Abukari Salifu Atchulo: The Open University
Social and Environmental Investment Appraisal; Why Reinvent the Wheel? A look at the Milton Keynes Electric Light Vehicle Infrastructure ‘Elvis’ Project

Concerns about climate change and energy security, along with advances in battery technology, have stimulated a renewed interest in electric vehicles (Hidrue, Parsons, Kempton, and Gardner 2011). The uptake of Electric Vehicles can encourage and facilitate the shift from a fossil fuel transport system to a low carbon one. There have been suggestions as to how to incorporate social and environmental factors into investment appraisal and new tools have been suggested (Hopwood et al., 2010). However, otherwise non-quantifiable factors, such as brand, risk, image, and value creation, are already part of firm’s appraisal systems. There seems to be a danger of ‘reinventing the wheel’ rather than linking social and environmental decisions into existing methods.

Adopting a New Institutional Sociology perspective, this paper reports initial findings of research with firms in and around Milton Keynes exploring the use of electric vehicles and how they assess the business case.

Osamuyimen Egbon: University of St Andrews
Corporate-community accountability relations in the Nigerian oil industry: a managerial conception

The negative environmental impacts of oil operations on Niger Delta people suggest that the oil corporations owe accountability to their host communities. Accountability relationship suggests that corporations have obligations to accept responsibility for their impacts on, and provide information to, host communities. However, many previous studies on corporate-community relationship in Niger Delta have focused on corporate social responsibility. This study seeks to enrich our understanding of how oil corporations conceptualize their accountability relationship with communities, and the implications this has for their behaviours towards host communities.

Mohamed Elmaghrabi: University of Stirling
Determinants of adoption of integrated reporting: an exploration of institutional factors

Integrated reporting is emerging as a new reporting paradigm that is claimed to provide a more holistic, responsive and strategic portrayal of corporations’ overall performance. The pace of development of integrated reporting has been steadily increasing in recent years, with the number of corporations adopting such reporting rising from just a few firms in 2004, to 237 in 2010 (Eccles and Serafeim, 2011). However, despite the growing interest and importance attached to integrated reporting, there is a lack of research exploring the reasons why companies embrace integrated reports as their reporting vehicle. This research seeks to analyse the specific conditions under which corporate engagement in integrated reporting is enacted, maintained and transformed, by exploring the effect of institutional factors (coercive, normative and mimetic) faced by such companies. Drawing on a sample of GRI listed firms between 2002 and 2010, this longitudinal study employs a logit regression model to test relevant hypotheses based on the institutional factors relating to IR adoption.
Irene Eleonora Lisi: Università Bocconi

Exploring the integration of Management Control Systems for CSR: a strategic orientation approach
(with Angelo Ditillo, Università Bocconi)

Little research in social and environmental accounting has focused specifically on management control issues. This paper aims to start considering such issues. It proposes a framework to explain how variation arises in the management control systems (MCS) settled up by organizations in relation to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices. In particular, we investigate the way in which a company’s CSR strategic orientation affects the degree of integration of CSR control mechanisms within its overall MCS. A field research conducted in four companies promoting a strong social responsibility image supports the relevance of CSR strategic orientation in explaining the observed variation in CSR control practices’ configurations. The paper concludes by suggesting some avenues for future research opened up by this work.

Jonathan Maurice: University of Montpellier 1

Are mandatory environmental provisions reliable? The case of the French listed companies

This paper explores if, and why, mandatory environmental liabilities recognized by the French listed companies could be considered as reliable, or are mainly used to manage earnings. The early study of Berthelot et al. (2003), based on a positive accounting theory framework, shows that Canadian listed companies from environmental sensitive industries used their environmental provisions to smooth their earnings and to avoid political costs in the early 1990’s. Through both quantitative and qualitative research methods and the use of the alternative theoretical framework of the legitimacy, I find a different conclusion in the study of environmental provisions of the French listed companies from 2005 to 2010. The quantitative analysis reveals that environmental provisions are not used to smooth earnings or to avoid political costs whereas they tend to be used to increase environmental legitimacy. These quantitative results are reinforced and explained by the qualitative part of the research where the decision process which leads to this environmental provisions recognition is described. Indeed, it could be analyzed as a bottom-to-top, highly technical and standardized process that gives finally little flexibility to actors of the top management to manage earnings.

Norsyahida Mokhtar: International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

(with Norhayah Zulkifli, University of Malaya and Ruzita Jusoh, University of Malaya)

While the pressure of legitimacy was found to greatly influence companies’ environmental reporting (ER) practices, being environmentally responsible however is not necessarily reflected through positive and descriptive environmental disclosure. Unless companies begin to truly commit to upholding ‘environmentally responsible’ – that is, to be accountable towards their business environmental impacts, the issue of incompleteness and incredibility of ER will remain. As conventional accounting systems do not support the generation of environmental information, the implementation of Environmental Management Accounting (EMA) system to manage and report companies’ environmental performance is therefore essential. Using a social issue life cycle theory as the interpretive lens, the paper aims to propose a theoretical framework of how the relationship between EMA implementation and ER practices is likely to be moderated by the social issue life cycle phases.

Julia Janfeshar Nobari: University of Newcastle

Insider action research and social accounting

The paper evolves theoretical and practical understandings of developing social measurement. The work is set within a third sector supported housing organization and demonstrates the nature of reflective change and development within a social situation. The paper gives insights into the methodological approach taken, using insider action research. The challenges faced by the researcher were about becoming an accepted insider with regard to access, pre-understandings and managing organizational politics. Other challenges were the ongoing shifts and change related to the cyclical and evolving nature of the action research itself.
Clémence Rannou: Université Laval
Towards a more critical understanding of management accounting and the environment: the case of capital budgeting

The purpose of this project is to stress the benefit of a more critical and theoretical approach to environmental management accounting research in order to better understand the practices of organisations and their impediments. This research provides an analysis and critique of the extent of critical theorising and use of theories in environmental management accounting research. It draws on three branches of the management accounting field, mainstream, critical and environmental, in order to present a case for research on environmental management accounting practices using critical theories and theorising. The study of the capital budgeting process is used as an example of practices that could gain a better understanding from the insights of theories.

The analysis shows that the management accounting literature has a critical branch but is mainly uninterested by environmental issues. In contrast, the environmental management accounting literature remains mostly managerial and under theorised. The lack of a critical approach to environmental management accounting is found to be due to a focus on describing and enhancing management practices within a business case. We argue that further research into the practices of organisations with theoretical lenses will allow a better understanding of those practices and their impediments. In particular, we argue that capital budgeting would benefit strongly from more theoretical views in order to explain the lack of systematic consideration of environmental issues by managers.

Drawing on the management accounting literature and the example of capital budgeting, I will present a way forward for researchers in environmental management accounting, where further theoretical contributions might be made by future research in environmental management accounting.

Maryam Sadeghi: University of Sheffield
Environmental and Social Disclosure: Comparison between large and medium companies in UK

The current research attempts to find out how companies in various business sectors with different size adopt CSR practices and compares their environmental, social disclosures. In addition, this study explores how companies define social practice in their business context and how they communicate their social responsibility message. Furthermore, it studies how business environment has impact on companies understanding of corporate social responsibility and their social activities. The research methodology is based upon qualitative approach for deep understanding of the whole phenomena. Additionally there will be a discourse analysis to investigate how companies communicate and apply discourse in their social practice disclosure.

Mohamed Saeudy: Keele University
Green and ethical banking: analytical review

Aim: This paper aims to analyse and review the main conceptual framework of green and ethical banking practices as a part of UK government initiative designed to promote the transition plan to green economy through The UK Green Investment Bank (UKGIB). Also, discover the main theoretical facts about green banking and the search for new explanation for these concepts.

Method: As part of the UK governmental initiative on green economy and delivering long term sustainable growth, the entire key green sector such as transport, waste, water, and electricity were encouraged to participate and achieve the government's ambitious green objectives. Main theoretical and empirical research papers on ethical and green banking practices are identified and reviewed.

Outcomes: This literature review will be prepared using the document analysis of these papers in order to provide a coherent understanding of the green and ethical banking practices and experience from different countries (e.g. Turkey, India, UK, and USA).

Significance: The findings from this research will be presented in the context of how the main accounting and financial practices that are being pursued to make the banking practices more sustainable.

Paper type: Literature review
Norfaiezah Sawandi: University of Strathclyde
Voluntary Financial Education Initiatives and Downward Accountability: A case study of Malaysia Unit Trust Industry
(with Ian Thomson: University of Strathclyde)

The purpose of this paper is to explore the range of practices associated with downward accountability in the Malaysia unit trust industry. A multi-case study approach was employed in this study. The case organizations consist of four unit trust management companies (UTMC) and the unit trust regulatory organization (SRO). The empirical content of the paper is derived from a series of semi-structured interviews with representatives of the case organizations and industry regulator, along with a comprehensive analysis of documentary sources and observation of organisational accountability practices. An extended theoretical model of downward accountability drawn from three broad and overlapping clusters has been developed in order to theorise the empirical findings. These theoretical clusters include functional accountability, communitarian accountability and social/holistic accountability. Results reveal that the case organisations have extended their range of accountability practises beyond conventional disclosures particularly in relation to downward accountability. An example is the voluntary provision of financial education courses to the general public. The ability of financial education initiatives to be considered as a downward accountability mechanism depends heavily on the motivations for undertaking such initiatives. The empirical evidence suggests that the case organisations used the same practices for a range of different reasons, which included public relations/marketing. However in some cases the practices were associated with a mixture of concern for ‘others’ and their own business interest. There appears to be a relationship between the quality and quantity of this educative provision and the UMTC ownership structure. The government-related UTMCs seem more ‘genuine’ and concern with the ‘others’ (Roberts, 2003) as compared to the privately-owned UTMCs and the SRO. The research is based on an analysis in a specific context which may limit its wider applicability. Nevertheless, the theoretical framework developed in this study is an early attempt in understanding the effectiveness of different practices of discharging downward accountability.

Sartini Wardiwiyono: University of Huddersfield
Corporate Social Responsibility and its Disclosure: A Tawhidic Approach

The concept of tawhid (oneness of God) in Islam signifies that human being, individually and collectively, has been created for having two important roles that are as a vicegerent (leader) of the earth and as servant of God. The former places upon human being the responsibility to safeguard the right of his fellow human being and to take part in maintaining the harmony and the peace in the community and to take part in protecting the environment. The latter provides philosophical foundation on how human being is accounted for fulfilling their responsibilities as a leader of the world. Those responsibilities concepts are in some ways consistent with the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that was born in the Western society, though there is possible difference and overlap. This study is intended to take the idea of tawhid in Islam and to explore its implication on CSR and its disclosure. By examining and analyzing the previous texts and literature on tawhid, CSR and CSR disclosure, the study reveals that the concept of tawhid in Islam could possibly provide philosophical as well as practical foundation of CSR. In term of disclosure, tawhid has also provide a clear concept of accountability, both accountablil for legal responsibilities as well as accountability for non-legal responsibilities.

Keywords: Islam, Corporate Social Responsibility, Disclosure, Tawhid
Dalilawati Zainal: University of Malaya  
Corporate Ownership Structure, Boards of Directors, Reporting Regulation and Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting (CSRR) in Malaysia  
(with Norhayah Zulkifli: University of Malaya and Zakiah Saleh: University of Malaya)

Evidences from the extant literature on corporate governance and corporate reporting, including corporate social responsibility reporting (CSRR) have generally dictated a link between the two concepts. In summary, this range of studies acknowledged the influence of the way firms are governed on the levels of information reported to the stakeholders. In the context of CSRR, the association between two important components of corporate governance, namely corporate ownership structure and board of directors, and CSRR has been explored from the perspective of voluntary regime of CSRR. Following the introduction of the mandatory CSRR in several countries around the world, particularly in Malaysia, there is a need to investigate the effect of CSRR regulation along with corporate governance, on the levels of CSRR disclosed by firms. Therefore, this study serves the following purposes. First, it looks into the influence of different types of corporate ownership structure on the levels of CSRR disclosed by firms. Then, it examines the impact of board of directors’ CSR experience on the levels of CSRR disclosed. Finally, this study tests the moderating effect of CSRR regulation on the association between corporate ownership structure and CSRR. This study examines a five-year data set from 2005 to 2009, reflecting the voluntary (year 2005 to 2006) and mandatory (2007 to 2009) period of CSRR. Research model of this study is built upon the stakeholder theory and contingency theory. Referring to Ullmann (1985), the greater power possessed by the stakeholders (especially when the stakeholders control resources critical to the firms), the greater influence they may exert on the firms’ CSRR decision. Ullmann (1985) suggested three types of stakeholder power that may influence the firms’ decision on CSRR, namely, shareholders power, government power and creditor power. However, this study focuses on the shareholder power, represented by the four common types of corporate ownership structure in Malaysia, namely managerial ownership, family ownership, foreign ownership and government ownership. Shareholders, being the primary provider of financial resources in firms, may be in a good position to control over the firms’ decision on the CSR-information to be reported to the stakeholders. The other two stakeholders power (government power and creditor power) are introduced as control variables. Board of directors’ CSR experience represents the strategic posture used by firms. In addition to government power (firm size, industry and Shariah status) and creditor power (leverage), this study also control for the economic performance (profitability) of firm. The importance of CSRR in Malaysia has been evidenced especially when the Bursa Malaysia (formerly known as Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, KLSE) mandated the reporting of any CSR-related activities undertaken by firms in firms’ annual reports with effect from financial year 2007 onwards. In testing the moderating effect of CSRR regulation on the association between corporate ownership structure and CSRR, this study adopted a contingency theory. In other words, this study proposes that the association between corporate ownership structure and the levels of CSRR disclosed by firms is contingent upon the presence of CSRR regulation. Overall, this study suggests for an interrelationship between corporate ownership structure, board of directors and CSRR regulation in determining the levels of CSRR disclosed by firms. This study contributes to the existing works on stakeholder theory, for examples, by Ullman (1985), Roberts (1992), Brammer and Pavelin (2006) and Huang and Kung (2010) by introducing more variables to represent the shareholder power, particularly in the context of Asian countries’ perspective, whereby firms are characterized by family- and government-owned structure. The importance of Shariah status of a firm in Malaysia leads to the introduction of Shariah status of firm as one of the control variables (represent government power) in this study. This study also highlights the importance of director with CSR experience and CSRR regulation in influencing the levels of CSRR disclosed by firms (represented by the quantity and the quality of CSRR).

Henry H. Zhang: University of Edinburgh  
Exploring the complexity of sustainability reporting practices of British universities

This research seeks to understand how different organizational actors mainly within British universities view the sustainability reporting practices of their organisations and to explore the multiple factors which promote and/or impede sustainability reporting practices. This study attempts to draw on insights from loose coupling and conflicting legitimations as sensitizing theoretical perspectives to enrich our understanding of the complexity of sustainability reporting practices in universities. In accordance with different sustainability rankings and award schemes, many less funded, poorly ranked (in conventional university rankings), infamous, local “modern” universities significantly outperformed some heavily funded, internationally reputable, elite universities. It raises a question of what factors lead to such unexpected differences. And do these rankings and award schemes really provide “true and fair” views about sustainability performance of universities? The in-depth comparative case studies may provide valuable insights.