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Conclusion

DAWN MANNAY

Introduction

This concluding chapter has the difficult task of revisiting and consolidating the intervening chapters, which dealt with diverse but connecting themes about Wales and contemporary Welsh life. Each chapter in the collection has reflected on the changes and continuities since the publication of key works in *Our Sisters' Land* and the seminal papers revisited from the journal *Contemporary Wales*. Therefore, the topics revisited have been selected from an expansive set of contributions. Consequently there are omissions such as the contemporary experiences of women in rural Wales (Ashton, 1994; Wenger, 1994), material culture (Vincentelli, 1994), sexuality (Crwydren, 1994) and religion (Morgan, 1994): these are important topics that call for further consideration. Nevertheless, the chapters have explored the role of men and women in Wales and Wales itself as a nation, an economy and a centre of partially devolved governance, and raised questions related to gender, equality and identity.

In summarizing the key arguments of the collection, the chapter will take a thematic approach, dealing with each section of the book in turn but also making reference to the ways in which the discussions connect and overlap. As well as reflecting on what the chapter authors can tell us, importantly the conclusion engages with the musical and photographic contributions, developed with Ministry of Life, and explores what can be learnt from the voices of young people living in Wales. In many ways, the chapters were constrained by their revisiting; however, the open nature of the arts-based contributions has engendered new viewpoints and an opportunity to explore issues of ethnicity, body



image, bullying and the active political voice of young people beyond discourses of apathy and disengagement.

Accordingly, the collection has worked to engage with marginalized young people in Wales and provide the opportunity for their conceptualizations of nation, identity, Welsh culture and social issues to have a voice in the publication and the associated audio and visual outputs. These creative outputs were not simply a reflection of the content of the chapters, rather the young people involved took the themes and came back with issues that had not necessarily been considered by the academic authors; issues that were nonetheless of central importance to them. Considering the breadth of these diverse inputs, as well as looking back, the chapter will also look forward to the next 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*.

Revisiting Wales, Welshness, language and identity

Jane Aaron opened this section of the book with her insightful reflections on Welsh women authors' work, in all its various genres, since devolution, and suggested that in the changing land of present-day Wales, gender equality in the literary field is no longer a distant prospect. However, given the declining gender parity in Welsh governance and the instability of women in public life and employment more widely (see Chaney, Rees and Lloyd this volume), Aaron is cautious in celebrating this victory, hoping that the current luminosity of Welsh female creativity will be sustainable and not a time that will be regarded in retrospect as 'but a bright flash in the pan'.

For Aaron, Gwyneth Lewis's bilingual lines emblazoned on the forehead of the Millennium Centre, which are featured in Ian Homer's photograph, serve as an inspiration for women writers and the works visited in her chapter illustrate the vibrancy and value of their writing. However, despite this revolution of female creativity the subject matter discussed by the authors still raises questions about the pervasive nature of systems of patriarchy, unemployment in the post-industrial landscape, environmental depletion and scarring, health inequalities, migration and ethnic differences. Therefore, although freedoms now exist for Welsh women to write, their creativity remains encased in the complex and divided land of the Welsh nation, which is reflected and represented in their literary forms.

A further characteristic of Welsh ‘differences and divisions’ is linguistic difference and Aaron charts the rise of Welsh speakers through Welsh-medium schooling, but also notes the limited opportunities for students to engage with the language outside the educational arena. Drawing on Catrin Dafydd’s (2007, 2015) popular fictions, Aaron reflected on how Dafydd’s character, Samantha Jones, attempted to keep up her Welsh-speaking skills after leaving school, aided only by an ailing Welsh-speaking grandmother and the television series *Pobol y Cwm*. This idea of a paucity of spaces for the social use of Welsh is taken up by Non Geraint in the following chapter, where she revisits Heini Gruffudd’s (1997) article from *Contemporary Wales*, ‘Young People’s Use of Welsh: The Influence of Home and Community’.

Geraint sensitively charts the struggle and conflict that has dominated the linguistic history of Wales, detailing *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (‘The Treachery of the Blue Books’) and the political, social and economic impacts, which worked together to marginalize the Welsh language, before charting the recent resurgence of the language, primarily driven through the growing provision of Welsh-medium schooling. In her empirical work with secondary schoolchildren, Geraint found a strong identification with Wales in terms of national identity and, echoing Gruffudd’s (1997) study, participants held consistent positive views towards the Welsh language and its importance as a national and cultural symbol of Welshness; however, English dominated as the language of social relationships in the school setting.

Geraint argued that it is crucial that the Welsh language is developed as a social language beyond the opportunities provided within education and the workplace, if Welsh is to survive as an active, thriving and vibrant language. The photograph created for Geraint’s chapter represents the lack of opportunity for young people to access ‘fashionable’ media in the Welsh language, and the dominance of English forms of print media, but as Mackay argued in chapter 12, this English-language dominance can be extended to other mediated forms. Geraint’s chapter suggests that for the Welsh language to become sustainable as a first language the extension of social, cultural and media-based Welsh opportunities for young people should be a Welsh government priority.

My own chapter was concerned with the tension between post-feminist discourses of freedom and the everyday negotiation of feminized identities in the private space of the home for mothers

residing in a marginalized locale in urban south Wales. In exploring the everyday realities of lived Welsh working-class femininities, with a focus on housework, the chapter argued that women are caught in an untenable position between the ideologies of the 'Welsh mam' and competing neo-liberal discourses that expect women to contribute economically and attain acceptable forms of motherhood and mothering. Despite evidence of personal agency, women's accounts spoke of the impossibility of achieving feminist and egalitarian ideologies for mothers and daughters on the margins of contemporary Wales.

This positioning between impossible expectations and the emotional cost of maintaining acceptable forms of motherhood, domesticity, paid work and working-class femininity are echoed in the later chapters by Morgan and Salisbury, suggesting that the last two decades have resulted in more complex and difficult negotiations between public and private life for women in Wales. However, the photograph for the chapter, whose frame was selected by young people in the workshops reflecting on their own experiences, presents a more positive visual trope for the future as a father washing the dishes is watched by his young daughter. Personal history, subjectivity and practices are formed in social relations and the affective routines of everyday family life (Wetherell, 2012), and this image suggests that as working patterns change a more equitable sharing of the domestic sphere could emerge. In this way, the question of 'who should do the dishes?' in future generations in Wales may engender responses that are not fixed in traditional, outdated gendered discourses.

Gendered identities were also explored by Ward, who refocused the discussion to examine the lives of young men in south Wales. Again, there were tensions between traditional ideologies of being a 'real man' in Wales and the context of the post-industrial employment landscape. Ward explored the ways in which young men in Wales construct an acceptable form of working-class masculinity by drawing on their family backgrounds and the industrial heritage of place. For many young men, an archetype of masculinity associated with an older world of industrial work, was outwardly performed through 'masculine' affirming practices within the school and 'risky' leisure pleasures outside it. Although some of these young men aimed for traditional apprentices in the space of physical work, this is problematized by deindustrialization and the loss of heavy industry, as discussed by Adamson in chapter 10 and represented by Ian Homer's photograph,

communicating the physical landscape of a post-industrial Welsh valley.

Ward also discussed alternative forms of masculinity based around music, different leisure pursuits and academic identities, the latter being potentially advantageous in relation to the shift to a knowledge economy (see Ward, 2014). However, these routes to escape from the de-industrial community produced a troubled and risky subject position, whereby young men following alternative pathways were often subject to peer bullying, a subject that resonated with the song produced for the Education, Labour Markets and Gender in Wales theme, which I will return to later in this chapter. Ward argues that a particularly 'hard' form of working-class masculinity in this de-industrial community is still the default reference point. Following, or working against, these default historical legacies, about what it means to be a 'real' Welsh man, or woman, impact on individuals' educational and employment possibilities, and also the everyday gendered experiences, of both young people and adults in contemporary Wales.

In exploring Welsh identities this section has focused on gender and linguistic differences within the nation; however, in revisiting previous works there was little space to explore the array of possible ethnicities within the boundaries of Wales. Aaron reflected on the representation of multiple ethnicities in literature, for example, considering Charlotte Williams's *Sugar and Slate* (2002), and the Afro-Caribbean and north Wales slate-quarrying heritage, which meant that Williams opted for the ethnicity of Welshness because Wales is so diverse, 'mixed up ... fragmented, because there is a loud bawling row raging, because its inner pain is coming to terms with its differences and its divisions, because it realises it can't hold on to the myth of sameness, past or present' (Williams, 2002, pp. 169 and 191).

The song created for the first section theme, Wales, Welshness, Language and Identity, celebrates the idea and value of hybrid identities within Wales. The song, *Hybrid Identity*, written and performed by KAOS, expresses pride associated with a diverse heritage, which can allow space for simultaneous associations with Wales and Welshness, 'I'm at Cardiff City games saying I'm proud to be Welsh', however, the lyrics also demonstrate the pervasiveness of prejudice and discrimination. As a nation that has been historically marginalized, there is an argument that the Welsh have developed a different articulation of racial superiority and inferiority, a claim that the Welsh nation is welcoming, in relation to the narrow xenophobia and overt

racism of English nationalism, but it is a claim that should be challenged (Williams, 1999).

The silencing of 'race' in Wales is supported by an investment in discourses of empathy with oppressed people and the imagining of Wales as a tolerant nation, where any ideas of xenophobia are defined through the Welsh/English dichotomy. This culture of disbelief refuses to acknowledge the significant levels of mistreatment experienced by ethnic minority groups inside and outside the workplace, including racial harassment, physical attacks and job discrimination (Wooding, 1998; Robinson and Gardner, 2004). A recent report argues that the economic downturn has contributed to a climate of blame where everyday racism takes the form of spitting, verbal abuse, threatening gestures and throwing objects, directed at black and ethnic minority communities (Crawley, 2012). Importantly, white residents in Wales, from other parts of the UK, report incidents of xenophobia and in contemporary Wales historical discourses of English oppression are evoked to excuse the persecution of individuals who become a convenient target of ridicule and aggression.

In considering Wales, Welshness, language and identity there is much in the big history of a small nation that provides a secure sense of self; however, history by its very nature, will always be an eclectic of fact, perspective and interpretation. For example, the eighteenth-century writer, Iolo Morganwg succumbed to the temptation of creating the past, and his forgeries earned him the title 'rogue elephant of the literary tradition' among historians; but his embellishments still inform contemporary understandings of Wales (Barlow, 2009). Custom and tradition, real and imagined, are seen to engender nationalism and the Welsh language is also a vehicle for forging and maintaining connection within Wales. These themes are drawn upon to separate Wales from England, maintain a sense of nationhood and inform ideologies of acceptable masculinities, femininities and ethnicities. However, it is important that these symbolic, cultural and narrative forms are drawn upon with caution and act as a base to form new, inclusive and progressive forms and articulations of Wales, Welshness and identity, rather than constraining and shadowing the opportunities for both the nation and its diverse citizens.

Revisiting education, labour markets and gender in Wales

Melanie Morgan opened this section with 'Re-Educating Rhian: Experiences of Working-class Mature Student Mothers', that revisited Pam Garland's (1994) contribution to *Our Sisters' Land*, which charted the experiences of mature women students in higher education. In revisiting and updating this earlier study, Morgan found many continuities across the decades and the idea of the pressures of combining studies with the domestic life emerged as a dominant trope, where women were caught between the 'greedy' institutions of family and university (Edwards, 1993, p. 62; Currie et al., 2000). Resonating with my earlier chapter, Morgan explored how neo-liberal shifts have exerted an increasing pressure on mothers to be both effective care givers and economically active providers.

This key shift was made visible through the mature student mothers' earlier journeys back into higher education, as where in Garland's study women had waited until their children were older and more independent, in Morgan's sample women were embarking on higher education while their children were still very young. Morgan argued that returning to learn within such a demanding stage of the family life cycle, although achievable, is not without practical, emotional and psychological costs for mature student mothers in Wales. This is reflected visually with the chapter photograph, designed in workshops with young people who suggested the struggle of this positioning be reflected with a mother and young child negotiating the steps to Cardiff University, laden with books, communicating the physical sense of balancing child care and study within projects of educational and social mobility.

Jane Salisbury moved from a focus on students to those who teach, but also continue to seek credentialization, in her chapter 'Private Lives Used for Public Work: Women Further Education Teachers in Wales'. The emotional and psychological costs of caring for families discussed earlier in the book (see Mannay and Morgan this volume) transfers to the educational setting where the 'capacity to care' (Hollway, 2006) is translated into teacher's pastoral relationships with students. Salisbury argues that women teachers are caught in a system of increased scrutiny, overburdening administrative duties and target setting, which means that their emotional labour becomes commodified, as they work outside their paid hours to meet the occupational challenges of contemporary further education.

As well as negotiating the neoliberal managerialism of an educational sector that has been subject to extensive funding cuts, to be and remain

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effective teachers, the women featured in the chapter were also involved in ‘chasing credentials’. Their engagement, again, was connected to the altruistic goals of being a more effective teacher and also wider projects of self-improvement and employability, an important aspect because women continue to be under-represented in the higher ranks of all educational sectors in Wales. Like the additional work that these women contribute, their positioning in educational systems is often made invisible; Salisbury ends her chapter by concluding that the Education Workforce Register for Wales will hopefully improve the visibility of important teacher characteristics – not least that of gender. The invisibility of women teachers’ pastoral work and their gendered marginalization in educational institutions is symbolized in the chapter photograph featuring a panther chameleon. Well known for its ability to adapt to changing environments and in doing so becoming less visible, the chameleon is pictured among certificates of credentialization.

Focusing on a different employment sector, low-wage manufacturing industries and the low-wage service sector work, Caroline Lloyd argued that in Wales, improvement in the quality of this type of work remains bleak. The photograph for the chapter, women working at sewing machines, represents the clothing industry, which was a major employer for women when Lloyd was writing in the 1990s. However, the industry has since gone into serious decline and workers have been displaced into the fragile economy of the service sector. Wales had already suffered disproportionately during the 1980s recession, reinforced by long-term decline in the coal and steel industries, and therefore the loss of manufacturing and the clothing industry was felt even more keenly in the labour market.

Lloyd resists the temptation to gloss the experience of working in the clothing industry in terms of nostalgic references to camaraderie on the shop floor and she is careful to stress that these manufacturing jobs were typically low paid and consisted of routine and repetitive forms of work. However, although conditions were far from perfect, in relation to the current opportunities in the service sector they did at least offer some form of security with predictable working hours and secure contracts. In reflecting on low-waged work in contemporary Wales, Lloyd centralizes the rise of zero-hours contracts, which provide no guaranteed hours and leave the worker facing variations in both working time and pay on a weekly basis. In this way, the problematic nature of low-paid work, for both men and women, has intensified, leaving them in a vulnerable and insecure position, which current

policies in Wales, and the UK more widely, are unable and ill-equipped to alleviate.

These issues were also explored by Alison Parken in her chapter, which examined the present picture for women in paid work in Wales across a wide base of employment and pay parameters. Revisiting earlier work conducted by Teresa Rees (1994), Parken argued that at the top end of the occupational structure, there is now gender balance in the professional occupations overall; however, women professionals in Wales are mainly restricted to the sectors of education, health and social care. At the bottom of the labour market hierarchy, elementary occupations are also gender balanced overall but men and women have starkly opposing working patterns in terms of full- and part-time work; they also work in highly gender segregated jobs. The last two decades have seen some improvements in relation to gender equality, and Parken discusses how Welsh government policy has evolved to recognize the need to support the implementation of equality duties, such as the 'equal pay duty'. She cites the Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE) programme as an example of movement from declaratory intent, (Chaney, 2009, and this volume), to evidence-based action. However, in line with Lloyd, Parken argues that the Welsh government must work to address low-skilled, low-hours jobs as the default form of flexible working.

The photograph produced by Ian Holmer for Parken's chapter features Paula, a cleaner at Eastmoors Youth Centre. Paula's picture could be seen to represent the highly gender-segregated jobs in elementary occupations; however, the picture also represents Paula's personal experience of paid work. Paula was nominated for a Local Hero Award for her work at Eastmoors, where she not only takes pride in the task of maintaining the physical space but also befriends, supports and encourages the staff and young people that use the centre. This emotional labour and capacity to care is beyond the remit of Paula's employment, but like the teachers in Salisbury's study, Paula builds relationships within her community. However, Paula can only do this as her contract offers her fixed, regular hours, based in the same youth centre; a zero-hours contract, spread out insecurely across different venues with unpredictable hours would not allow this form of secure work. In this way, zero-hours contracts not only engender insecurity, poverty and vulnerability but they also close down the opportunities for workers like Paula to build relationships and contribute to sustainable communities.

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Tasha Harvey's song for this chapter also moves away from and beyond the themes revisited in this section, as her interpretation of education in Wales seeks to illustrate the everyday educational experiences of young people from an alternative perspective. The title of the song, *Beautiful*, captures the essence of the vocal arrangement and Tasha's performance of the song but the message speaks of the destruction of beauty, youth and family and the ultimate loss of an untimely death. The song offers an insight into the lived experience of bullying 'This beautiful girl I knew just started high school, Bullied just because she walked into the classroom', and its pervasive effects 'Being anorexic and skinny to the bone, Still people picked on her because she was alone'. The accompanying video also communicates a sense of isolation as Tasha performs the song within a busy city yet communicates a sense of being alone.

The chapters in this section have focused on the inequalities of the gendered educational landscape and labour market that have to be continually negotiated by adults in Wales, while Tasha Harvey asks us to consider the barriers faced by young people. The inclusion of this song offered an opportunity to raise important questions about bullying, pressures around body image and the commodification of young bodies in a consumer society. These issues link with the performance of acceptable (and unacceptable) masculinities in the school, discussed earlier in the book (see Ward), but beyond education spaces young people are enmeshed in a postmodern, mediated world of flux, change and uncertainty where they also need to deal with the bullying of a digital age, where they are surrounded by portals to the virtual world. The documentary *Bridgend* (2013) and the film *A Bridgend Story* (2015) explore the impact of young people and suicide in south Wales but beyond these dramatized representations important work has been done in Wales to gain a more nuanced insight into the everyday gendered experiences of young people in educational and online settings (Ivinson and Renold, 2013; Renold and Ringrose, 2011; Ringrose 2013; Ringrose and Renold, 2010), which is worth pursuing to gain an understanding of this important area.

Revisiting Welsh public life, social policy, class and inequality

The final section of this collection began with Dave Adamson's poignant reflection on his work on class relations in the 1990s. At this time,

the poverty of the marginalized working class was expected to be a short-lived effect of industrial restructuring that would be resolved by government policies, which would act to regenerate employment in post-industrial areas. However, these hopes were not actualized and reflecting on the situation in contemporary Wales, Adamson argues that rather than being alleviated, poverty has become a normalized, pervasive, intergenerational feature of Welsh life in marginalized locales. Moreover, the restrictive nature of devolved power means that Welsh government has only been able to offer ameliorative policies that seek to make the lived experience of poverty more manageable, but these policies cannot tackle the fundamental causes of poverty in Wales.

The photograph for the chapter represents the loss of industry in Wales, featuring Merthyr Tydfil's Hoover factory. When Adamson was exploring the 'new poverty' of the 1990s, the prospect of job cuts was already on the horizon for the workers at Hoover and, in 2009, 337 staff clocked off for the last time joining the ranks of the unemployed in the increasingly marginalized town (WalesOnline, 2009). The photograph is symbolic of the high levels of employment and poverty, which have become established as a permanent feature of Welsh society. In this post-industrial landscape, towns like Merthyr Tydfil, which were once productive centres of industry, become marginalized and stigmatized in a popular and political culture that has little empathy with the poorest Welsh communities.

In the following chapter, Paul Chaney shifted the lens of analysis to explore devolution, civil society and political representation with a particular focus on gender. The emergence of the national assembly, with its highly visible display of women assembly members, acted as a symbol of hope and inspiration for new forms of governance and public life; and, to some extent, this has been supported by empirical evidence charting advances in the substantive representation of women and the promotion of gender equality. However, for Chaney, despite these gains the record of devolved governance in terms of its ability to claim gender parity has been disappointing in three key respects – depth, breadth and permanency – not only in terms of the reversibility in the number of women holding key political seats but also in relation to policy making and its inability to fully address key gendered barriers in a climate of austerity and cuts, which disproportionately affect the social and economic aspects of Welsh women's lives.

The idea of women in public life was represented in Ian Homer's image of young women protesting against the war in Iraq, representing

their commitment to change through direct action. In picturing political engagement within the hands of a general public, the image speaks of the power, ability and commitment of people in Wales to effect change and to speak out against the decisions of wider governance. This participatory model of engagement in public life, through many forms, not simply that of direct action, resonates with the aims of many of the civil society organizations interviewed by Chaney in his research. For example, the flagship programme Women Making a Difference has been central in providing women with opportunities to engage with public life by offering a range of courses, mentoring and role shadowing, which has led to positions for women such as community councillors and public appointments. However, while these measures are invaluable, a far wider scale of structural and cultural transformation will be required too if Wales is to achieve an equal and inclusive governance structure.

The following chapter opened with Nathan Bond's artistic interpretation of *Dr Who*. Along with other high-profile programmes such as *Gavin and Stacey* and *Torchwood*, *Dr Who* has been filmed in Wales and the new *Dr Who Experience* visitor centre has mapped Cardiff as the contemporary home of this science fiction classic. This mediated attachment to place has affected the ways in which Wales can be seen both inside and beyond its borders; however, arguably, although these programmes are filmed in Wales, they do not necessarily reflect 'Welsh life or communicate any sense of Welsh identity to a wider audience' (Blanford, 2010, p. 293). Furthermore, the geographical focus on a narrow range of predominantly urban centres means that these programmes only represent certain dimensions of Welsh life, to the exclusion of others. Hugh Mackay explored these issues of nation and representation in charting the transformation of the media in Wales.

Mackay revisited a sector that has seen huge changes over the past two decades. The print press in Wales, as in the UK more widely, has experienced a considerable demise, which has had significant impacts for those working in the media. However, Mackay found that the Welsh-language sector of the press has managed to negotiate some sustainability in its transition to online formats. In radio, Welsh-language programming has faced difficulties and the space for young people to engage with what they consider 'relevant' media is an ongoing concern (see Geraint, this volume). In television, despite cuts to funding, the move from analogue television to digital forms allows viewers outside Wales to enjoy Welsh programming, serving the

demand of the Welsh-speaking diaspora. Most striking has been the expansion of the Internet that has allowed a multiplicity of voices, many of them in the Welsh language, which are able to connect with audiences through blogs and social media. It is then, perhaps, this form of media that has the greatest potential for communicating the multiplicity of Welsh identities within the nation and allowing a space for more nuanced and meaningful representations of Welsh life, values, art and creativity.

In the final chapter, Karen Parkhill and Richard Cowell revisited Merylyn McKenzie Hedger's (1994) article, 'Wind Energy: the Debate in Wales'. The chapter highlighted many continuities with this earlier work, not least the persistence of public opposition to wind energy development in Wales. Resonating with the image of activism that represented Chaney's chapter, the photograph for this chapter illustrates an event held in Cardiff in 2011 to protest against proposals to build numerous large wind farms and high-voltage grid lines across tracts of rural Wales. The central placard 'No Way to Powys Pylons' sends a clear message to the Welsh government housed within the Senedd. However, there have been differential responses in Wales with some communities challenging plans for wind farms because they compromise the scenic beauty, while others welcome the potential opportunity for local employment and prosperity. Reflecting on Adamson's chapter, the desire for employment in marginalized areas can be seen to set up further inequalities in that residents may still have concerns about the long-term environmental impacts of large energy facilities but feel that this is the only available option for regenerating their locality and addressing long-term worklessness and poverty.

The Welsh government has only enjoyed limited and restrictive powers in relation to the implementation of wind farm projects; consequently their plans and policies remain vulnerable to actions in Westminster. The Silk Commission recommended that the powers of the Welsh government be extended, and the manifestos of all main parties going into the May 2015 election suggested that Silk be implemented. However, these additional powers to control the development of new energy infrastructure will not necessarily reduce conflict on the appropriate future for Wales's landscapes or tensions around the scale of wind energy developments. McKenzie Hedger's (1994, p. 132) prediction that 'it is unlikely that a consensus viewpoint will emerge [on wind farms] in the short term' has been born out in Parkhill and Cowell's revisiting, and their prognosis reaches a similar

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conclusion that the landscape of clean energy will continue to be a difficult and complex space to negotiate in Wales.

Jamie Feeny, aka Sapien, wrote the music and words for the final song of the collection, *Politricks*, and the video, produced by Magnus Oboh-Leonard of TAB Media, acts to powerfully reinforce the central messages with captions and a storyboard touching on austerity, government cuts and poverty. The song chimes with Adamson's discussion of poverty, 'To the gap between rich and poor, Contrast from a tramp to an entrepreneur', emphasizing the growing inequalities in Wales in terms of income and place. It also resonates with questions raised by Chaney, Parkhill and Cowell about the limitations on the Welsh government to deliver change within their restricted political powers and how this generates apathy among young people – 'No surprise it's a low turnout at the polls'. In relation to Mackay's reference to the Internet as a dominant form of communication, information and voice, Sapien also explores the ways in which young people are searching for answers beyond the discourses of national politics: 'So we're looking at the global news, Conspiracy theories make more sense than the truth, That's why they're so popular with the youth.' In revisiting Welsh public life, social policy, class and inequality the chapters in this section, and the lyrics of *Politricks*, have much to tell us about how far Wales has come in the last twenty years and the changes necessary to move forward to attain a more equal, inclusive and sustainable Wales.

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In reflecting on the collection as a whole there is much to celebrate in post-devolution Wales and there have been significant changes for the better where the Welsh government has governed in a distinctly 'Welsh way', committed to communitarian and collective policies that embrace bilingualism, civic nationalism and a more inclusive political system. However, there are also substantial concerns about marginalization, in-work poverty and sustainability, which need to be addressed urgently. Furthermore, the everyday lives of people in Wales are complicated by historical gendered and racialized discourses that compete against the contemporary requirements of the knowledge economy, create additional burdens for dual-earner households and allow the continuance of discrimination and xenophobia.

The photographs, audios and videos created for this collection offered the opportunity for new voices to be heard and for their messages to be communicated at the level of affect (Mannay, 2015). The young people involved have generously shared their ideas about Wales as a nation and raised important issues to place on the agenda. In looking forward to the evolving future of the nation it is clear that issues of bullying and racism need attention, and that the new programme of government cuts are a threat to ideologies of equality and community. Austerity has already disproportionality impacted on the most marginalized communities in Wales, and the Welsh government will need to carefully consider how this trend can be reversed if it is to both stand for and serve the people of Wales. In reaching the end of the book, I would encourage the reader to go back and listen to the audios or watch the videos for each of the themes again, engaging with and reflecting on the lyrics created by KAOS, Tasha Harvey and Jamie Feeney, aka Sapien. At the end of the *Politricks* video we see the presentation of a set of flash cards, reading ‘Say No to the Cuts’, ‘Focus on Local Views’ and ‘Promote Equality’ – these are the messages that bring the collection, *Our Changing Land*, to an end, and for the last word and take-home message, I offer the hopes and fears presented in the final lines of *Politricks*:

And I, dream of a future where the government try
To do right by the people, just living their lives
But we’re stuck in the system, funding’s cut by the knife

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