International Journal of Urban and Regional Research

Fluid Spatial Imaginaries: evolving estuarial city-regional spaces

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Fluid Spatial Imaginaries: evolving estuarial city-regional spaces

Introduction

From the 1960s through to the present a succession of government and more recently private sector-led initiatives have been under-taken to try to create more coherent identities, governmental structures and governance bodies for Britain's main estuary areas. The desire to create greater governance coherence was largely driven by the rationale of helping stimulate industrial and metropolitan development in estuarial regions perceived to have the capacity to host further employment and population growth (Frey, 1971). In the 1960s and 1970s in particular the underlying feeling was that growth was inhibited by the lack of an elected local or sub-regional government body with an estuary-level remit

In this paper we focus empirically on successive waves of identity making around three of England's major estuarine city-regional port complexes, involving some of the country's largest metropolitan areas: the Thames Gateway, the Mersey Belt, and the Hull-Humber city-region. This empirical focus is helpful in exploring conceptually the variety of ways in which new planning and regeneration spaces have emerged in a succession of different guises, the fluid spatial imaginaries of the title of this article. The concept of an imaginary, according to Jessop (2012a, p.17) "denotes a simplified, necessarily selective 'mental map' of a supercomplex reality". These imaginaries are never a simple representation of reality since they help construct the very reality they seek to represent. In this article we examine the role of successive waves of creating and remaking spatial imaginaries in the process of region-building in the case of estuary regions. Following Metzger's (2013) recent injunction in this journal to avoid writing Whiggish histories of regionalisation processes as producing somehow natural coherences around particular regional formations, we seek to provide a longitudinal and comparative approach to understand the processes of creating, stabilising, deconstructing and remaking regional identities, accepting that successful examples of stabilisation into recognised regions is more the exception than the norm. In particular we draw on recent work on region-making, spatial imaginaries and relational space to demonstrate the practices, the reversals and re-imaginings involved in trying to imagine new estuary regions over a fifty year period.

We develop an argument that over the course of fifty years it is possible to see a transition from policies that were largely framed territorially to a period which combines relational and territorial thinking about space. More than this, the comparative perspective reveals how new generations of region building may reflect common challenges and intellectual understandings, but generate different approaches to creating new spatio-temporal and geo-institutional fixes.

1

Larger estuaries pose particular issues in terms of attempts to develop a shared cultural identity that matches proposals to create a new estuary-focused geo-institutional fix. One of the challenges is cultural, where distinctive and separate local identities and cultures may exist up-stream and downstream or on the two sides of the estuary. The Humber is a classic example of this, where the south Humber historically lies in the county of Lincolnshire, whilst the north bank is in the county of Yorkshire. Neither the creation of Humberside County Council in 1974 nor the opening of the Humber Bridge in 1981 proved sufficiently compelling symbols of unification to overcome the entrenched opposition by some on both banks of the estuary towards the notion of a Humberside region.

Another challenge concerns dealing with existing governmental arrangements, particularly where cities are involved as in our case studies, since new estuarial identities must necessarily deal with the tensions that arise from superimposing new 'estuary region' identities that provide a sometimes poor fit with cities and city regions. For instance, the Mersey Basin covers two large separate city-regions, Liverpool and Manchester each with distinctive identities and a history of adversarial relationships between them, making it difficult for this policy imaginary to gain much political traction. By contrast the smaller estuary space known as Merseyside framed a more culturally cohesive set of places and as such faced fewer objections when it came to creating a Merseyside county council in 1974, albeit that frictions between some of the constituent local authorities continue to hamper attempts to create a coherent regional identity through to the present (see below).

The spaces and territories of planning and regeneration

Most studies looking at the emergence of new governance spaces have tended to focus on specific initiatives and contemporary rationales (though see Allmendinger and Haughton, 2013). By contrast taking a fifty year time horizon and a comparative approach to explore the succession of attempts to create new regional spatial imaginaries is helpful in better understanding the emergence of a series of rationales, objectives and practices for regeneration and planning. The task of comparing three regions over this time horizon means that necessarily we focus on key moments, sacrificing some of the detail of policy evolution in order to get the benefits of this broader focus on how region-making rationales are presented, contested and re-worked over time.

In broad terms there are two drivers of regional spatial imaginaries over this period. The first concerns how centralised, statist and welfarist forms of government have given way to devolved, entrepreneurial, market supportive forms of partnership-based governance under the influence of global competition and emergent neoliberal ideologies. In effect we can see the changes from late stage Keynesian welfare state approaches to a more 'competition state' or neoliberal approach, through early reforms aimed at rolling-back of the state in the 1980s, to the rolling-out of more market-

2

supportive state sector reforms under New Labour (1997–2010) (Jessop, 2000; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Much discussed in the literature on the changing nature of governance is the shift in emphasis from govern*ment* to govern*ance* forms over this period, and the continuous rescaling of the state at sub-national level, as new spatial fixes are sought and new geo-institutional architectures created that seek to take forward the competitive state agenda (Jessop, 2000, 2001; Jones, 2001). Alongside the much remarked upon 'hollowing out' of the nation state, has been a wave of initiatives that 'fill-in' the spaces left by the reworking of governmental powers and resources to new sub-national and local bodies, particularly in the area of regeneration (Goodwin *et al*., 2005, 2006; Jones *et al*., 2005).

The second main driver has been the series of experiments across Europe attempting to create new regional identities that transcend existing regional and national boundaries, for instance the recently initiated Baltic Sea, Danube, Alpine, North Sea and Mediterranean regions (Metzger 2013, Stead, 2011). Other European inspired and endorsed spatial imaginaries concern environmental-functional spaces such as the Rhein, or sectoral imaginaries around, for example, transport. More explicitly, dissatisfaction with the variable nature of environmental protection throughout the EU in the 1980s resulted in the Habitats Directive which eventually led to the emergence of new, bio-geographic regions and imaginaries that promoted some national and regional spaces while supressing though not eliminating others (Chilla, 2005). The resultant spatial imaginaries, backed up by funding and policy initiatives, have helped unsettle existing thinking and understandings with continental notions such as 'spatial planning' providing justification and new narratives with which to pursue region-building.

Both drivers of change and the resultant waves of region-building and rethinking have necessarily involved attempts to generate new spatial imaginaries (Brenner 2004, Jessop, 2012a, 2012b), involving a rich and variable repertoire of discursive tactics and material practices, including the creation of symbolic markers in the case of new regional imaginaries (Dembski and Salet 2012, Dembski 2013). For instance, the building of the Humber Bridge in the 1970s and 1980s helped provide a material example of the potential for estuary-spanning activity in the emergent political unit of Humberside (North et al. 1987). In the case of creating new regional imaginaries, multiple imaginaries can exist at any one moment in time and at a variety of scales, each competing to present itself as a 'natural' and meaningful scale around which policy actors can cohere to undertake strategic work supported by an appropriate institutional governance infrastructure. Each spatial imaginary involves a performative function with a series of selectivities that identify, privilege and seek to stabilise particular understandings over others, drawing on a range of discursive tactics (logos, brands, rhetorical claims on behalf of the new imaginaries and dismissal of alternative imaginaries) and material practices (such as maps, strategies, plans, workshops, conferences, and institutions) appealing to stakeholders and different audiences. Economic imaginaries for instance identify, privilege and seek to stabilize certain economic activities rather than others, for instance industrial districts or competitive city-regions (Jessop 2012a), providing powerful new imaginaries that challenge existing

3

ones. Crucially, regions can be (re-) imagined in different and overlapping ways - as scalar or territorial constructs, as place making exercises, or as nodal points in a global economy of flows (Jessop 2012b).

These processes are helpful in trying to make sense of the recent explosion of experimentation with preferred governance scales and institutional forms for pursuing state growth strategies (Brenner 2004, Lovering 2007). It is important not to see these processes as part of a hollowing out and filling in of the state, involving the 'demise' of certain territorial government forms in favour of new governance forms, since in reality these always co-exist as complex, contingent hybrids, where new initiatives are layered on top of previous ones and frequently contain traces of them, not least in terms of personnel. This usefully links to one of our core concerns here, about the relationship between new, 'soft' spatial imaginaries and existing 'hard' territorial spaces, drawing in part on recent work on the emergence of soft spaces of governance (Haughton *et al.*, 2010, Metzger and Schmitt, 2012). Whatever the origin or objective new spatial imaginaries are always layered on to the contingent histories of each area, each with its own accumulation of cultural, political and institutional rivalries and cooperation which need to be addressed if a new spatial imaginary is to succeed in creating a stable if only temporary coherence around agreed strategies.

In the UK a succession of central government-led sub-regional strategies and local government reforms in the 1960s and 1970s tended to reflect efforts to re-think the appropriate scales and functions for elected local government, notably including the creation in 1974 of new metropolitan counties such as Merseyside and Tyne and Wear, and estuary-centred county units such as Teesside and Humberside. These early attempts to imagine new official *governmental* spaces contrast with later experiments to create new *governance* spaces, in which typically new territorial understandings are put forward for debate, often introducing new names and identities for spatial units that are deliberately framed without reference to the formal boundaries of existing territorial political government units. Sometimes these newly imagined regions even come with fuzzy boundaries, in an attempt to emphasise the disassociation from existing territorial government boundaries (Haughton *et al.*, 2010; Heley, 2013). The new governance spaces and institutions are also generally accompanied by networks and alliances of public sector, private sector and civil society actors, lauded by those who set them up as opening up opportunities for fresh thinking and helping create more integrated approaches across multiple policy sectors and territories (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009).

Such material and discursive practices have been the subject of recent debates on territories, scale, networks and place (e.g. Brenner, 2004; Jessop *et al.*, 2008) that seek to move away from thinking of the absolute, fixity of space in favour of an understanding based upon the fluidity of space: relational perspectives envisage space as forever in a state of becoming, existing as nodal moments, temporary permanences or temporary constellations within ever-changing often far-reaching flows and networks (Harvey, 1973, 2004; Massey, 2005; Agnew, 2005). Whilst such understandings capture the realities of global connectivities the day-to-day practices of

4

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

regeneration and planning on the other hand require engaging with and working through absolute or territorial space.   This has led to an uneasy relationship between relational and territorial understandings of space within the regional development literature (Morgan, 2007). The early bifurcation in debates around territorial and relational space has more recently begun to be bridged in productive ways (see Jessop *et al.*, 2008; Massey, 2011; Cochrane, 2012; Jones 2009; Painter 2008). In particular recent empirical studies have begun to recognise the continued significance of territory and emphasise how spatial governance and regional politics have a strong territorial fix, but can also deploy a range of strategies, including relationally based forms of governance, to complement and help facilitate territorial politics (Morgan, 2007; Allen and Cochrane, 2010; Cochrane, 2012). Such a view sees territorial politics as bounded *and* porous, territorial *and* relational.

Within the field of planning these issues have been explored empirically both at a UK (e.g. Haughton *et al.*, 2010; Heley, 2013; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009, 2010) and mainland European level (e.g., Stead, 2011; Oleson, 2011; Metzger and Schmitt, 2012; Faludi, 2010). The broad thrust of such studies has been to highlight how planning has changed from a largely territorial, hierarchical, nested structure and activity towards being a truly multi-scaled, networked assemblage of practices. In this view a variety of policy scales coexist, and the shifting of powers, responsibilities and expectations between formal and informal scales is a constant process. More than this, planners and regeneration professionals must now be embedded within, and achieve their policy goals through, a variety of networks consisting of diverse stakeholders. Yet this new form of planning remains territorially anchored as the reworking of scale and scope in planning and regeneration represents part of a continuous search by the state for a new territorial management fix, always bound up in socio-political struggles over establishing strategic directions and priorities (Jessop, 2000, 2001; Brenner, 2004, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007).

The emergence of new planning and regeneration spaces needs to be viewed against this backdrop as they can be accompanied by the dismantling of earlier units of government or governance, and by a growing complexity of institutions and sectors. Territorial spaces, unlike relational spaces, are relatively enduring entities and remain, in fields such as foreign policy, security and planning, the basis of shared understanding and action (Paasi, 2013). Territorial spaces are also, we might add, important spaces for contestation. Those charged with taking forward development in both new and existing governance spaces are necessarily always engaged in balancing pressures to look inwards and lock-in behaviours of stakeholders who sign up to a strategy, and pressures to look outward and open up to fresh ideas and ways of acting.

It will be clear from this analysis that new planning and regeneration spaces exhibit a range of features and characteristics: they can be territorial or relational, relatively enduring or ephemeral, formal or informal, centrally sanctioned or locally driven. Such features are mediated and leavened by a range of unique circumstances and with a variety of unique configurations. We would argue that in contrast to earlier attempts to remake governmental scales which were largely exercises in territorial thinking, for

5

instance English local government boundary reforms of the 1970s (Redcliffe-Maud and Wood 1973, Pugalis and Towsend 2013), reforms to contemporary planning and regeneration practice tend to emphasise both territorial *and* relational ways of working. This dual function is hard-wired into the nature of planning in particular, as planners seek to 'open up' and think strategically in ways that acknowledge that social, economic and environmental activities are not bounded by particular jurisdictional boundaries, and then 'close down' such relational thinking into a territorially sanctioned and focused 'product', for example through a strategy or plan. New regeneration spaces likewise may reflect aspects of relational thinking by creating new geo-institutional governance fixes with boundaries that often eschew those of existing units of territorial government, but ultimately few of the new regeneration initiatives can succeed without some link back to the democratic sanction that comes from acting with and through those operating within territorial forms of government. In particular the development aspects of regeneration require cooperation with those creating and implementing the strategies contained in legally enforceable statutory land use plans.

Creating sub-regional economic planning and regeneration spaces in England.

Whilst it is certainly noteworthy that we have seen a rapid expansion in the number of sub-national governance bodies in recent years (Lovering, 2007), it is also worth emphasising at this point that there is nothing original about attempting to create new imaginaries that look beyond the existing territorial units of local government (Keating, 1997; Jones, 2001; Painter 2008, Paasi, 2003, 2010, 2013). For instance, in England during the 1960s and 1970s a range of government sponsored 'regional' and 'sub-regional' studies were undertaken under the auspices of central government including strategies for the estuary spaces of Teesside, South Hampshire (Portsmouth/Southampton), the Humber, Severn and Tay, in an attempt to examine the opportunities that these represented for attracting port-based industries and improved internal and international logistics (Frey 1971; Glasson, 1974; Glasson and Marshall, 2007). Despite the contemporary denials of politicians about them influencing local government reforms, seen in retrospect it seems clear that the commissioned sub-regional studies did become exercises in territory making, with local government reform in 1974 resulting in some of the study areas, including Humberside, being given county council status. Some of the new estuary spaces very quickly evolved then from being innovative new spatial imaginaries, to formalised units of government. Whilst it might be possible to see this in Metzger and Schmitt's terms (2012) as a 'hardening' of soft spaces, this was in many ways more about the search of government itself for a new territorial scalar fix, rather than a transition from a relational governance space to a territorial form of government.

A key factor in the translation from free-standing, free thinking work on new sub-regional strategies to creating new territorial forms of local government was the parallel work of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission, which had been given the task of examining the boundaries of local government (Redcliffe-Maud- and Wood, 1973,

6

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Pugalis and Townsend 2013). The Commission put considerable work into developing the idea of city-regions as coherent local government units, influencing the decision to create six new metropolitan county councils for existing built up metropolitan areas in 1974, of which Merseyside County Council was one.

What these early initiatives reveal is the way in which new geographical imaginaries could be created primarily through the apparatus of government, starting with informal studies, often carried out within government or by directly commissioned consultancies working to central government. Where the political will dictated that these might be usefully carried on to become more formal parts of the governmental apparatus they were quickly turned into territorial government units (Glasson and Marshall 2007). The new counties were created with a clear remit within the hierarchy of sub-national government, providing a strategic and coordinating role for planning and regeneration policies for instance.

None of the new estuarial or metropolitan city-regional arrangements mentioned earlier were to survive in their original form as formal county councils, yet despite this some if not all of them have remained strangely enduring and difficult to eradicate from the official lexicon. Both regions and metropolitan county councils fell foul of the enthusiastic neoliberal roll-back of the state championed by successive Conservative governments from 1979–1997. The metropolitan county councils lasted through to 1986 when the Thatcher government abolished them, frustrated by the opposition of some of the county leaders to national government policies (Haughton and Counsell 2004). Local governments in all the former metropolitan county councils were given unitary status in 1986, which included strategic planning powers, although they continued to cooperate on strategic planning matters in the aftermath of abolition, producing official strategic planning guidance documents (Roberts *et al.*, 1999).

With local government bureaucrats seen as being as much of a problem as national civil servants, successive governments have been reluctant to channel additional resources and funding directly to local government, helping to fuel a constant process of creating new edge-of-state alternative governance bodies to help regenerate areas in need or to provide the strategies for growth in areas perceived to be experiencing blockages. Urban Development Corporations, Training and Enterprise Councils, the Thames Gateway, and many other new governance bodies based on public-private partnerships emerged, often working to new geographies that operated within or across existing territorial jurisdictions, so that they were not 'captured' by local government politicians and bureaucrats, or to put it another way, not directly subject to local democratic accountability (Shaw, 1990; Haughton *et al.*, 2000). Also important in this era was the work of the European Commission in insisting that independent regional and sub-regional strategies were prepared by local actors for areas that were eligible for regional funding, rather than rely solely on central government determining their needs and spending priorities, in this case indicative of a distrust of national government departments (Boland, 1999; Haughton *et al.*, 1999).

If the Thatcher years were quintessential examples of roll-back neoliberalism, the Conservative administrations of John Major (1992–7) and the subsequent New Labour

governments (1997–2010) might be said to have been engaged in a set of neoliberal roll-out state reforms, aimed at casting the state in a more market-supportive role focused on re-regulation rather than crude de-regulation (Allmendinger 2011, Allmendinger and Haughton 2013). For all the rhetorical commitment to social and environmental goals, economic growth remained the dominant driver of national and sub-national governmental reforms (Raco, 2005a). Particularly notable for the purposes of this article are Labour's devolution agenda from 1997, which led to the growth in a regional governance apparatus, and the growth strategy from 2002 onwards, which saw the designation of a substantial array of new growth areas and local regeneration bodies (Raco, 2005a, 2005b; Haughton *et al.*, 2010; Allmendinger, 2011).

Since 2010 the complex landscape of governance spaces that evolved under New Labour has been quickly dismantled, replaced under the Coalition Government's austerity driven, deregulatory reforms, reverting to a crude neoliberal agenda of state roll-back, with major cuts to public sector budgets and institutions. As part of this the previous regional governance infrastructure has been dismantled along with many local and sub-regional regeneration initiatives, replaced by a poorly funded network of private sector-led, sub-regionally based Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) as the new government's favoured scale of regeneration activity (Deas, 2013; Pugalis and Townsend, 2013).

Estuarial spaces for growth and regeneration

The above discussion helps frame the changing nature of planning and regeneration spaces and attempts at creating new spatial imaginaries. In this section we examine successive attempts to create new sub-regional identities and entities around three major estuarial spaces with substantial urban centres within them: the Thames Gateway, the Atlantic Gateway and the Humber. This section draws upon our experiences of research and writing on these are for over thirty years, starting with working on strategies for the Humberside (Graham Moss Associates 1984) and the the Upper Reaches of the Manchester Ship Canal in the 1980s (Haughton 1987), work on the Thames Gateway since the mid-1990s (Haughton *et al.* 1997, Allmendinger and Haughton 2009), and on-going work on the Atlantic Gateway (Deas *et al.* forthcoming).

Mersey Belt and Atlantic Gateway
The Atlantic Gateway is the latest in a long line of non-statutory spatial imaginaries for an area that broadly speaking covers the Manchester and Liverpool city regions and the spaces in between them (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Atlantic Gateway

The recent governance history of this estuarial space can be usefully charted back to the preparatory studies for the 1974 Strategic Plan for the North West, in which the concept of the Mersey Belt first appeared as a sub-regional area linking the cities of

8

Manchester and Liverpool, with Warrington the most notable settlement between the two (Deas, 1997; Williams and Baker, 2007; Dembski, 2012). In its early manifestation the precise outline of the Mersey Belt was not really all that clear, but broadly speaking it covered the pre-1974 local authority district boundaries around Manchester and Liverpool and the area between.

When regional planning returned to government favour in the early 1990s after a period in the political wilderness, attention returned to the Mersey Belt concept, which after much debate at public examination was included in a fairly weak form in regional planning guidance for the North West in the early 2000s (Haughton and Counsell 2004). In both periods, despite much talk the Mersey Belt failed to generate a strong support base or a separate institutional identity, not least because this would have required commitment of resources and personnel from the relevant local authorities, and still more problematic, a willingness to work towards shared agendas in a context when any concessions from one part of the sub-region to another might have created adverse media coverage and political fall-out (Deas *et al.*, forthcoming).

The creation of Merseyside County Council by national government in 1974, provided a statutory scale for strategic planning, backed up by an economic development remit, through to abolition in 1986 (Batey 1999). In the early 1980s various new central government-inspired initiatives began to rework the internal institutional landscape, notably with the introduction of the Merseyside Development Corporation, a private sector-led partnership which operated on both banks of the Mersey (Meegan 1990, Sykes *et al.* 2013). At one level, with a shared sense of cultural identity already in existence public acceptance of strategic planning and identity creation at the Merseyside scale has proven relatively uncontroversial with the public, helped by strong physical links across the estuary, the two Mersey Tunnels and a ferry, which acted also as powerful physical and cultural symbolic markers for the area, especially since the 1960s pop song 'Ferry Cross the Mersey'. After abolition of the Merseyside County Council joint strategic planning work continued, leading to the production of Strategic Planning Guidance for Merseyside in 1988, but at a mere six pages it was skimpy on detail, most notable for its turning the focus to economic growth based on private sector rather than public investment (Batey, 1999).

The Merseyside name did not disappear following abolition of the county council, and it continued to be used frequently in a variety of governmental initiatives around regeneration. In part this reflected that whilst it generated little in way of popular support and identification, 'Merseyside' as a label did not encounter the popular public resistance found in Humberside for instance. But it also reflected a fairly pragmatic political acceptance that the former county boundaries were used to define it as a NUTS2 region in terms of the European Commission. The importance of this is that from the early 2000s this sub-region was designated as an Objective 1 region and as such attracted high levels of European regional development funding to assist regeneration in the area (Batey, 1999; Boland, 1999; Haughton *et al.*, 1999). Nonetheless, tensions between the constituent local authorities have remained, particularly in relation to recent attempts to promote the use of Liverpool more prominently in city-regional

9

affairs (Heseltine and Leahy 20111, Sykes *et al.* 2013). The Atlantic Gateway concept emerged in 2008, known in its early incarnation as Ocean Gateway, the brain child of Peel Holdings, a private company which owns considerable development land along the Manchester Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal. From the mid-2000s the company began to develop and promote the Atlantic Gateway concept as part of its development strategy for its land holdings (Harrison 2014, Deas *et al.* forthcoming). In effect the 'Mersey Belt' with its public sector origins and emphasis on the river has been usurped by a new space that covers roughly the same area, though boundaries are never made clear, and in which the Manchester Ship Canal rather than the Mersey is presented as the main focus. The use of 'Gateway' in the title appears to be in part a genuflection to the Thames Gateway, but it also reflects that the term Gateway often appears in port and maritime city publicity materials around the world. The Gateway has a planned life of 50 years and seeks £50bn of investment. It has an independent corporate identity to that of Peel Holdings, with a management board consisting of the great and good from industry, government and civic society in the area.

There were two key moments in the transition of the Atlantic Gateway from being a 'pretender' to being a 'contender' in sub-regional governance. The first came with its acceptance and incorporation into North West Regional Development Agency's (NWDA) work in preparing a new integrated economic development and planning strategy for the North West. This work was published as a last hurrah, after the abolition of the NWDA had been announced (NWDA, 2010). The document contains no mention of the Mersey Belt; instead, there is a commitment to "Develop the international potential of the Liverpool-Manchester corridor, through the Atlantic Gateway concept" (NWDA, 2010: 42). As Harrison (2014) notes in his detailed account of this process, this was a pivotal moment in the political acceptance of the concept.

The second key moment in the official sanctioning of the Atlantic Gateway concept came with the call from national government in 2010 for bids from interested local actors to create Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) that would operate at a level below the regional and above that of individual local governments. Successful LEP bids were expected to be led by the private sector, with bidders encouraged by the government to choose their own geographies and to not worry too much about overlapping boundaries. Whilst most bids took engagement with local government as axiomatic, there was one exception, when a private sector proposal came forward for an Atlantic Gateway LEP. Though the formal proposal was quickly withdrawn before it could be rejected, it achieved some of its purpose at least in drawing attention to this new private sector imagining and gaining acknowledgement from local governments that they would need to work with the Atlantic Gateway. Three LEPs were created for Liverpool, Greater Manchester and Cheshire and Warrington which, like the local authorities of the area, now find they must learn to live and work alongside the Atlantic Gateway.

In the context of public sector funding cut backs and limited funding for the LEPs, this leaves the Atlantic Gateway with Peel Holdings as its backer as a potentially significant future investor. Thinking of this as a 3-D governance model, we have the three LEPs working above the various local authority units, which provide a rather

10

tenuous form of democratic anchorage for the LEPs. Above the LEPs, free-floating like a balloon or cloud, is the Atlantic Gateway, tethered back to ground through the various large investment sites that anchor much of the Gateway's proposed future investment activities. These it should be emphasised link more to the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal, and to Peel's port-related land holdings along the estuary. The Mersey label then has only limited value as a symbolic marker for the Atlantic Gateway, valued mainly for its cultural significance.

Though the Atlantic Gateway is perhaps best known as an economic development initiative, it is important to emphasise that the stated vision is more holistic than this, with considerable emphasis placed on improving communications infrastructure, supporting transition to a low carbon economy, and green infrastructure. This provides a link to our final Mersey imaginary. The Mersey Basin campaign to clean up the Mersey was an explicitly environmental organisation, enjoying considerable support for its activities from the European Commission and the UK government, support which was often conditional on having wider impacts than simply environmental clean-up (Williams *et al.* 1999). This organisation was established in 1985 with a 25 year time-horizon, closing down in 2010. The Campaign was set up at the behest of national government, but comprised a wide-ranging network of governmental and non-governmental actors. Key to its mission was recognition of the importance of the link between economic regeneration and environmental improvement, which meant that the work programme went beyond simple environmental remediation to promoting economic regeneration. Its boundaries were essentially based around environmental notions of a river catchment, but pragmatically these were treated as flexible and fuzzy when it came to deciding where projects might be supported.

What we see in the case of the Mersey Belt, Merseyside, Atlantic Gateway and the Mersey Basin is in many ways extraordinary: public sector imaginaries allied to the planning system, an environmental imaginary that also had regeneration goals, and now the Atlantic Gateway as a private sector led imaginary. All tapped into aspects of the zeitgeist and each was rooted in attempts to create not simply new strategic visions and related 'brands', but each also seeking to build alliances between actors in different sectors and to meld work that involved both economic and environmental rationales.

Thames Gateway
In contrast to the Atlantic Gateway the motivation behind the creation of the Thames Gateway as a new spatial imaginary emerged from the public sector. The history of strategy making for the Gateway area goes back to the mid-1980s, when SERPLAN the regional planning body for the South East worked up the concept. It was launched in 1991 by the then Secretary of State Michael Heseltine as the East Thames Corridor (Haughton *et al.*, 1997) though later re-branded as the Thames Gateway and given a unique status in the UK planning hierarchy through the publication of sub-regional planning guidance (Department of Environment, 1995). The initial rationale of the Thames Gateway was that London's growth was being held back by congestion and

11

overheating to the west of the capital, whilst to the east de-industrialisation had left a legacy of substantial derelict land and areas of high unemployment (Figure 2). Previous initiatives had been undertaken in the area, but not at this scale or indeed on this scale. Most notable was the London Docklands Development Corporation, set up at the same time as the Merseyside Development Corporation in the early 1980s, with a similar property-led, private sector-led ethos, and with planning powers controversially taken from the local authorities as part of the process. A strategic vacuum opened up at the Greater London level with the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986, which both created the need and the opportunity for a large scale strategic regeneration project such as the Thames Gateway.

Despite its rapid insertion into the hierarchy of statutory plans, initial progress was slow, in part because no specific funds were allocated for the initiative, and only a small coordination unit existed which operated from within the central government planning ministry (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009). In short, there was an institutional absence and a lack of strong leadership. This led to various critical reports in the early-mid-2000s. A re-launch took place in 2003 when Thames Gateway was declared one of four national growth areas in the government's Sustainable Communities programme. At this stage a whole series of new internal governance vehicles were created to help carry forward delivery, creating a complex amalgam of governmental and governance bodies: by the mid-2000s the Thames Gateway area covered parts of three different standard regions, and included three sub-regional partnerships, a range of local delivery partners, two Urban Development Corporations, the Olympics Delivery Agency, and all or parts of sixteen local authorities (Raco, 2005b; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009; Brownill and Carpenter, 2009). Subsequently, amidst continuing concerns over lack of leadership for the initiative as a whole, a Thames Gateway Chief Executive 'Czar' was appointed to provide leadership of these disparate spaces and institutions though with no formal authority.

Figure 2. The Thames Gateway. Source: Allmendinger, 2011

With this re-booting of the Thames Gateway came a succession of strategies and frameworks for the area as a whole and for its numerous sub-components, in effect trying to bridge the gap between the relational thinking implicit in the creation of the Gateway concept and the more territorial needs of public and private actors to better understand the implications and consequences of this strategy. Whilst the sub-regional planning strategy was still in force, this was evidently not enough to resolve the tension between the relational imaginary of Thames Gateway as a whole and the need for this territorial specificity and grounded delivery plans (Haughton *et al.*, 2010). As for physical 'symbolic markers', the Olympics site is perhaps the most high profile, but it was never coupled with the Thames Gateway in the popular imagination. In effect Thames Gateway captured the imagination of policy-makers, but there is little evidence that it won either support or concern from those living in the area. The Thames

12

Gateway remained an externally imposed imaginary, with considerable work on presenting individual initiatives within it, but only limited work on building public support for it as an over-arching concept.

The election of the Coalition in 2010 radically altered the fortunes of the Thames Gateway and dirigiste forms of planning and regeneration generally. Though ministers claim in public to be fully supportive, in practice funds have been substantially withdrawn and the institutional infrastructure has been steadily dismantled, a process that was begun at the end of New Labour's period of office, when plans were announced to wind down the two development corporations (Barclay, 2011). The result is that the Thames Gateway initiative no longer exists as a coherent single entity, instead a patchwork of residual initiatives remain, with the Thames Gateway seemingly reduced to a branding role in some but not all subsequent attempts at planning. The Government naturally presents this as a coherent part of its localisation strategy, giving power to local authorities (Barclay, 2011). In the process it announced government plans to close both the London and the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporations, with any residual responsibilities and assets handed over to local authorities. The result is a hard to trace set of vestigial elements to what was once branded the largest regeneration site in Europe, lacking strategic coherence, bespoke funding, a meaningful institutional presence, or a governance framework.

It may be that in some respects the Thames estuary and its catchment areas are simply too big to provide a coherent economic governance space in the English context, where large large-scale regeneration projects of this nature are rare. By contrast we may be seeing the creation of more enduring multi-stakeholder initiatives around environmental issues, for instance Thames 21, a charitable trust, and Thames Estuary Partnership (Morris 2008). Initiatives on flood risk management and environmental protection continue to make sense on an estuary basis, whilst economic initiatives seem to be very much subject to the whim of whichever central government is in power, with little sign of local actors voluntarily coming together at that scale without a strong government steer.

Humberside, Hull and Humber City Region and the Energy Estuary.

As with the Atlantic and Thames Gateways there is a long history of attempts to create new planning and regeneration spaces for the Humber, going back to one of the sub-regional studies published in 1969 (Central Unit for Environmental Planning, 1969), the year that the Hunt Committee on Intermediate Areas also declared Humberside one of the best sites in the country for future maritime industrial development (North *et al.*, 1987; Spooner, 1991). This early work helped inform local government reorganisation in the area leading to the creation of Humberside County Council in 1974, a new tier of local government that united the north and south banks of the river until its abolition in 1996 (Figure 3). Despite the high hopes that the new county council and the opening of the Humber Bridge in 1981 might help to unite the two sides of the estuary into a unified entity, in practice the new sub-region never managed to overcome the

13

entrenched opposition of those on either bank who felt it diluted their historic Lincolnshire (south bank) and Yorkshire (north bank) identities (Spooner 1991).

Despite these well-known antagonisms, the idea of a Humber region based on the boundaries of the former county has continued to be attractive to those seeking to promote economic development in the area. In one form or another, the Humber identity has remained a powerful force in shaping the work of sub-regional actors through to the present: Humberside Training and Enterprise Council, Humber Forum, Humber Economic Partnership, the Hull and Humber City Region, all focused on the Humber. Partly this was pragmatic, as the Humber was a NUTS2 level region eligible for European regional development funding, and the European Commission insisted on coherent regional strategies and partnerships as a condition of granting money. Indeed Gibbs *et al.* (2001) posed the question of whether the Humber might have too many strategies and too few partners. It is worth noting that whilst regeneration actors continued to act on a Humber basis, there has been little or no planning work at this scale since the abolition of Humberside County Council.

The Hull and Humber City Region concept emerged in the mid-2000s when it was proposed as one of the eight city-regions that would be the focus of the work of the Northern Way (Northern Way Steering Group, 2004). Subsequently, as we noted earlier, the LEP initiative in 2010 invited bids from local actors who were allowed to choose their own geographies, suited to local needs. In the case of the Humber this led to rival camps setting out their ideas (Bentley *et al.* 2010, Pugalis and Bentley 2013), one for a Humber LEP maintaining the boundaries of the former Humberside County Council, whilst a competing North Bank focused bid stretched the area of influence northwards to embrace the area around Scarborough, whilst leaving out the areas south of the Humber. After the first round of bids, ministers refused to accept any bid for the sub-region, concerned about the evident local hostilities. In the second round agreement was obtained around a Humber LEP embracing both banks, yet with the odd institutional feature that the North Bank had its own sub-board created, but not the south bank.

Such minor controversies apart, the value of thinking strategically around the estuary clearly endures – indeed the current branding exercise from the Humber LEP is that of the 'Energy Estuary', as the LEP seeks to promote development based around off-shore wind power and other renewable energy sources, including tidal and biomass. It is interesting too to note the concern about the Humber brand, and the importance to it of the estuary, in the LEP's strategic plan: "The Humber has in the past failed to collectively market the area, its capabilities and its opportunities." (Humber LEP, 2012: 12). The value of the Humber in this latest interpretation then is not in forging a widely shared sense of regional identity for those living and working there, rather it is a brand, something to convey a message to the outside world about the region being 'open for business'. As with the other two estuary regions, a number of environmental initiatives have been undertaken at estuary level, which have sometimes been contentious, as with estuary management plans (Morris 2008), mainly reflecting conflicts around economic and environmental priorities.

14

There are intriguing issues around territorial and relational conceptions of space in so far as they relate to this region. The concerted campaign for the abolition of Humberside was based upon the arguments that it was an 'artificial' creation and that it smothered historic associations and labels such as Yorkshire or Lincolnshire (Spooner 1991). Yet it is precisely as a functional economic space around the Humber estuary that the Humber identity has endured. Although it may pain some to accept it, the Humber has continued as a functional regeneration space following the abolition of the County Council. In effect the balance has shifted towards becoming a more relational space, emerging out of a short-lived experiment in trying to construct the area as a territorial space. Or to reverse the terminology of Metzger and Schmitt (2011) there has been a softening of a hard space.

Figure 3. Humberside

Conclusions

This paper has provided a broad-brush historical account of how new spatial imaginaries have been minted for three of England's major estuary areas, all of which experienced a febrile search for strategic thinking and regional identity making as territorial and institutional structures have changed. The importance of these major urban-estuary regions for the English economy is undeniable, yet as this paper demonstrates, despite successive attempts there has been a failure to achieve a durable, workable governance framework for any of them.

The territories, scales, networks and places framework (Jessop *et al*., 2008) provides a useful context for summarising our main findings. The case studies, we would argue, highlight the value of thinking both relationally and territorially when it comes to understanding attempts at making and re-making regional identities and their related geo-institutional support infrastructures. We can see for instance the importance of a succession of attempts and making, unmaking and then remaking new *territorial* forms. The example of the Humber is particularly stark – an informal study of the economic potential of the Humber estuary, rapidly followed by the creation of a Humberside County Council, the abolition of that body in 1996, and subsequent attempts by private and public sector actors on a Humber-wide basis still using the boundaries of the former county council, but without publicly using the 'Humberside' moniker. In part the issue here and in the Thames Gateway concerns *scale* and the continuous rescaling of the state that we have witnessed in England over recent years, with the sub-regional or city-regional scale resonating better with the political mood in some periods than others. The 1960s and 1970s marked one high point in the search for sub-regional solutions whilst the mid-2000s providing the next, when support for city-regional scale actions gathered momentum as New Labour's regional experiment faltered (Harrison, 2012).

But these similarities in enthusiasm for sub-regional scales should not mask the differences in the two time periods, with governmental territorial formations clearly in

15

the ascendancy in the earlier period, whilst *relational, networked* approaches are more dominant in the more recent period. The Atlantic Gateway concept for instance has an unclear geography, with boundaries not shown on maps to ensure there is no sense of containment of the idea, creating an ambiguous hinterland area in which other projects might be supported, for instance green infrastructure. The board of the Atlantic Gateway contains a mix of private, public and civil society actors, in effect building up a relational, networked space that pays limited attention to existing territorial boundaries by creating is own space, yet at the same time seeking legitimacy through its engagement with the representatives of the main sub-regional territorial spaces which it overlays. The Thames Gateway embodies a mixture of both relational, networked understandings of space and more territorial understandings, where the whole largely made sense through its reliance on creating an internal network of delivery involving both governance and governmental bodies.

Attempting to settle on a meaningful sense of *place* is important in grounding these various initiatives, which because of their large size proved problematic, as they covered areas with diverse existing senses of place within them – creating a new identity was always going to be seen by some as usurping older ones. Indeed one of the interesting features of all three case studies is the extent to which actors have increasingly tended to deal with the issues of brand identity as much as area identity. Arguably this shift towards brand consciousness reflects that as governance actors no longer feel the need to address the general public of the region, as they are outside the democratic system of government. In this context what matters is whether the estuary or use of a specific city in the title of an initiative helps in improving visibility and credibility with other, more diverse stakeholders, not least businesses. In effect, developing a 'brand' that is outside existing political, territorial imaginaries is simultaneously a political decision that is depoliticising, in the sense that it allows consensus-building and debate around particular strategies to remain at a distance from the ballot box. It is this process of democratic distancing which in different ways has undermined attempts to build enduring strategies for all three estuary regions, as actors have sought to find effective ways of thinking and acting both relationally and territorially.

To summarise, these case studies reveal the complex relationships that are made and re-made over time between relational and territorial forms of thinking and policy, and the ways that these are used to construct alternative spatial imaginaries with differential power to move hearts and minds. Or to put it more prosaically, it helps us understand how some imaginaries seemed to work better than others, by beginning to unpick the variety of discursive and material practices involved in trying to translate them into strategies, institutions and policies. The long-term and comparative analytical framework developed here allows us to move towards a more nuanced reading of the creation of new governance spaces, which may well present 'shop-fronts' that focus on their capacity to generate new spatial imaginaries and strategic ideas, even as they simultaneously rely heavily on the powers, legitimacy and cooperation of existing territorial structures and spaces.

16

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

Agnew, J. (2005) Space: place. In Cloke, P. and R.J. Johnston (eds), *Spaces of geographical thought,* Sage, London.

Allen J and Cochrane A (2010) Assemblages of State Power: Topological Shifts in the Organization of Government and Politics. *Antipode* 42.5, 1071–89.

Allmendinger, P. (2011) *New Labour and Planning: From New Right to New Left*. Routledge, London.

Allmendinger, P. and G. Haughton (2007) The fluid scales and scope of UK spatial planning. *Environment and Planning A* 39.6, 1478–96

Allmendinger, P. and G. Haughton (2009) Soft spaces, fuzzy boundaries, and metagovernance: the new spatial planning in the Thames Gateway. *Environment and Planning A* 41.3, 617–33.

Allmendinger, P. and G. Haughton (2010) Spatial planning, devolution, and new planning spaces. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 28.5, 803–18.

Allmendinger P and Haughton G (2013) The Evolution and Trajectories of English Neoliberal Spatial Governance: 'neoliberal' episodes in planning, *Planning Practice and Research*, 28.1, 6-26

Amin, A., D. Massey and N. Thrift (2003) *Decentering the national: a radical approach to regional inequality.* Catalyst, London.

Barclay P (2011), Thames Gateway, House of Commons Library, Standard note: SN/SC/2894 downloaded 228.2.2013: http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN03894

Batey, P. (1999) Merseyside. In P. Roberts, K. Thomas and G. Williams (eds), *Metropolitan planning in Britain: a comparative study,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.

Bentley G, Bailey D and Shutt J (2010) From RDAs to LEPs: a new localism? Case examples of West Midlands and Yorkshire, *Local Economy,* 25.7, 535-557

Boland, P. (1999) Contested Multi-Level Governance: Merseyside and the European Structural Funds. *European Planning Studies* 7.5, 647–64.

Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brownill, S. and J. Carpenter (2009) Governance and 'Integrated' Planning: The Case of Sustainable Communities in the Thames Gateway, England. *Urban Studies* 46.2, 251–74.

Central Unit for Environmental Planning (1969) *Humberside: a feasibility study*. HMSO, London.

Chilla T, 2005, "The Implementation of the EU Habitats Directive in the German Laender - The challenge to enforce ecological aims and the risk of top-down-procedures", in *Sustainable Regions: Making Regions Work. Conference Proceedings of the Regional Studies Association Annual Conference.* Eds S. Hardy, L. B. Larsen F. Freeland, pp 104-105

Cochrane, A. (2012) Making up a region: the rise and fall of the 'South East of England' as a political territory, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30.1, 95–108.

Department of the Environment (DoE) (1995) *Regional Planning Guidance 9a*. The Stationery Office, London.

Deas, I. (2006) The contested creation of new state spaces: contrasting conceptions of regional strategy building in North West England. In M. Tewdwr-Jones and P. Allmendinger (eds), *Territory, Identity and Space: Spatial Governance in a Fragmented Nation*, Routledge, London.

Deas, I. (2013) Towards Post-political Consensus in Urban Policy? Localism and the Emerging Agenda for Regeneration Under the Cameron Government, *Planning Practice and Research* 28.1, 65-82.

Deas I, Haughton G and Hincks S (forthcoming) "A good geography is whatever it needs to be": evolving spatial imaginaries in North West England, in Allmendinger P, Haughton G, Knieling J and Othengrafen, F (eds) *Soft Spaces in Europe. Re-Negotiating Governance, Boundaries and Borders,* Routledge, London.

Dembski, S. (2012) *Symbolic markers and institutional innovation in transforming urban spaces*. Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, Amsterdam.

Dembski, S. (2013), In Search of Symbolic Markers: Transforming the Urbanized Landscape of the Rotterdam Rijnmond*. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 37: 2014–2034.

Dembski S, Salet W, 2010, "The transformative potential of institutions: how symbolic markers can institute new social meaning in changing cities" *Environment and Planning A* 42(3) 611 – 625

Faludi, A. (2010a) *Cohesion, Coherence, Cooperation: European Spatial Planning Coming of Age*? Routledge, London.

Frey, A.E. (1971) Estuary Development Feasibility: Tayside, Humberside and Severnside Compared. *Area* 3.4, 231–33.

Gibbs, D.C., A.E.G. Jonas, S. Reimer and D.J. Spooner (2001) Governance, institutional capacity and partnerships in local economic development: theoretical issues and empirical evidence from the Humber sub-region. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26.1, 103–19.

Glasson, J. (1974) *Regional Planning*. Hutchinson Educational, London.

Glasson, J. and T. Marshall (2007) *Regional Planning.* Routledge, London.

Goodwin, M., M. Jones and R. Jones (2005) Devolution, constitutional change and economic development: explaining and understanding the new institutional geographies of the British State. *Regional Studies* 39.4, 421–36.

Goodwin, M., M. Jones and R. Jones (2006) Devolution and economic governance in the UK: rescaling territories and organizations. *European Planning Studies* 14.7, 979–95.

Graham Moss Associates (1984) Humberside Integrated Development Operations Study, Humberside County Council, Beverley.

Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Harrison, J. (2012) Life after regions? The evolution of city-regionalism in England. *Regional Studies* 46.9, 1243–59.

Harrison J (2014) Rethinking City-regionalism as the Production of New Non-State Spatial Strategies: The Case of Peel Holdings Atlantic Gateway Strategy, *Urban Studies*, 51.11 2315-2335.

Haughton, G. (1987) 'Constructing a social audit: putting the regional multiplier into practice' *Town Planning Review,* 50.3, 255-265.

Haughton. G., P. Allmendinger, D. Counsell and G. Vigar (2010) *The New Spatial Planning: territorial management with soft spaces and fuzzy boundaries.* Routledge, London.

Haughton, G. and D. Counsell (2004) *Regions, Spatial Strategies and Sustainable Development.* Routledge, London.

Haughton, G., J.A. Peck and I. Strange (1997) Turf wars: the battle for control of English local economic development. *Local Government Studies,* 23, 88–106.

Haughton, G., P. Lloyd and R. Meegan (1999) The rediscovery of community economic development in Britain: the European dimension to grassroots involvement in local regeneration. In G. Haughton (ed.), *Community Economic Development,* Stationery Office, London.

Haughton, G., I. Rowe and C. Hunter (1997) Thames Gateway and the re-emergence of regional strategic planning: the implications for water resource management. *Town Planning Review* 68.4 407–22.

Healey, P. (1996) *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies,* Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Healey, P. (2007) *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: Towards a Relational Planning for Our Times.* Routledge, London.

Heley, J. (2013) Soft Spaces, Fuzzy Boundaries and Spatial Governance in Post-devolution Wales. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 37.4, 1325–1348.

Heseltine M and Leahy T (2011) 'Rebalancing Britain: policy or slogan? Liverpool City Region - Building on its Strengths: An independent report.' Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Accessed 25.2.2013 http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/2013023

Humber Local Enterprise Partnership (2012) A Plan for the Humber 2012-2017, Humber LEP. http://www.humberlep.org/a-plan-for-the-humber accessed 22.2.2013

Innes, J. (1996) Planning Through Consensus Building: A New View of the Comprehensive Planning Ideal. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62.4, 460–72.

Jessop, B. (1998) The rise of governance and the risks of failure: the case of economic development. *International Social Science Journal* 50.155, 29–45.

Jessop, B. (2000) The Crisis of the National Spatio-Temporal Fix and the Ecological Dominance of Globalizing. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24.2, 323–60.

Jessop, B. (2001) Institutional re(turns) and the strategic-relational approach. *Environment and Planning A* 33.7, 1213–35.

Jessop, B., N. Brenner and M. Jones (2008) Theorising sociospatial relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26.3, 389–401.

Jessop B (2012a) Economic and ecological crises: green new deals and no-growth economies' *Development* 55(1), 17-24

Jessop B (2012b) Cultural Political Economy, spatial imaginaries, Regional Economic Dynamics, CPERC Working Paper, 2012-2. Lancaster University: Available, http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cperc/docs/Jessop%20CPERC%20Working%20Paper%202012-02.pdf accessed 12.8.2014

Jones, M. (2001) The rise of the regional state in economic governance: 'partnerships for prosperity' or new scale of state power? *Environment and Planning A* 33.7, 1185–1211.

Jones, M., M. Goodwin and R. Jones (2005) State modernization, devolution and economic governance: an introduction and guide to debate. *Regional Studies* 39.4, 397–404.

Keating, M. (1997) The invention of regions: political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 15.4, 383–98.

Lovering, J. (2007) The relationship between urban regeneration and neoliberalism: two presumptuous theories and a research agenda. *International Planning Studies* 12.4, 343–66.

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. Sage, London.

Massey, D. (2011) A Counterhegemonic Relationality of Space. In E. McCann and K. Ward (eds), *Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policy Making in the Global Age*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Meegan, R. (1990) Merseyside in crisis and in conflict. In M. Harloe, C.G. Pickvance and J. Urry (eds), *Place, Policy and Politics: do localities matter?,* Unwin Hyman, London.

Metzger, J. (2013), Raising the Regional Leviathan: A Relational-Materialist Conceptualization of Regions-in-Becoming as Publics-in-Stabilization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 37: 1368–1395.

Metzger, J. & P. Schmitt (2012) When soft spaces harden: the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. *Environment and Planning A* 44.2, 263–80.

Morgan, K. (2007) The polycentric state: new spaces of empowerment and engagement. *Regional Studies* 41.9, 1237–51.

Morris R.K.A. (2008) English Nature's Estuaries Initiative: a review of its contribution to ICZM, *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 51, 25-42.

Northern Way Steering Group (2004) *Moving Forward: The Northern Way – First Growth Strategy Report.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northern Way Growth Strategy Team.

North, J., D. Spooner and D. Symes (1987) Humberside: an introductory profile. In D. Symes (ed.) *Humberside in the Eighties*, Department of Geography, University of Hull.

North West Development Agency (NWDA) (2010) *Future North West: our shared priorities*. NWDA, Warrington.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (2003) *The Communities Plan - Sustainable communities: building for the future.* The Stationery Office, London.

Paasi, A. (2003) Territory. In J. Agnew, K. Mitchell and G. Toal (eds), *A Companion to Political Geography*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Paasi, A. (2010) Commentary. Regions are social constructs, but who or what 'constructs' them? Agency in question. *Environment and Planning A* 42.10, 2296–2301.

Paasi, A. (2013) Regional planning and the mobilization of 'regional identity': from bounded spaces to relational complexity. *Regional Studies* 47.3, 1206-1219.

Painter, J. (2008) Cartographic anxiety and the search for regionality. *Environment and Planning A* 40.2, 342–61.

Peck, J. and A. Tickell (2002) Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode* 34.3, 380–404.

Pugalis, L. and A. Townsend (2013) Rescaling of planning and its interface with economic development. *Planning Practice and Research* 28.1, 104–21.

20

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Pugalis L and Bentley G (2013) Storming or performing? Local Enterprise Partnerships two years on, *Local Economy*, 28.7-8, 863-874.

Raco, M. (2005a) Sustainable Development, Rolled-out Neoliberalism and Sustainable Communities. *Antipode* 37.2, 324–47.

Raco M (2005b) A Step Change or a Step Back? The Thames Gateway and the Re-birth of the Urban Development Corporations. *Local Economy* 20.1, 141–53.

Redcliffe-Maud, Lord and B. Wood (1973) *English Local Government Reformed.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Roberts, P., K. Thomas and G. Williams (eds) (1999) *Metropolitan planning in Britain: a comparative study*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.

Shaw, K. (1990) The lost world of local politics revisited: in search of the non-elected local state. *Regional Studies* 24.2, 180–4.

Spooner, D. (1991) Humberside: to be or not to be? *Regional Review* 1.1, 11.

Stead, D. (2011) European Macro-Regional Strategies: Indications of Spatial Rescaling? *Planning Theory & Practice* 12.1, 163–67.

Williams, G. and M. Baker (2007) Strategic and regional planning in the North West. In H. Dimitriou and R. Thompson (eds), *Strategic Planning for Regional Development in the UK*, Routledge, London.

Sykes O., Brown J, Cocks, M, Shaw D and Couch C (2013) A *City Profile* of Liverpool, *Cities* 35, 299-318.

Wood, R., Handley, J. and Kidd, S. (1999) Sustainable development and institutional design: the example of the Mersey River Basin Campaign, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management,* 42.3, 341–354.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
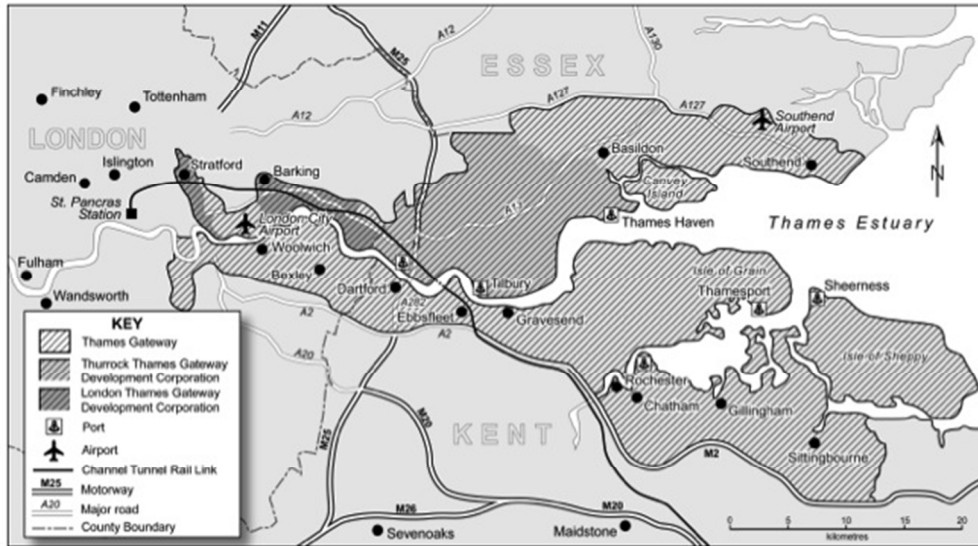45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 2: Thames Gateway
232x131mm (72 x 72 DPI)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 1: Atlantic Gateway
124x77mm (150 x 150 DPI)

Figure 3: Humber region
120x118mm (150 x 150 DPI)