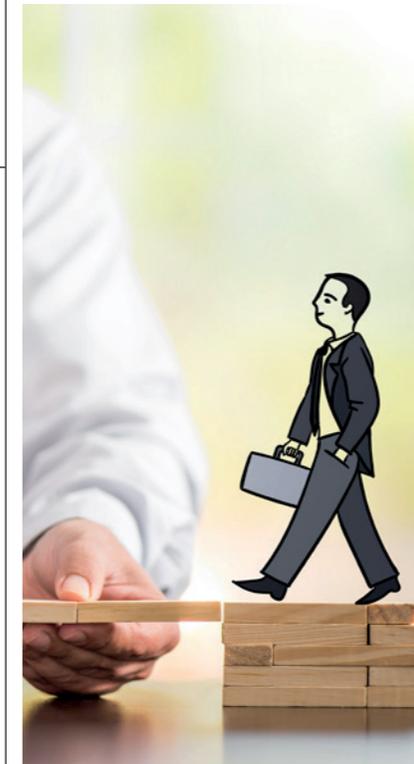
Shared parental leave

26

Older worker myths

28

Bridging barriers

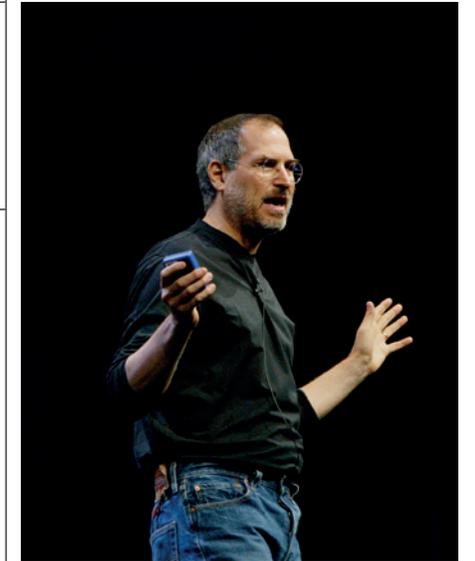


34

Bookshelf

24

Making a gesture



32

Legal first



Full charge

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) can help a business improve competitiveness, productivity and performance through better use of knowledge, technology and skills.

Ask a business owner today what keeps him or her awake at night, and the chances are that data - and maximising its potential - is likely to be very high on the list.

As Lecturer in Data Science, and Business Engagement Lead for Alliance MBS, Richard Allmendinger says: "Every company or organisation now keeps a daily track of their data. But when businesses start seeing their competitors using data analysis to gain commercial advantage then they know they need to act. Companies are really starting to wake up to the potential of data mining."

It is just one reason why demand for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) is currently at record levels at Alliance MBS, with many projects driven by demand for data analytics and machine learning skills.

First port of call

In his role as Business Engagement Lead Dr Allmendinger is one of the first ports of call for companies looking for help. Given that his own research area is in data analytics, he is particularly well-placed to advise businesses.

"Data mining applies to every industry and every sector and we have never been busier," he says. "Companies of all sizes are coming to us wanting to do KTPs, and for many of them it is because they want to maximise the potential of their data."

"Businesses have always had data coming in but in the past didn't do much with it, or didn't know what to do with it. Today it is very different. Companies are coming to us because they know that they need to make better decisions using their data. They need people within their teams with machine learning skills, people who can use the data to make the best possible decisions."

Partners

He says KTP partners are typically smaller or medium-sized businesses which don't have the budget to hire data science specialists. "My role is to work with companies to structure a project, thinking about who from the University is needed to make it happen."

The University of Manchester can offer multidisciplinary teams with complimentary skills. "Data science is most effective when combined with people who know the domain and therefore know how to make best use of the information and patterns discovered by data science," he adds. "To give one example in healthcare, a KTP team can consist of someone with data science expertise and then also someone with expertise in optometry if the project is related to data-driven diagnosis in eye hospitals. Being part of a large University means we can draw from lots of different departments, and the chances are that someone, somewhere, in the University will be working on a problem you are interested in."

Cost

Dr Allmendinger says that embarking on a KTP needn't cost a company a fortune either. He says a cost effective way for a company looking at a KTP is to set up an MSc dissertation project with an academic to do some exploratory groundwork which then supports the decision to go for a KTP and can provide a starting point for the application. Current KTP clients range from law firms and software consultancies, through to the wider advertising industry. Projects can be focused on any aspects of business, not just data analytics.

Students

In response to these trends he adds that more and more students are studying business analytics, machine learning and data mining. Indeed numbers for the School's MSc in Business Analytics are extremely high, and the course was recently ranked the seventh best in the world in the latest QS world university rankings.

As such he is excited about the wider potential of the Alliance MBS offering for companies, academics and students. "If we do a data mining project for a business we get access to a data set that no one has ever worked with before, and that can be both tremendously powerful and exciting." ●



If we do a data mining project for a business we get access to a data set that no one has ever worked with before, and that can be both tremendously powerful and exciting.



Richard Allmendinger is a Lecturer in Data Science and Business Engagement Lead.



Our partner: IPEC

IPEC is a technology design and manufacturing business based at Manchester Science Park which concentrates on products and systems for the international electricity generation and distribution market.

The KTP has addressed two primary needs within the business. Firstly, the ability to efficiently control and support its network of distributors. And secondly, led to the creation of a 'servitization' model which enables the company to take full advantage of the associated services which can be sold along with, or independently of, its products.

The term refers to how manufacturers are increasingly shifting their focus from products to end solutions as systems become increasingly automated. Indeed the fundamental aim of the KTP was to drive a strategy away from products and towards services and a portion of IPEC's income can now be directly attributed to the servitization products resulting from the KTP.

Business Development Director Carl Eastham said the project delivered on what was set out in an effective and professional manner. "Many organisations have clear aims for development, but no internal skills to realise this. A KTP offers the benefits of both a dedicated new employee as well as the great knowledge contained within universities.

"Our relationship with Alliance MBS and the University of Manchester is going to continue beyond the KTP in further direct knowledge sharing."

Thinking of a KTP? Read on for details about how your business can get involved.

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) is a government-funded programme aimed at helping UK businesses improve competitiveness, productivity and performance through better use of the knowledge, technology and skills available within universities and other knowledge bases.

A KTP takes knowledge from within the university and applies it to a significant strategic challenge faced by the business. A graduate or PhD student is employed as a KTP Associate to drive the project, while academic time equivalent to half a day per week supports the initiative.

Who can do a KTP?

Companies of all sizes from all sectors. Large companies are encouraged to demonstrate how they will support supply chains, particularly SMEs, so that the benefits of the knowledge transfer flow through to these companies. Charities, social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations can also apply.

How long does a KTP take?

It can range from 12-36 months, depending on the type of project. The main objective is to transfer knowledge and skills in order to assist the company with their need, leading to innovative outcomes such as new product development or process enhancement.

What is the benefit for a business?

The KTP provides access to academic expertise and university facilities and a highly skilled graduate. The business can also benefit from improved competitiveness and financial benefits from completed projects. KTPs also tend to lead to other interaction with the university such as student projects and access to other expertise and equipment.

What is the benefit for the university and academics?

In addition to having access to untouched data, other benefits for academics include publishing papers with the company during the KTP project, joint follow-up projects with the company, joint grant applications, and access to other companies in the supply chain or clients of the KTP company. Sometimes the KTP company also sends their staff or top level management to do a degree at the University due to the positive experience of the KTP.

What type of projects can be undertaken?

KTPs work across a wide range of academic disciplines and business functions such as: improving existing products or developing new products; developing and implementing a marketing strategy to enter new markets or launch new products/services; IT projects exploring big data and increasing confidence in cloud systems and advanced software engineering.

How much does it cost?

A KTP is part-funded by a grant. The business needs to contribute to the salary of the Associate who will work with the business, plus the cost of a supervisor who will oversee the scheme. The amount the business needs to contribute depends on the scale and length of the project and the size of the company. SMEs typically contribute around £35,000 per year, about one-third of the project costs. Larger businesses typically contribute around £55,000 per year, or half of the project costs.

How does a business apply?

In the first instance contact **richard.allmendinger@manchester.ac.uk** to discuss your idea for a KTP. You'll then need to produce a short project outline detailing the potential impact of your project. ●

Valuable dividends



More employee-owned businesses would improve UK productivity, enhance the resilience of regional economies, and motivate more engaged employees, says Joseph Lampel.

Professor Joseph Lampel has led several employee ownership research studies over the past decade and recently co-authored the final report into a year-long inquiry which looked at the performance of employee owned businesses (EOBs).

The findings, detailed in The Ownership Dividend report, conclude that employee ownership can provide the positive responses needed to many of the challenges currently facing the UK economy such as its poor productivity record, and calls for the government to invest in ownership capacity building.

Resilience

Prof Lampel says: "Back in 2010 I was asked by the John Lewis Partnership and the Employee Ownership Association (EOA) to write a report looking at employee ownership and performance in the UK which compared the performance of employee and non-employee owned firms in different sectors. That report showed that employee-owned businesses had proven far more resilient to the economic downturn and had maintained growth during the recession.

"The report subsequently proved influential among the then Coalition government and led to further reviews of the sector, in particular the Nuttall Review. Since then the EOB sector has continued to grow with more companies converting to an employee owned model. As such the EOA decided now was a good time to revisit these issues."

As well as writing a pre-inquiry report which surveyed the current literature relating to employee ownership, Prof Lampel also attended inquiry hearings ahead of his final report which he co-authored with Professor Ajay Bhalla and Dr Aneesh Banerjee from Cass Business School.

Meaningful work

Prof Lampel said one of the key findings from the latest report was the significant contribution that EOBs make to their local communities.

"We also looked at more psychological factors, and whether people felt their work was more meaningful in an EOB. The answer was a clear yes and this has strong implications. For instance the millennial generation increasingly wants to work in environments that give meaning to what they do. A lot of the issues faced by British business today could also be addressed by more employee ownership."

Sir Charlie Mayfield, Chairman of John Lewis Partnership, said: "The most valuable asset to a business in driving productivity is its people. This report shows the significant benefits from giving employees a meaningful stake and share in the value that they create, not just financially but also in terms of motivation, wellbeing and fulfilment at work.

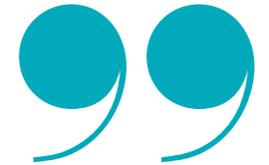
"With the significant shifts currently taking place in the workplace and in society, it is time to take a fresh look at the dividends that increasing employee ownership can offer to the UK economy and society."

Baroness Sharon Bowles, Ownership Effect Inquiry Chair, added: "The Panel's conclusion is clear. There is a significant and valuable dividend to be obtained from creating greater amounts of employee ownership in our economy. This independent inquiry has produced the most comprehensive, robust and compelling evidence about employee ownership in the UK to date, supported by the academic rigour of Alliance Manchester Business School and Cass Business School."

The employee owned sector counts for over £30bn in annual turnover across the UK and is growing at a rate of 10% a year. ●



The millennial generation increasingly wants to work in environments that give meaning to what they do.



Professor Joseph Lampel is the Eddie Davies Chair in Enterprise in Innovation Management and Director at the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research.

Sense of purpose

Is the corporation fit for purpose in the 21st century? A major national research programme has been asking the question.

This autumn Alliance MBS and the British Academy are bringing together some of the country's leading economic thinkers and business figures to discuss the very future of the corporation and capitalism today.

Part of a major Academy-backed research project, never have both been under such attack - as evidenced by the seismic upheavals of the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump.

The project is being led by Professor Colin Mayer, the Peter Moores Professor of Management Studies at the Said Business School at the University of Oxford. Both he and Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford, will be speaking about the project and its context in modern British society at the AMBS event.

Ethics

Prof Collier said one of the key messages from the study is that you cannot detach the corporation from ethics. "The prevailing view still remains that companies exist in order to make a profit, and that all you need is intense competition and that will be good for everyone. As we are now seeing, that view is manifestly false."

Collier discusses these themes in depth in his latest book *The Future of Capitalism* which talks about the big social divisions that have opened up in society and, in particular, the new class divide between the well-educated and technologically highly skilled, and those who are less well-educated and in jobs which rely more on manual skills.

"In the search for higher productivity this divide is rising as demand for ever more specialised skills increases," he says. "Globalisation has only widened the gap further and you see this borne out with Brexit and Trump. These are mutinies by people on the down escalator who are seeing others going up the opposite escalator."

Collier says that until these fears and issues are addressed they will continue to dominate public policy. "The political costs of not listening to those on the way down the escalator will become very high. The problem at the moment is that mainstream politics is not really listening, which then

allows those with a more extreme view to come in, even though they have no practical solutions to the problems."

Sense of purpose

He says one of the key questions is how to reshape the very purpose of the corporation so that it is not just about making money.

"Look at the economic history of the UK and you will find companies that were founded with a clear public dimension. Look at what Titus Salt did in Yorkshire, or the Lever brothers at Port Sunlight, or Cadbury in Bournville. That is the tradition we need to return to. Companies having a sense of purpose that is larger than just profit and which is linked to trust. This has to be embedded in the culture of an organisation."

He says there are a number of policy levers that can be used to create this sense of purpose. He cites moves to encourage certain types of company ownership structure such as the employee ownership model, and improving corporate governance codes so that rewards for management and shareholders are better checked.

"Another lever you could pull is taxation and ensuring big firms pay their fair share. More public investment to enable private investment should also be encouraged."

Collier believes that the German corporate *Mittelstand* structure, commonly seen in small and medium-sized companies, is a particularly good model to follow.

"These businesses typically have a supervisory board which represents the labour force and the result is that there is a much more co-operative relationship between the labour force and the company. Local politicians are also close to the company and there is a wider co-operation between employees, town or city, and firm. A culture of a common purpose is firmly embedded."

Closing the gap

So how do we close the gap between the haves and have-nots? Collier believes one of the answers to a very complex question is to change the balance of public expenditure between cognitive and non-cognitive skills.

"If you take the UK all the status is with gaining a degree, and the more people that go to university the more others feel they ought to go. Yet look at a country like Switzerland where 60% of young people take the vocational route instead. They choose to do that even though Switzerland is home to plenty of prestigious universities. The vocational route typically involves four years of paid training, and half the cost is met by firms, so those firms make damn sure those trainees are really employable at the end." ●

Real world challenges

'The Future of the Corporation' is a major research programme developing an evidence base to redefine business for the 21st century.

Initiated by Professor Colin Mayer, the Peter Moores Professor of Management Studies at the Said Business School at the University of Oxford, some 13 research groups are producing research addressing ten themes - history, trust, corporate purpose, corporate culture, technology, corporate governance, long-term investment, ownership, law, taxation and regulation, and social benefit.

Since 2017 the programme has engaged around 500 academics, business leaders and policymakers, and the overall aim is for the research to influence change in three areas:

Business Education: the way that business is taught in academic institutions and how future business leaders see business

Business Practice: the way that business interprets policy and academic thinking and puts it into practice

Public Policy: the good practices, agreements, codes of conduct, standards, regulations and laws that set out the framework for business to operate

Manchester rethink

A major study has been looking at the impact of Manchester's developer-led strategy on transport and housing.

Regeneration across Greater Manchester over the past 30 years has focused heavily on the development of new flats and offices in the two central boroughs of Manchester and Salford.

And there are plenty more to come, with nearly 50,000 new and mostly private homes planned in central Manchester by 2040. Yet today there are also some 80,000 people on Greater Manchester's social housing waiting list.

These are just some of the stark statistics that have spurred a major new study into the Greater Manchester economy.

The study's authors argue that private property developers, which have led Manchester's renaissance, have failed to consider both the transport and social infrastructure – such as schools, libraries and broadband – that communities need to thrive.

For instance, in relation to the city's transport offer they say the focus has been on prestige public transport investment such as trams which carry many fewer passengers than buses. Yet it is estimated that an additional 68,000 trips per year will be made on Greater Manchester's public transport by 2040. At the same time subsidies to the city's bus network, which carries the most passengers, are being reduced.

Long-term strategy

The report calls for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to create a long-term strategy that focuses on the wellbeing of all citizens that make up the cultural and geographical diversity of Greater Manchester's ten boroughs.

Karel Williams, Professor of Accounting and Political Economy, led the research team. He said: "Regeneration is

about more than just new buildings in the centre of Manchester, it should benefit all communities in the wider city region too. Transport and housing is failing communities in the outer boroughs and this is a direct result of the misguided approach of developer-led regeneration."

Regeneration

Since the abolition of Greater Manchester County Council in 1986, Manchester City and Salford Councils have targeted regeneration by allowing private property developers to build large-scale developments on brownfield sites near the city centre. The result is a centre filled with one and two bed buy-to-let flats built for one demographic – young white-collar workers. This fails to meet the demands of the many Greater Manchester citizens with families or on lower incomes, says the report.

Its authors also criticise central government for failing to hand councils and new metro mayors greater powers and funding for transport, housing and other infrastructure improvements. Indeed, since his election last year, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham has focused his efforts on areas such as a perceived lack of rail investment and homelessness in the absence of statutory powers.

Future plans

Meanwhile, the report also argues that plans to build a further 50,000 similar homes could create spillover problems as central Manchester expands.

Planned developments in areas such as Angel Meadow and Collyhurst could create tensions as regeneration intrudes

on existing communities, many of them in areas of social deprivation, potentially resulting in "social clearances".

Williams added: "The city centre is increasingly built over and developers are constantly looking for brownfield land on the edges of the centre or green field development in the outer boroughs. Current regeneration plans and frameworks aren't fit for the purposes of controlling and limiting development in the interests of communities.

"For all Greater Manchester's boroughs to thrive, we're calling for a rethink in policy expertise at local government level. We need policymakers who have the granular knowledge of local circumstances and social needs to deliver what citizens truly need." ●

“ Current regeneration plans and frameworks aren't fit for the purposes of controlling and limiting development in the interests of communities. ”

Other academics involved in the report included Professors Andy McMeekin, Anne Stafford, Julie Froud and Pam Stapleton, as well as Dr Mike Hodson and Dr Hua Wei.

Heart of the action

Alumna Daina Bellido de Luna Mayea's first-hand experience of a labour dispute in her native Chile encouraged her to return to Manchester to complete her PhD.



“ I learnt about negotiations, what not to do in such a crisis, and just how angry workers can get if they feel they are not being listened to. ”

After completing her masters in International Human Resource Management and Comparative Industrial Relations at Alliance AMBS in 2012, Daina Bellido de Luna Mayea returned to the Chilean capital of Santiago to work in the HR department of a wine company.

Little could she have imagined that within weeks of returning she would find herself in the centre of a major pay dispute with workers going on strike. "It was as if everything I had learnt during my masters was coming to life," she recalls. "I learnt about negotiations, what not to do in such a crisis, and just how angry workers can get if they feel they are not being listened to."

She says the experience has shaped her studies ever since. "One of the outcomes of the strike was that the company ensured that workers were listened to more. They increased the number of meetings between employees and owners and also set up focus groups for workers, an initiative I was particularly involved with. It was a fantastic learning experience and I felt I played a major role in helping to improve industrial relations at the company."

Inspired by her experiences Daina was keen to continue to pursue her studies. "When I went back home after

my masters I didn't really expect to do any more studies, but following the trade dispute I found that I was keen to extend my knowledge further and I knew that I could apply for a government scholarship to take a PhD. I had really enjoyed studying in Manchester for my masters so the city was top of my list to do the PhD."

Research

Daina chose the subject of trade union renewal in Chile for her PhD. As she explains: "Excessive employment flexibility alongside lower trade union membership rates and lower bargaining capability means that the role of trade unions is today being questioned like never before. While a lot has been written about the subject in European countries there has been very little written about what is going on in Latin America.

"What was particularly interesting was that Chile had recently approved a labour reform that promised to strengthen and modernise employment relations and I wanted to research what impact that had had. I wanted to look at whether trade unions had been successful in regaining their strength, and at what strategies unions were employing in order to make themselves have more of a voice."

To carry out the research Daina has split her time between theoretical studies in Manchester, and fieldwork in Chile where she has been researching specific activities and practices implemented by trade unions in manufacturing companies and looking at trends around modernising the wider Chilean labour movement.

Findings

Her preliminary results indicate that Chilean trade unions are in general reacting well to the new world of work, and also contributing to the international debate of how worker organisations are coping in this new climate. However she says that the sense of renewal is still very localised and that unions have to often adapt to very specific local economic and political conditions. ●

Daina was recently awarded best paper at the leading industrial relations conference ILERA for her research on work and employment in emerging markets.

Under the microscope

We regulate many areas of public and commercial life, but does it work? Kieran Walshe asks the question.

Most people will have heard of OFSTED (which inspects schools and other settings where children and young people are cared for), and the Care Quality Commission (which inspects hospitals, general practices, care homes and other health and care providers).

But we also regulate restaurants, solicitors, financial services, security firms, and factories, as well as many public services like prisons, the police, housing associations, and more. So do all these regulators contribute to improving schools, hospitals and so on – or do they just add costs and bureaucracy for the organisations they oversee?

Our research on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has been trying to answer that question. Over the last five years the CQC has undertaken the largest ever, most intensive and costliest programme of inspections and ratings in health and social care in England. An army of inspection teams has visited every hospital, nursing home, general practice and other care providers in the country.

There is no doubt that regulation by CQC has been a force for good, driving improvement especially among poorly performing providers of health and care. But it has also had some adverse effects, and has been a significant added cost to the health and care system. We think there are some useful lessons from our research not just for CQC but for other regulators.

Lesson one

Regulation affects organisations' performance in lots of ways. It is not just about inspection reports and enforcement actions, though that is where we often focus most attention.

Organisations respond to regulatory standards long before an inspection even takes place, and savvy leaders learn from the inspection reports and experiences of other organisations, and try to build regulatory standards into their own improvement programmes. Regulators need to make maximum use of those other pathways to impact – which may mean them inspecting less, but actually achieving more.

Lesson two

How organisations respond to the regulator depends on their "improvement capability" – either their internal capacity to do improvement, or the external support for improvement they can access.

We think this matters a lot. For example, we found that large NHS hospitals often had both internal and external capacity to call on. But for smaller organisations like general practices and care homes, it was less clear where that capacity could come from. We think that is a problem and may help explain why some organisations seem "stuck" and unable to improve.

Lesson three

The relationship between the regulator and the organisations it oversees matters a great deal. If there is a constructive, professional relationship of mutual credibility, respect and trust, it is much more likely that improvements can be made – often through informal advice and interaction rather than through written reports or enforcement actions.

But poor relationships, adversarial attitudes, and unreasonable behaviours on either side can be quite toxic. We think regulators' staff need to be real experts in the sectors they oversee, and to have great interpersonal skills and be able to build those relationships successfully. It's a tough job to do well.

Lesson four

We think people sometimes have quite unrealistic expectations of regulators like CQC. The responsibility for the quality of care sits with provider organisations and the people running them. CQC cannot prevent every serious quality failure in a nursing home or hospital somewhere in England.

But regulators like CQC can be a powerful and constructive force for improvement – using their independence and the rigour of their methods to shine a light on problems and failings which might otherwise be brushed under the carpet.

And finally...

One final point. Regulators need to do more to evaluate how regulation works, and be willing to share those findings openly, and to change systems of regulation when the evidence shows they could be more efficient or effective. It should not just be left up to researchers like us to try and answer the questions about whether regulation works. ●

The full report from Alliance MBS and The King's Fund can be found at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/impact-cqc-provider-performance



Kieran Walshe is a Professor of Health Policy and Management.

Heads in the sand



There are a multitude of research papers about how companies are responding to climate change. But a paper co-authored by Jonatan Pinkse looked at why companies are not taking any action in response to global warming.

Professor Jonatan Pinkse believes the world has grown a little cynical about how companies, organisations and governments are responding to climate change. "Too often today it is all about beautiful initiatives and grand projects, but the stark reality is that global emissions are continuing to increase."

In fact, he says the only time global emissions went down was during the financial crisis ten years ago. "Despite increasing pressure to deal with climate change, firms have been slow to respond with effective action."

He says that governments too have been guilty of setting long term targets which are difficult to achieve. "What is much harder is setting short to medium term targets which enable you to reach that long term target. If you set targets over three or five years you have to deliver on them."

Research

In response to concerns that companies are not acting quick enough to tackle climate change, Prof Pinkse and his co-authors set out to unearth what was stopping businesses from taking action.

As he explains: "Many studies assume that firms address sustainability issues, either to gain a competitive advantage or to maintain legitimacy. What is lacking, however, is a deeper understanding of the reasons many firms simply do not reduce their impact on the natural environment."

Their starting point was to look at how psychology, sociology, and organisation theory can explain this inaction. "What we found time and again was that people, whatever their role, were not prepared to take the necessary big steps to change their business. In many respects we weren't surprised by what we found. If something is far away from you, whether in time or place, you don't act on it. People still feel climate change is something far in the future that won't particularly impact them."

Uncertainty

Prof Pinkse says at the organisational level short-termism was found to be the biggest barrier. "It is so difficult to change the mindset of a business, even if you are

determined to try to change the status quo and make an effort to respond to climate change.

"What we also found was the importance of self-preservation. Remember that a lot of businesses, say in the food and drink industry, might not have a financially viable business model in the future because they won't be able to grow their crops in a warmer climate."

In terms of the institutional angle, he adds that a key issue is regulatory uncertainty, especially given the conflicting signals coming out of the US under the Trump administration. "It remains the case that whatever the US does remains so important in this wider debate, it has a signalling effect for the rest of the world."

Vicious cycle

Prof Pinkse says the fact that the organisational, personal and institutional levels so heavily interact with each other creates a vicious circle which is almost impossible to get out of. "All these factors interact with each other and simply lead to more waiting games in terms of companies taking hard action. Breaking that cycle is extremely difficult and there are no easy answers."

He says sticking to targets and goals is absolutely essential. "Company boards need to be sticking to medium and long term goals and mustn't be distracted by short term shareholder activism."

Economic growth

How to marry economic growth with a sustainable business model is another aspect of this wider debate. He adds: "If you look at companies which are growing what you find is that although their relative rate of emissions may be falling, their absolute emissions continue to rise. Which begs the question of whether you can decouple business growth and greenhouse gas emissions. Put simply, it is difficult to grow without using more energy, but ultimately tackling climate change requires absolute reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and that requires large transformational change within a business." ●



Jonatan Pinkse is a Professor of Strategy, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Professor Pinkse's paper *The Role of Short-Termism and Uncertainty Avoidance in Organizational Inaction on Climate Change* recently won best article published in the journal *Business & Society* in 2017.

Gender roles

For many couples, family-friendly schemes such as shared parental leave are playing catch up with their ideals and beliefs, says Emma Banister.

Despite widespread belief that men should be as involved as women in all aspects of childcare, they are both still largely playing traditional gender roles when looking after children, according to a new report from Business In The Community (BITC).

This is disappointing news for gender equality, and the British government's initiatives around family-friendly workplace policies, such as shared parental leave.

The BITC report, entitled "Equal Lives", is underpinned by a survey of 10,000 employees with caring responsibilities. It found that men under age 35 are "significantly more likely" to wish to take a more active role in caring for their children than previous generations of fathers.

Findings

This finding resonates with the conversations we've had in our ongoing research with men and couples who opted to take shared parental leave. Since 2015, shared parental leave has allowed eligible parents the opportunity to divide up to a year of parental leave between them in a baby's first year or first year of adoption.

Our interactions with this current generation of parents who've had a child since 2015 show just how strongly some hold ideals of parenting equality. For many, family-friendly schemes, such as shared parental leave, are playing catch up with their already-established ideals and beliefs: that parenting is a joint, and equal, venture. As one of the parents we interviewed, Sarada, told us: "I never saw the one-year maternity right as something that automatically applied to every single woman, I saw that as an option and shared parental leave caught up with my mindset."

Already lagging behind

Those we've interviewed have called into question traditional gender roles, with our research suggesting that shared parental leave policy is already lagging behind this new generation's progressive thinking.

Parents have told us they find the maternity leave transfer model that underpins shared parental leave unhelpful. An employed woman still has the right to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, but it's up to her whether she wishes to swap some of this time for shared parental leave taken with her partner. It is one aspect of the scheme that has been blamed for its poor take up.

The men in our own study felt they were "loaning" leave from their partner. They often described themselves as feeling like a "charity case", or a "second-class parent", beholden to their female partner to transfer some of "her" leave.

The Equal Lives survey reported that 85% of parents under the age of 35 already consider caring to be an equal responsibility, so perhaps it's unsurprising that the men we've spoken to were indignant about the way shared parental leave works.

Nordic experience

Nordic countries are ahead of the game here, all adopting, in some form, a "use it or lose it" quota of leave specifically for dads, and offering a ring-fenced period of time on leave that is reserved for mothers and fathers. Both parents are obliged to take leave from work to care for their child and if they don't use it, they lose it – a potential policy change which BITC supports.

Yet the UK's established and comparatively long maternity leave (increased to one year in 2003) is deeply entrenched. And so it's easy to see why the UK currently operates what is essentially a transferral scheme between parents.

In working through how couples make caring decisions, it's useful to see how same-sex couples operate. The Equal Lives survey found that men in same-sex couples were less likely to be concerned with "depriving their partner" of leave that is rightfully theirs.

However, new Swedish research suggests that this is not the case in same-sex female couples involving a birth mother, where those preconceived roles can still linger. The research, comparing

parental leave in different-sex and female same-sex couples, finds that the birth mother's uptake of leave is higher than the partner's uptake in both same-sex and different-sex couples. Perceived norms still exist, linked to the child's "need" for its birth mother.

Reimagining the workplace

The Equal Lives findings come alongside other calls for the workplace to be reimagined. In early September, Frances O'Grady, the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, called for a universal four-day week so that employees can benefit from the increased efficiency afforded by technological change.

Such a call also recognises that work needs to fit with peoples' lives – and it provides food for thought about other ways to facilitate a more equal sharing of childcare. The Equal Lives report shows it's time for employers and society to recognise more fully the importance of supporting employees to have lives outside work. ●

This article, co-authored with Ben Kerrane from Lancaster University, was originally published in The Conversation.



Emma Banister is a Senior Lecturer in Consumer Research.

Making a gesture



Entrepreneurs who combine figurative language and skilled gestures when pitching to investors are more likely to secure funding, says Mark Healey.

Start-up founders who use ideational gestures when pitching can trigger mental imagery in the minds of potential investors about how their product or service is used, making the venture more concrete and easier to understand.

That's one of the key findings of research conducted by Alliance MBS and other partners across Europe. The researchers found that this can increase the likelihood of an investor backing their business by an average of 12%, according to the study.

In particular, researchers examined what makes a successful business pitch and what types of language and gestures could be adopted by entrepreneurs to convince investors to support their ventures.

They found that an entrepreneur's ability to paint mental imagery in the minds of potential investors plays a key role in guaranteeing investment. Combining complex gestures about the product or business with simpler 'beat' gestures that emphasise key parts of a pitch was found to be a highly effective strategy.

Tech investors

Dr Mark Healey from Alliance MBS says academics first studied entrepreneurs as they pitched to seasoned investors at a regional technology investment forum in the North of England. They chose this particular event as technology entrepreneurs are more likely to face challenges when communicating their ideas to investors due to the complexity of their businesses.

They observed significant variation in how entrepreneurs used speech and gestures. In particular they found that entrepreneurs used four main strategies when pitching:

1
a 'literal' approach,
a technical description that
involves little figurative speech
and little use of gestures



2
a 'rhetorical' approach,
using considerable figurative
speech to explain the venture
but with little gesturing



3
a 'demonstrative' approach,
which involves little figurative
speech but relies on an
animated delivery through
the repetitive use of gestures



4
an 'integrative' approach,
which features a high
level of both figurative
speech and gestures

In a subsequent experiment using video pitches with 124 experienced investors, the researchers found that entrepreneurs who combined ideational gestures that symbolise parts of their business - for example its growth, its product, or how the product works - with beat gestures that signify certain aspects of speech were better able to convey investment rationale to potential investors.

Convincing pitch

Says Dr Healey: "Entrepreneurs pitching their businesses typically have only between five and 10 minutes to impress and convince investors why they deserve financial backing. This short timeframe makes it even more important to ensure they've persuaded and communicated clearly what makes their business deserving of investment.

"The prevailing view is that the words and stories entrepreneurs choose matter and that body language helps them communicate their passion. We found that skilled gesturing not only matters more than we thought, but that it does much more than make entrepreneurs seem passionate. For instance it also helps them communicate important ideas about how their products and businesses work.

"This is the first study of its kind that really delves into the impact of using certain gestures during a pitch. An increase in the likelihood of securing an investment is significant and underlines why entrepreneurs should focus on their presenting skills as well as their verbal messaging."

The research was conducted by Alliance MBS in partnership with Emlyon Business School in France and Erasmus University in the Netherlands. ●



Dr Mark Healey is a Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management. This research was recently published in the Academy of Management Journal.

What managers really think about older workers

Research shows that age discrimination is still rife, say Sheena Johnson and Ricardo Twumasi.

Legislation to outlaw discrimination on the basis of age was first introduced in the UK in 2006. It was designed to protect people of all ages from discrimination, but research has shown that older workers are more likely to be adversely affected by age-related stereotypes.

In particular it seems there are a number of unfair assumptions about the ability of older workers, which in turn influences how people behave towards older job applicants. This is especially hard to justify when older workers (loosely defined as people over the age of 50) are generally more experienced. And, since 2011, the UK default retirement age has been scrapped. This means there

is no longer a set retirement age for most jobs (there is still a state pension age, although this too is rising in line with increased life expectancy) so a lot more people are working beyond their 60s.

Legal protection

Despite the legal protection that now exists to prohibit age-related discrimination, research has shown that there tends to be a delay between the outlawing of discrimination and a reduction in that type of discrimination.

For instance, we have had sex discrimination protection since 1975, but most people would agree that sex

discrimination is still happening. Age discrimination laws should help to change stereotypes over time but thus far there is little evidence of a decline in discrimination.

As part of our "working late" research project, we explored some of the views managers held about older workers. It supports other findings that age discrimination still occurs. For instance one manager we interviewed about his hiring practices said: "We're actually looking for someone between the ages of 25 and 35. That's not being ageist but that's just ensuring they've got the energy, the drive and the passion to learn."

Five of the most common stereotypes about older workers and how they can be challenged.



1. They will retire and leave the organisation

The average age of the population is increasing. As the population ages, the average age of employees will increase, too. There is no longer a default retirement age. So employers should recognise that a worker employed with lots of experience – even at 64 – could easily stay with the organisation for many more years.

When someone joins a company at 24, there is no strong guarantee that they will stay any longer. In fact, research shows we now change jobs around once every five years on average.



3. They take more time off sick

Research shows this to be an inaccurate assumption. On average, it is true that older workers tend to take more time off on long-term sickness, but they also take less time off due to short-term sicknesses with no notice.

Older workers are also at lower risk of accidents in the workplace, but suffer from more fatal accidents. This averages out to be a similar amount of sickness time taken for all employees. There are also strategies we can use to improve the health of the workforce at all ages.



5. They are 'overqualified' (and this is bad)

In some of our recent research, terms such as "inflexible" and "overqualified" were examples of the feedback given to older applicants when they were rejected for jobs. It is hard to justify the use of the term "overqualified", although it can perhaps be explained by employers being concerned about people leaving the job after a short space of time for a job that better matches their skill set.

Meanwhile, there are many good reasons that an experienced worker may want to take a step down to a role that requires fewer specialist skills than their previous job. Also, older workers often report wanting part-time, more flexible, or less stressful jobs, which might explain them moving to jobs they may be viewed as "overqualified" for. ●

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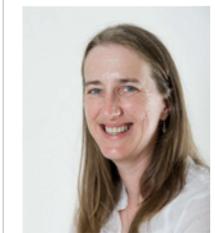
2. They are less productive

There is very little evidence supporting this in people of working age, even taking into account the fact that people are retiring later than before. We might expect physical and cognitive abilities to decline with age, but this tends to be at an older age than you would be working. Age and workplace performance are not linked, with plenty of evidence showing older workers are just as effective as younger workers.



4. They can't learn new things

Older workers have been found to have lots of experience adapting to new tools, environments or working practices. Did you know that the average age for successful entrepreneurs is between 42 and 47?



Sheena Johnson is a Senior Lecturer in Occupational Psychology.



Ricardo Twumasi is a Lecturer in Organisational Psychology.

Bridging barriers

What are the challenges of translating academic knowledge into practice? Dr Roman Kislov has been investigating.



Having initially trained as a doctor in Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, Roman Kislov jokes that today he has exchanged patient care for caring for healthcare professionals instead. "I suppose I give them some kind of therapy. My aim is to help them feel better, reflect on their experiences and facilitate learning."

As a Senior Research Fellow within the Health Services Research Centre (HSRC) and Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) at Alliance MBS, Dr Kislov's research centres on the management and organisation of healthcare in the UK, an extremely hot topic given constant reforms across the NHS.

He has been studying the subject ever since completing his PhD at Alliance MBS in 2012 on 'communities of practice', the concept that describes any group of people with a shared interest and way of doing things. In particular, he says, what fascinates him is "knowledge mobilisation", namely how to promote research and innovation in day-to-day healthcare practice.

Challenges

He says one of the key challenges working with the NHS is the difficulty of implementing research. This is usually down to either the complexity and volume of research, a reluctance to change culture and mindsets, or a lack of a trained workforce, infrastructure and co-ordination.

"Researchers who want to make a difference in practice need to start by

“ I see my role as helping researchers bridge barriers and facilitating learning.”

looking at what resources are actually available in the health service, using that information to guide their research plans, rather than issuing recommendations that simply cannot be implemented in practice. One should always think about implementation well in advance."

That said there is a need for constant compromise between researchers and healthcare practitioners. "When we work together we will inevitably have to compromise because there are multiple tensions. It means that researchers have to be more creative and change their mindsets too. They have to be asking healthcare professionals 'tell us what kind of improvements you want to make and we will see how our research could help you achieve your objectives'."

Academic award

Dr Kislov's research also looks at the very structure of CLAHRC, a unique partnership between providers and commissioners from the NHS, industry, the third sector and academia.

This particular work has caught the eye of the academic community with his study of a knowledge brokering team awarded a Best Paper at the Academy of Management Conference earlier this year, an accolade that is given to fewer than five per cent of all submissions to the Conference.

The paper explored a CLAHRC team whose remit was to promote coordination

and integration between researchers and healthcare professionals involved in managing patients with heart failure.

Credibility

Dr Kislov adds that being a medic himself helps his research significantly. "It gives me more credibility and opens doors. Healthcare professionals still perceive me as 'one of their own' and my background means I have technical knowledge that social scientists do not usually have."

Does he miss not practicing? "When I was younger, I always thought research was not for me and that I would be a practitioner. Indeed I started my career as a medic for a gold mining company. But the more studies I undertook, the more I enjoyed the challenge of research." ●



Dr Roman Kislov is a Senior Research Fellow.

All points south

The shape of the global economy is changing rapidly, leading to the emergence of major new businesses in the supply chain, says Matthew Alford.

Global trade is often viewed as 'North-South' with companies in developing nations in the global 'South', such as across Asia and Africa, supplying goods to the so-called global 'North'.

But in today's rapidly changing global economy, driven by a rising middle class in developing nations such as China, we are increasingly seeing the rise of 'South-South' trade involving Southern lead firms and end markets.

Matthew Alford from Alliance MBS has been studying this trend for several years and says it now raises a critical challenge for global governance. Namely, how can Southern markets be more effectively aligned with ethical and social standards that result in decent work outcomes?

This is the starting point for a major new research project which was recently awarded a significant grant by the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) to examine the implications of regional and domestic value chains in the global South.

Africa

Dr Alford, who was part of the winning bid team, says the research will focus on sourcing by South African and Kenyan retailers of horticulture and garments from South Africa, Lesotho and Kenya.

In particular it will assess the implications for attaining decent work, especially for precarious female workers, and examine whether the spread of regional value chains implies greater commercial challenges for labour.

As he explains: "There is a changing geography around globalisation with big firms in the global South now developing

hugely significant regional value chains. These are big companies about which we know very little, especially compared to big Western companies. But we cannot ignore these new players, and there is a real knowledge gap in terms of the day-to-day impact they are having.

"For instance, what are the social conditions in these more regional value chains? Will the commercial dynamics of regional value chains driven by Southern lead firms undermine decent work? Or do they provide new channels for promoting more effective 'Southern' standards based in the global South?"

As part of the project the research team will be interviewing companies, governments, civil society and workers to find out. "We hope our research will help to establish more effective ethical trade platforms within Africa involving the public and private sector, and civil society, which could then help inform similar alliances elsewhere in the global South."

Global networks

The tensions caused by global production networks, and their impact on labour standards, have already come under the gaze of recent papers co-authored by Dr Alford.

In particular he has been studying the South African fruit industry which has been through a period of major upheaval in recent years, with producers subject to increasingly stringent global supermarket pressure to provide quality standards at low cost.

At the same time the sector has undergone significant transformation

through a combination of economic liberalisation and integration into value chains, alongside strengthening post-apartheid employment legislation aimed at improving labour conditions.

Dr Alford says these combined changes have contributed to a reduction in the number of on-farm permanent workers and increasing use of precarious off-farm and migrant workers which has fuelled social conflicts between workers.

One paper, which he co-authored with Professor Stephanie Barrientos from the Global Development Institute (GDI) at The University of Manchester, specifically looked at the impact of one particular conflict which caused huge commercial and social disruption in the South African agricultural sector.

As part of the latest ESRC project Dr Alford will work with the GDI as well as with colleagues from The University of Cape Town, The University of Nairobi, and the Ethical Trading Initiative. ●



Dr Matthew Alford is a Lecturer in International Business and Management

Legal first



Law firms have joined forces with Alliance MBS and The University of Manchester to launch a ground-breaking legal technology initiative.

“It is intended that this consortium becomes a platform for innovation and a voice of recognised expertise in this emerging field.”

The University of Manchester has brought together an interdisciplinary academic team from Alliance Manchester Business School and its schools of Law and Computer Science, to form a consortium with industry that looks at the potential innovations and impacts of technology applications in the legal sector.

The Manchester Law & Technology Initiative was launched in September and comprises of the University, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, and DWF Ventures. It is the first research collaboration of its type in the UK to draw on business and academic expertise to develop research and teaching focused on the potential application and impact of digital technology in legal services provision.

The Rt Hon. Lord Keen of Elie QC, Ministry of Justice spokesperson in the House of Lords, spoke at the launch of the consortium where he outlined the government's support for the initiative and noted the work already underway by the government-backed LawTech Delivery Panel to further boost the sector.

Following its launch, the consortium is now open to additional members from the

legal, technology and associated sectors. Top UK law firm Weightmans LLP is the latest legal services firm to join the Initiative which is also seeing considerable interest from company in-house legal departments.

Innovation

The new Initiative aims to innovate in the use of technological applications into legal services firms and produce future graduates with the skills to utilise the technology and platforms within the sector.

The consortium will fund and direct research activities relating to the application of technology in order to aid understanding of the emerging technology trends that may affect the sector, and to examine their potential impact on the provision of legal services. It will also contribute to public policy debate on innovation in legal technologies.

Andrew James, Professor of Innovation Management & Policy at Alliance MBS and one of the key academics leading the new initiative, said: "It is intended that this consortium becomes a platform for innovation and a voice of

recognised expertise in this emerging field. The University has a strong reputation of collaborative research with industry partners, with more UK businesses working with us than any other UK higher education institution. By combining our research expertise with business awareness, we hope this work will result in the establishment of improved service provision within the legal sector."

Opportunity

By feeding into teaching and facilitating applied student projects and industry placements, the ambition is for The University of Manchester to be the place to go for education and academic expertise for legal services providers of the future.

DWF Ventures Managing Director and Head of Development Jonathan Patterson added: "At DWF Ventures we have seen the benefits of collaboration and the value that academic input can bring to R&D, so the chance to help develop this consortium from the outset was too good an opportunity to miss." ●

Bookshelf

A guide to some recent publications by Alliance MBS academics



The Cambridge Companion to Presenteeism At Work
 Edited by Sir Cary Cooper and Luo Lu.
 Cambridge University Press

Whilst the cost of absenteeism in organisations has been widely acknowledged and extensively examined, the counter-issue of 'presenteeism' has only recently attracted scholarly attention as a phenomenon that harms employee wellbeing, disrupts team dynamism, and damages productivity.

Sir Cary Cooper, the 50th anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health at Alliance MBS, joins forces with Luo Lu, a Professor at the National Taiwan University, to bring together leading international scholars from diverse scientific backgrounds, including occupational psychology, health, and medicine, to provide a pioneering review of the subject.

International in scope, the collection incorporates both Western and East Asian perspectives, making it an informative resource for multinational companies seeking to formulate human resource strategies and better manage their culturally diverse workforce.

Says Sir Cary: "In the current economic climate, and the need to 'achieve more with less', many organisations strive to maintain productivity and a competitive edge. But this has a substantial impact on employee health, wellbeing, and work outcomes. As such a relatively recent phenomenon that is receiving increasing attention is presenteeism.

"But presenteeism can be costly. When employees come to work sick they often demonstrate lower levels of performance and productivity, feeling more depressed and exhausted. In the long term presenteeism causes serious problems in employees' physical and mental health."



Foundational Economy: The infrastructure of everyday life
 Foundational Economy Collective
 Manchester University Press

Privatisation, market choice and outsourcing are the watchwords that have shaped policy in numerous democratic states in the last generation. The end result, say the authors, is the degradation of the 'foundational economy' which encompasses the essential fabric of our lives – the essential infrastructure of energy, water, and transport, and the essential services of education, health and care.

The Foundational Economy Collective, whose authors include Professors Julie Froud and Karel Williams from Alliance MBS, show how these services were built up in the 20th century so that they were collectively paid for, collectively delivered and collectively consumed.

They argue that this system of provision has been undermined in the age of privatisation and outsourcing and describe the principles that should guide renewal of the foundational economy and the initiatives which could begin to put these principles into practice.

Lord Bob Kerslake, the former head of the UK civil service, says: "There is now a widespread and growing view that the UK economy has ceased to work for ordinary people. This original and challenging book sets out a compelling argument for why this is happening."



Duality by Design: The Global Race to Build Africa's Infrastructure
 Nuno Gil, Anne Stafford, Inocent Musonda
 Cambridge University Press

As Africa experiences exponential population growth and China rises to become the world's largest economy, China's development assistance to tackle Africa's infrastructure gap has risen commensurately along with growing controversy on China's role in Africa's socioeconomic development.

Chinese authorities claim that warnings of a debt trap are unfounded, but Western observers are wary of filling infrastructure gaps without building the surrounding institutions first.

At the same time equipping Africa with basic infrastructure to cope with rapid population growth, fast urbanisation, and climate change has become a grand challenge of our times – a global race where the only loser, if we should fail, is humanity.

Building on an extensive body of evidence, this book jumps into the fray by arguing that building institutions and quick capital investment are two desirable, but organisationally incompatible objectives because their underlying design attributes are hard to reconcile.

Professors Nuno Gil and Anne Stafford from Alliance MBS have joined forces with Inocent Musonda, a civil engineer who has worked in the public and private sector across Africa and who is a founder and director of the centre for applied research and innovation in the built environment (CARINBE) at the University of Johannesburg. ●



**ORIGINAL
THINKING
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