

## **PERN Webinar 1: The future role of towns and cities (07/07/2020)**

### **SPEAKER AFFILIATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Chair: Dr Peter O'Brien, Yorkshire University**

Executive Director of Yorkshire Universities and senior research fellow at the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS), Newcastle University, where he specialises in, and has published widely on, issues relating to urban and regional development and governance, and infrastructure funding and financing. Peter has worked at a senior level in local and regional government in the north of England during the past decade.

#### **Speaker: Professor Philip Brown, University of Huddersfield**

**Presentation:** [Unlocking empty properties to drive economic recovery](#)

Professor of Housing and Communities

An interdisciplinary researcher with a background in psychology and a Chartered Psychologist of the British Psychological Society. Philip has held research grants from a range of funders including the ESRC, EPSRC, European Commission, UK Government departments and devolved administrations, local authorities, housing organisations, charities and private sector organisations. Philip's work broadly aims to understand and contribute to alleviating the housing and neighbourhood inequalities experienced by members of particular marginalised communities. I have a research experience in fields as diverse as social inclusion, migration, homelessness, fuel poverty, energy efficiency and regeneration. My current research projects focus on two main issues namely migration and homelessness; in particular, how places can support the integration of poorer migrants and refugees and how homelessness can be tackled through new forms of delivery and system change. He has provided expert input to a number of bodies including the European Parliament, Council of Europe, Fundamental Rights Agency, major funders and government departments. I have had a number of external roles including as Specialist Advisor to the Parliamentary Women & Equalities Committee, a non-Executive Director of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and have supported the UK All Party Parliamentary Groups on Migration and Gypsy, Travellers and Roma in relation to monitoring the impacts of Brexit. In

April 2019 I became Chair of the UK's Housing Studies Association and sit on the Editorial Board of Thinkhouse.

**Speaker: Dr. Richard Whittle, Manchester Metropolitan University and the 'Productivity Insights Network (PIN)'**

**Presentation: [Psychological and infrastructure-related challenges to post-covid city-centre retail](#)**

Dr Richard Whittle is an Economist at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Richard's work primarily concerns technology, behaviour and society, including online decision making, crypto currency, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work. His last book Algorithms, Blockchain and Cryptocurrency provided an introduction to these technologies for professionals and drew on the combination of these technologies to investigate longer term technological trends on working. His next books, one investigating online retail, Spending Without Thinking and one forecasting the future of finance, Money 2030 are both coming out in early 2021. Dr Whittle has published in Work, Employment and Society, Banking, Financial Services Policy Review, and has provided consultancy reports for the Money Advice Service, the CIPD, and AJ Bell. He produced the retail technical report for the Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review. In February Richard's work was presented to the European Parliament's Technology Committee and has recently been highlighted in Government Gazette. Richard is currently working on a Productivity Insights Network funded project investigating Fintech as a facilitator of socially distant economic activity.

**Speakers: Dr. Elke Pirgmaier Professor Andrew Brown, University of Leeds**

**Presentation: [Rethinking value for regional recovery](#)**

**Dr. Elke Pirgmaier, University of Leeds**

Elke is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Sustainability Research Institute at the University of Leeds in the [Living Well Within Limits](#) project and the [iCASP Green and Blue Infrastructure Business Cases](#) project.

Elke studies the links between capitalist dynamics and global environmental challenges, from a political economy and ecological economics perspective. Elke is keen to unveil the political implications of different economic theories and methodologies to explain barriers to sustainability transitions with a view

to supporting radical systemic change towards social and environmental justice.

Elke's PhD research aimed to strengthen theoretical and methodological links between heterodox economics and ecological economics. It is based on the recognition that tackling the interrelated nature of social-ecological phenomena from a systemic perspective is rare, i.e. there is little theorising about the environment and the economy as a whole. More theorising is needed however, as it is both important for understanding and explaining the reality of contemporary economic systems and for thinking about how future sustainable societies might look like.

### **Professor Andrew Brown, University of Leeds**

Economics Division, Director of Research, Leeds University Business School. Dr Andrew Brown is Professor of Economics and Political Economy at Leeds University Business School. Developing a unifying approach to 'social provisioning' rooted in the political economy tradition, he has published in high quality, high impact journals on: circular economy; sustainable and resilient infrastructure and industry; value and wellbeing; financialisation; and the methodology and philosophy of interdisciplinary science.

In 2015 he was awarded the Sage prize for Innovation and/or excellence for his paper on realist methods in social science. He has led interdisciplinary economics research as PI or Co-I in numerous funded projects, (total value >£20M) bringing together economics, engineering, environmental and social sciences, and has extensive experience working with public and private sector stakeholders, for example with HM Treasury on Green Book guidelines for valuing infrastructure spend, and with DEFRA on plastics packaging waste metrics. He currently leads the [iCASP Green and Blue Infrastructure Business Cases](#), working with local, regional and national stakeholders to better value system-wide and long-term impacts of low-carbon transition. He is also co-investigator in the 'Self-Repairing Cities' project - <http://selfrepairingcities.com/>

### **Speaker: Dr. David Spicer, University of Bradford**

**Presentation: [Lessons from and expectations of small business post-covid: productivity, growth and digital transformation](#)**

David is Director of Business Engagement in the Faculty of Management Law and Social Sciences and is leading on the development of the School of Management's programme and portfolio in respect of support for small business and entrepreneurship. David has over 20 years of experience in

higher education and returned to Bradford (where he began his academic career) at the start of the 2019/20 academic year, having previously led the Business School at the University of Salford.

David's research interests include strategic learning, change and leadership. He is currently leading a major study looking at small firm resilience in response to Covid-19. He has undertaken research and consultancy and delivered executive education in both SMEs and with large corporate firms. He currently teaches on both the Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes within the School of Management.

Twitter: @DavidPSpicer, @BradManagement

**Speakers: Dr Thijs Dekker and Dr Manuel Ojeda Cabral, University of Leeds**

**Presentation: [Informing decision-making in Cities and Towns: Participatory Value Evaluation \(PVE\). a new appraisal tool](#)**

**Dr Thijs Dekker, University of Leeds**

Lecturer in Transport Economics at the Institute for Transport Studies. Applied economist active in the fields of transportation and the environment. Has developed innovative data collection formats, novel statistical methods and has made significant contributions to linking choice modelling to economic appraisal.

**Dr Manuel Ojeda Cabral, University of Leeds**

Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Transport Studies. His research is focused on improving the economic appraisal of public sector projects and policies. Works closely with major public sector and industry organizations.

**Webinar wrap up by Gary Dymski, University of Leeds**

I have published numerous books, articles, chapters, and studies on banking, financial fragility, urban development, credit-market discrimination, gender and racial inequality, the Latin American and Asian financial crises, exploitation, housing finance, the subprime lending crisis, financial regulation, the Eurozone crisis, and economic policy. Some of this research has appeared in economics or political economy journals (and books), and some in geography journals (and books). Current research projects include the UK

productivity paradox; the impact and governance of financial power in the global economy; the spatial aspects of financial instability; the post-crisis challenges of economic development in lower-income areas affected by subprime lending, discrimination, and redlining; the liquidity preference/investment crisis in South Africa; the integration of macroeconomic and financial logic into economic geography; and the challenge of creating more circular, equitable, and sustainable urban and national economies.

I co-led the University's Cities research theme (2016-19)

[https://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130566/cities/603/cities\\_team](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130566/cities/603/cities_team).

In that role I was also able to encourage the development of new cross-campus initiatives. I'm a member of the advisory board of Virtuocity (<https://uolds.leeds.ac.uk/facility/virtuocity/>) and have participated in various networks and initiatives on campus.

I'm currently playing roles in several exciting UK-wide research projects. I'm a co-investigator in the 'Self-Repairing Cities' project (EPSRC Grand Challenge) - <http://selfrepairingcities.com/>, and also am one of the co-investigators for the Productivity Insights Network (ESRC Network-Plus) - <https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk/>. I also serving as a research hub co-leader for the Rebuilding Macroeconomics project (ESRC Network-Plus) - <https://www.rebuildingmacroeconomics.ac.uk/>. I was also co-investigator on the recently concluded ESRC-funded Socially Inclusive Cities project (2017-2019) led by Dr. Ghazala Mir of Leeds' faculty of medicine and health - <https://medicinehealth.leeds.ac.uk/dir-record/research-projects/979/socially-inclusive-cities>