Acknowledgements

This book is no different to any other in the sense that the author is indebted to many people who have given their time and energy to discuss the matters contained herein. As such, there are a long list of people and organizations to be acknowledged.

To commence, a number of organizations funded research projects out of which the ideas in this book directly arise. First, several organizations funded the collection of the empirical data for the English Localities Survey discussed herein, namely the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Countryside Agency and the European Commission via its Targeted Socio-Economic Research (TSER) programme. Besides acknowledging the financial support of these organizations, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Theresa Aldridge, Jo Cooke, Stephen Hughes and Richard White for providing the research assistance and all of the respondents for taking the time to help us understand the role of underground transactions in their lives.

Second, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in the UK provided funding to write a synthesis report on the relationship between the underground sector and deprived neighbourhoods. In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude not only to the ODPM for giving me the opportunity to think through policy approaches towards the underground sector in deprived neighbourhoods, but also my co-workers, Stephen Syrett and Mel Evans.

Third, the Small Business Service (SBS) and Small Business Council (SBC) provided financial support to investigate small businesses in the informal economy and what should be done about them. In relation to this project, I am grateful to both members of the SBC Steering Group, especially Paul Harrod, Monder Ram and Simon Topman for their insights, as well as the friendly and encouraging support for my ideas offered by numerous SBS officials, but particularly Sheena O’Sullivan and Caroline Berry, along with the officials from other Government Departments who participated in the resultant discussions and focus groups.

Fourth and finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for funding an evaluation of data sources on entrepreneurship and the underground economy so as to explore
possible future avenues for mapping this relationship. With regard to this project, I owe a debt to my collaborators for being so good-natured and stimulating, namely Rebecca Harding of London Business School (now at Deloitte), Simon King of Hedra PLC and Angela Zvesper of Social Research Associates.

I am also deeply grateful to a host of other organizations and individuals that have played a vital role in helping the ideas contained in this book come to fruition. First, I would like to thank all members of the cross-government Informal Economy Steering Group (IESG) for inviting me to attend their discussions and gain an insight into policy formulation and implementation in this realm. I am particularly grateful to those senior officials in Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DeFRA), Home Office, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), HM Treasury and Small Business Service (SBS) who entrusted me with such privileged access to their discussions. Let them rest assured that I do not here break the ‘Chatham House extra’ promises of confidentiality I made.

Second, I would like to show my appreciation to members of the Formal and Informal Work in Europe (FIWE) research programme funded by the European Commission, especially the co-ordinator, Professor Birgit Pfau-Effinger, for giving me the opportunity to discuss some of the ideas contained in this book and providing valuable feedback, as well as for so warmly welcoming me on my sojourn in Hamburg. Third, I am grateful to those who participated in the Public Administration Committee (PAC) Conference stream on the ‘shadow economy and public administration’ in September 2005 for providing further valuable feedback on some of the ideas discussed here. Finally, I am indebted to a number of senior civil servants within Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) crosscutting policy team who have so openly shared their knowledge and ideas with me on both the availability of evidence and the feasibility of various policy options.

There are also a multitude of additional academic colleagues who have over the past few years provided advice on various ideas raised in this book, notably Peter Armstrong, Liliana Bâculo, Danny Burns, Jenny Cameron, Julie Gibson, Katherine Graham, Bill Jordan, Enrico Marcelli, Sue Marlow, Pete North, Monder Ram, Piet Renooy, John Round, Michael Samers, Jim Thomas and Richard White. As always, however, I owe by far the largest debt to my long-time research collaborator, Jan Windebank. As she knows so well, and continuously reminds me, it is actions on my part and not mere words of gratitude that are required. Hopefully, by the time she reads these words, I will have started to make some inroads into my massive debt to her.
Last but not least, I would like to thank my colleagues at the University of Leicester School of Management (ULSM) for providing such a friendly, supportive and inspiring environment in which to work. I could not wish for a better and more stimulating group of colleagues. Mindful of some of their reactions to my expressions of gratitude in a previous book, I will not here repeat what it means to me to have such a wonderful work environment. They should already know.

The usual disclaimers of course apply. The ideas and recommendations in this book are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of any of the above individuals, organizations or institutions.