Preface and acknowledgements

> Geography deals with complex open systems in which today's activities take place in contexts not of current agents' making, but nevertheless constrained and enabled by them. In such systems there are at best temporary and local regularities. Yet one could still explain what happens in them by tracing connections and looking for causal mechanisms.
>
> (Sayer 2018: 105)

Cities and Regions in Crisis captures my 20-year intellectual research journey with sub-national geographies of economic governance in England's cities and regions. It offers detailed theoretical and empirical insights into putting local and regional economic development in its place by questioning the what, where, how and why of state intervention. This facet of public policy has seen so much policy-churn since the 1980s that those working inside it struggle to comprehend ongoing events. Rarely a week goes by without a new government department being (re)-created, a 'new' economic development policy initiative being announced, often followed by the deep cynical sighs of those on the receiving end of it—seen this before, albeit always called and packaged as something different. Appearances of activity and policy failures run deep. Often the same people are involved in its delivery, with civil servants and policy communities sceptical about any success likely to happen, keen to predict failure and critique the next economic development policy downfall. By going backwards to go forwards, *Cities and Regions in Crisis* offers an in-perspective political economy analysis of the mechanisms, sites, and geographies of sub-national economic development, probing on how policy-makers frame problems and articulate their solutions by deploying crisis spaces.

This multi-causal and inter-disciplinary boundary spanning research on the broad area of economy, society, and space, and specifically on the interfaces between economic and political geography, started with my collaborations with Jamie Peck, extended to Graham Haughton, Gordon MacLeod, Adam Tickell, Kevin Ward, and David Etherington. The 2000s saw these links continue and extend further to collaborations with Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Mark Goodwin, Rhys Jones, Mike Woods, Sally Hardy, Jesse Heley, Anssi Paasi, John Harrison, David Beel, and Ian Rees Jones. I would also like to acknowledge additional Aberystwyth University colleagues—Deborah Dixon, Matthew Hannah, Peter Merriman, and Mark Whitehead—involved

in our space, place, and politics book and other projects. The influences of these peopled experiences are heartfelt through the chapters, with some of the arguments and evidence drawing on our jointly authored research. I would also like to acknowledge Huw Beynon, Allan Cochrane, Gill Valentine, Bob Jessop (again), and Steve Rogers for inspiration and support over the years. Thanks also goes to four Vice Chancellors—Noel Lloyd, April McMahon, Keith Burnett, and Liz Barnes—who have recognised and supported the strategic coupling of my research with my leadership and management career. At Staffordshire University, credit goes to Rosemary Duncan for technical instance with Figure 1.7. At Edward Elgar, this book could not have happened without the endeavours of Matthew Pitman, Katy Crossan, Stephanie Hartley, Barbara Pretty, and Sarah Price. Lastly, closer to home, I am not sure that Victoria and Harley agree with all my (sometimes crackers) arguments in *Cities and Regions in Crisis*, but we can all agree on 'cheese as productive fuel' for tackling the crisis of crisis-management.

These collaborations have been always been concerned with: first, capturing the real-time restructuring dynamics of an increasingly neoliberalising local and regional economic development world; second, deploying this empirical material to build an inter-disciplinary geographical political economy, with crisis and contradiction-analytic perspectives of state intervention at its core; and, third, combining all this to formulate and deliver an impactful research agenda. Place and region matters: I have always seen the (privileged) importance of the institutions of higher education to connect with and inform praxis in political and civil society. *Cities and Regions in Crisis* draws on empirical work conducted in and around my university places—Manchester, Aberystwyth, Sheffield, and Stoke-on-Trent—working with local community groups and public policy officials (civil society) to seek to improve economic and social conditions and the life chances of disadvantaged people in forgotten places. I have had the pleasure of giving evidence to UK Government Select Committees on skills, business support, and regional development and have worked alongside various government departments, the European Commission, think-tanks, and pressure groups. This is geographical knowledge to inform and empower others, and in doing so, make a better world—albeit from the field of local and regional economic development. In this context, as Orwell (1946) would have it, this book has a 'political purpose and attitude'.

The chapters draw on aspects of previously published work, edited to provide a narrative. Figures, tables, and footnotes have been mostly removed from their original versions and I would recommend reading these for further insights.

In line with Harvey (2001: 9), I have endeavoured to 'rub together' different conceptual and empirical 'blocks together to make an intellectual fire'. The selection and inter-weaving of them to develop the *political economy of*

sub-national economic development, I hope, is my distinctive 'fire' contribution to geographical knowledge. The authored and co-authored sources are listed below and I wish to thank those listed, who have kindly given permission for the use of copyright material. I am also grateful to the editors and reviewers of those journals and book chapters for helping me develop this work and building my confidence in it. No one, however, is to blame for what follows: the responsibility for the text and all its faults is fully mine.

The 'Introduction' (Chapter 1) derives in part from: Martin Jones (2013) 'It's like déjà vu, all over again' in M. Ward and S. Hardy (eds) *Where Next for Local Enterprise Partnerships*, London: Smith Institute, 86–94; Martin Jones (2019) 'The march of governance and the actualities of failure: the case of economic development twenty years on' *International Social Science Journal* (DOI: epdf/10.1111/issj.12169).

Chapter 2 derives in part from Martin Jones (1998) 'Partnerships as modes of economic governance: A regulationist perspective', in N. Walzer and B. Jacobs (eds) *Public–Private Partnerships for Local Economic Development*, Westport: Praeger, 205–226.

Chapter 3 derives in part from: Martin Jones and Kevin Ward (2002) 'Urban policy under capitalism: Towards a "fourth-cut" theory of crisis', Spatial Policy Analysis Working Paper 50, Manchester: University of Manchester, School of Geography.

Chapter 4 derives in part from: Graham Haughton, Martin Jones, Jamie Peck, Adam Tickell and Aidan While (2000) 'Labour market policy as flexible welfare: Prototype Employment Zones and the new workfarism', *Regional Studies*, 34, 669–680.

Chapter 5 derives in part from Martin Jones (2001) 'The rise of the regional state in economic governance: "Partnerships for prosperity" or new scales of state power?' *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 1185–1211.

Chapter 6 derives in part from Martin Jones (2004) 'Social justice and the region: Functional regionalization and civil society regionalism in England', *Space and Polity*, 8, 157–189.

Chapter 7 derives in part from: Martin Jones and David Etherington (2009) 'Governing the skills agenda: insights from the Sheffield city-region', *Local Economy*, 24, 68–79.

Chapter 8 derives in part from: Martin Jones (2017) 'New localism, new localities …', in Ian Deas and Stephen Hincks (eds) *Territorial Policy and Governance: Alternative Paths*, London: Routledge, 17–35.

Chapter 9 derives in part from: David Beel, Martin Jones and Ian Rees Jones (2018) 'Regionalisation and civil society in a time of austerity: The cases of Manchester and Sheffield', in Craig Berry and Arianna Giovannini (eds) *Developing England's North: The Northern Powerhouse, Devolution and the Political Economy of Place*, London: Palgrave, 241–260.

Chapter 10 derives in part from: David Etherington and Martin Jones (2018) 'Re-stating the post-political: Depoliticization, social inequalities, and city-region growth', *Environment Planning A*, 50, 51–72.

Chapter 11 derives in part from: David Beel, Martin Jones, Ian Rees Jones and Warren Escadale (2017) 'Connected growth: Developing a framework to drive inclusive growth across a city-region', *Local Economy*, 32, 565–575.

Chapter 12 derives in part from David Etherington and Martin Jones (2004) 'Whatever happened to local government? Local labour market policy in the UK and Denmark', *Policy and Politics*, 32, 137–150.

The approach adopted in *Cities and Regions in Crisis*, then, draws attention to more than specifics of economic development. It encourages scholars and practitioners to think about the historically contingent and politically charged context-specific processes and practices of economic governance. The book seeks to provide a window into the dynamics of economic development where the state is a 'political process in motion' (Goodwin et al. 2012, 2017). This has required a multi-methods research design deployed over a period of 20 years to capture the real-time restructuring of local and regional economic development across England's cities and regions. The individual research projects that have produced the various chapters, funded by a number of research entities—and I would particularly like to acknowledge the financial support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for funding WISERD Civil Society (Grant ES/L0090991/1), work package Spaces of New Localism and Impact Accelerator funding (Making City-Regions Work: Inclusive Governance, Skills, and Labour Market Disadvantage)—have all involved a number of phases.

Phase 1 has involved the analysis of economic development strategies, construed, first, in national-level government documentation (bills, acts, white and green papers) and, second, how this is translated through the various sub-national institutions and projects of the state. Phase 2 then turns to examine the experiences of economic development through a series of contemporary case studies, where the state-making practices and struggles become evident. Each of the case studies featured in this book were designed to explore how effectively the institutions of economic governance have been able, or not, to meet the challenges of economic development within their various localities. This was explored by looking at the nature of intergovernmental relationships vertically and horizontally to get a handle on levels of institutional cooperation and collaboration and the alignment of policy responsibilities and working practices.

Taken together, the *Cities and Regions in Crisis* approach foregrounds the 'capacity to act' (Goodwin et al. 2012, 2017) of the institutions of economic development through a 'close dialogue' (Clark 2010) with policy-making, in the process contributing to a theory-building of geographical political

economy. Each case study was undertaken using a combination of documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. Over 250 interviews have been undertaken between 1993 and 2018 with a wide variety of people working in, and connected to, the field of economic development, ranging from ministerial and chief executive levels, to those engaged in policy formulation and delivery on the ground. Several individuals were interviewed several times, often over a period of several years, where the roles undertaken remained broadly the same but the name of their institution and its geographical reach had changed. For reasons of confidentiality, the individuals are not named; anonymous quotations feature in some chapters and in others, the 'voices' feature in the analysis of policy.

These interviews were supported and triangulated by the analysis of policy documents, and vice versa, including institutional minutes, policy briefings, strategy papers, and media analysis. *Cities and Regions in Crisis* offers a reflexive institutional historical take on local and regional economic development, conscious of not falling into the Eighteenth Brumaire—'tragedy' then 'farce'—(policy) history repeating itself trap, flagged by Marx (see Jessop 2002a). My various crisis and contradiction theory-building endeavours in subsequent chapters require this immersed 'mode of retroduction' (Sayer 1992)—not just interviewing, but where possible experiencing, following, and living the economic development complexities that I am seeking to understand in order to pin down the causes and conditions of failure.

On this last note, the book is dedicated to my parents for giving me social capital and always being supportive of my academic ambitions and career over the past 25 years: successes, failures, and some crises.