

## **Spatial and Organisational Reconfigurations of Business Services: Global Trends and Local Consequences**

While there has been extensive research on delocalisation and the emerging division of labour in the real goods sector, the recent array of press headlines and consultants reports on offshoring and outsourcing suggests that this process has now spread to new segments of the service sector. Certain kinds of software and hardware design can now be done more cheaply in South-East Asia than in the United States, Western Europe or Japan. More recently a growing array of knowledge-intensive business services, such as accounting and financial analysis, HR management, legal services, business consulting, and R&D have begun to move offshore as well.

The session *Spatial and Organisational Reconfigurations of Business Services: Global Trends and Local Consequences* as a part of the RSA Research Network (*Regional Development and the Changing Geography of Outsourcing Business Services in an Enlarged Europe*) aims to build upon the theoretical frameworks of value chains, the changing division of labour and multiplier effects, which will be embedded in an understanding of recent trends in corporate restructuring.

The prime objective of the session is to identify and investigate the impact of the emerging geographies of outsourcing and offshoring services on the local and regional structural change in the 'new Europe', and compare them with the home country perspectives.

Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- factors driving firms to concentrate on their core competences and to outsource and/or offshore all or parts of their business services
- regional patterns of business service outsourcing and offshoring in comparison with other forms of foreign investment
- relative attractiveness of EU post-communist economies as a location for business service investment compared to (i) alternative destinations within the home country, (ii) the wider European region (Ukraine, Turkey, Russia), (iii) Asian destinations and India, in particular
- structural and institutional factors explaining why some regions in Europe are experiencing clusters in business services
- ways the institutions intervene to attract and regionally embed business services
- impacts of the outsourcing activities upon regional and local structural change (e.g. analysis of multiplier effects);
- regional development implications of receipt of inward investment in (i) routine business services (e.g. data processing), (ii) and higher level functions (e.g. software development)

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