

BRASS

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Research news

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What a difference a decade makes

Professor Ken Peattie | BRASS Director



2011 represents the tenth year of BRASS’s existence, which represents a good moment for a brief reflection on our story so far and the ways in which the research agenda is in a very different place in early 2011 compared to early 2001.

It is actually quite difficult to appreciate the extent to which the original BRASS research areas were seen as slightly “fringe” and radical at the time. The original funding case for BRASS argued for greater emphasis on accountability and biosecurity in our food supply system several months before the Foot and Mouth crisis bit. It also argued for greater accountability and social responsibility amongst large companies long before Enron’s house of cards came tumbling down in October 2001.

Compared to 2001 the social responsibilities of big business has become an even more central topic of debate amongst academics, policy makers and the business community with the credit crunch of 2008/9. The culpability of the banking industry has led many to question the financial sustainability of existing business practices, and the research work by Dr Demetra Arsalidou, summarized in this issue of BRASS Research News, demonstrates the extent to which the “Bankers Bailout” may lead to us repeating the mistakes of the crunch

instead of learning from them. Of course CSR is not simply relevant to big business, although small businesses have traditionally been rather neglected in both scholarship and policy debates on the topic. BRASS has helped to redress this, particularly through the research work of Heledd Jenkins. This has formed the foundation of a new interactive online resource for smaller businesses, co-produced with the ACCA, and described here on pages 10 and 11.

Social enterprise, social marketing, climate change behaviours, alternative

business models to build more sustainable cars, localized food supply systems, ecological footprinting, ecolabelling and approaches to measuring wellbeing are all issues that in 2001 few people would have heard or thought much about. They all existed then very much at the fringes of academic, political and business thinking. BRASS has since played its part in driving them all into the mainstream to the point where we now have a government department and major new ESRC research investments focusing on social enterprise; social marketing is firmly in vogue as government departments seek to tackle many health, sustainability and community challenges through cost-effective behavioural change approaches; we’ve seen a House of Lords enquiry into how to promote lower carbon transport behaviours (to which BRASS contributed); and real businesses are being established to create more sustainable vehicles using the innovative business models pioneered by BRASS researchers.

In 2011 the ESRC announced three new priority themes for its research strategy:

- Economic Performance and Sustainable Growth
- Influencing Behaviour and Informing Interventions
- A Vibrant and Fair Society

It is interesting to note how closely these match some of the core competences of BRASS in sustainable business, behavioural change and social marketing, issues of environmental justice, welfare and wellbeing. It confirms that over ten years BRASS and its research agenda have traveled from the interesting and innovative fringes to the very heart of the social science research agenda of the future. Looking into the future is always a risky business, but I think I’m safe in predicting that the BRASS research agenda and its focus on business sustainability and CSR will become even more important in the years to come.

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Changing climate, changing behaviour

Dr Lorraine Whitmarsh

As climate change has become a pressing social and policy issue, so the ways in which climate change is perceived and responded to by different sections of society have become crucially important.



At a basic level, effective and democratic climate change policy-making involves public support. Some see a more active role for the public in creating change, involving public participation in policy-making, community decision-making, and grassroots innovation. In many cases policy makers' interest in societal engagement goes beyond building public support (or demand) for policy, to encouraging individual behaviour change – both in terms of energy use (mitigation) and living with climate change impacts (adaptation). Yet despite increasing public awareness of climate change and its relationship with lifestyle choices, energy demand and associated greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase and impact our climate.

Research being undertaken by BRASS Associates is focussing on identifying key influences on climate-significant behaviour and effective engagement methods to stimulate behaviour change and foster more sustainable lifestyles. Dr Lorraine Whitmarsh, a BRASS Associate since November 2009, has just published findings that highlight the importance of 'green identity' – i.e., seeing oneself as an environmentally-concerned person – on adopting certain sustainable

behaviours, particularly consumer choices (i.e., eco-shopping). Yet environmentally-friendly travel habits and energy saving in the home are less influenced by psychological factors than by contextual factors, such as residential location and age. This may be because shopping for material objects (unlike energy) is 'conspicuous consumption' and more likely to be an expression of identity. On the other hand, knowledge and concern about climate change tend to have little influence on adoption of climate-friendly behaviours which are often constrained by various psychological, social and structural barriers. Methods, models and tools for overcoming these barriers and promoting public engagement with climate change are showcased in a volume edited by Whitmarsh and colleagues, published in November 2010 (www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=102449).

Other BRASS research highlights that attitudes and preferences for low-carbon policies and technologies vary considerably amongst different groups. In research funded by BRASS and the European Seventh Framework Programme REACT project (Supporting Research on Climate-friendly Transport; www.react-transport.eu) Lorraine Whitmarsh and Dimitrios Xenias are using a range of methods to investigate preferences for low-carbon transport. This work finds widespread support amongst both transport experts and non-experts for public transport, walking and cycling; but far less support amongst the general public, than amongst experts, for pricing policies (e.g., congestion charging). Ultimately this research will inform development of a European research agenda for low-carbon transport, as well as helping to shape policy in this area.

Tyndall comes to Cardiff

Reflecting the expertise in climate change and sustainability within BRASS, the Understanding Risk group and elsewhere at Cardiff University, the world-renowned Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research (www.tyndall.ac.uk) has invited Cardiff University to become a core partner of the Centre. The Tyndall Centre was established in 2000 brings together scientists, economists, engineers and social scientists who are working to develop sustainable responses to climate change.

This strategic alliance builds on and formalises existing collaborations between BRASS Associates and Tyndall Centre researchers. It is also further highlights the unique, world-leading expertise on climate change that exists in Wales which was brought together at the end of 2009 under the banner of the Climate Change Consortium for Wales (C3W; www.climatechangewales.ac.uk). This £4 million initiative is financed by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), the Countryside Council for Wales and substantial investment from the four universities involved (Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea). BRASS's association with the Tyndall Centre will strengthen, extend, and enhance the international profile of our work on sustainable responses to climate change.



Apples and pears!

Poppy Nicol | BRASS PhD Scholar

What do you get if you bring together 85 fruit trees, 250 broken pallets, 100 recycled tyres, 26 volunteers, a handful of Finnish engineers and throw them all in to a car park in south London? The beginnings of an urban orchard!

The Union Street orchard was designed by Landscape Architect and Wayward Plant Registry founder, Heather Ring. Over the weekend of 3rd-4th July 2010, the site was filled with visitors as part of the London Festival of Architecture. It is also the temporary home of Ring's adoption agency for abandoned or 'wayward' plants.

Alongside the 85 heritage fruit trees planted, the site included a beach hut retrofitted to become a greenhouse, a skip converted into a pingpong table, a Finnish wooden nesting structure, a sedum-roof urban pod and bird nests. Heritage fruit varieties were selected with apple trees including Blenheim Orange, James Grieve, Jonagold, Ellison's Orange as well as a range of heritage varieties of cherries, quince, and pear.

BRASS PhD scholar, Poppy Nicol, who is researching journeys of apples and notions of quality as part of her research, was asked to help lead a workshop on apple mappings and tastings. Participants explored the orchard and some participated in a tasting journey, considering the different tastes of apples available in London that day from Bramleys to Golden Delicious. They then had the opportunity to press some apples and try the juice of their fruity labour. Recipes of childhood memories of

apple related dishes were collected and a patchwork of descriptives gathered from the tasting workshop.

When considering that approximately 80% of the fruit consumed within London is imported from outside of the UK, the Union Street Orchard offers an alternative use of urban space and a different view of procurement and consumption of fruit within the city.

As part of the festival, workshops covered seed bomb making with guerrilla gardeners, beekeeping, willow sculpting, flower arranging with salvaged plants, apple pressing with a juicing expert, talks on the potential of algae as a biofuel and a visit from the Helsinki Design Lab.

After the lease of the space runs out in September, the fruit trees and



Union Street Urban Orchard. [source: Poppy Nicol]



In the evening, the orchard was filled with music, screenings, poetry and cider.

other plants will be redistributed to other community gardens in the local area and the legacy of the fruit trees will continue, alongside the ideas and insights gained throughout the weekend's events.

For any further information, email Poppy on nicolp@cf.ac.uk

Working together to put out fires

Dr Sue Peattie

Dr Sue Peattie writes about the advantages of tackling research projects at an interdisciplinary centre like BRASS. Drawing on the highly successful 'Bernie' social marketing project, developed to tackle deliberate grass fire setting behaviours in the South Wales Valleys, she explains how she gained access to a range of different research skills.

What is Social Marketing?

The BRASS social marketing work led by Dr Sue Peattie and Professor Ken Peattie specialises in applying social marketing techniques to areas linked to sustainability, moving beyond their usual sphere of health behaviours. Social marketing applies similar approaches used by marketers in business to achieve social goals. It uses research to better understand people and to develop some form of attractive 'proposition' which will motivate them to change.

The potential for Fire Services to use social marketing was presented by Sue and Ken to the 2008 UK Fire Service Conference in London. South Wales' Chief Fire Officer subsequently, set up a long-term project through Alexander Consultants, in consultation with Dr. Sue Peattie, to tackle the problem behaviour of deliberate grass fire setting.

Each year the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) fight about 7,000 grass fires in the South Wales Valleys, at least three quarters of which are started deliberately. Years of conventional educational

approaches aiming to alert children about the dangers of such fires had not significantly reduced their incidence, nor the annual £7million bill for dealing with them.

The behaviour occurred predominantly in Spring, particularly around the school Easter holidays when the previous season's grass and bracken became dry enough to burn. It had become something of a seasonal tradition and a social norm within the Valleys communities.

The Social Marketing Campaign

A pilot project was established in Tonypany, one of two communities where the problem was most intense. Another nearby community Aberdare, was used as a 'control group', to eliminate weather and other external influences when evaluating the project's success. Just like commercial marketing, social marketing begins with in-depth research into the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of potential 'customers' and other stakeholders.

The research identified that it was something that parents remembered doing in their youth, and which was

generally perceived as relatively 'harmless fun'. Interviews with local youngsters in Tonypany revealed that fire-setters were predominantly young males motivated by boredom, thrill-seeking, attention seeking, peer pressure, natural curiosity and experimentation. They were not necessarily disaffected youths, and included an unexpectedly wide range of young people.

The campaign brought together a range of community stakeholders including SWFRS, the Police, Forestry Commission, Tonypany Community College and a local Asda store, to combine educational efforts, better law enforcement and appealing alternative activities which promoted perceived value and ownership of youngsters' local environment.

The challenge was to involve and engage the youngsters responsible in more positive alternative behaviours and reduce opportunities for starting fires. Pupils from Tonypany Community College helped develop the campaign, designing the Bernie the Sheep mascot and campaign strapline 'Grass is Green, Fire is Mean'.

A Youth Advisory Board from the College worked with the SWFRS and other stakeholders to plan a range of activities to keep local youths engaged over the Easter holidays including bush-craft skills, abseiling, film-making and graffiti workshops. Youngsters could even attend a 'Firefighter for a day' course and experience first hand some of the challenges faced by local fire crews. The Bernie website and associated Facebook page kept local youngsters informed and involved, and participation was rewarded with a highly desirable Bernie Hoodie and a signed 'pledge' certificate.

Working together to evaluate the success

Professor Robert Newcombe from Cardiff Medical School, an expert in medical statistics, applied the type of rigorous statistical analysis usually used in epidemiological studies to analyse the effectiveness of the behavioural intervention in Tonypany. This needed to be compared both to past incidences of deliberate fires and to the experience of the 'control' group.

Prof. Newcombe concluded that, for the 6 week intervention period around Easter 2010, the number of fires was 46% lower than expected (compared to previous years and the figures for the 'control' group). This was way above the project target of reducing fires by 15%. In addition, the number of deliberate grass fires in Tonypany continued to be lower than expected in subsequent months indicating a sustained change in behaviour even when the intervention had finished.

Dr Fiona Davies (Cardiff Business School) provided marketing research expertise to measure changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the young people in Tonypany and Aberdare as a result of *Project Bernie*.

Dr. Diego Vazquez (BRASS) also performed a cost-benefit analysis of the project. This revealed that a saving of £120,000 was made in its first year, leading to a double return on investment by 2010.



As a research project, 'Bernie' represented an innovative and effective approach to changing a behaviour which negatively impacts communities and the environment. As a practical intervention it demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of social marketing and the power of partnerships in shifting seemingly intractable problem behaviours.

On 24th January 2011, 90 people attended a seminar held at Cardiff University to learn about the success of project BERNIE, and it has also been short listed for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Excellence Awards (Public Sector Category).

Another interesting and unexpected outcome of the project was the way in which it impacted the internal working practices of SWFRS and its relationship with key external stakeholders including the Police and the Forestry Commission. Professor Robyn Thomas (Cardiff Business School), an expert in organisations and public sector management, worked with Dr Sue Peattie to interview key players in the project to understand how *Project Bernie* had effected internal and Partnership working. The social marketing campaign also appeared to have provided a catalyst to improve internal relationships, effectiveness and laid a good foundation for improved future partnership working with other key stakeholders.

Crime figures from South Wales Police also indicate that there was a reduction in other reported anti-social behaviour in the Tonypany area during and after the intervention period. The success of the intervention has been such that similar initiatives are going to be established in four more Welsh Unitary Authorities next year.



The behaviour occurred predominantly in Spring, particularly around the school Easter holidays when the previous season's grass and bracken became dry enough to burn.

Planning policy-making in Wales: working with the Welsh Assembly Government

Dr Hazel Nash

Providing the research and evidence upon which future policy is based forms an important part of the BRASS Agenda.

As a BRASS Research Associate, my role includes keeping abreast of legislative and policy developments in aspects of the environment, contributing to relevant UK and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) consultations, providing policy briefings on upcoming or current areas of policy development and undertaking studies to inform the development of policy in areas including waste. However, contributing to policy-making by providing information and developing policies are two very different things, as I learnt during my secondment to the Planning Policy Branch of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The project mandate for my secondment was to assess the implications for the existing planning policy framework of the new Waste Strategy for Wales, "Towards Zero Waste" (TZW) and feed into the development of the Collection, Infrastructure and Markets Sector (CIMS) Waste Sector Plan. Landuse planning plays a key role in delivering the reuse, recycling and landfill

reduction targets established in TZW by ensuring the provision of an integrated and adequate network of waste facilities and infrastructure.

The greatest challenge of the secondment has been to examine documents for the purpose of determining what they mean, or might mean, for the planning system and decision-making process.

What was most surprising was the emphasis on and need for communication both within the division and amongst divisions. The large open plan office really supports a team mentality. Liaison between divisions can be more hit and miss, relying to a large extent on individuals recognising the benefits of fostering close working relationships.

In developing a greater understanding of the implications of TZW and the waste sector plans on landuse planning policy the team was provided early on with the opportunity to engage in the development of the CIMS Plan. The team was copied into emails detailing the latest developments and data analysis within the Plan, invited to provide feedback, suggestions, observations and had a number of meetings with waste colleagues to feed into the scope and mechanisms

of the developing draft policy from the planning perspective.

Although integration between policy areas is vital, it also presents policy-makers with certain challenges. Policy divisions specialise in a particular field and therefore come with a particular built-in focus and expertise. However, since policy cannot operate or be applied in a vacuum, it must be reflected through cooperation between various policy-makers and relevant stakeholders in drafting new policy.

In policy development discussions, there is potential for tensions between different policy areas to arise since



the lead policy team has priorities they need to meet. Again, sound relationships and good partnership working enables resolutions to be found and compromise to be negotiated.

My experiences on secondment have given me a real insight into the intricacies (practical, technical and administrative) and political aspects which influence the complex task of policy-making.

These operations are made more challenging by ambitious timeframes driven by EU obligations or ministerial instruction, a varied and heavy work load and restricted resources. Still, the focus of the Planning Policy Branch's

efforts remain squarely in representing the interests of Local Planning Authorities and Planning Officers. In doing so, they can ensure that new policies and priorities likely to affect the framework of landuse planning in Wales reflects the functions, responsibilities and processes of the planning system.

My evolving appreciation of the challenges involved in policy-making will undoubtedly inform, shape and steer future research, policy analysis and advice.

At the time of writing, the draft CIMS Plan is entering its final stages of refinement before going out to consultation.

The Planning Policy Division has fed into this plan, both through a contextual chapter on what the impacts will be on the existing planning policy framework and also by setting out a number of consultation questions in relation to how these can be built into planning policy in a clear way which reduces administrative burdens whilst ensuring legislative compliance.

It remains to be seen exactly how this will be taken forward in planning policy, but what is certain is that the division is engaged with the new and forthcoming waste policies.

The ABC of CSR for SMEs – a practical online guide

Heledd Jenkins

A practical online guide designed specifically for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Wales who want to understand more about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been developed based on work by BRASS Researcher, Heledd Jenkins. 'The ABC of CSR for SMEs' was produced in partnership with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Cymru/Wales and drew on case studies from six Welsh SMEs that illustrate examples of good practice.

Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing Jane Davidson AM, highlighted the importance of CSR to the Welsh economy when she launched the innovative online guide aimed at Welsh SMEs on Tuesday 9th November 2010 at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay.

CSR is something that businesses of all types and sizes need to understand and address. People associate CSR with large companies, but the economic importance of SMEs has led to a growing emphasis on their social and environmental impact. Research has shown that far from being disengaged from the practice of CSR many SMEs are innovative in the ways they address the issues. SMEs can take advantage of the opportunities

presented by CSR and maximize the business benefits from making the most of such opportunities. Wales has taken a lead in challenging businesses to adopt CSR programmes and it is crucial that SMEs play their part in meeting local, national and global targets on social, environmental and economic issues.

In practice CSR is about how businesses of all types and sizes manage their day to day processes to ensure their contribution to society is a positive one. CSR is not an "add-on" to how business is run; it is increasingly at the core of "how business does business" and should be integrated into every aspect of the operation. It's about "very best business practice".



In practice CSR is about how businesses of all types and size manage their day to day processes to ensure their contribution to society is a positive one.

The guide takes a step by step approach designed to suit a business no matter what the level of CSR understanding or what stage a business has reached in relation to CSR.

A. Getting Started - initial practical ideas for how to get started with CSR.

B. More Ideas - more advanced ideas and initiatives for those who have already started to adopt some CSR measures.

C. Taking Things a Step Further - for those companies ready to formalize their CSR programmes.

The guide addresses four key CSR issues that are likely to be important to small businesses - employees, the environment, the community and the supply chain. The guide also focuses on six key lessons that SMEs should bear in mind when implementing CSR.

1. Set values - put CSR at the core of business operations so that it influences the way that all decisions are made.
2. Find a champion - every business needs a champion to 'kick-start' CSR activities and to pioneer and support new ideas.
3. Make a difference where you can - a CSR strategy should reflect the actual operations of the company.
4. Channel CSR through employees - make it mean something to employees; employee buy-in is crucial to the success of CSR.
5. Realise and maximise the business benefits - it needs to make good business sense to be effective and sustainable
6. Communicate CSR efforts - both internally and externally in order to realise the full business benefits.

The guide also contains a glossary, information on legal obligations and useful links and sources of support. Case studies from six Welsh SMEs illustrate different companies' approaches to adopting CSR.

The guide can be found online at <http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk/abc/>

To learn more about ACCA: <http://www.accaglobal.com/>

To read more about the research <http://goo.gl/vmnDG>

For more information please email Heledd Jenkins at: jenkinsh1@cf.ac.uk

Hot Spots: mapping social vulnerability and environmental risk

Dr Diego Vazquez

A major international BRASS project, in collaboration with Almeria University (Spain) and Buenos Aires University (Argentina), assessed social vulnerability and environmental threats posed by economic activities. It did so by combining environmental, socio-economic and geographical concepts to construct new spatial and technical indicators.

This approach to calculating risk has been applied to three countries which share the same language, but whose socio-economic situations vary greatly, namely Spain, Argentina and Bolivia.

Mapping the indicators facilitated the assessment of potential environmental deterioration caused by the industrial activities located in certain areas. Two scales of analysis were used to make the assessment: a regional one that identifies average risk over large administrative areas such as provinces and a more detailed scale, the census unit, to determine the local distribution of risk and contaminant industries.

A census unit is the smallest area for which census data is collected in a country, typically containing between 0 and 1000 people and up to 250 housing units. The methodology identifies geographical variations of risk levels within the same country and is also useful for comparing data across different countries.

The results confirmed the usefulness of this methodology to assess risk due to environmental deterioration to which the population of a given area is susceptible. Irrespective of their degree of economic development, the three countries present scenarios of high vulnerability and/or hazardousness.

These “Hot Spots” have mainly been identified in large cities where there are higher concentrations of firms and people - usually associated with rapid growth that compromises the appropriate adaptation of the region.

The great differences in levels of poverty and social vulnerability (e.g. housing conditions, access to running water, sewage, education, health coverage, single parent families, informal employment), in Latin America underlines the importance of considering these aspects alongside environmental hazardousness in order to evaluate the risk.

Environmental risk has an impact on human health (e.g. environmental diseases) and economic assets (e.g. land deterioration, destruction of infrastructure by floods or accidents) but also has a wider impact on the wellbeing of communities. Communities living under chronic situations of

environmental risk generated by economic activity are trapped in lose-lose institutional situations forcing them to trade employment for health.

Mapping the data to assess situations of hazardousness arising from cumulative negative impacts of firms was an innovative approach. It allowed the identification of hazardousness due, not only to large industries, but also to geographical clusters of numerous small industries whose hazardousness was insignificant individually (and therefore less regulated or controlled), but whose combined emissions may have constituted a greater threat than that of a single large firm.

Small firms or those posing little hazard face less scrutiny than large firms, and less is known about their cumulative effect on the population. Consequently, there are usually fewer policies directed at managing risk generated through geographical proximity to small emitters

Communities living under chronic situations of environmental risk generated by economic activity are trapped in lose-lose institutional situations forcing them to trade employment for health.

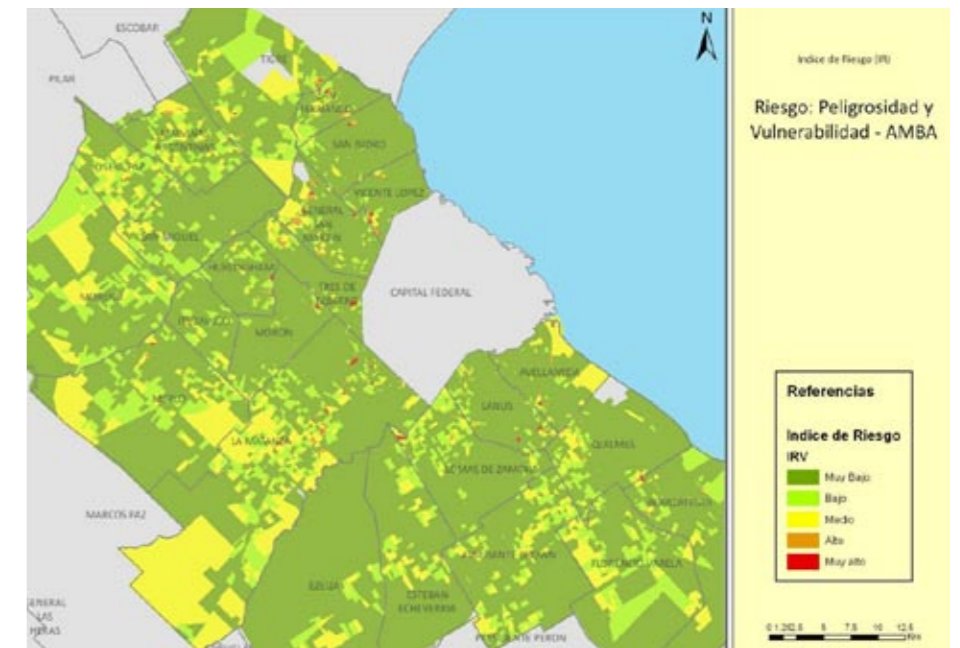
The analysis of more detailed data may prove useful for those responsible for spatial planning, e.g. town planning schemes, or the concession of permits for industrial activity and for building.

compared to large industries. This methodology provides diagnostic tools to overcome this problem in distributing institutional resources for managing risk.

This work provides a single aggregate value of overall risk. This analysis constitutes the first step towards the management of risk and may help in the design of preventive measures. However, solving these problems implies that decision making entities must be capable of acting on the causes of risk.

This approach was implemented at country and municipality levels to obtain results for both the municipal and census units. These different levels of analysis will facilitate the pinpointing of efforts in planning and controlling evaluated environmental risk at different administrative levels. Governments should pay greater attention to aggregate data to control risk in large areas. It could even be used to decide on the allocation of resources for vigilance and for plans to prevent or control risks to the population (e.g. incentives to decentralise large agglomerations).

The analysis of more detailed data may prove useful for those responsible for spatial planning, e.g. town planning schemes, or the concession of permits for industrial activity and for building. The detailed data may also be useful in planning the safety and protection of the population (e.g. security forces, Civil Protection, fire service, hospitals, etc.). As such, these Hot Spot maps could be useful for designing and establishing emergency protocols or for planning simulation exercises.



The project also prompted the mapping of community-business partnerships that reduce vulnerability and environmental deterioration in the identified Hot Spots. This revealed the importance of citizenship and personal engagement as well as companies' proactivity to open institutional spaces to generate bottom-up projects.



For example, an initiative to break poverty traps stimulates creative thinking in children from some of the most critical hot-spots areas. It organises workshops where vulnerable children create 'ideal worlds': drawing

characters, recording sounds and writing scripts, which are then captured in three-dimensional projection loops. This project was led by a local journalist and communications experts. A pilot was funded by the telecommunications giant Telefonica through its Telefonica Foundation, and is currently maintained by Buenos Aires Municipality with the pioneering children acting as coaches for others in a new series of workshops.

Facilitating Sustainable Innovation through Collaboration - A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective - Sarkis, Joseph; Cordeiro, James J.; Vazquez Brust, Diego (Eds.)

ISBN: 978-90-481-3158-7 is available through Springer books.

New book advocates 'integrated' methods of sustainability research

Ayushman Singh Jamwal | BRASS Communications Intern

Most books concerned with social science research methods are generic in approach with broad explanations of theories and the basic challenges of research in different subject areas. Existing books help researchers to apply methods and models across different socio-economic settings, but offer little advice on how to then engage non-academic groups or policy makers with crucial issues and findings.

BRASS researchers have a tradition of both disseminating their findings through traditional academic channels through research papers and monographs, and engaging with a broader audience to promote changes that will benefit individuals, communities and society. Alex Franklin and Paul Blyton's edited collection *Researching Sustainability* featuring research by BRASS researchers comprehensively reflects this. The book illustrates individual approaches with real case studies, highlighting particularly useful research methods and recognises the importance of communicating research, making it a distinctive piece of social science literature.

Sustainability researchers are regularly faced with the need to engage with different stakeholders from community groups, NGO's, government bodies to media organisations. Consequently, it is important for the research design to first establish a clear understanding of the different stakeholders in the research, their characteristics and the worlds they operate within.

The chapters in *Researching Sustainability* illustrate the range of different stakeholders (individuals

and institutions) that sustainability researchers engage with during different stages of their work.

Some notable contributions are BRASS PhD scholar Llyr Roberts' exploration of the relationship between academic researchers and policy makers in the context of promoting sustainability issues and implementing policies. Roberts highlights the plethora of groups that seek to exert influence over sustainability policy at different levels of policy-making and argues that academics can make a particular contribution on the basis of the rigour and balance of their research findings. The author draws on his personal experience as a lobbyist and his knowledge of sustainability policy-making to demonstrate how the independence of the academic researcher can be an important factor in developing effective relationships with policy makers.

BRASS' Networks Manager Cerys Ponting highlights the factors surrounding the engagement of young people with sustainability issues. The author draws on her experience as a Researcher in Residence at a secondary school to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of developing an interest in, and commitment to sustainability issues, both among the school children and their teachers. Many of the points she raises have a wider relevance to the issues surrounding communication with non-specialist audiences in general.

Additionally, BRASS Research Manager Lori Frater draws from her personal experience as a Media Fellow at the BBC to discuss the relationship between academic researchers and the media, considering how it might be improved. Frater emphasises the need for a greater appreciation of the different media time scales and notes the

significant contribution that academics can make in providing knowledge and a balanced perspective on sustainability issues that journalists frequently lack the time to acquire.

These and other chapters emphasise the value of sustainability researchers disseminating their findings to different audiences, whilst recognising the particular situation and needs of those audiences, be they lay people, policy makers or journalists of this or the next generation. Broader dissemination helps increase the impact of the research, opens up opportunities for undertaking additional research at a future date and creates opportunities for shared or 'engaged' scholarship. Additionally, developing and communicating research findings using a breadth of different methods and approaches, helps to avoid the pitfalls of becoming overly fixated on one approach or sustainability discourse.

By illustrating some of the ways in which social science research methods are being used to further develop our knowledge and understanding of unsustainable practices, *Researching Sustainability* advocates a more effective integration of social science research techniques and take up of social science results within broader sustainability research programmes.

The book is available from Earthscan at: <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=102740>



Should the bailout have saved the bankers?



Dr Demetra Arsalidou

The Government bailout of UK banks is generally credited with having saved the UK economy, but did it also save irresponsible bankers from being held accountable for their actions? This question has been tackled through a detailed analysis of the legal implications of the bailout by Dr Demetra Arsalidou who specialises in research on Directors' legal responsibilities.

There is general agreement that mismanagement, incompetence and reckless risk-taking significantly contributed to pushing many of our banks to the brink of collapse. A report by the International Corporate Governance Network concluded that poor corporate governance underlay the financial crisis and too many people simply failed to understand the risks involved.

The Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, provides, through section 6, for the mandatory disqualification of directors whose company has become insolvent, for a minimum of two years and a maximum of 15. In addition, the Insolvency Act 1986 gives courts the power to impose personal liability on directors for the debts of an insolvent company if they have engaged in "wrongful trading". This personal liability aims to encourage company directors to face up to a growing financial crisis before it becomes too late. However,

these sanctions only apply to directors of companies that have become insolvent. The directors of a company brought to the brink of insolvency, but rescued by nationalisation or another form of government protection, cannot be disqualified or held accountable for the debts of their failing institution, no matter how much wrongful or reckless trading they have engaged in.

When the UK Government stepped in to rescue Northern Rock through nationalisation, Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds through share purchases, and Bradford and Bingley through loans, it won plaudits for prompt and decisive action which saved them from collapse. The price of this rescue however, may be more than financial. By preventing the directors involved from being held accountable, we may not learn the lessons of the credit crunch, nor be able to prevent it from being repeated in future.

The injection of taxpayer money into failing firms saves their directors from liability and creates a safety net that encourages the types of excessive risks that caused the crunch. This can potentially lead to problems of moral hazard, a term generally referring to the danger that safety nets push market participants to take greater risks than normally taken. "The Run on the Rock" report recognised this problem, stating that that UK banks and building societies appear to view the Government's support of Northern Rock as a promise that no bank would be allowed to fail in future. With both the banks and the bankers escaping

from the consequences of any reckless risk-taking, there is clearly an urgent need to tighten the law.

The Treasury introduced a new Banking Act in 2009, which amended the law on bank insolvency and administration. It specifically includes the possibility of bank directors being disqualified to ensure that action can be taken against those of failed banks. However, while the loophole remains open whereby a government rescue from insolvency prevents bankers from being held fully accountable for their actions in a financial sense, it is unlikely to change their behaviour, particularly if they believe that ultimately banks will not be allowed to fail.

The UK needs a special bank directors' regime that links the wrongful trading provisions of the Insolvency Act with the aims of the new Banking Act to ensure that irresponsible directors can be held accountable even when banks are rescued. Knowing they cannot evade responsibility for their actions will deter bank directors from presiding over reckless behaviour, whilst providing some redress for those who suffer losses as a result.

The full article is available at:

The Banking Crisis: Rethinking and Refining the Accountability of Bank Directors, Arsalidou D, The Journal of Business Law, 4 (2010) 284-310 ISSN 0021-9460

Questioning the “economists” critique of Fair Trade

Alastair M. Smith, BRASS PhD Scholar

One of the most persistent critiques of fair trade is that guaranteed minimum prices incentivise producers to remain in low-value economic activities. This argument has a strong rhetorical power as it is grounded in basic economic theory that everyone knows from school. However, such simple economic theory is not appropriate for analysis and this position can be strongly questioned on theoretical and empirical grounds.

Fair trade implicitly and explicitly recognises the need for producers to diversify out of low-value sectors into higher income activities. After all, the very idea of opening northern markets is an attempt to capture more value rather than just relying on local markets often dominated by exploitative intermediary traders.

Furthermore, basic economic theory makes some very unrealistic assumptions about the world in order to model it (that everyone knows everything across time and space being just one of them). For this reason, consumers, producers and policy makers are not choosing between (less efficient) fair trade and (more efficient) perfect market models (where producers migrate out of low income activities into higher value sectors), but instead between fair trade and what exists in its place.

Setting aside the ‘oligopsonistic’ nature of international commodity markets (with many producers and few buyers) more sophisticated economic theory demonstrates that simply expecting producers to respond to market incentives is inadequate. The reason for this is three fold:

1. While there are obvious “push” incentives to a livelihood of poor returns and instability, there are not necessarily “pull incentives” to attract producers into other areas. Just because growing coffee pays poorly, doesn’t mean you know what fetches better prices in Sainsbury’s.
2. Even if “pull” incentives exist, actors require resources to respond. Unfortunately however, the very definition of ‘poor’ producers means that they will not have the financial, physical, social and human capital necessary – and it is unlikely that they can access these for example, by getting a bank loan.
3. Even where farmers can access resources, all economic decisions involve a calculation of “risk”. Indeed, a widespread literature demonstrates poor producers will not risk the little that they have for an uncertain alternative – as failure probably

means a total lack of income for the foreseeable future.

For the above reasons, the argument that fair trade distorts perfect market mechanisms that would otherwise promote diversification is irrelevant. Instead, analysis needs to compare fair trade with what would actually be the case if it were withdrawn; and therefore, assess if such governance reduces the real constraints on diversification into higher value sectors.

Theoretically, fair trade pays guaranteed minimum prices as well as offering long-term trading relations to provide the necessary stability for long-term planning and eventual diversification into higher-value products and processes. The Social Premium allows investment in health and education needed for wider economic development. While this can theoretically be achieved through aid transfer, there are dangers of dependency and this does not allow producers to “learn by doing” how to be economically self sufficient. Finally, many fair trade organisations work with producers directly to improve their efficiency and produce quality. Finally of course, there are also empirical examples of where Fairtrade certified producers have diversified into higher value sectors!

In conclusion, fair trade agrees that southern producers must diversify into higher return activities. For this reason it seeks to remove real world obstacles to development by increasing remuneration and capacity in southern communities and providing the stability needed for long-term planning. One limitation of this argument however, is its theoretical nature and limited empirical base. For this reason, impact assessments must take seriously the issue of direct and indirect livelihood diversification. A final issue of urgent importance is that certification organisations explicitly recognise the need for diversification and ensure that fair trade principles remain a tool of development and not just ethical consumer satisfaction.

This article is based on the peer review academic article published in Oxford Journal of Development Studies which has recently won the “Sanjaya Lall Prize” for 2009-2010: Smith, Alastair M. (2009), “Fair Trade Diversification and Structural Change: Towards a broader framework of analysis”, Oxford Journal of Development Studies. Vol. 37 No. 4.





Making big events in Cardiff more sustainable

Dr Andrea Collins

Year 9 geography pupils at Cardiff High School recently took part in an environmental tour of Cardiff's Millennium Stadium. Pupils visiting the Stadium were winners of a poster competition on how to make big events green and more sustainable. The tour was organised by BRASS RCUK Fellow, Dr Andrea Collins as part of the RCUK's 'Researchers in Residence' Scheme.

The 'Researcher in Residence Scheme' funded by the RCUK and supported by the Wellcome Trust aims to engage young people with contemporary research to stimulate their interest and motivation in the social, physical, life and earth sciences and the humanities, and motivate them to take up careers in those areas. Dr Kerry Leslie, Head of Public Engagement with Research at the RCUK describes the Researchers in Residence Scheme as "a unique programme, which is extremely important in helping to develop a new generation of researchers who will

continue to enhance the UK's global research reputation."

Andrea's placement at Cardiff High School involved delivering classroom workshops on the London 2012 Olympic Games, Sustainability and sports events as well as organising the poster competition and educational tour of Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

Dr Collins said: "The enthusiasm of pupils and staff has been great. The opportunity to work with the pupils and getting them to think about the environmental impacts of major sport events has been very rewarding as a researcher. The winning posters were very innovative in terms of the solutions put forward by pupils to help solve some of the big environmental impacts."

Claire Jenkins, Events Manager at the Millennium Stadium, provided a bespoke environmental tour for the winning pupils. Pupils learnt how the stadium prepares for its big events, what measures it has in place to reduce the environmental impacts of events, and how it will be preparing to host the football events as part of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.



Cardiff High School has commented on the wider importance of incorporating sustainability into lessons as a means to encourage students to become responsible global citizens. Ms Williams, Head of Geography at Cardiff High School said, "Large events such as the Rugby Six Nations, music events and the Speedway do attract a large amount of spectators to the city. As well as bringing economic benefits to Cardiff, events like these can also have a significant impact on the environment. Our pupils benefitted greatly from visiting the Stadium. Pupils learnt not only what steps the Stadium are taking to stage more sustainable events, including the football as part of the London 2012 Games, but also how difficult it can be to introduce the latest green solutions to a stadium which is now almost 10 years old".

Working together to discover wellbeing – a young person's perspective

Cerys Ponting & Dr Julie Newton

BRASS has embarked on an exciting new research project working with the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Technquest to explore what wellbeing means for young people aged 16-19 in Wales and gathering their views on whether measuring wellbeing is worthwhile.

This work will feed into a long term programme for the ONS to capture a snapshot of wellbeing in Britain as part of the government's drive to measure national wellbeing spearheaded by the Prime Minister, David Cameron. These measures will sit alongside other indicators of progress such as Gross Domestic Produce (GDP).

Wellbeing as a measure will have to take into account differences between age groups. For example, young people may not be so concerned about financial or job security but might have other concerns such as relationships with their friends and families, having technology that allows them to communicate with their friends and having their voice heard.

This work draws on Dr Julie Newton's expertise in wellbeing, as well as Cerys Ponting's previous work with young people through BRASS's outreach and public engagement work. The project is a first in terms of working with the ONS and feeding into their broader work on

measuring national wellbeing. This has also been the first time that BRASS has worked in partnership with Technquest, a strategic partner of Cardiff University.

Technquest, with their expertise in working with young people, designed the workshop which has its basis in a 'contemporary science debate'. This creates a space for young people to discuss the things that make life good and what they feel they need to live well. They are asked to write their key components of wellbeing on post it notes and combine these with those of other young people to group them under common headings, or 'domains'. They then try to rank these in order of importance as well as discuss other aspects of wellbeing using story and information cards, focussed on wellbeing issues.

The first trial of the workshop was delivered to a group of young girls on the Discover! Club - coordinated by Careers Wales and the Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) initiative. This brought 30 young girls to BRASS for the morning of Saturday February 12th. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Elen Stokes, Dr Julie Newton, Cerys Ponting and BRASS PhD Scholars, Emma Dean and Louise Obara.



The workshop has subsequently been run with over 150 young people aged 16 – 19 across six schools in convergence areas in Wales. A report was fed back to the ONS at the end of March, and a conference paper will later be delivered in at the Wellbeing 2011 conference in Birmingham, and at the International Society for Child Indicators at York University.

For further information, please contact Cerys Ponting on pontingc@cf.ac.uk or Julie Newton, newtonj2@cf.ac.uk



Comments from a visiting fellow



Nicole Darnall Ph.D. | Associate Professor of Management and Policy, George Mason University

In June 2009, I had the opportunity to visit BRASS as a Visiting Fellow. My fellowship was sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the US Social Science Research Council (SSRC). I collaborated on two research projects during my stay.

Project I – Consumers’ Eco-label Use

I worked with Diego Vazquez (BRASS Research Manager) and Cerys Ponting (BRASS Research Associate) to assess why consumers are motivated to use eco-labels in their purchasing decisions. While previous research on consumers’ responsiveness to eco-labels has generally shown that they are willing to pay more for these products, we know far less about the factors motivating consumers’ eco-label use. We addressed these concerns by using a dataset developed through partnership research between BRASS and the Future Foundation of consumers’ purchasing preferences related to 6 UK eco-labels. By examining both general- and action-based knowledge alongside consumers’ sense of personal risk related to the environment and sense of empowerment to address environmental problems (‘personal affect’), this research offers important information to eco-label developers about which informational features may be particularly useful in encouraging broader eco-label use. For example, results, which have been presented at two international conferences, show that:

1. Consumers’ trust in environmental information differs depending on the source of information (e.g. government, environmental nonprofits and private industry). As such, an eco-label’s ability to influence consumer behavior may relate to which entities are involved in their creation and marketing.
2. This research takes an important step forward in determining what types of environmental information and consumer perceptions are more closely related to eco-label use.

Project II - CEO Perceptions of Win-win Compatibilities

My second project during my fellowship with BRASS related to Chief Executive Officers’ (CEO) perceptions about the relationship between a firm’s economic and environmental performance. This project was also in collaboration with Diego Vazquez. We sought to examine the factors related to CEO perceptions that corporate efforts to improve the environment are compatible with firm profitability using BRASS’ survey data on the environmental perceptions of Argentinean CEOs.

Initial findings were presented at Oxford University’s Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Cardiff University, and Lund University’s International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics. They informed the results of the first project. They indicate that corporate leaders who fail to recognize the potential of deriving a “green premium” are less likely to behave in an environmentally proactive way and utilize environmental labels of any sort.



Nicole Darnall Ph.D.

I attribute my work with BRASS and the ESRC/SSRC fellowship towards me receiving the 2010 George Mason University Emerging Researcher, Scholar and Creator Award.

BRASS Collaborations

I am enormously grateful for having had the opportunity to collaborate with BRASS researchers. The fellowship has allowed me to expand my ongoing research into areas which would I could not have done on my own. This expansion, I believe, was critical to me in receiving the 2010 Erasmus Mundus International Scholar Award, which has facilitated my collaborations with scholars at Lund University (in Sweden) and Central European University (in Hungary) during summer 2010. Additionally, I attribute my work with BRASS and the ESRC/SSRC fellowship towards me receiving the 2010 George Mason University Emerging Researcher, Scholar and Creator Award. The award recognizes growing national and international achievement and scholarship for scholars within 10 years of receiving their Ph.D.

I thank the ESRC/SSRC for sponsoring my work, and look forward to continued collaborations with BRASS researchers. Additionally, I encourage other researchers to learn more about BRASS’ visiting fellowship opportunities. Few places parallel BRASS’ focus on producing high quality, sustainable enterprise research that has applicability to research scholars, business managers and public policy makers alike. It is a unique place that is being increasingly recognized as a leader in business sustainability research.

Fashion EXPOsed

By Laura James

When it comes to clothing, do you care about what goes on behind the label?

BRASS addressed this question by organising a recent family fun day and fashion expo held at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Cardiff which attracted over 1000 visitors.

The day included craft activities, talks, and workshops. One of the talks entitled 'How to be an ethical shopper' was presented by Llyr Roberts, a BRASS Doctoral Researcher.

There were also two fashion shows showcasing clothing with an ethical conscience. Key partners providing clothes for the catwalk were Fair Do's, Halcyon Daze, Pre-Fab, Oxfam Boutique and Welsh designer Elinor Franklin.

Highlights of the fashion show included an 'up-cycled' skirt made from old ties, Fairtrade kaftans and fashionable trouser-suits, men's organic cotton shirts, and the unique 'Pollinator Frocks' created by designer Elinor Franklin and Dr Karen Ingham of Swansea Metropolitan University.

These special dresses use pollen grains in their fabric and are coated with nectar-like substances to mimic the way insects relate to flowers. The thought behind this scientific approach to dress-making is to attract pollinators – such as bees, butterflies and moths – and raise awareness of the threat to their habitats from human activity and fewer green spaces in urban areas.



Professor Ken Peattie, Director of BRASS, said: "BRASS is not looking to take the fun out of fashion, rather to add the thoughtfulness back in. The clothes in the fashion show were beautiful and special in terms of their ethical production and their benefits brought to both people and planet."

Fashion EXPOsed was part of National Science and Engineering Week (11–20 March), a 10 day programme of events running throughout the UK to celebrate science, engineering and technology. It also formed part of the University's 'Big Ideas' series of public engagement events that took place during March 2011.

There were also two fashion shows showcasing clothing with an ethical conscience.



BRASS staff

BRASS Directors

Professor Ken Peattie
peattie@cardiff.ac.uk

Ken is the Director of BRASS, and also a Professor of Marketing and Strategy at Cardiff Business School. Research interests include: The impact of environmental concern on marketing and corporate strategies, corporate social responsibility and social marketing.

Professor Bob Lee
leerg@cardiff.ac.uk

Professor Bob Lee is a former Head of Cardiff Law School and a Member of the Lord Chancellor's Standing Conference on Legal Education. Research interests include: Environmental regulation, regulation of biotechnology and biomedicine, risk, precaution and law and environmental economics and sustainability.

Professor Terry Marsden
marsdentk@cardiff.ac.uk

Professor Terry Marsden is Director of the Sustainable Places Research Institute and Professor of Environmental Policy and Planning in the School of City and Regional Planning, BRASS co-director and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Research. Research interests include: Theoretical and empirical studies in rural development, agro-food studies, sustainable development and planning, policy development and rural governance.

BRASS Research Managers

Lori Frater
fraterlb@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Regulation of nanotechnology; biotechnology and the role of intellectual property rights; the role of international law on the protection of national and regional biodiversity; waste, resource conflict and the influencing, developing and implementing policy.

Dr Diego Vasquez
vazquezd@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Environmental Values, Mindsets and Practices; Policy Process and Decision Making; Discourse Analysis; Stakeholders Theory; Corporate Social Responsibility; Policy Evaluation; Research Methods; Managing, Reporting and Measuring Sustainability.

BRASS Researchers and Support Staff

Petra Anderson
andersonp@Cardiff.ac.uk

Petra has been the Centre Secretary since June 2006. She is the first point of contact for all enquiries at BRASS and provides invaluable support for all BRASS staff.

Jeroen Dijkshoorn
dijkshoornj1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: European alternatives in waste management, process control and waste minimisation, waste management of SMEs in Britain, waste data management, EC and UK waste law and the European Waste Catalogue.

Dr Chris Groves
grovesc1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Environmental ethics and law; intergenerational ethics and sustainability; novel technologies; risk and regulation; sociology of risk and uncertainty; social theories of time; devolution and democratic politics in the United Kingdom.

Laura James
jamesl10@cf.ac.uk

Laura is the BRASS Administration Manager responsible for managing the administration of BRASS and is also involved in Centre communications. Laura joined BRASS in January 2006.

Heledd Jenkins
jenkinshm1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: SMEs, stakeholders and corporate social responsibility, CSR and the mining sector, CSR and football.

Dr Adrian Morley
morleya@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Sustainable food chains, public procurement, social enterprises and the social economy, sustainable waste management, innovation and alternative food systems.

Dr Hazel Nash
nashha@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: European environmental law, multi-level governance and devolution issues, environmental regulation and impact, planning law and policy and philosophical discourse on risk, governance and institutional reasoning.

Dr Julie Newton
newtonj2@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Sustainable communities; wellbeing; poverty and the environment; sustainable development; natural resource management; rural livelihoods; green spaces; agricultural extension; gender mainstreaming; culture and identity; social integration and inclusion.

Cerys Ponting
pontingc@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Relationship and network building, communications, climate and behaviour change, wellbeing, employee volunteering, social enterprise and producer responsibility.

Sarah Wilshin
WilshinS@cardiff.ac.uk

Sarah is the Centre Manager and joined BRASS in June 2009.

Dr Natalia Yakovleva
yakovlevan@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Corporate social responsibility, sustainability, environmental management, environmental reporting, corporate philanthropy, health and safety, employee policy, community development. Environmental and social issues relating to mining industry, supply chain relations, innovation and sustainability in the food system.

BRASS Associates

Dr Demetra Arsalidou
arsalidoud@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Corporate governance and the banking failures, directors' duties of diligence, disqualification and personal liability, ownership and control, the agency theory.

Professor Paul Blyton
blyton@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: The changing nature of work; how this has impacted on employees, and how employment relations processes shape the nature of outcomes of restructuring; changes in working time patterns, employees' experience of different work time schedules, and the implications of working time patterns for non-work life.

Dr Gillian Bristow
bristowg1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests focus on regional economic development and competitiveness, devolution, policy and governance, and resilience.

Dr Celine Chew
chewc@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: The application of strategy and marketing in third sector (voluntary and charitable) organisations; strategic positioning, innovation and performance in public service organisations; and social enterprise.

Dr Andrea Collins
collinsa@cardiff.ac.uk

RCUK Fellow in BRASS. Research interests include: Ecological Footprint, environmental impacts of sports, tourism and events; environmental decision-making and sustainable communities.

Dr Gareth Enticott
enticottg@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Biosecurity, public understandings of risk and disease, the social impacts of living with environmental risks, the governance and regulation of animal health and the veterinary profession.

Dr Peter Feindt
feindtp@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Theoretical and empirical studies in environmental policy and planning, agricultural, rural and food policy, democracy and participation, multiarena governance, political communication, climate change and sustainability politics.

Dr Andrew Flynn
flynnac@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Environmental regulation, business responses to sustainable development and food regulation.

Dr Alex Franklin
franklina1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Sustainable communities; City-region adaptations and transitions; Agricultural and rural restructuring; socio-natures; human-animal relationships; sustainable practices.

Neil Gunningham
gunninghamn@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Health and environmental regulation and the analysis of risk and regulation.

Dr Calvin Jones
jonesc24@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Economies of sports and major events, and on tourism economies. Regional economic modelling, including Input- Output and the development of Tourism Satellite Accounts.

Dr Selyf Morgan
morgans1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: agri-food and agri-environmental issues; knowledge generation and learning in agriculture; innovation and entrepreneurial behaviour; rural development and regional economic development; and science policy.

Professor Kevin Morgan
morgankj@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Innovation and Regional Development, devolution and the multi-level polity, sustainable agri-food chains, regeneration and self-managed communities.

Professor Max Munday
mundaymc@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interest include regional economics and policy, sustainability indicators; environmental implications of tourism activity and carbon accounting.

Dr Paul Nieuwenhuis
nieuwenhuis@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: sustainable automobility, sustainable consumption and production, socio-technical transformations, ecological models of business.

Dr Simon Norton
nortonsd@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Corporate governance in financial institutions, Bank regulation and financial fragility, Business ethics: banking activity and its impact upon the natural environment, the Equator Principles, Islamic finance and stakeholder engagement in the banking sector.

Dr Sue Peattie
peatties@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests centre on Social Marketing for behaviour change (the application of commercial marketing techniques to health, safety and environmental issues).

Professor Nick Pidgeon
pidgeonn@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Issues at the interface of society, public policy, technology, risk and the environment. His research focuses on risk perceptions, risk communication, risk regulation/management and public engagement with science and technology.

Dr Annette Roberts
robertsa1@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Modelling economy-environment interactions, index of Sustainable Economic Welfare, sustainability indicators and regional economic policy.

Dr Elen Stokes
stokeser@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Regulation of new technologies; risk regulation; regulatory theory, the precautionary principle.

Dr Peter Wells
wellspe@cardiff.ac.uk

Research interests include: Industrial ecology, renewable eco-industrialism, sustainable and alternative business models, sustainable mobility, social-technical transformations, distributed economy and localisation.

Dr Lorraine Whitmarsh
whitmarshle@cardiff.ac.uk

Research areas include: Public engagement with climate change, carbon literacy, carbon offsetting, and low-carbon lifestyles; public/stakeholder participation in sustainability science and policy; innovation and behaviour change with respect to sustainable transport and consumption.

BRASS PHD Students

Claire Cutforth
cutforthcl@cardiff.ac.uk

Waste minimisation; recycling; policy decision making; sustainable development.

Emma Dean
deanel@cardiff.ac.uk

Local Food, Farmers' Markets, Resilience, Communities.

Gavin Harper
harpergd@cardiff.ac.uk

The Social, Political & Economic Impact of Alternative Vehicles and Fuels.

Fabien Martinez
martinezf@cardiff.ac.uk

Operational and Managerial Perspectives on Corporate Environmental Responsibility.

Jesse McEntee
mcenteej@cardiff.ac.uk

Food Deserts in Wales, UK and Vermont, USA: An International Comparison of the Socioeconomic Causes and Implications of Inadequate Food Access.

Evelyn Nava-Fischer
navafischere@cardiff.ac.uk

Framing consistency, acceptability and access to regulation of sustainable production and international trade: translating standards of agro-ecological conduct into animal resources industries in India.

Poppy Nicol
nicolp@cardiff.ac.uk

Apples in the city: economic globalisation and ecological localisation in the agri-food sector.

Juma Nyende
nyendej1@cardiff.ac.uk

Natural resource use, sustainability and property rights: institutional and legal aspects relating to regional cooperation and local governance in the management of Lake Victoria.

Louise Obara
obaralj@cardiff.ac.uk

Research Interests include; Business and human rights (perceptions, drivers, implementation and scope of responsibility); Human rights, business and the United Nations; Evolution and models of corporate responsibility within organisations; International human rights mechanisms and standards; Globalisation and political economy.

Taiwo Oriola
oriat@cardiff.ac.uk

A Framework for Regulating Adventitious Release of Genetically Modified Organisms Arising from the Co-existence of GM and Non GM Arable Crops.

Llyr Roberts
robertsls1@cardiff.ac.uk

Sustainable Fashion: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Clothing Sector.

Anthony Samuel
a.samuel@trinity-cm.ac.uk

The role of place based communities in influencing sustainable/ethical consumption with particular reference to Fairtrade Towns.

Alastair Smith
smitham3@cardiff.ac.uk

Fair Trade & Public Procurement: Is it possible to facilitate processes of sustainable development by including fair trade products in public procurement frameworks?

Radoslaw Stech
stechr@cardiff.ac.uk

"Citizens' activity as a catalyst of business responsibility in environmental matters. The implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Poland and the UK".

Steven Vaughan
vaughans2@cardiff.ac.uk

Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals.

Please see BRASS website for more details and publication lists

BRASS Research Centre
55 Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3AT

T: +44 (0)29 2087 6562

F: +44 (0)29 2087 6061

E: brass@cf.ac.uk

W: www.brass.cf.ac.uk

ESRC: www.esrc.ac.uk

For general BRASS enquiries,
please contact Petra Anderson,
the Centre Secretary:

T: +44 (0)29 2087 6562

F: +44 (0)29 2087 6061

E: andersonp@cardiff.ac.uk

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