

Regeneration Economies: Transforming People, Place and Production

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'Regeneration Economies: Transforming People, Place and Production' will examine new ways of conceptualising regional economies by drawing upon a comparative analysis of two city regions - Birmingham and Chicago with the ambition of developing a distinctive interdisciplinary Birmingham and Chicago school approach to understanding regional economies.

The economic crisis that commenced in 2007 is associated with calls to rebalance the economy. This reflects political interest in economic restructuring to enhance competitiveness through diversity combined with localism. Cities like Birmingham and Chicago have experienced waves of restructuring that have stripped out manufacturing employment and led to significant societal, urban and economic challenges. Academics have developed disciplinary approaches to understanding regional problems that require interdisciplinary solutions. Existing approaches are based on regional economies as they operated in the last century and are heavily influenced by research undertaken in Scandinavia and Italy. The existing models have also been developed within the social sciences and have not been informed by on-going developments in the disciplines of engineering or education. The existing approaches are no longer appropriate for understanding cities that are experiencing an on-going process of economic regeneration.

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Bringing together research

Our approach will develop new policy interventions and will allow further comparisons with other places in Europe, America or China. It will also contribute to breaking down the disciplinary barriers that exist in the University of Birmingham between the Social Sciences, Engineering and Education.

The Regeneration Economies theme includes three interrelated strands of activity:

- The development of an integrated approach to understanding regional regeneration economies which will be more holistic or less partial than existing conceptualisations.
- Major developments in engineering will revolutionise production systems and will transform the functioning economic geography of regional economies and of the international economy in the near future. This strand will explore the consequences of these developments by developing a distinctive research dialogue between engineering and the social sciences.
- The competitiveness of regional economies is increasingly reliant on the availability and quality of skills as well as the anticipation of future skills and training needs. This third strand explores the relationship between firms, regional competitiveness, skills and training.

For further information on this theme please contact the theme leaders or Sue Gilligan: s.gilligan@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:s.gilligan@bham.ac.uk>).