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Introduction

DAWN MANNAY

Starting places

In common with most introductory sections, this chapter provides the reader with an insight into the rationale for bringing this edited collection together. It sets out the aims and scope of the volume, as well as providing an overview of the following chapters and the ways in which they connect to the core themes of Welshness and everyday life in contemporary Wales. In this way, it forms a starting place, an opening and a beginning but no commencement is entirely novel – for the present is always embedded in the past; and at the same time oriented to the future. As Berger (1972, p. 370) contends:

The present tense of the verb to be refers only to the present: but nevertheless with the first person singular in front of it, it absorbs the past, which is inseparable from it. 'I am' includes all that has made me so. It is more than a statement of immediate fact: it is already biographical'

Throughout *Our Changing Land: Revisiting Gender, Class and Identity in Contemporary Wales*, there is an emphasis on this temporal positioning as all of the chapters are both reflective, contemporary and forward thinking. As Steedman (1986, p. 6) argues, 'specificity of place and politics has to be reckoned with in making an account of anybody's life, and their use of their own past'; and this premise holds for studies of the collective, and the nation, as well as understandings of individual biographies and futures.



Definitions of Welshness are never static and each generation passes their memories on to the next: such memories are ‘conditioned by the times in which they lived’ (Beddoe, 2000, p. 3) and they shadow our immediate experience. Consequently, it is important to revisit: and here there are two key, iconic sources that provide the contextualization for the present volume; the edited collection *Our Sisters’ Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (1994), edited by Jane Aaron, Teresa Rees Sandra Betts and Moira Vincentelli, and early editions of the journal *Contemporary Wales*, currently edited by Paul Chaney and Elin Royles, and published by the University of Wales Press.

Our Sisters’ Land

Our Sisters’ Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales argued for a focus on Welsh women because of their increasingly importance to the world of paid work, while retaining their roles and responsibilities in the home. The book demonstrated the ways in which women’s lives were characterized by diversity. At the time of its publication, the text addressed an important lacuna for the changing identity of Welsh women as they managed the balance between private and public lives, which had been relatively uncharted. For this reason the text was groundbreaking in bringing together a collection of interdisciplinary research papers on the changing identity of women in Wales.

The text was introduced to me as a student on the inspirational Women Making a Difference programme run by the contemporary Welsh champion of gender equality, Paula Manley. As part of this programme, I took the course Women into Public Life, where Jan Stephens, of Cardiff University, guided students to a body of inspirational work by Deirdre Beddoe, Jane Pilcher and Teresa Rees; and centralized in this reading list was *Our Sisters’ Land*. As a Welsh-language learner, Welsh-language sources still remain a closed book for me – a body of work that with greater proficiency I hope to one day explore. However, *Our Sisters’ Land* allowed an entry point into a richer understanding of the ‘particularities of women’s experience in one minority culture’ (Aaron et al., 1994, p. xv): the culture of Wales.


Our Sisters’ Land was concerned with addressing the absence of minority voices, drawing on the Welsh proverb, *nid byd, byd heb wybodaeth*, a world without knowledge is no world; the book aimed to address the doubly under-represented world of Welsh women ‘within

the dominant English and male-oriented culture' (Aaron and Rees, 1994, p. 2), which subsumed their existence. Despite shifts in the visibility of women in public life, in the early 1990s women still could be defined by the concept of 'muted groups' (Delamont and Duffin, 1978, p. 11) in relation to the dominant group of men in social structure; and Welsh women were in a double bind as residents in a colonized nation within nations, in terms of language, law and social policy. A position that demanded a decolonizing methodology (Smith, 1999) to bring twenty-first-century Welsh women 'out of the shadows', as Beddoe (2000) had for twentieth-century Welsh women in her book, which made visible their hidden histories.

The journey for visibility was travelled in twenty-one chapters in the edited collection *Our Sisters' Land*. Each chapter was written by a woman in Wales, and the themes of the book were broad and diverse with attention given to home and community; education, training and work; culture and governance; women in rural Wales, material culture, religion, sexuality and the politics of identity. The book established the ways in which women's lives in Wales were changing and evolving, setting these changes in written testimony, which hoped to increase an understanding of these shifts and 'mitigate against the possibility of any future erosion of women's hard won emancipation' (Aaron and Rees, 1994, p. 14). Setting the evolving worlds of Welsh women on record was a major achievement of this collection; however, how far we can avoid slipping back in terms of the ideologies of feminism will be explored in this new collection. In contemporary Wales, it remains important to centralize the voices of women; but, to engender positive change, it is also important to acknowledge the voices of Welsh men.

Contemporary Wales

The pattern of family life and public life has continued to shift since the seminal publication of *Our Sisters' Land* and it has become important to revisit and re-examine the lives of both men and women in Wales. For this reason, *Our Changing Land* engages with issues emerging from earlier work in the journal *Contemporary Wales*, allowing for a reflection on gender in a wider sense. Drawing from the work of leading writers and emerging academics, in Welsh history, social policy, education, sociology, psychology and geography, and revisiting two seminal sources allows this edited collection to examine what is distinctive





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about Wales and Welshness in an interdisciplinary manner, which allows room for multiple voices and narratives of authors in Wales, regardless of their gender.

Contemporary Wales has been published annually by the University of Wales Press since 1987, and remains at the forefront of research into economic, political and social sciences relating to Wales. Its interdisciplinary content, drawing on current research on Wales, attracts leading Welsh authors from a wide range of academic fields. It contains both academic and practitioner-based articles, annual economic and legal reviews, and book reviews. The journal works across a range of subject areas including the social sciences, history, law, media and languages and offers academic articles and reviews relating to politics, policy, economics and current affairs.

Currently edited by Paul Chaney, of Cardiff University, and Elin Royles, of Aberystwyth University, *Contemporary Wales* is arguably the leading journal of modern Welsh public life. The current collection will revisit carefully selected articles published around the early 1990s, with four authors revisiting their original work and four authors revisiting papers in relation to their own contemporary Welsh research. Importantly, the original authors of papers in the journal are both men and women – as are those revisiting the classic articles – providing the multiple insights needed to explore the postcolonial landscape of a devolved and evolving Wales, which forms the geographical, cultural and psychological site that *Our Changing Land* sets out to revisit, exploring the changes and continuities in the Welsh nation across this temporal space.



Our Changing Land

The last two decades have seen big changes within a small nation, and the distinctiveness of Wales, in terms of its political life and culture, has grown considerably. Nevertheless, beneath the imagery of the definitive nation, Wales remains a complex and divided land (Mackay, 2010), and this collection will explore the themes of continuity, change, unity and division that actively contribute to the making of contemporary Wales. The collection will explore what it means to be Welsh in postcolonial Wales, in a politically devolved and continually evolving nation.

Drawing from the work of leading writers and emerging academics, in Welsh history, social policy, education, sociology, psychology and

geography, this edited collection examines what is distinctive about Wales and Welshness in an interdisciplinary yet comprehensive manner. Core themes and issues will be explored throughout the book, which presents twelve chapters in three distinct yet overlapping thematic sections, 'Wales, Welshness, Language and Identity', 'Education, Labour Markets and Gender in Wales' and 'Welsh Public Life, Social Policy, Class and Inequality'.

Wales, Welshness, language and identity

Nation is a powerful concept for drawing distinctions that act to 'other' places and people, consecutively constructing, imagining and maintaining a sense of Wales and Welshness (Clarke, 2009). In Wales, rugby illustrates a symbolic, internal source of unified Welsh expression, which powerfully unites a nation divided by gender, language, race and class (Mackay, 2010). However, a sporting game, no matter how beautiful, cannot engender a sense of national identity in isolation, and there are other processes that must be considered, such as nationalism and the Welsh language, literary and cultural imagery, and historical, geographical, gendered ideologies.

This first section of the book explores these themes by returning to previous identity positioning, in earlier Welsh texts, from the standpoint of the present. The section begins with a chapter from Jane Aaron, editor of *Our Sisters' Land*, who revisits her seminal chapter 'Finding a voice in two tongues: gender and colonization'. The original chapter charted the ways in which the pressures that circumscribed Welsh women's lives were not engendered solely from Welsh culture itself, but from the tensions between Wales and England.

'Finding a voice in two tongues: gender and colonization' returned to the Victorian era by exploring the moral imperative to adopt an English middle-class model of femininity put forward in the English 1847 Report of the Commissions of Inquiry, which was central in placing Welsh women, and the Welsh language, as inferior, dirty and immoral (Aaron, 1994). The branding of the Welsh woman as lawless and licentious in regard to their sexual conduct and the consequent moral imperative of purity rendered these 'colonised others' voiceless (Smith, 1999), culturally and linguistically. The chapter moved from this starting point to explore the journey of 'finding a voice' through literature, poetry and in social and political movements including Welsh

Women's Aid, Greenham Common and Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg – the Welsh Language Society.

Aaron's writing was rich and evocative: it painted a history of Wales that I had not seen before and made a lasting impression. My reading of the chapter was re-evoked as I encountered the legacies of this history and its pervasive influence over the communities that I work with in Wales. In this new chapter, 'Devolved voices: Welsh women's writing post 1999', Aaron focuses on the work of contemporary Welsh women writers post-devolution, exploring how women's greater representation in constitutional government, through the Welsh government, has affected women writers' lives and their sense of Welsh identity. The chapter examines the pervasiveness of the divisive elements of class, ethnic, linguistic and sexual difference in Welsh life, and revisits the traditional role of the 'Welsh mam' in relation to discourses of feminism and nationalism through the literary activism of 'finding a voice in two tongues'.

The theme of 'finding a voice in two tongues' is carried forward in the following chapter by the emerging author, Non Geraint, who I was privileged to supervise in her undergraduate degree research dissertation. As Sapir contends, 'common speech serves as a peculiarly potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language' (cited in Davies, 2010, p. 162): language then can be a powerful expression of collective identity and belonging. However, the Act of Union 1536 banned Welsh from official use and the 1847 Report into the State of Education in Wales further marginalized the language by forbidding its use in schools (Davies, 2010). Consequently, Welsh declined and distinctions developed between regions leading to the linguistic tensions.

Children and young people are imperative in nation building, and Heini Gruffudd's (1997) article 'Young people's use of Welsh: the influence of home and community', published in *Contemporary Wales*, explored these linguistic tensions by documenting young people's relationship with the Welsh language. Gruffudd reported an equal balance between English and Welsh language when young people spoke about school and education; however, in conversations around popular culture, music and visual entertainment, English became the dominant mode of communication. English was also seen as transitionally fashionable among young people, where adopting the English language engendered a level of kudos in youth subcultures – an association that was seen to negatively impact on their everyday use of

Welsh. Gruffudd (1997, p. 217) argued that Welsh media and youth provision needed to create new opportunities for Welsh young people to have ‘their own means of cultural expression and identity’.

Geraint’s chapter, ‘Only inside the classroom? Young people’s use of the Welsh language in the school, the community and the peer group’ revisits Gruffudd’s article. The chapter explores the continuities and changes in the use of Welsh and attitudes towards the language amongst bilingual and monolingual children, in relation to their subjective feelings of national identity. Drawing on findings from a research study conducted with children aged 12 to 13 in a dual-stream bilingual school in mid Wales the chapter argues that at this age, Welsh-speaking children have a stronger sense of Welsh identity, based on their stronger negative attitudes towards the ‘British’ label and its association with England. However, the chapter also provides evidence that suggests that children view the Welsh language as an important commodity and advantage for future employment rather than as the language of social life, with Welsh-speaking children often assimilating to English due to peer influences. Geraint contends that government initiatives to create a ‘bilingual nation’ through education may limit the language to the educational and occupational domain rather than creating a bilingual nation more widely.

Following on from Geraint’s chapter, the focus on identity shifts from the Welsh language to issues of gender and class. My own contribution to the collection, ‘Who should do the dishes now? Revisiting gender and housework in contemporary urban south Wales’. This chapter revisits Jane Pilcher’s (1994) important chapter from *Our Sisters’ Land* – ‘Who should do the dishes? Three generations of Welsh women talking about men and housework’. Pilcher’s chapter was based on research with grandmothers, daughters and granddaughters that examined the legacy of the myth of the ‘Welsh Mam’ (Beddoe, 1989; Mannay, 2013) in maintaining acceptable feminine identities. Despite intergeneration shifts in relation to ideologies of egalitarianism in women’s talk, Pilcher found that the actual domestic arrangements acted to counter this rhetoric of gender equality.

Two decades on from the original study, my chapter looks again at the cultural legacy of the ideology ‘Welsh Mam’ on women’s everyday lives, and explores this question in contemporary south Wales by drawing upon data generated in a study of mothers and daughters residing in a Welsh, marginalized, urban housing area. The chapter argues that in contemporary Wales, the domestic sphere remains a site

of inequality, where women are negotiating the impossibility of being both in full-time employment and meeting the ideological tenets of the 'Welsh Mam'. Furthermore, the work of women and the accompanying expectations have moved from being peripheral to becoming central, and the chapter suggests that this places women in a psychological impasse where they identify themselves as 'lazy' when they cannot simultaneously fulfil these roles to the unreachable standards of the new respectable working-class femininity.

In the final chapter of the section, Michael Ward shifts the discussion focus from working-class femininities to the complexities of working-class masculinities. While the work on men, masculinities and gender identities has exploded across the social sciences since the late 1980s, very little of this work has looked at masculinities and what it means to be a young man in a Welsh context. This chapter revisits a seminal paper, 'Boys from nowhere', published at the end of the millennium in *Contemporary Wales* by Jonathan Scourfield and Mark Drakeford, which argued that to understand Wales there was a need to understand its inhabitants, both those with and without power. They suggested that by analysing Welsh men it would be possible to critically explore the social process of the construction, production and reproduction of masculinities within the nation. However, research has been slow to develop in this area, arguably because of the diversity of masculinities within the nation, in terms of linguistic divisions, social-class dynamics and the north/south/urban/rural divide.

To gain a nuanced understanding of Welsh men, Ward suggests that research must appreciate the separate historical and geographical contexts, within the social construction of gender and specific localities. In this chapter, "Placing young men": the performance of young working-class masculinities in the south Wales valleys', Ward draws on an ethnographic study with a group of young working-class men in a post-industrial community to explore how young masculinities are performed across a variety of educational and leisure spaces, and to illustrate the ways in which social, economic and cultural processes impact on the formation of self. Ward argues that expectations and transitions to adulthood are continually framed through geographically and historically shaped class and gender codes.

Education, labour markets and gender in Wales

Between 1945 and 1980 the income differential between individuals in Wales narrowed; however, since 1980 the gap between rich and poor has widened (Evans, 2010). This section argues that the increase in social polarization makes it increasingly difficult for marginalized working-class individuals in Wales to succeed in the labour market. However, the workplace is preceded by the education system and social mobility is intrinsically linked with Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of social and cultural capital so that those born into poverty do not have the resources and connections that are inherited by middle-class children. Furthermore, according to the historian, Deidre Beddoe (2000), the lives of Welsh women have been shaped by nonconformity, religion, industrialization and a virulent strain of patriarchy, which have meant that in Wales, more than other parts of Britain, women have been denied access to the public sphere, which has arguably engendered a legacy of gendered inequalities.

In this section gendered patterns of social mobility in the Welsh education system are revisited by Melanie Morgan, who draws on her own psychosocial study to make comparisons with the earlier work of Pam Garland, who explored the journeys of mature students in her chapter in *Our Sisters Land*, 'Educating Rhian: experiences of mature women students'. Garland interviewed thirty north Wales mothers about their experiences as mature students in university and found that their journeys were characterized by difficulties. These mature student mothers 'muddled, struggled and juggled their way through both university life and home life, in order to meet the competing demands made upon them' (Garland, 1994, p. 120), and Garland argued that basic support from both the university and the family could have significantly improved the experiences of the participants in her study. In her chapter, 'Re-educating Rhian: experiences of working-class mature student mothers', Morgan reflects on Garland's chapter in relation to her four-year, Economic and Social Research Council-funded study that applied psychosocial interviews to explore the subjectivities of Welsh working-class mothers in higher education. Morgan's chapter focuses specifically on the mechanisms and strategies this group of women employed in constructing, negotiating and managing identity/subjectivity within university: and their motivations for pursuing academic success despite the emotional and practical conflicts of doing so.

The focus then shifts to the experiences of teachers in further education as Jane Salisbury revisits her own chapter, 'Chasing credentials: women further-education teachers and in-service training', again from *Our Sisters Land*. Her original chapter was based on research with six women on a part-time In-service Certificate in Education at a university in Wales. Similar to the women in Garland's study, Salisbury's participants spoke about 'surviving the course' (Salisbury, 1994, p. 156); however, they all displayed a positive commitment to their work as teachers and felt that the training engendered a more professional identity and improved self-image.

In her new chapter, 'Private lives used for public work: women further education teachers in Wales', Salisbury draws on data from the 'Learning and working in further education colleges' study to provide a contemporary lens on this educational sector. The ethnographic study followed the learning journeys of twenty-seven teachers and forty-five students who were core participants over two years. The empirical material in this particular chapter focuses on six women teachers who had been employed as further education teachers from between four and fifteen years teaching a range of vocational courses and A-level subjects. Each of the women was passionate about scaffolding and supporting their diversely motivated students to secure qualifications. As in the earlier study, all of them were also striving for self-improvement and were engaged in various types of continuing professional development, acknowledging that they were too 'chasing credentials'.

In relation to the workplace, Caroline Lloyd revisits her article in *Contemporary Wales* titled 'Tailor-made Occupations: a Study of Gender and Skill in the Welsh Clothing Industry' through a discussion of the widespread loss of female manufacturing jobs in modern Wales. The original article highlighted the gender segregation of jobs in the clothing industry and the impact of product market and technological change on skills and the gendered division of labour. Since this early publication, Lloyd's research has explored the political economy of skill, workplace industrial relations and the relationship between product markets, labour markets, work organization and skills.

This body of research has examined low waged work internationally, with a particular focus on Europe, but in this edited collection she returns her focus to the Welsh context. In her chapter, 'From low-wage manufacturing industries to the low-wage service sector: the changing nature of women's employment in Wales', Lloyd revisits the issues

raised in her earlier article through a discussion of the widespread loss of female manufacturing jobs in Wales, the failure of the UK to assist in the restructuring and renewal of traditional industries and the expansion of low-wage jobs in the service sector for both men and women.

In the closing chapter of this section, Alison Parken revisits Teresa Rees's seminal chapter 'Women in paid work in Wales' and reflects on how successful policy has been in closing gender pay gaps at the structural level in contemporary Wales. Teresa Rees was recently awarded a DBE for her body of work developing gender mainstreaming approaches to policy development, implementation and evaluation; and in her chapter she argued that the prevalence of post-feminist and equal opportunities discourses were in stark contrast to the realities of women's everyday lives in Wales. Rees explored the role of the 'greedy institutions', the home and the workplace, which placed unreasonable demands on women in the workforce as well as the gendered assumptions that deny women access to senior positions in the workplace.

Reflecting on the available evidence, Rees (1994, p. 104) argued that decisions were made for women based largely on their gender and that the majority of women could not access the competition for top jobs, 'irrespective of their desires or capabilities'. As project director for 'Women adding value to the economy', a European Social Fund project part funded through the Welsh government, Parken is perfectly placed to revisit this work and examine the present picture for women in paid work in Wales. In her chapter, 'Changes and continuities: women in paid work in Wales 1994–2014', Parken examines Welsh data and equalities policy reviews, and secondary data analysis of gender segregation in occupations and working patterns in Wales. The chapter argues that despite shifts in policy that recognize the gendering of labour markets, and the unequal division of labour, many women are finding it increasingly hard to 'make work pay' given their over concentration in low-skilled, low-paid, part-time work.

Welsh public life, social policy, class and inequality

Since the creation of the national assembly in 1999 successive administrations have governed in a distinctly 'Welsh way', differentiating provision and policy from that adopted in London as promised in First Minister Rhodri Morgan's 2003, 'clear red water' speech. In the same

way that Welsh Labour drew on nationalism, socialism and connections with *y werin* to align the party with an ideology of ‘Welshness’, arguably the Welsh government has been committed to communitarian and collective policies that embrace bilingualism, civic nationalism and connect the political system with the people of Wales. This section explores post-devolution Wales in relation to the themes of public life, social policy, class and inequality.

In the opening chapter, Dave Adamson revisits his earlier work from the 1990s into the changing class structure evident in Wales, including the discussions in his *Contemporary Wales* article ‘Still living on the edge’, which focused on the ways in which a marginalized working class had come to characterize areas of Wales dominated by poverty and social exclusion. Adamson’s work was concerned with understanding the ‘fracturing’ of a traditional working class in Wales and to map the patterns of poverty and social exclusion that resulted from the rapid process of economic decline, which was especially evident in the south Wales valleys.

In his chapter, ‘Class, poverty and politics in devolved Wales’, Adamson explores how devolved policy-making has responded to poverty and the consequences of poverty in Welsh society. Reflecting on his earlier work, Adamson had hoped that with the correct policies and full political commitment to change, the tide of rising poverty would be turned; however, despite nearly fifteen years of regeneration policies in Wales, his new chapter demonstrates that little has changed for the poor. This chapter suggests that in the quest to eradicate poverty, policy has only achieved an ameliorative role, and it remains inadequate to tackle the fundamental causes of poverty in Wales.

Paul Chaney also focuses on issues of equality by revisiting his substantive work on the place of women in public life in Wales, drawing specifically from work in his co-edited book *New Governance: New Democracy* (2001). His new chapter, ‘Women and policy-making: devolution, civil society and political representation’, offers a critical perspective on how issues of gender equality have evolved, drawing on a series of studies conducted over the past fifteen years as well as secondary data sources including assembly proceedings, policy documents and government reports. The chapter also reflects on his more recent research based on seventy-five interviewees undertaken in 2013–14 with managers of a purposive sample of third-sector organizations. Importantly, these were not solely with ‘women’s organizations’, rather, further to the ethos of mainstreaming, they relate

to a broad range of NGOs, considering views on gender equality from across the sector.

Chaney problematizes discourses of gender parity in public life and argues that the overemphasis on the number of women elected to the assembly has created the false impression that devolution has transformed gender relations in Wales, when this is far from the case. The chapter illustrates the variability across policy areas and issues, where some have seen greater progress whilst others have registered little change. Issues of permanency are also explored as interviewees discussed sustainability, fearing that the gains made to date are vulnerable to reversal, notably in the face of current austerity and spending cuts. Overall, the chapter contends that whilst the past fifteen years have seen some progress, this progress has fallen short of achieving gender parity and eliminating inequality.

In the following chapter, Hugh Mackay turns the lens of inquiry on the media in Wales, revisiting the article, 'Wales and its media', published in *Contemporary Wales* (Mackay and Powell, 1996). The article argued that the Welsh print press mediascape was characterized by fragmentation and the dominance of the London press; in terms of newer technologies, these were seen as central to enhancing consumer choice but also fragmenting the experience of media consumption. In this way the internet and cable television were positioned as meeting minority interests but antithetical to the Welsh media's goals in relation to the construction of nationhood. The monolithic ideology of nationhood was envisaged to be replaced with more hybrid forms and representations of nation, Welshness and individuality, within the emerging global village.

There have been two striking changes in the intervening period between the publication of 'Wales and its media' and Mackay's new chapter, 'The transformation of the media in Wales: technology and democracy'. One is the arrival of the national assembly for Wales and Welsh government, which Mackay argues has given rise to concerns about the communications environment in Wales, and the need for assembly members and the government to communicate its message to the people of Wales. The other notable change is the phenomenal growth of the internet, which was still in its infancy as a communication technology in 1997. The chapter provides a review and update of the original summary of media technologies in Wales, discussing both changes and continuities in the Welsh mediascape.

Lastly, Karen Parkhill and Richard Cowell revisit Merylyn McKenzie Hedger's 1994 article 'Wind energy: the debate in Wales', published in *Contemporary Wales*, which explored the support for and opposition against the introduction of wind farms in rural Wales. On the one hand, supporters evoked discourses of clean energy, sustainability and additional income for farmers, as well as bringing employment to economically depressed areas. On the other hand, the opposition regarded wind farms as effectively an 'industrialisation of the hills involving some long term and irreversible effects' (McKenzie Hedger, 1994, p. 122), which would threaten the natural beauty of Wales.

In relation to the intensity of the dispute, McKenzie Hedger (1994) was doubtful about any short-term resolution but advised that any developments should be systematically reviewed before any rapid expansion. Continuing with the theme of inequalities in the chapter 'Wind energy: revisiting the debate in Wales', Parkhill and Cowell draw upon the latest scientific evidence, national policies and planning case studies to explore the ways in which battle lines continue to be drawn with consequential winners and losers in relation to sustainability, carbon reduction and maintaining the identity of the Welsh rural idyll.

Visions of Wales in photography and verse

In *Our Sisters' Land* there was recognition of Welsh art and culture through the inclusion of poetry and a series of illustrations especially commissioned from the photographer Mary Giles. Again, this collection sets out to engage with the discourse of the Welsh bard. However, to extend the concept in relation to contemporary Wales, original rap poetry and songs were written, produced and recorded by the young Welsh artists KAOS (featuring Chantelle), Tasha Harvey and Jamie Feeney aka Sapien, for each of the three themes of the book. The lyrics of the songs are presented to introduce each of the themes and here you will find web links to the audio and video recordings hosted on the Ministry of Life website.

These bespoke musical reflections on contemporary Welsh life were created in collaboration with the community organization Ministry of Life, who ran workshops with young artists to create, produce and record these materials. Ministry of Life also organized workshops with young people to explore the key arguments in each of the chapters in the collection and discuss how these could be represented visually.

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Working with the local photographer, Ian Homer, Ministry of Life and the young people in their workshops developed bespoke illustrations and selected images from the photographer's existing catalogue to represent each of the chapters in this collection. In addition to the photographs an original piece of artwork was commissioned from the Welsh artist Nathan Bond to represent Hugh Mackay's chapter. These images are presented throughout the book, alongside the chapters that they represent, and the messages that these artistic productions convey will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

This following chapters in *Our Changing Land: Revisiting Gender, Class and Identity in Contemporary Wales* are all structured around the central theme of revisiting the seminal writings about Wales and Welsh life from the 1990s, reflexively exploring the changes and continuities in the nation across this temporal space. The last two decades have seen big changes within a small nation, and the chapters shift across these temporal spaces, the political landscape of post-devolution and the geographical areas that constitute Wales.

The concluding chapter will revisit the aims set out in this introduction and reflect on the key points from the intervening chapters, linking these findings to the overarching themes spanning the chapters. It will summarize what the collection tells us about the role of men and women in Wales and Wales itself as a nation, an economy, and in relation to questions of equality and identity. The chapter will reflect on the changes and continuities presented in relation to the original chapters presented in *Our Sisters' Land* and the seminal papers revisited from *Contemporary Wales*. It will reflect also on the musical and photographic contributions and explore what can be learnt from the voices of young people living in Wales. As well as looking back, the chapter will also look forward to the next two decades of changing identities, gender relations and discourses of class, suggesting future academic research and emerging agendas from the volume, and considering the future of *Our Changing Land*.

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