Celebrating Sustainability at RHUL
Wednesday 18th February 2009
Windsor Building 1-05

Abstracts

John Ahwere-Bafo: Creative Capitalism: An old wine in a new bottle, a fad or fashion?

This is a theoretical exposition on a theme that is enjoying some attention recently. To the extent that the concept appears to have existed in other forms, we raise the question of whether or not this phenomenon is a fad or a fashion. We acknowledge that whilst the intentions of the protagonists cannot be concluded fully without interviewing our subjects or their proxies, we draw on photographic evidence of recent events around the world including the leadership of Bill & Melinda Gates, Warren Buffet, Hollywood celebrities in mega rich philanthropy and remotely the election of Barack Obama as the next US President to establish authenticity. This paper is a work in progress and uses codes from photography and iconography to decode the authenticity and intentions of people involved in philanthropy.

David Bevan and David Jackman (keynote speaker): Standards as a means of managing and reporting sustainability: a systems thinking approach

From theoretical and empirical perspectives David Bevan and David Jackman discuss a motivation and some implications of approaching sustainability through systems thinking. The empirical focus is British Standard 8900 of 2006 ("Guidance for managing sustainable development") and the specific context the MTR Corporation of Hong Kong. CRIS and MTRC have established a community of practice around the use of this standard in a transnational firm.

Alan Bradshaw, Andreas Chatzidakis and Pauline Maclaran: No Shame: Creative Consumers and the Ethics of Disposal

Consumer culture, with its ethos of 'use-up', 'use-more' and 'throwaway', encourages many taken-for-granted everyday practices that seriously threatens the longterm sustainability of life on earth. Yet, research into marketing and consumer ethics has focused almost entirely on issues associated with the (un)ethical acquisition rather than disposition of goods (Strutton et al. 1997). With the exception of recycling (e.g. Davies et al. 2002), other facets of disposal ethics, such as reuse of discarded goods, buying secondhand items from charity shops, car boot sales and online auctions (Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005) have received little attention. In addition, from a consumer perspective, the disposition of possessions entails "the process of detachment from self" (Young and Wallendorf, 1989) and there is often a sense of self-identity threat or

shame attached to the notion of 'reuse', a shame that makes us fear appearing mean-spirited in a world of excess, less than glamorous in this era of the luxury brand. In this paper we argue for an 'ethics of disposal' that celebrates consumer creativity in the reuse of products and materials, and overcomes the sense of stigma attached to such practices. To make our points we will focus only on the reuse of discarded items, as a neglected aspect of disposal ethics and consumer/marketing ethics more broadly.

 Our presentation will explore how consumers put discarded goods to new and often highly creative uses. Using a variety of media sources, including film, websites, internet discussion boards, documentaries and newspaper reports, we illustrate a variety of imaginative practices around scavenging, collecting, salvaging and recycling. Sometimes it is out of necessity, such as people who live in squatter communities or the homeless finding scraps of food and clothing from other consumers' leftovers. At other times it is out of choice, for example, those who, for ethical reasons, live out of the waste food they find in supermarket dustbins, food that has reached its sell-by-date but is still perfectly edible. A growing number of people are calling themselves 'Freegans' and practising the art of 'freeganism' which is 'the recovery of usable items, including food, from the waste of others' (http://freegan.org.uk). Others, usually artists, search the streets for abandoned objects that inspire their muse, recrafting skirting boards, windscreen wipers, metal frames and other assorted bric-a-brac into sculptures or using them as subject matter for their paintings. Many artists now proudly claim that their 'Junk Art' (see photo 1 below) is helping to clean the streets and, at the same time, create beauty out of ugliness (see http://www.renkrn8.com.au).

Photo 1: '*Squidfish*' by Steve Oatway, Junk Artist.

José-Rodrigo Córdoba: Sustainability education: Not another 'aside' subject...?

 As academics, many of us celebrate the inclusion of sustainability issues in business education. However, this inclusion seems to still be an inclusion in the margins of mainstream education. In this presentation we argue that a fuller degree of inclusion of sustainability in the curricula can be greatly helped by using systemic thinking and by experiential learning as forms of inquiry. These two elements require that we re-think what we do in the classroom and what we need to be doing outside it. The presentation will suggest different notions of the concept of 'system' and how they can be employed to facilitate student inquiry into sustainability issues. It is hoped that this will trigger

discussion into how we can cultivate thinking about sustainability in different areas of business education.

Mary Dengler: Active learning approaches to teaching sustainability

Sustainability is a process rather than a fixed destination and requires active engagement in identifying issues and workable solutions. The MSc Sustainability and Management jointly taught at Royal Holloway by the School of Management and Department of Geography fosters the students' development of problem-solving skills in complement with the expansion of their knowledge base. This presentation focuses on active learning methods that are deployed to teach problem-solving skills in one of two core courses: GG5300, Principles of Sustainability. The presentation highlights active learning methods such as integration of a mandatory community service project and mock climate change negotiations to teach sustainability. Such activities enhance learning opportunities, widen participation for diverse students, and also offer employability benefits.

Anna Gupta: Using Tradition to Build Sustainable Futures for Marginalised Children: Messages from Georgia

In the mid-nineties following the end of the Soviet Republic and the first war in South Ossetia, an alternative street shelter was developed outside of Tiblisi by Ghia Razmadze, which marked a turning point in the lives of many of the marginalised street children. Ghia's methodologies was based on a deep understanding of his own culture's traditional practices, such as the power of Georgian song and 'Supras' to resolve conflict and build emotional connections, self-esteem and a sense of belonging in the children. Many of the children made the transition from a life characterised by fear and distrust into social inclusion and now lead fulfilling and successful lives. Interviews were undertaken with Ghia, other adults involved in the Dzegvi street shelter, as well as young people who lived in Dzegvi. This presentation will explore the themes raised in these interviews and consider lessons for work with vulnerable children in Georgia and elsewhere.

Andy Hix: Sustainability Officer at Royal Holloway

The position of Sustainability Officer was created by the College in 2005. The Sustainability Officer's remit includes energy and carbon management, water use reduction, promotion of sustainable travel, promoting Fairtrade and publicising the College's ecological management plan. This presentation will outline the successes achieved in each of these areas and how the College intends to improve its environmental performance in the coming years.

Charles Howie (unable to present): An issue of sustainability for farmers and the government in An Giang Province, Vietnam.

Farmers in the Mekong Delta, in the south of Vietnam, have transformed their landscape, from an area which is flooded for four to six months of the year to the country's most productive 'rice basket'. Where formerly farmers grew one crop of rice per year and harvested two tonnes of rice, farmers now harvest three or more crops per year, each crop yielding six or more tonnes of rice. This dramatic change has come about as the result of several developments:

• The development in the Philippines of short duration, high yielding rice and its introduction into Vietnam in the last 1960s

- The abandonment of the cooperative system in the 1980s

- Allocation of land use rights to farmers after 1986

- The discovery by farmers of how to control the water regime and grow several crops per year.

These changes have given Vietnam the assurance of food security and with it social stability. However, this change has come at a price. This paper will present empirical evidence of a decline in crop yields and rising levels of fertiliser and pesticides in the most intensively farmed area. Finally it will present a suggestion on how this might be addressed and what problems would raise, should it be adopted.

Dorothea Kleine: Ethics 2.0 - Using the Internet to empower ethical consumers

In 2008, in a survey among UK consumers, 51% of respondents claimed to have made a purchase primarily for ethical reasons and 36% felt guilty about having made an unethical purchase. But where can consumers get independent, reliable information on the social and environmental practices of companies? The EPSRC-funded Fair Tracing project (www.fairtracing.org) brings together computer scientists, geographers, and human computer-interaction designers in an action research initiative aimed at using the internet to supply such information. Using the product barcode, consumers can find out about the actors involved in the value chains of Fairtrade Chilean wine and Indian coffee. The presentation will introduce the project and highlight some of the conceptual, political and practical challenges the team encountered. What kind of visual and textual metaphors should be used in representation? What were the lessons learned when working in partnership with NGOs, businesses and volunteers? In what way does the discourse of sustainable consumption influence consumer behaviour in offline and online space?

Dave Mattey: Climate hindcasting from cave records

Climate change has an obvious and direct impact on virtually every aspect of our human society, especially regarding the sustainability of agriculture, water resources and natural habitats. Climate prediction models are built on knowledge of past climate trends, but instrumental records are available only back to the early 19th century and at very few locations on Earth. Climate 'proxies' such as tree rings provide qualitative information on environmental change but very few are capable of reconstructing climate trends in a quantitative way and with sufficient accuracy that can be utilised by climate modellers to improve future predictions.

Cave deposits such as stalagmites are climate recorders that contain many different proxies for rainfall amount, temperature, humidity, wind direction and even atmospheric aerosol loads. These records can be precisely dated on timescales spanning millions of years down to annual, or even (as shown by our work at Royal Holloway) monthly resolution. Since caves are located in different climate regimes all over the world, climate modellers are increasingly looking to these records as a valuable new source of quantitative and more accurate data defining past climate trends. Work ongoing in the Department of Earth Sciences is focussing on understanding the controls on how stalagmites record climate features and how these records can be converted into real meteorological data to hindcast weather patterns, eventually as far back as the end of the last ice age.

Martin Menzies: Response of Humans to Abrupt Environmental Transitions (RESET*)

The aim of RESET is to investigate how our ancestors coped with abrupt changes in climate during the last 100,000 years. To achieve this aim RESET has brought together experts in anthropology, archaeology, climate change, oceanography & volcanology/geochemistry. At the heart of RESET lie major volcanic eruptions which have occurred in France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Spain & Turkey over the last 80,000 years. Highly explosive eruptions have deposited ash/tephra over 1000's of square kilometers. The tephras in these volcanic centres will be dated using $^{40}Ar/^{39}Ar$ and ^{14}C techniques in Oxford and California and chemically classified using the laboratories in Earth Sciences at RHUL. In turn this data provides a masterfile against which we can compare the chemistry of "invisible" tephras (<50 microns) found in archaeological sites {crucial in constraining human migratory patterns} and marine & lacustrine cores {crucial in defining the timing of abrupt environmental change}. Once a chemical match is found, a source volcano can be identified and an "age" assigned to the micro-tephra. So tephra helps us establish the precise temporal relationships between archaeological events and abrupt environmental change with which we can test competing models of human migration (i.e., cultural innovation *versus* external forcing [abrupt environmental transitions]).

*(*RHUL Geography (Blockley, Gamble, Lowe [co-ordinator]) and Earth Sciences (Menzies); School of Archaeology Oxford University (Barton, Pollard & Ramsey), National Oceanography Centre Southampton (Roberts & Rohling) & the Natural History Museum (Stringer))*

Margherita Pascucci: Poverty as potentia

My research project aims at defining a new concept of poverty as ontological force (*potentia*). With poverty as ontological force is intended that poverty is today the place where we can acknowledge the mistakes of the capitalistic mode of production. Poverty indicates how the concept of value at the core of the capitalistic system is a mistaken knowledge of the social relations it is the expression of.

By individuating some historical moments when the reflection of value was accompanied by a theoretical reflection on poverty, my research has been focused its attention, in previous works, on 13th century French-Italian, 17th century Holland and 19th and 20th century German philosophical production regarding the concept of money and the concept of poverty in relation to knowledge.

In the project that I am currently conducting at Royal Holloway (2008-2010), the research concerns 16th–17th century and 19th century England, with a focus on the literary representation of money and poverty and the governmental techniques of management of poverty issues (the first and second poor laws and their 'critique' in Shakespeare and Dickens). In this presentation I would like to propose a brief outline of the main results of my previous work and the perspective of the actual one.

Alan Pilkington (unable to present): Automotive propulsion and fuel cell technology

As part of a continuing stream of work under the banner Enterprise Engineering, a significant research presence which borders sustainability has been developed. Part of this work employs bibliometric analysis of patent data to investigate the development of emerging technologies. One area of interest is automotive propulsion and fuel cell technology in particular. The original aim of the project was to explore whether patent

data could be employed to determine the main players, both inventors and firms, in fuel cell innovation. This work was subsequently extended to develop tools for the measurement of commercialisation in the industry; and also the key inventor method of classifying contributions to technology development. The key inventor approach simultaneously considers both productivity and contribution. This typology and grouping of inventors (and firms) allows their differences to be studied and lessons learnt about what could lead to successful innovation. More recently the technique has been extended to contrast the fuel cell network with that of nanotechnology.

Related projects include Alternative Fuel Technology, Zero Emission Vehicles and Fuel Cell Industry Development.

More information on the Enterprise Engineering work, and a list of publications, can be found on the web site. http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/uhtm/001/homepage.html

Leonardo Rinaldi, Alessia D'Andrea (Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy) and Jeffrey Unerman: Stakeholder Dialogue through the Internet: An empirical analysis of stakeholder engagement initiatives of UK FTSE100 companies

This paper presents an empirical study which investigates and critically analyses electronic stakeholder engagement and dialogue initiatives employed by the constituents of the FTSE100 index. Stakeholder engagement has been regarded as a central component of corporate social, environmental, economic, and ethical governance mechanisms. It is seen as a key factor for accountability and sustainability purposes because stakeholder expectations indicate both what behaviour stakeholders require and consider acceptable from an organisation, and what information stakeholders need in order to help them hold the organisation to account for its actions. Given the theoretical centrality of stakeholder dialogue to widespread corporate accountability initiatives, it might be expected that corporations would take advantage of all available technology to actively engage in dialogue with a range of their stakeholders on social, environmental, economic and ethical issues – to both identify stakeholder expectations and to provide an account of corporate actions using the most appropriate and effective communication media. The study exposes this centrality by throwing light to the extent to which the FTSE100 companies are using the communicative capabilities of the Internet to develop innovative stakeholder engagement initiatives and thereby improve the potential effectiveness of their stakeholder dialogue on social, environmental, and ethical issues. The paper contributes to the increase in field work in the social accounting literature which looks for more readily engagement of all stakeholders in open, honest and cooperative discourse, being prepared to acknowledge and accept the force of the stronger argument and modify their views accordingly.

Nuria Rodríguez Priego: Consumers' Socially Responsible Decisions from a Cultural Perspective

Existing research into socially responsible consumption has mainly focused on how personal characteristics affect individual decisions and has provided inconclusive findings (Montoro and Muñoz, 2006). In contrast, few studies have analysed the relationship between cultural, symbolic and social aspects of consumption. For example, some studies have shown how an individual's cultural values can explain aspects of socially responsible behaviour (Stern et al., 1995; Dietz et al., 2002; Kilbourn and Pickett, 2008). Other authors have conceptualised different types of socially responsible consumption, depending on people's cultural vision of nature (Douglas, 1999; Rippl, 2002), perceptions

of risk and attitudes. Finally, a related line of marketing literature has begun to investigate the role of brands as cultural icons with symbolic content (Holt, 2004). This project brings these different streams of literature together, in an attempt to provide deeper and more comprehensive understanding of cultural influences in socially responsible consumption. It investigates concepts such as values orientation (Schwartz, 1992), degree of anthropocentric bias (Kilbourne and Carlson, 2008), ideological position (Kahn, 2007), vision of nature (Nooney et al., 2003) and risk perception (Poortinga et al., 2002). Ethnographic techniques are employed to determine the nature, relationship and explanatory ability of the above determinants of socially responsible consumption. The results shed light on cultural aspects of modern consumption, which may eventually inform public policy and marketing initiatives in favour of socially responsible behaviour.

David Simon: Urbanisation and Global Environmental Change

In recent years, the complex bidirectional interrelationships between urbanization and global environmental change (GEC) have emerged as a priority sphere of research. The more established GEC research foci of climate change modelling, land use and cover change, industrialization and technological development do not fully capture the human and biophysical implications of urbanization. This field of enquiry is central to social justice and environmental sustainability at different scales and evidence-based research is vital in order to influence the policy agenda at different scales in order to promote more sustainable urbanization.

Laura J. Spence: Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are the dominant form of business organisation globally, usually representing upward of 90% of private businesses. They are as relevant to developing country contexts as they are to developed countries. Previous empirical research in the UK, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands (e.g. looking at business ethics practices, social capital, 'CSR' language use, attitudes to the environment) has established that SMEs are tend to be engaged in socially responsible practises, trade heavily on their good reputation, but are unlikely to formalise these or indeed call them 'CSR'. Global comparisons are being developed through a project with the International Society for Business, Economics and Ethics with contributions from Latin America, Africa, the Indian Sub-Continent, Australasia and Europe. Current research builds on this broad empirical basis with perspectives on CSR in the supply chain (with case studies on Waitrose, Camelot and Toyota), in industrial clusters (Aerospace and Food Processing/Manufacturing) and theoretical work on Entrepreneurial Social Responsibility which draws together commercial entrepreneurship and social enterprise. The work on SMEs is also informative in a project on Competitive Intelligence Gathering which engages primarily with large multinationals.

Srimathy Sriskantharajah: Answers in the Wind: Atmospheric Monitoring at Royal Holloway

Sustainability, in all its aspects, has an impact on the atmospheric environment. The Atmospheric Monitoring and Isotope Laboratory at Royal Holloway has been active since 1995, recording the concentration of the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane, as well as carbon monoxide and hydrogen in the air arriving on campus. Carbon dioxide concentrations have increased steadily since 2000, showing that measures to curb emissions are not having the desired result. However, the introduction of catalytic converters has dramatically reduced London's carbon monoxide emissions, which

continues to drop steadily even now. The implementations of emission cutting practices have seen a reduction in methane emissions from landfill; this is seen in the London atmospheric records here at Royal Holloway.

In addition to giving insights into the composition of these trace gases in the local and national air masses, the data collected at Royal Holloway can show trends in the Arctic, European and Atlantic air. Members of the Atmospheric Monitoring and Isotope Laboratory also conduct investigations into the sources and sinks of these trace gases from regions as far afield as the Arctic Circle and the Falkland Islands to very local sources such as the pond within the Royal Holloway campus.

Chijioke Dike Uba: Achieving Sustainable Transport in UK; Car Consumption amongst University of London Students

Carbon dioxide emissions which are responsible for climate change are on the increase. Cars alone account for a huge percentage of total global carbon dioxide emissions (World Watch Institute 2004) implying that issues of climate change cannot be addressed without investigating and managing car consumption.

Since car consumption continues to increase worldwide, policy makers are left with two options: implement policies that reduce the environmental impact of cars and/or reduce car consumption. This research project is about the latter. More concretely it investigates the social, economic and psychological factors that influence individuals' private car consumption decisions to gain a better understanding of the tools and mechanisms that are likely to be most effective in designing and implementing efficient environmental policies aimed at containing private car use.

The first phase of this study involves working with students from the University of London to develop an in depth understanding of the relationship between pro environmental cognitions and car usage. The information collected through interviews, focus groups and questionnaires will be used to gain insights into the role of context factors (social, economic, psychological) in amplifying or dampening intentions to car usage. The Theory of Planned Behaviour developed by (Ajzen 1985) underpins the theoretical frame and the interpretation of the data. The emphasis, throughout the project, is on the conscious (and unconscious) attitudes, beliefs and values that shape individuals planned behaviour. The preliminary findings will, it is hoped, help identify ways in which we can motivate young people to reduce their current and future reliance on cars.

Jeffrey Unerman: Placing a value on sustainability

The aims of this presentation are to explore limitations of existing social valuation techniques, and topics for future research in this area. Firstly some techniques currently available to account for the social impact of operations are outlined. Secondly some of the key gaps and challenges in translating measurement of social impact to organisational value are discussed. Finally some potential responses to addressing these gaps are proposed. In all of these areas, the term social accounting is used to encompass accounting for both social *and* environmental policies, practices and impacts.