Disengagement in Wales: Educational, Social and Economic Issues

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ABSTRACT

This summary article presents some of the already existing figures for social, economic and educational disengagement in Wales. Where possible we present the most up-to-date figures, at the lowest level of aggregation; these have been adapted from a variety of sources, which are acknowledged at the foot of each table. These sources have often also made available larger datasets, from which we have derived trends over time and differences between groups, such as males and females, or between home countries. We comment on these trends and differences, where appropriate. Many of the figures have been rounded to integers for ease of presentation, but the more precise figures were used in the actual analysis. We focus on figures at the level of unitary authorities (UAs), and, via factor analysis, show how closely linked are the patterns of disadvantage discernible in such apparently disparate areas as education, health, housing, economy and crime. Recognizing the importance of 'multiple deprivation' and its likely long-term impact on individuals' propensity to enhance their basic skills via education or training gives us a valuable insight into the kinds of policies for amelioration that will be particularly effective – and those that may be less effective.

The article is in three main parts. The first presents tables of relative disadvantage, relevant to formal education and training. The second presents tables of relative disadvantage, relevant to social and economic factors. The final part considers the overall patterns in the data, via multivariate analysis, and presents some of their practical implications.

Education

School attainment

Tables 7.1 to 7.3 show the proportion of pupils attaining the 'expected' levels in each of Key Stages 1 to 3. Although there are some differences between subjects and Key Stage, the UAs in the Valleys tend to have scores below the Wales average. The lowest score at KS1 is 78 per cent for English in Blaenau Gwent. Excluding the partial figures for Welsh, the lowest score at KS2 is 68 per cent for Maths in Torfaen. The lowest score at KS3 is 49 per cent for English in Blaenau Gwent. On the other hand, Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan tend to have the highest scores on any indicator. In between

Table 7.1
Percentage attaining Level 2+ at Key Stage 1, Teacher Assessment, 2002

	English	Welsh	Mathematics	Science
Anglesey	82	77	85	87
Blaenau Gwent	78	97	83	84
Bridgend	84	84	89	88
Caerphilly	82	92	88	89
Carmarthenshire	84	92	88	89
Cardiff	78	84	85	85
Ceredigion	81	84	90	88
Conwy	84	89	90	90
Denbighshire	82	87	88	86
Flintshire	84	85	87	87
Gwynedd	78	87	87	87
Merthyr Tydfil	80	96	86	86
Monmouthshire	90	83	92	91
Neath Port Talbot	80	88	87	88
Newport	87	100	91	92
Pembrokeshire	83	88	88	89
Powys	86	89	90	90
Rhondda Cynon Taff	80	89	86	86
Swansea	82	87	85	86
Torfaen	80	92	88	88
Vale of Glamorgan	89	91	93	94
Wrexham	83	94	89	90
Wales	*83*	*87*	*88*	*88*

Source: NAW (2003a).

Table 7.2
Percentage attaining Level 4+ at Key Stage 2, Task or Test, 2002

	English	Welsh	Mathematics	Science
Anglesey	80	63	75	82
Blaenau Gwent	73	–	66	82
Bridgend	81	75	73	87
Caerphilly	75	80	69	83
Carmarthenshire	80	87	70	86
Cardiff	80	70	74	83
Ceredigion	82	73	77	85
Conwy	80	86	74	86
Denbighshire	77	81	72	83
Flintshire	80	79	73	87
Gwynedd	78	73	76	83
Merthyr Tydfil	77	–	71	85
Monmouthshire	85	–	76	89
Neath Port Talbot	75	77	69	84
Newport	78	–	73	86
Pembrokeshire	83	75	77	88
Powys	84	83	73	89
Rhondda Cynon Taff	77	78	73	84
Swansea	81	77	75	87
Torfaen	76	–	68	84
Vale of Glamorgan	87	86	79	92
Wrexham	80	80	72	85
Wales	*79*	*75*	*73*	*86*

Source: NAW (2003a).

these, we have the urban areas predominantly in the south that are closer to the figures for the Valleys, and the other rural areas in mid- and north Wales that are closer to the figures for Monmouthshire. We will see this pattern appear many times in this article for indicators of education and of other forms of relative disadvantage.

Table 7.4 shows some of the indicators of attainment at Key Stage 4 – the proportion actually leaving education at age 16 with no qualification at all, the proportion gaining less than the equivalent of one GCSE grade G, and the proportion attaining the benchmark of five 'good' GCSEs. The weakest scores are for Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Cardiff and Caerphilly.

Table 7.3
Percentage attaining Level 5+ at Key Stage 3, Task or Test, 2002

	English	Welsh	Mathematics	Science
Anglesey	58	64	60	62
Blaenau Gwent	49	–	53	57
Bridgend	62	–	62	65
Caerphilly	57	61	58	64
Carmarthenshire	61	75	62	66
Cardiff	66	73	67	70
Ceredigion	64	74	69	76
Conwy	63	78	64	71
Denbighshire	63	58	62	70
Flintshire	64	65	65	72
Gwynedd	59	70	62	65
Merthyr Tydfil	53	–	51	59
Monmouthshire	67	–	67	71
Neath Port Talbot	61	74	61	66
Newport	60	–	57	62
Pembrokeshire	66	76	65	72
Powys	71	76	72	80
Rhondda Cynon Taff	58	71	59	63
Swansea	61	77	61	65
Torfaen	55	–	60	65
Vale of Glamorgan	71	–	69	76
Wrexham	61	71	62	67
Wales	*60*	*73*	*58*	*64*

Source: NAW (2003a).

The strongest scores are for Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Powys. The overall picture is similar to that for the earlier Key Stages. The poorest areas are the Valleys, and the strongest are the rural UAs. All of these scores of school-level attainment are similar to those of England. Where there is a difference between the home countries, the scores are generally worse in Wales, but contextualized and value-added analyses show that this should not be seen as evidence of poorer *performance* by pupils, teachers or schools in Wales (Gorard, 2000, and see below).

Table 7.4
Qualifications obtained by 15-year-old cohort (Key Stage 4), 2001/2002

	Percentage leaving with no recognized qualification	Percentage gaining neither GCSE nor ELQ	Percentage gaining five or more GCSEs A*–C
Anglesey	1.2	3	54
Blaenau Gwent	1.8	6	43
Bridgend	2.5	4	47
Caerphilly	3.4	7	35
Cardiff	5.8	7	45
Carmarthenshire	2.2	3	57
Ceredigion	0.6	1	62
Conwy	3.1	3	54
Denbighshire	1.5	5	52
Flintshire	1.2	7	51
Gwynedd	0.9	1	57
Merthyr Tydfil	7.6	6	46
Monmouthshire	1.4	3	52
Neath Port Talbot	2.5	2	51
Newport	4.7	5	53
Pembrokeshire	2.7	2	52
Powys	1.4	4	60
Rhondda Cynon Taff	3.5	8	46
Swansea	3.5	6	49
Torfaen	2.6	4	36
Vale of Glamorgan	3.4	4	60
Wrexham	4.4	4	45
Wales	*3.0*	*5*	*50*

Source: NAW (2003a).

Disadvantage at school

One of the key reasons why lower school attainment in Wales should not be construed as evidence of poorer performance by schools is that Wales has generally higher levels of the kinds of disadvantage strongly linked to educational attainment. This is also, largely, the reason why outcomes are better in rural areas than in the Valleys. Entitlement to free school meals (FSM) is a widely used indicator of family poverty, and one that is strongly and inversely linked to educational outcomes. Eligibility is higher in Wales than in the other home countries. Table 7.5 shows that again the Valleys have the most

disadvantaged figures (31 per cent free school meals in Merthyr Tydfil primary schools), while rural areas have the least (8 per cent free school meals in Powys secondary schools). Policies for statementing pupils with special educational needs (SEN) vary by UA, and depend at least partly on parental pressure and the availability of help, showing very little link with the FSM figures. SEN is higher in north Wales, and less so in the Valleys and Newport.

Table 7.5
Indicators of disadvantage at school (percentages)

	Primary school free school meal entitlement	Secondary free school meal entitlement	Pupils with statements of SEN
Anglesey	20	16	3.8
Blaenau Gwent	27	25	1.6
Bridgend	21	17	3.7
Caerphilly	22	19	3.4
Carmarthenshire	19	18	3.7
Cardiff	20	15	3.9
Ceredigion	13	11	4.3
Conwy	17	15	3.9
Denbighshire	16	14	4.4
Flintshire	12	11	4.0
Gwynedd	15	15	4.5
Merthyr Tydfil	31	25	2.2
Monmouthshire	11	9	2.9
Neath Port Talbot	22	22	3.9
Newport	25	20	4.4
Pembrokeshire	19	17	3.4
Powys	12	8	4.0
Rhondda Cynon Taff	27	22	1.6
Swansea	21	21	3.0
Torfaen	22	18	3.1
Vale of Glamorgan	13	10	2.0
Wrexham	14	14	5.1
Wales	*19*	*17*	

Source for columns 1 and 2: 'Entitlement, January 2002', NAW (2003a).
Source for column 3: 'January 2003', Office for National Statistics (2003).

Absences from school

Table 7.6 presents absences and unauthorized absences ('truancy') from school. These are higher in Wales than in England, and relatively high in some of the Valleys areas, but even worse in urban areas such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. This is a somewhat different pattern from that in most of the indicators so far.

Table 7.7 reports the rate of pupil exclusions from school. This, again, shows a different pattern. Fixed-term exclusions are, like absences, higher in

Table 7.6
Absences among pupils of compulsory school age in all maintained secondary and special schools, 2002/2003

	Percentage of all absences	Percentage of unauthorized absences
Anglesey	10	1.4
Blaenau Gwent	10	1.0
Bridgend	9	1.5
Caerphilly	11	1.9
Cardiff	11	3.4
Carmarthenshire	9	0.9
Ceredigion	9	0.8
Conwy	9	1.0
Denbighshire	10	1.6
Flintshire	9	0.7
Gwynedd	8	0.8
Merthyr Tydfil	10	0.7
Monmouthshire	9	0.8
Neath Port Talbot	8	0.6
Newport	10	2.0
Pembrokeshire	9	1.3
Powys	8	0.7
Rhondda Cynon Taff	11	2.2
Swansea	11	3.1
Torfaen	10	1.4
Vale of Glamorgan	9	1.0
Wrexham	9	0.9
Wales	*10*	*1.6*

Source: NAW (2003b).
Note: Figure for Wales includes independent schools.

Table 7.7
Exclusions from secondary schools in 2002 (percentages)

	Permanent exclusions	Fixed term exclusions of five days or fewer
Anglesey	0.17	3.6
Blaenau Gwent	0.16	4.5
Bridgend	0.27	3.8
Caerphilly	0.3	4.0
Cardiff	0.26	9.3
Carmarthenshire	0.15	1.7
Ceredigion	0.12	3.4
Conwy	0.16	5.1
Denbighshire	0.15	1.4
Flintshire	0.14	1.4
Gwynedd	0.3	2.4
Merthyr Tydfil	0.21	3.5
Monmouthshire	0.1	3.5
Neath Port Talbot	0.17	5.5
Newport	0.24	5.2
Pembrokeshire	0.0	2.9
Powys	0.15	2.5
Rhondda Cynon Taff	0.02	3.9
Swansea	0.16	6.1
Torfaen	0.13	2.3
Vale of Glamorgan	0.11	3.6
Wrexham	0.18	6.8
Wales	*0.17*	*4.3*

Source: NAW (2003a).

urban than rural areas (9.3 per cent in Cardiff, for example). Permanent exclusions are quite low in Rhondda Cynon Taff but quite high in neighbouring Caerphilly. Perhaps, like statements of SEN, these very small numbers are sensitive to variations in local policies.

Adults: participation and qualification

The proportion of adults of working age with no qualifications shows a very similar pattern to that for attainment at compulsory school (Table 7.8). In Blaenau Gwent, 34 per cent of working-age adults are unqualified, compared to only 14 per cent in Monmouthshire.

A very large number of adults, in a range of studies, have reported receiving no formal education or training at all after leaving initial education. In one recent study only 38 per cent of adults in Wales reported continuing with any formal learning directly after reaching school-leaving age (Gorard et al., 2003). The other adults reported no further education, no induction training at work and no participation in government schemes, for example. Only 46 per cent of adults reported any formal education or training in later life, once having completed their initial continuing education. Given the overlap between these two groups, the single most common learning 'trajectory' for adults in Wales is one of lifelong non-participation

Table 7.8
Percentage of adults with no recognized qualifications, 2001

	Men aged 18–64, women aged 18–59	**All adults aged 16–74**
Anglesey	19	32
Blaenau Gwent	34	45
Bridgend	24	36
Caerphilly	28	40
Cardiff	17	37
Carmarthenshire	23	34
Ceredigion	19	25
Conwy	18	32
Denbighshire	19	31
Flintshire	20	29
Gwynedd	20	30
Merthyr Tydfil	27	44
Monmouthshire	14	26
Neath Port Talbot	30	39
Newport	22	34
Pembrokeshire	19	31
Powys	21	31
Rhondda Cynon Taff	23	41
Swansea	17	31
Torfaen	25	37
Vale of Glamorgan	15	26
Wrexham	25	33
Wales	*21*	–

Source: NAW (2001).

and non-qualification (37 per cent of the adult population). The main reason that the figures for non-qualification among adults (Table 7.8) are not higher is that adults leaving the workforce through old age generally have lower school-based qualifications than do 16-year-olds joining the workforce (Gorard et al., 2002). This means that very few adults without existing qualifications are receiving later education and training as adults. Other studies in Wales show a similar scale of non-participation (Gorard and Rees, 2002). La Valle and Blake (2001) show 41 per cent of respondents reporting no taught learning in the three years prior to their survey, and 24 per cent no learning of any sort since school. In the 2002 NIACE Adult Learners Survey, 38 per cent of the boosted sample in Wales reported no education or training since leaving initial education (a higher proportion than the UK average).

Social and economic indicators

In this section we consider a range of non-educational indicators that are symptomatic of, or associated with, disengagement.

Indicators of health

There has been an increase in reported teenage smoking (at least weekly) in Wales from 9 per cent in 1986 to 11 per cent in 2000 among 13–14-year-olds, and from 18 per cent in 1986 to 24 per cent in 2000 among 15–16-year-olds, for example. There has been an increase in teenage drinking (at least weekly) from 27 per cent in 1986 to 30 per cent in 2000 among 13–14-year-olds, and from 44 per cent in 1986 to 54 per cent in 2000 among 15–16-year-olds, for example (source: Health Promotion Division, 1986–2000).

Infant mortality is greater (at 0.64 per cent) in Wales than in the other home countries, with deaths rates from all causes also higher (at 1.2 per cent) per annum (source: Office for National Statistics, 2001a, Table 7.1).

Life expectancy in Wales is, therefore, slightly lower than in the rest of the UK. Table 7.9 gives the breakdown for men and women, and shows that those living in Merthyr Tydfil have the lowest expectancy (72 years for men), whereas those living in Ceredigion have the highest (82 years for women). The pattern of relative disadvantage is the same as for the indicators of educational outcome.

The same pattern, unsurprisingly, also appears for the percentage who report 'not good' health (Table 7.10). This is 18 per cent in Merthyr Tydfil

Table 7.9
Life expectancy (years) at birth, 1998–2000

	Male	Female
Anglesey	75.0	79.7
Blaenau Gwent	72.8	78.3
Bridgend	74.3	79.2
Caerphilly	73.6	78.4
Carmarthenshire	74.9	79.7
Cardiff	75.4	80.1
Ceredigion	77.0	81.9
Conwy	75.1	80.4
Denbighshire	74.3	79.5
Flintshire	75.1	80.0
Gwynedd	75.1	80.8
Merthyr Tydfil	72.0	77.2
Monmouthshire	76.0	82.6
Neath Port Talbot	74.1	79.4
Newport	74.9	80.0
Pembrokeshire	74.9	79.7
Powys	75.9	81.3
Rhondda Cynon Taff	73.5	78.4
Swansea	75.0	79.9
Torfaen	74.2	78.7
Vale of Glamorgan	75.9	80.2
Wrexham	74.6	79.2
Wales	*74.8*	*79.7*
UK	*75.2*	*80.1*

Source: NAW (2002).

and 17 per cent in Blaenau Gwent, compared to 10 per cent in Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan. There is little variation between the health scores for UAs, but what little there is shows the same pattern again.

Table 7.11 shows that irrespective of the age profile of the population in each UA, teenage pregnancy is most common in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and other Valleys areas. Teenage pregnancy is proportionately quite low in Ceredigion, Monmouthshire and Powys. Of these teenage pregnancies, the fewest lead to abortion in Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen. Therefore the pattern for abortions is different from, but not quite the reverse of, the pattern for pregnancies. A teenage woman in the Valleys,

Table 7.10
General physical health of the population

	Percentage health 'not good'	Health scores
Anglesey	11	49
Blaenau Gwent	17	46
Bridgend	14	48
Caerphilly	15	47
Carmarthenshire	10	49
Cardiff	14	47
Ceredigion	10	49
Conwy	12	48
Denbighshire	12	49
Flintshire	10	49
Gwynedd	10	49
Merthyr Tydfil	18	46
Monmouthshire	10	49
Neath Port Talbot	16	46
Newport	12	48
Pembrokeshire	11	48
Powys	10	49
Rhondda Cynon Taff	16	48
Swansea	13	48
Torfaen	14	48
Vale of Glamorgan	10	49
Wrexham	11	49
Wales	*13*	*48*

Source for column 1: Office for National Statistics (2001b).
Source for column 2: (NAW 1998a). Health scores are calculated as a composite of thirty-six responses, and range from 0: poor to 100: best.

for example, is more likely to conceive and proportionately also more likely to carry to term. This could be related to the patterns of post-16 education and training noted above (Table 7.8). However, this is not clearly so, since there were no clear differences between men and women in their patterns of immediate post-compulsory learning. It is more likely that both phenomena have a common underlying cause (see below).

Table 7.11
Teenage conception and abortion (percentages)

	Rate of conception under 16s	Rate of conception to under-18s	Rate of conception to under 20s	Percentage conceptions to under 20s leading to abortion
Anglesey	0.7	4.1	5.9	35
Blaenau Gwent	1.6	7.3	8.7	27
Bridgend	1.2	6.1	7.9	24
Caerphilly	1.5	6.8	9.1	29
Cardiff	0.9	5.1	6.0	35
Carmarthenshire	0.8	4.2	6.0	29
Ceredigion	0.5	3.1	3.9	39
Conwy	0.9	5.2	7.2	41
Denbighshire	0.9	4.8	6.7	34
Flintshire	0.9	4.6	6.1	38
Gwynedd	0.5	4.3	5.7	31
Merthyr Tydfil	1.5	6.7	8.5	30
Monmouthshire	0.7	2.9	4.2	37
Neath Port Talbot	1.0	5.7	7.7	31
Newport	0.8	5.6	8.1	30
Pembrokeshire	0.7	4.3	6.5	32
Powys	0.7	3.4	4.3	40
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1.3	6.5	8.4	29
Swansea	1.2	6.1	6.8	32
Torfaen	0.8	6.1	8.1	27
Vale of Glamorgan	0.7	4.1	5.2	30
Wrexham	1.1	5.7	7.4	39
Wales	*1.0*	*5.2*	*6.8*	*32*

Source: NAW (2003a).
Note: Conceptions which resulted in either a live or still birth or termination by legal abortion.

Poor housing

Tables 7.12 and 7.13 show the available figures for 'unintentional' homelessness, and the reasons why a person or household is eligible for local authority assistance. Proportionately, the problem of priority need is greater in Bridgend, Cardiff and Torfaen, and less in Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport and Blaenau Gwent. Swansea has a particularly high

Table 7.12
Unintentionally homeless and eligible for help, 2002

	Number of homeless households	Percentage in priority need
Anglesey	130	0.19
Blaenau Gwent	73	0.11
Bridgend	549	0.43
Caerphilly	407	0.24
Cardiff	925	0.30
Carmarthenshire	401	0.23
Ceredigion	140	0.18
Conwy	193	0.17
Denbighshire	117	0.12
Flintshire	253	0.17
Gwynedd	231	0.20
Merthyr Tydfil	93	0.17
Monmouthshire	85	0.10
Neath Port Talbot	140	0.10
Newport	131	0.09
Pembrokeshire	298	0.26
Powys	273	0.21
Rhondda Cynon Taff	527	0.23
Swansea	688	0.31
Torfaen	383	0.42
Vale of Glamorgan	206	0.17
Wrexham	184	0.14
Wales	*6,427*	*0.22*

Source: NAW (2003a).

proportion of the unintentionally homeless involving a young person at risk aged 16 or 17.

Tables 7.14 and 7.15 give some indication of the state of housing in each UA. For those with dependent children, the problem is worse in Gwynedd (14 per cent of homes) and Pembrokeshire (13 per cent) than in Conwy (4 per cent) or Anglesey (3 per cent). Not having an integral bathroom and central heating is also a more common problem in rural areas like Ceredigion (0.67 per cent) and Gwynedd, and less common in urban and industrial areas like Flintshire, Torfaen and Newport. This indicator shows

Table 7.13
Percentage of the unintentionally homeless in specific categories

	Household includes dependent children	Special reasons: young persons 16–17 at risk	Young person at risk aged 18–20
Anglesey	62	6.1	1.5
Blaenau Gwent	49	4.3	1.7
Bridgend	56	2.1	5.2
Caerphilly	41	9.4	2.6
Cardiff	38	9.5	2.4
Carmarthenshire	33	11.4	2.7
Ceredigion	40	9.5	2.9
Conwy	14	9.3	10.7
Denbighshire	45	12.4	4.0
Flintshire	49	9.2	5.7
Gwynedd	30	2.3	3.8
Merthyr Tydfil	38	18.6	2.1
Monmouthshire	44	9.6	4.0
Neath Port Talbot	47	4.8	6.3
Newport	49	6.9	2.6
Pembrokeshire	36	16.5	8.5
Powys	56	2.1	2.1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	43	6.9	4.7
Swansea	41	24.6	13.7
Torfaen	45	8.1	5.5
Vale of Glamorgan	53	2.3	8.2
Wrexham	37	5.3	14.5
Wales	*43*	*8.3*	*4.6*

Source: NAW (2003a).
Note: Cells contain the relevant percentage of the totals in Table 7.12. The focus here is on specific categories, so the columns do not sum to 100.

almost the opposite pattern of disadvantage to the main theme, the one linked to educational attainment.

Reported Crime

Relevant figures for crime are not available at UA level, and so only two examples are shown here. Table 7.16, however, demonstrates that the more rural areas in the Dyfed/Powys police-force region have less reported crime

Table 7.14
Percentage of unfit dwellings by type of household

	Single persons	With dependent children	Other, no dependent children	All
Anglesey	7	3	4	4
Blaenau Gwent	16	8	6	9
Bridgend	19	7	8	10
Caerphilly	9	5	5	6
Carmarthenshire	12	9	7	9
Cardiff	11	6	8	8
Ceredigion	9	10	13	11
Conwy	6	4	5	5
Denbighshire	9	6	7	7
Flintshire	7	4	4	5
Gwynedd	11	14	8	11
Merthyr Tydfil	16	11	12	13
Monmouthshire	9	6	10	9
Neath Port Talbot	15	6	9	10
Newport	14	9	8	9
Pembrokeshire	10	13	9	11
Powys	11	8	7	8
Rhondda Cynon Taff	18	6	11	11
Swansea	7	8	6	7
Torfaen	14	11	10	11
Vale of Glamorgan	11	6	6	7
Wrexham	8	7	8	8
Wales	*12*	7	*8*	*9*

Source: NAW (1998b)

(and fewer convictions). Gwent, including many of the less advantaged Valleys areas thrown up by other indicators, has a substantially higher rate of violent crime. South Wales, including the other Valleys areas, has the highest proportion of crime among young people.

Economic indicators

Wales has the highest proportion in the UK of children living in households with an income below 50 per cent of the mean (source: Office for National Statistics (2001b)). Unemployment of all types is highest in Merthyr Tydfil

Table 7.15
Percentage of homes without central heating or sole use of a bathroom

Anglesey	0.24
Blaenau Gwent	0.09
Bridgend	0.07
Caerphilly	0.05
Cardiff	0.11
Carmarthenshire	0.22
Ceredigion	0.67
Conwy	0.29
Denbighshire	0.26
Flintshire	0.06
Gwynedd	0.46
Merthyr Tydfil	0.11
Monmouthshire	0.08
Neath Port Talbot	0.06
Newport	0.04
Pembrokeshire	0.22
Powys	0.30
Rhondda Cynon Taff	0.15
Swansea	0.08
Torfaen	0.04
Vale of Glamorgan	0.06
Wrexham	0.12

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b).

Table 7.16
Crime by police force area 2002/2003

	Violent crime per 10,000 population	Percentage of indictable offences by persons under 18
Dyfed/Powys	134	12%
Gwent	287	16%
North Wales	185	16%
South Wales	183	17%
Wales	*195*	–

Source: Home Office (2003).
Note: Source does not provide figures by UA, due to danger of identifying the individuals committing some offences.

and Blaenau Gwent, as is the local rate of economic inactivity (Table 7.17). Both unemployment and economic inactivity are considerably lower in Flintshire and in Cardiff and Swansea and the UAs neighbouring these cities.

Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen have a higher proportion of households with a low overall income, and a higher proportion of social housing (Table 7.18). Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire are in the reverse situation.

It is not very surprising, therefore, to observe that Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil have a relatively high proportion of children living in

Table 7.17
Economic inactivity percentage rates

	Economically active unemployed	Full-time student	Unemployed (aged 16–24)	Unemployed (who have never worked)	Economically inactive
Anglesey	4.7	1.5	1.0	0.4	41
Blaenau Gwent	4.7	1.4	1.5	0.5	44
Bridgend	3.5	1.9	1.1	0.3	39
Caerphilly	3.6	1.6	1.2	0.3	41
Cardiff	3.1	4.1	0.9	0.3	37
Carmarthenshire	3.4	1.8	1.0	0.3	41
Ceredigion	2.9	3.9	0.7	0.2	43
Conwy	3.7	2.0	0.9	0.3	39
Denbighshire	3.4	1.9	1.0	0.3	38
Flintshire	3.0	2.0	0.9	0.2	32
Gwynedd	4.1	2.5	1.0	0.3	40
Merthyr Tydfil	4.0	1.7	1.4	0.5	46
Monmouthshire	2.6	1.9	0.8	0.2	34
Neath Port Talbot	3.9	1.7	1.3	0.4	44
Newport	3.9	2.4	1.2	0.4	37
Pembrokeshire	3.9	1.7	1.0	0.3	40
Powys	2.7	1.6	0.6	0.2	34
Rhondda Cynon Taff	3.6	2.2	1.2	0.4	43
Swansea	3.6	3.0	1.0	0.3	41
Torfaen	3.4	1.8	1.1	0.3	39
Vale of Glamorgan	3.3	2.4	1.0	0.3	34
Wrexham	3.3	2.4	1.1	0.2	35

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b).

Table 7.18
Percentage of less advantaged households

	Gross household income up to £10,000	Social housing	Over one occupant per room
Anglesey	33	19	4
Blaenau Gwent	41	34	4
Bridgend	27	18	4
Caerphilly	40	24	5
Cardiff	32	20	5
Carmarthenshire	40	20	5
Ceredigion	29	14	4
Conwy	33	15	3
Denbighshire	34	16	4
Flintshire	34	21	3
Gwynedd	40	22	5
Merthyr Tydfil	48	30	3
Monmouthshire	27	16	4
Neath Port Talbot	30	25	3
Newport	33	26	4
Pembrokeshire	29	21	5
Powys	32	19	6
Rhondda Cynon Taff	36	19	6
Swansea	34	24	6
Torfaen	38	33	4
Vale of Glamorgan	27	14	3
Wrexham	36	32	4
Wales	*34*	*22*	*5*

Source: NAW (1998b).

households on benefit, compared to Monmouthshire and Powys, for example (Table 7.19).

People living in the Valleys and South East Wales are correspondingly less likely to have a bank account, use a credit card or own shares in a company (Table 7.20).

People living in the Valleys are also less likely to have used a computer or the Internet at home (Table 2.21). In fact, our own research has shown that access to IT replicates the pattern of access to almost all other public services, including education (Selwyn and Gorard, 2002).

Table 7.19
Percentage of children living in benefit households, 1998/1999

Anglesey	40
Blaenau Gwent	47
Bridgend	36
Caerphilly	42
Cardiff	41
Carmarthenshire	35
Ceredigion	35
Conwy	38
Denbighshire	38
Flintshire	32
Gwynedd	39
Merthyr Tydfil	49
Monmouthshire	22
Neath Port Talbot	40
Newport	45
Pembrokeshire	40
Powys	28
Rhondda Cynon Taff	42
Swansea	40
Torfaen	40
Vale of Glamorgan	31
Wrexham	36

Source: NAW (2003a).

Table 7.20
Percentage using financial facilities, 2002

	Bank account	**Credit card**	**Shares in company**
North Wales	86	59	26
Mid/West Wales	84	64	30
West South Wales	83	68	26
Valleys	83	54	22
South East Wales	78	54	23
Wales	*83*	*59*	*25*

Source: *Welsh Omnibus Survey* (2002).

Table 7.21
Percentage using information technology at home, 2002

	Used PC at home	Used Internet at home
North Wales	31	22
Mid/West Wales	39	31
West South Wales	33	21
Valleys	29	20
South East Wales	39	33
Wales	*34*	*26*

Source: *Welsh Omnibus Survey* (2002).

Child protection

Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen have the highest proportion of children on the protection register, and Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport have the most 'looked after' children (Table 7.22). Flintshire and Wrexham have among the lowest figures on both indicators.

Background, origin and language

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) records that there are around 180 asylum-seekers in receipt of subsistence-only support in Wales and 1,585 in NASS accommodation. Of the former category, the bulk are in Cardiff (70) and Newport (25). Of the latter, the bulk are in Cardiff (1,000), Swansea (410), Newport (110) and Wrexham (55). Clearly, these figures are too small to allow further analysis.

Table 7.23 shows the country of origin of people living in Wales in 2001. Only Cardiff has a substantial number of residents born outside the EU. The areas of relative disadvantage noted in most of the tables so far tend to have a larger proportion of residents born in the same area (92 per cent in Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent, compared to 51 per cent in Flintshire, for example).

Table 7.24 confirms that the overwhelming majority of the population of Wales is reported as 'white'. Of course, this majority group includes considerable variation and, as we have seen, some very disadvantaged sub-groups. However, the very scarcity of minority ethnic groups and ethnic minority-language groups in Wales can lead to their near exclusion from some social and educational policies (such as those emanating from the Welsh Language Act). Cardiff stands out as the only UA with a substantial ethnic minority.

Table 7.22
Looked after children aged 0 to 17

	Child Protection Registers 2002	Children looked after by authorities 2001
Anglesey	3.4	0.4
Blaenau Gwent	2.6	0.8
Bridgend	3.5	0.5
Caerphilly	3.0	0.8
Cardiff	3.7	0.7
Carmarthenshire	2.5	0.5
Ceredigion	2.1	0.4
Conwy	3.4	0.6
Denbighshire	3.0	0.4
Flintshire	1.8	0.3
Gwynedd	2.6	0.4
Merthyr Tydfil	4.6	0.8
Monmouthshire	2.8	0.3
Neath Port Talbot	3.5	0.7
Newport	4.0	0.8
Pembrokeshire	3.5	0.5
Powys	1.8	0.3
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2.4	0.5
Swansea	3.0	0.4
Torfaen	5.3	0.5
Vale of Glamorgan	1.9	0.6
Wrexham	1.7	0.3
Wales	*3.0*	*0.5*

Source: NAW (2003a).

As with asylum-seekers, ethnic group and country of birth, only Cardiff, Newport and Swansea stand out as having any sizeable population with a minority religion (Table 7.25). Perhaps the most notable pattern of religion in Wales is, otherwise, the relatively high proportion of people with no stated religion in the Valleys areas (such as 34 per cent in Rhondda Cynon Taff).

Four areas (Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Gwynedd) have a majority of the population with any reported knowledge of Welsh (Table 7.26). Only Gwynedd and Anglesey have a majority of the population able to use Welsh to read, write and speak. South-east Wales, the Valleys, and the M4 corridor have less than 20 per cent of the population with any reported

Table 7.23
Country of birth, percentages

	Wales	England	Other EU	Elsewhere
Anglesey	68	28	2	1
Blaenau Gwent	92	6	1	1
Bridgend	85	12	2	2
Caerphilly	90	8	1	1
Cardiff	75	16	3	6
Carmarthenshire	80	17	2	1
Ceredigion	59	36	3	2
Conwy	54	41	3	2
Denbighshire	58	38	3	2
Flintshire	51	45	3	1
Gwynedd	70	27	2	2
Merthyr Tydfil	92	6	1	1
Monmouthshire	61	34	3	2
Neath Port Talbot	90	8	2	1
Newport	81	13	3	3
Pembrokeshire	69	26	3	2
Powys	56	41	2	2
Rhondda Cynon Taff	90	8	1	1
Swansea	82	13	2	2
Torfaen	86	12	2	1
Vale of Glamorgan	76	19	3	2
Wrexham	72	24	2	1

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b).

knowledge of Welsh, and overall less than 10 per cent of the population able to read, write and speak Welsh.

Multiple deprivation

Having observed all of the patterns above, it is clear that on any coherent index of multiple deprivation the situation would be assessed as more severe in Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, and the Newport area than in the Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire (Table 7.27). This is what is found by ranking areas in terms of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Table 7.24
Percentage of local population reported as 'White' ethnicity

Anglesey	99.3
Blaenau Gwent	99.2
Bridgend	98.6
Caerphilly	99.1
Cardiff	91.6
Carmarthenshire	99.1
Ceredigion	98.6
Conwy	98.9
Denbighshire	98.8
Flintshire	99.2
Gwynedd	98.8
Merthyr Tydfil	99.0
Monmouthshire	98.9
Neath Port Talbot	98.9
Newport	95.2
Pembrokeshire	99.1
Powys	99.1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	98.8
Swansea	97.8
Torfaen	99.1
Vale of Glamorgan	97.8
Wrexham	98.9

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b)
Note: Because these figures are so small, it is not feasible to conduct further analysis cross-tabulating minority ethnic origin and other indicators.

Putting it all together

As already noted, the variation between UAs is often highly correlated across different indicators of disengagement. For example, local levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 in maths are closely related to local levels of attainment in Key Stage 3 maths and science. Attainment at Key Stage 2 maths is also related to the rate of teenage pregnancies, which is linked to local life-expectancy. The proportion of pupils leaving school with no qualifications is related to the proportion of local social housing. The local levels of child poverty are related to the rate of absence from schools. And so on.

These links are familiar to anyone working in this field, and we know that

Table 7.25
Reported religion (percentages)

	Christian	No stated religion	Other religions
Anglesey	79	20	1
Blaenau Gwent	64	35	1
Bridgend	70	29	1
Caerphilly	66	34	1
Cardiff	67	27	6
Carmarthenshire	75	25	1
Ceredigion	71	28	2
Conwy	78	21	1
Denbighshire	78	21	1
Flintshire	79	20	1
Gwynedd	75	24	1
Merthyr Tydfil	70	29	1
Monmouthshire	75	25	1
Neath Port Talbot	72	27	1
Newport	72	25	3
Pembrokeshire	76	24	1
Powys	75	24	1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	65	34	1
Swansea	71	27	2
Torfaen	71	29	1
Vale of Glamorgan	73	26	1
Wrexham	77	22	1

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b).
Note: 'Other religions' includes Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. All of these are less than half of one per cent, except in Cardiff (for example, 4 per cent Muslim) and Newport (3 per cent Muslim).

these links are not causal in nature. Teenage pregnancy cannot *cause* poor performance in maths at Key Stage 2, for example, or vice versa. Nor do the links at UA level necessarily refer to the same individuals within UAs. Those with poor performance in maths at Key Stage 2 may be no more likely than any others to become pregnant as a teenager, for example. What all of these relationships imply is an underlying pattern of cause, termed variously 'deprivation', 'exclusion' or 'disengagement'. In fact, the various 67 indicators presented in the tables above can be quite accurately summarized in seven distinct underlying patterns, using a technique known as exploratory

Table 7.26
Knowledge of Welsh (percentages)

	No knowledge of Welsh	Speaks, reads and writes Welsh	Other combination of skills
Anglesey	30	51	20
Blaenau Gwent	87	7	7
Bridgend	80	8	12
Caerphilly	83	9	8
Cardiff	84	9	8
Carmarthenshire	36	39	25
Ceredigion	39	44	17
Conwy	60	23	16
Denbighshire	64	21	15
Flintshire	79	11	11
Gwynedd	24	61	15
Merthyr Tydfil	82	7	10
Monmouthshire	87	7	6
Neath Port Talbot	71	13	16
Newport	87	7	6
Pembrokeshire	71	16	13
Powys	70	16	14
Rhondda Cynon Taff	79	10	11
Swansea	78	9	13
Torfaen	86	8	6
Vale of Glamorgan	83	9	8
Wrexham	77	11	12

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001b).
Note: Population aged 3 years or more.

factor analysis (unfortunately we cannot use the figures for crime or asylum, as these are not at the UA level). The seven-factor model explains 92 per cent of the variation in the original 67 indicators. We report here only correlations of 0.7 or higher. The loadings on to the first factor for many variables is very high (over 0.9), emphasizing that all of the indicators are effectively measuring the same thing.

The first and largest factor strongly links 38 of the original 67 indicators, suggesting that all of these are measuring variation in only *one* underlying phenomenon. These include attainment in maths, science and English at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the GCSE benchmark of five or more grades A*–C, the

Table 7.27
Ranking of deprivation scores

	Child poverty index rank	Overall deprivation index rank
Anglesey	8	7
Blaenau Gwent	2	2
Bridgend	16	11
Caerphilly	5	5
Carmarthenshire	6	16
Cardiff	18	6
Ceredigion	17	18
Conwy	13	17
Denbighshire	14	14
Flintshire	19	20
Gwynedd	12	8
Merthyr Tydfil	1	1
Monmouthshire	22	22
Neath Port Talbot	11	4
Newport	3	9
Pembrokeshire	9	15
Powys	21	19
Rhondda Cynon Taff	4	3
Swansea	10	12
Torfaen	7	10
Vale of Glamorgan	20	21
Wrexham	15	13

Source: NAW (2000) – higher ranking equates to greater deprivation or poverty.

number of school-leavers with no qualifications, and the number of adults of working age and of all ages with no recognized qualification. The factor subsumes all of the indicators of childhood disadvantage, such as eligibility for free school meals at primary and secondary school, child poverty, children living in households on benefit, and protected and registered children. It also includes where people were born (within the EU), local economic activity rates, the proportion of those on benefit, unemployment at age 16, long-term and overall unemployment, social housing and household income. Finally it includes health scores, poor health, life expectancy, total absences from school (sickness), all indicators of teenage pregnancy and the

proportion of abortions. This overall 'quality of life' factor is key to our understanding of disengagement.

The second factor underlies the indicators to do with Welsh speaking and fluency, attainment in Welsh at Key Stages 1 and 2, and the lack of a bath and central heating in residences. This factor is unrelated to poverty and otherwise unrelated to educational attainment.

A third factor is based on the unauthorized absences from school, the rate of fixed-term exclusions from school, the percentage of full-time students among the adult population, the proportion of non-white ethnic minorities and of those born outside the EU. This factor distinguishes the more rural from the urban areas of Wales.

The fourth factor links most indicators of unfit housing. The fifth links the proportion of each religion with special educational needs. And the sixth factor links indicators of homelessness with the rates of permanent exclusions from school. The last factor relies on only one indicator – the density of occupation, based on the proportion of homes with more than one person per room. All of these are otherwise unrelated to educational attainment.

There is, of course, a relatively easy to identify common 'cause' in all areas and for nearly all indicators of disengagement – poverty. Again this is widely known. However, we make no apology for labouring the point throughout this article, because the true implications of this finding are often overlooked. We have in Wales a plethora of educational policies aimed, purportedly, at widening participation and overcoming disadvantage, but which are of value only to the 'usual suspects'. For example, although learndirect, UfI Wales, Open University of Wales and other organizations are meant to provide anytime, anywhere, anyhow learning that overcomes the barriers of time and place, and are genuinely trying to do so, in fact they are having little impact. For example, the NIACE boosted sample for Wales 2002 found only six out of 1,000 respondents who used the Internet to find out about a learning opportunity, and no one had used learndirect, UfI Wales or the Open University of Wales. These six Internet users were white, male, middle-class, already qualified and in work at the time. All had a PC and telephone at home. This is what we mean by the 'usual suspects'.

The policies in place are largely irrelevant to the 40 per cent of the population who have not already participated in post-16 learning opportunities. The impact of these policies is hard for commentators to judge because research on their impact suffers one common and widespread defect: for reasons of economy, it is conducted with participants only. Most studies ask

only the existing users of the adult learning 'system' about their motivations and problems, and policies are therefore skewed towards their views. More expensive and time-consuming research that seeks out those with no intention of participating (the 'disengaged') paints a very different picture (Gorard and Rees, 2002). Family poverty, lack of role models, and a sense of 'not for us', coupled with poor experiences of initial schooling, can act to create a kind of lifelong attitude to learning – a negative learner identity. There is considerable reproduction within families of patterns of participation in adult learning of all types. In this case, the obvious barriers such as cost, time and travel are largely irrelevant. In the same way that most of the population is not deterred from higher education by lack of finance (largely because most young people with the requisite entry qualifications *already* attend HE), so most non-participants in basic skills training are put off not by 'barriers' but by their lack of interest in something that now seems alien and imposed. To some extent, what we now face in Wales is not so much a learning divide as a *learning choice*. The choices not to participate that are being made today are often based on a long personal and family history of multiple disengagement. To deal with this, we have first to respect it. In the relative social and economic situation for any individual, the choice not to participate could be completely rational. We need to revise the view, too common among policy-makers, that the existing set-up for learning is appropriate for all, and that the reluctant learner need only be lured back 'on track'. Rather, we should seek to support the kinds of genuine self-directed learning that are, in fact, going on but which are invisible to, and sometimes threatened by, credit frameworks and national targets. Above all, we need to break the crushing cycle of poverty and so its link with limited basic skills.

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