

Professor John Bryson

The Department of Procurement and Operations Management

Contact details

Telephone [+44 \(0\)121 414 5549](tel:+44(0)1214145549) (tel: [+44 121 414 5549](tel:+44(0)1214145549))

Fax +44 (0)121 414 5528

Email j.r.bryson@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:j.r.bryson@bham.ac.uk>)

University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK



About

John's research is motivated by a desire to understand and explain the complex ways in which production is organized through space and in place and via a variety of forms of enterprise.

Biography

- 2008 - Head of Human Geography
- 2005 - Professor of Enterprise and Economic Geography
- 2003-2008 - Senior Postgraduate Tutor
- 2000-2008 - Postgraduate Tutor, Human Geography

Selected External Appointments

- 2008 – Editorial Board, Applied Geography
- 2008 - Distinguished International Scholar's Fellowship, University of Auckland, New Zealand
- 2007 - European Founding Editor of the journal *Regional Science Policy & Practice*
- 2007 - Independent Chair of the *Worcestershire Partnership Climate Change Task Group*
- 2007 - Visiting Scholar, Center for Regional Development, Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA
- 2006 - Founding editor of the book series 'Services, Economy and Innovation' for Edward Elgar, Cheltenham (UK) and Northampton (US)
- 2006 - Editorial Board, Service Business
- 2004-2005 - Member of the European Commission, Enterprise Directorate-General, European Forum on Business-Related Services
- 2004 - Elected Vice President of the Council of the European Association for Research on Services (RESER), re-elected 2008
- 2003 - Governor/Director of Elmhurst School for Dance in Association with Birmingham Royal Ballet
- 2002 - Trustee, *Sebright Educational Foundation*, member of the Grants and Scholarship Committee
- 2001 - Editorial Board, *The Service Industries Journal*
- 2000 - Director of the *Aston Reinvestment Trust*, Birmingham; the UK's leading Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), member of the Lending Committee
- 2000-2008 - Distinguished Research Fellow, The Institute of Economics and Business Administration, Bergen, Norway

Awards

2006 - *The Halcrow Prize* for a paper published by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) (with Rossa Donovan and Jon Sadler, University of Birmingham)

1991 - *Institute of Small Business Affairs Prize* for the best conference paper (with David Keeble, University of Cambridge)

Postgraduate supervision

Research Students since 2001

2008 - **Rachel Mulhall**, Title – to be confirmed, ESRC

2008 - **Valeria Round**, Title – to be confirmed, School Scholarship

2008 - **Aksel Ersoy**, The Effects of Geographical Theories on Promoting Local Economic Development in Turkey, The Turkish Ministry of National Education

2006 - **Sandra Begley**, Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Firm Survival: Innovation and the Dynamics of Temporary Coalitions (School Scholarship)

2005 - **Stephen Williams**, 'ICT, Business and Professional Services, and Sustainable Communities', ESRC/ODPM

2004 - **Lindsey Appleyard**, Overcoming financial exclusion: Community Development Finance Institutions and the balancing of financial and social objectives (ESRC CASE award with The Aston Reinvestment Trust)

2004 - **Olga Arsenova**, New Firm Creation and Business Incubation in the West Midlands (ORS, School Scholarship)

2004 - **Sunita Dewitt**, Geographies of Asian 'Alternative' Economic Spaces in the West Midlands: enterprise creation, embeddedness and access to finance and advice (ESRC)

2004 - **Ahoefa Chantal Hales**, Female Entrepreneurship in Senegal, (Self)

2001-2005 - **Martin Buttle**, Geographies of Ethical Investment (School Studentship)

Research

Research group

- **Society, economy and environment** (</research/activity/hg/index.aspx>)
- **SERU** (<http://www.gees.bham.ac.uk/research/clusters/ee/seru/>)

Research interests

John's research is motivated by a desire to understand and explain the complex ways in which production is organized through space and in place and via a variety of forms of enterprise. Three concerns drive his research:

- A focus on understanding the economic geographies of knowledge specifically the production and consumption of expertise. Knowledge flows in and between enterprises, concentrating on knowledge-intensive business services, specifically management consultancy, market research, impression management and industrial design.
- Understanding the role played in the production process by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- A concern with exploring the ways in which individuals and enterprises shape and are shaped by their involvement in economic activity. The conceptualization of the importance of individual expertise and reputation in this new age of 'relationship capitalism' including hybrid forms of work and highly-paid professional work.
- Alternative forms of organization and enterprise including not-for-profit enterprises Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) and virtual firms.
- Historical and methodological perspectives on enterprise, entrepreneurship and business services.

Current / recent research

Designing Competitiveness

Funded by the Research Council of Norway

This two-year research project seeks to identify how industrial design services are produced, organised and consumed in Norway. Specifically, the project explores the geographies, formation processes (sources of design expertise and training) and organisation of the design industry and the ways in which this expertise engages with client firms in different regions of the country, including the areas outside the largest conurbations. Two issues drive the project: understanding the organisation and evolving geography of the supply of design services in Norway, and exploring client designer relationships and engagement through specific projects in different locations.

This project is in collaboration with Dr Grete Rusten, Institute of Research in Economics and Business Administration, Bergen.

Second City and Regional Economy Research Programme

This is a long-term research programme that is exploring the regional dynamics of the economy of the West Midlands which includes Birmingham, the second city in the United Kingdom, as well as rural areas. The project includes the following four related activities:

1. Understanding the Dynamics of Business and Professional Services in an Evolving Regional Economy (Funding: three Research Council Funded CASE PhD studentships: one in partnership with the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister, one partly funded by Advantage West Midlands, the regional development agency, and one partly funded by the Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART). Two of these projects are exploring business and professional services and are jointly supervised by Prof. John Bryson and Prof. Peter Daniels and one is exploring access to and the supply of finance for enterprise in the region (Prof. John Bryson and Prof. Michael Taylor).

2. Skills Needs of Business and Professional Services in the West Midlands. Funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Service and Enterprise Research Unit (SERU) has been commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to undertake a sub-sectoral and sub-regional analysis of the skills needs of business and professional service (BPS) firms in the West Midlands. The work is funded by the **European Social Fund** (<http://www.esf.gov.uk/>) and in particular its Action Plan Phase 2. This means that the study will focus on firms located within Objective 2 areas within the region; these incorporate areas covered by all six LSC sub-groups in the West Midlands. An earlier study of Professional Services in Birmingham and The West Midlands: Strengths, Opportunities and Threats (Daniels and Bryson, 2002) highlighted demand-led labour force issues that were identified by more than half of the BPS surveyed. Visit the **Project Web Site** (<http://www.gees.bham.ac.uk/research/seru/BPSSkillsNeeds/index.htm>).

3. Functioning Economic Geography of the West Midlands Region

Funded by Advantage West Midlands

Project Partner: West Midlands Regional Observatory

This project is part of the review of the Regional Economic Strategy being undertaken by Advantage West Midlands, the regional development agency. John Bryson and Michael Taylor were invited to undertake a detailed analysis of the functional economic geography of the West Midlands, with data collected to:

- Examine the functioning regional geographical context, existing variations and patterns of the manner in which individuals/ groups operate within the West Midlands (with national and wider links).
- Examine the distinctiveness of the different parts of the region (including urban and rural areas) and the links between them;
- Identify and explain the characteristics and causes of these 'functioning geographic economies' and the challenges and opportunities for them.

Key project publications: **Functioning Economic Geography of West Midlands Summary Report** (</Documents/college-les/gees/staff/BrysonFEG-Summary.pdf>), **Functioning Economic Geography of West Midlands** (</Documents/college-les/gees/staff/BrysonFunctioningEconomicGeogofWMids.pdf>), See also: <http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/wmesreview.html> (<http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/wmesreview.html>)

4. An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Urban Redevelopment: Birmingham Eastside as a National Demonstrator

Funded by EPSRC

Extension to the SUE Scoping Study - a major multidisciplinary research project with Professor Chris Rogers, School of Engineering, UoB; A. Barber, CURS, UoB, J. Sadler, UoB etc two years funding for four Research Fellows, 1 Nov. 2004.

This research proposal is for an extension to a Sustainable Urban Environment Scoping Study that is exploring the feasibility of adopting Birmingham Eastside as a 'Demonstrator of Sustainable Urban Redevelopment' (GR/S20482, which employs four Research Fellows, started in May 2003 and will finish in October 2006). The current project is being carried out by researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines (ranging from engineers to environmental geographers) and has its primary focus on the barriers to and enablers of sustainable urban redevelopment. The current study is limited to two contrasting parts of the large Eastside area that is undergoing

redevelopment (the Masshouse Area and City Park), but went through the planning stages well before the research project started. By focusing upon two current developments, the existing study has both identified a hierarchy of specific and generic barriers to achieving sustainable urban redevelopment, and highlighted possible ways of overcoming them (i.e. enablers). The most important barrier to achieving sustainability (which is being considered in its broadest sense based around the three social, environmental and economic 'pillars') was identified as the decision-making process, where sustainability either becomes central (or not) to the future of the city. The proposed research will therefore explore the complex issues surrounding the barriers and enablers at the time of decision-making.

Rediscovering Charitable Enterprises in Economic Geography: The Almshouse Renaissance and the Care of the Elderly and Poor in Urban and Rural Britain

Funded by the Nuffield Foundation

The transformation of the state welfare system has provided an opportunity for charitable enterprises to play an important role in the economy and society. This project explores their role in the provision of housing and welfare support for the elderly and poor. The debate on charitable provision of housing and care support for the elderly and poor has neglected the largest charitable group operating in this sector: almshouses, occupational and locational affiliations.

Methodologies of Economic and Historical Geography

This project draws upon material collected from qualitative corporate interviews held with large and small companies in the UK. It also explores material collected from biographies, autobiographies and archives associated with the evolution of Bournville, Birmingham. The purpose of this research is to develop a constructive critique of the ways in which institutions and organizations construct their histories. The main research interest is understanding the ways in which stories of economic and historical geography are constructed, reconstructed and retold by geographers (Bryson and Lowe, 2001; Bailey and Bryson 2006 a & b).

Other activities

Head of [society, economy and environment \(/research/activity/hg/index.aspx\)](#) research group

Publications

Key Publications since 2001

Books

Bryson, J.R. and Daniels, P.W. (eds.) (2007) *The Handbook of Service Industries in the Global Economy*, Edward Elgar, 594 pages ([View Flyer PDF \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/Brysonhandbook.pdf\)](#))

Bryson, J.R., Daniels, P.W. and Warf, B. (2004) *Service Worlds: People, Organizations, Technologies*, Routledge, 286 pages

Cuadrado Roura, J.R., Rubalcaba Bermejo, L and **Bryson, J.R.** (eds) (2002) *Trading Services in the Global Economy*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 361 pages.

Selected Journal Papers

Bryson, J.R., Taylor, M. and Cooper, R. (2008), 'Competing by Design, Specialization and Customization: Manufacturing Locks in the West Midlands (UK)', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (2): 173-186

Bryson, J.R., Taylor, M. and Daniels, P.W. (2008), 'Commercializing 'Creative' Expertise: Business and Professional Services and Regional Economic Development in the West Midlands, UK', *Politics and Policy*: 36: 2, 306-328

Taylor M., Plummer P., **Bryson John R.** and Garlick S. (2008), 'The Role of Universities in Building Local Economic Capacities', *Politics and Policy*: 36: 2, 216-231

Bryson, J.R. and Rusten, G. (2008) 'Transnational Corporations and Spatial Divisions of 'Service' Expertise as a Competitive Strategy: The Example of 3M and Boeing.', *The Service Industries Journal*, 28:3: 307-323

Rusten, G., **Bryson, J.R.** and Aarflot, U., (2007) 'Places through Product and Products Through Places: Industrial Design and Spatial Symbols as Sources of Competitiveness', *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 61:3: 133-144

Bryson, J.R. and Daniels, P.W. (2008), 'Skills, Expertise and Innovation in the Developing Knowledge Economy: The Case of Business and Professional Services, forthcoming', *International Journal of Services Technology and Management*, 9: 3/4: 249-267

Bryson, J.R. (2007) 'A 'Second' Global Shift? The Offshoring or Global Sourcing of Corporate Services and the Rise of Distanced Emotional Labour', *Geografiska Annaler 89B (S1)*: 31-43

Bryson, J.R. (2007) 'Arts, Dance, Cultural Infrastructure and City Regeneration: Knowledge, Audience Development, Networks and Conventions and the Relocation of a Royal Ballet Company from London to Birmingham', *The Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 61:3:98-110

Rusten, G. and **Bryson J.R.** (2007) 'The Production and Consumption of Industrial Design Expertise by Small and Medium-Sized Firms: Some Evidence from Norway', *Geografiska Annaler*, 89:1:75-87.

Bailey, A.R. and **Bryson, J.R.** (2006) 'Stories of Suburbia (Bournville, UK): From Planning to People Tales', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 7:2: 178-197

Bailey, A.R. and **Bryson J.R.** (2006) 'Quaker Industrial Patronage: George Cadbury and the Construction of Bournville Model Village', *Quaker Studies*, 11:1:96-124

Bryson, J.R. and Buttle, M. (2005) 'Enabling Inclusion through Alternative Discursive Formations: The regional development of Community Development Loan Funds (CDLFs) in the United Kingdom', *The Service Industries Journal*, 25, 2: 273-286

Rusten G., **Bryson, J.R.** and Gammelsæter, H. (2005) 'Dislocated versus local Business Service Expertise and Knowledge and the Acquisition of External Management Consultancy Expertise by Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Norway', *Geoforum*, in press, available on-line from January 13, 2005 (doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.10.002)

Daniels P.W. and **Bryson J.R.** (2005) 'Sustaining Business and Professional Services in a Second City Region: The Case of Birmingham, UK', *The Service Industries Journal*, 25, 4: 505-5

Bryson, J.R. and Rusten, G. (2005) 'Spatial Divisions of Expertise: Knowledge Intensive Business Service Firms and Regional Development in Norway', *The Services Industries Journal*, 25: 8: 959-977

Donovan, R. Sadler, J.P. and **Bryson J.R.** (2005) 'Urban biodiversity and sustainable development', *Engineering Sustainability: Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 158: ES2: 105-114, awarded the Halcrow Prize Number 1 by the Institution of Civil Engineers, 2006.

Bryson, J.R. and Monnoyer, M.C. (2004) 'Understanding the Relationship between Services and Innovation: The RESER review of the European service literature on

innovation', *The Service Industries Journal*, 24, 1: 205-222.

Rusten G., Gammelsæter, H. and **Bryson J.R.** (2004) 'Combinational and Dislocated Knowledges and the Norwegian Client Consultant Relationship' *The Service Industries Journal*, 24: 1: 155-170.

Bryson J.R. and Wellington C. (2003) 'Image Consultancy in the United Kingdom: Recipe Knowledge and Recreational Employment', *The Service Industries Journal*, 23, 1: 59-76.

Daniels, P.W. and **Bryson, J.R.** (2002) 'Manufacturing Services and Servicing Manufacturing: changing forms of production in advanced capitalist economies', *Urban Studies*, 39, 5-6: 977- 991.

Sidaway, J.D. and **Bryson, J.R.** (2002) 'Constructing knowledges of "emerging markets": UK based fund managers and their overseas connections', *Environment and Planning A*, 34: 401-416.

Bryson, J.R. et.al. (2001) 'Report on European Services Research' , *Service Industries Journal* January 2001, vol 21: 1: 227-240

Wellington, C.A. and **Bryson, J.R.** (2001) 'At Face Value? Image Consultancy, Emotional Labour and Professional Work', *Sociology*, 35:4: 933-946

Bryson, J.R. , McGuinness, M and Ford, R.G (2001) 'Chasing a loose and baggy monster: almshouses and the geographies of charity', *Area*

Bryson, J.R. and Lowe, P.A. (2001) 'Story-Telling and History Construction: Retelling the Story of George Cadbury's Bournville Model Village', *Journal of Historical Geograph*

Expertise

Entrepreneurship and enterprise; local and regional economic development; manufacturing; labour market and skills; service economy; business and professional services; design; competitiveness, financial services including community development finance institutions (CDFIs); knowledge economy; small and medium sized firms

Media experience

John is an experienced media commentator on a range of issues relating to the regional and national economic situation.

Related media experts

- [Professor John Fender \(/staff/profiles/business/fender-john.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/business/fender-john.aspx)

Alternative contact number available for this expert: [contact the press office \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)

Expertise

Entrepreneurship and enterprise; local and regional economic development; manufacturing; labour market and skills; service economy; business and professional services; design; competitiveness, financial services including community development finance institutions (CDFIs); knowledge economy; small and medium sized firms

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