

Europe's 'Phoenix' cities show how to survive a new age of urban limits

Europe's hard-pressed cities can show the rest of the world's urban giants how to survive the coming financial, environmental and social crisis predict the authors of a new study published today by Policy Press for the London School of Economics and Political Science.

The book, *Phoenix Cities: the fall and rise of great industrial cities*, explores how seven cities – including Sheffield and Belfast – have recovered from steep industrial decline through a combination of imagination, investment and leadership. It is the result of a three-year project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

And its authors – Professor Anne Power, Jörg Plöger and Astrid Winkler, say that having survived the ages of industrial boom and post-industrial regeneration the same cities can lead the world as it enters a third urban age - of recession and environmental pressure.

Under these financial and environmental constraints, say the authors, the lessons from Europe's recovering industrial cities will be even more valuable. The seven cities, which also include Bilbao, Bremen, Leipzig, St Etienne and Torino, recovered following industrial collapse by combining many crucial elements:

- innovative enterprises and new skills development;
- new-style city leadership and civic involvement;
- reinvestment in city buildings, public spaces and public transport;
- special neighbourhood programmes and social enterprise; and
- environmental reclamation and green technologies.

The hands-on approach of European urban policy makers, combining local vision, national backing and many stranded, closely focused actions, have served cities in Europe well. The more 'hands-off' approach of the US over recent decades of radical economic change has weakened the ability of US cities to round the corner to recovery. The book compares the fates of seven US 'rust-belt' cities.

Having lived through the first industrial economy of vast wealth production followed by collapse, the second post-industrial economy focused on reclamation, restoration, new services and new skills. Today the third response – constrained economy – points to a different kind of growth, more service – and labour – intensive, lighter on the planet and in the end more sustainable.

Professor Anne Power said: 'Despite the recent recovery, such cities are in a perilous position under today's triple threats of economic uncertainty, social polarisation and environmental limits. However, having already lived through a parallel crisis a generation ago, they are better prepared and in a stronger position to respond to severe resource constrictions and climate change than they were then. Their resilience offers lessons for other cities, showing how national reinvestment, grounded in local programmes, can win citizen support and turn conditions around.'

Speaking about the book, Jonathon Porritt, Founder Director, Forum for the Future said: 'As we embark on a new era of urbanism, based on resilience, equity and sustainability, there's

so much to learn from these 'boom, bust and recover' case studies. This is a hugely insightful piece of work.'

Phoenix Cities: the fall and rise of great industrial cities is published by Policy Press with a public lecture at LSE at 6pm on Tuesday 16 March. The speakers will be international author Lord Richard Rogers, Bruce Katz, adviser to the Obama administration on cities, and Anne Power, author of *Phoenix Cities*.

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For more information contact:

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Notes:

1. *Phoenix cities: The fall and rise of great industrial cities* by Anne Power, Jörg Plöger and Astrid Winkler is published by The Policy Press on 16 March 2010. It is available to buy from www.policypress.co.uk at £21.74, or from Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN (01235 465500).
2. To request a review copy of *Phoenix cities* contact Kathryn King email: Kathryn.king@bristol.ac.uk tel: 0117 331 4097. Review copies will be available from Wednesday 10th March.
3. The launch of the book will be marked by a lecture and debate on Tuesday 16th March 2010 chaired by Sir Howard Davies, Director of the London School of Economics with contributions from: Lord Richard Rogers, international prize-winning architect, Bruce Katz, Head of the Metropolitan Program and Vice-President of the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, Anne Power, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. To book a place at this free event, please contact Anna Tamas by email: a.tamas@lse.ac.uk. Registration and refreshments will be from 5.15pm and a reception will follow the event between 7.45-8.30pm.
4. Anne Power is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington. Anne was author of *City Survivors* (2007). Jörg Plöger completed his PhD at Kiel University, Germany in 2006 and worked on the Weak Market Cities programme from 2006-2009. Astrid Winkler did an MSc in Social Psychology at LSE and worked on the CASE Neighbourhood Study before helping set up the Weak Market Cities programme.
5. The recoveries of the seven European cities in this study are contrasted with seven US ones in the 'rust-belt': Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Louisville, Chattanooga and Akron.