

Description

Fig 2c shows that Cardiff has the largest market area. This is plainly visible from the map. Cardiff also has the longest distance people are prepared to travel of 38.4 miles as shown in the table. Fig. 2b shows that Merthyr has the smallest market area and an average distance of 16.5 miles. Brecon has the second largest market area shown on map Fig. 2a with a distance of 22.3 miles.

Explanation

Cardiff as expected had the largest market area. This is to be expected as Cardiff is the Capital city of Wales and has a large variety of shops and services, as investigated in hypothesis 1. However, the only suitable newspaper available on a Sunday was a national newspaper. This may have meant that the settlements further away that would have otherwise not appeared were mentioned. This would have increased the size of the market area. The settlements mentioned in the Cardiff newspaper tended to be larger settlements. In accordance with the settlement hierarchy, the larger the settlement, the fewer the number and therefore the further apart they are. This would have also made the market area bigger. Cardiff's market area would also be bigger in size because of the large amount of tourism Cardiff receives. It is a capital city, and the recent developments in Cardiff Bay would attract visitors. On the other hand, by looking at the map Fig. 2c, I get the impression that the market area would have been even bigger if not for the boundary of the sea.

Merthyr Tydfil had the smallest market area. This did not agree with my prediction. This may be because of the high unemployment figures, due to the collapse of the mining and steel industry. Because of this, the town is not very prosperous, the range and amount of shops and services is therefore small (see hypothesis 1). These factors mean that only local people will travel to Merthyr as illustrated on Fig. 2b. Merthyr is also in competition with Cardiff, which is near enough to attract some of Merthyr's market.

Brecon unexpectedly had the second largest market area. This is mainly because Brecon is a market town that mainly serves farmers. The farmers live in rural areas and therefore these settlements are further apart, thus increasing the size of the market area. Brecon also caters for tourists who visit the Brecon Beacons. Brecon's market area may have been bigger if not for the Brecon Beacons, which act as a boundary.

Conclusion

Cardiff did indeed have the largest market area, but Brecon had the second largest and Merthyr has the smallest. My prediction was partly right.

Hypotheses 3: The larger the settlement the better the quality of the environment.

Method

To investigate this hypothesis, I compiled an environmental survey. I conducted this survey in each of the settlements, and then gave a mark out of 100 for each.

Prediction

I predict that Cardiff will have the highest score, followed by Merthyr and then Brecon. I think that the larger the settlement, the wealthier it is, and so will be able to afford environmental improvements.

Results

Environmental Index

| STREET LAYOUT | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Excellent regular layout of street furniture, spacious and clear | 10 |
| Street quite clear, slightly cluttered. | 5 |
| Cluttered, crowded pavement, difficulty walking. | 0 |

| TRAFFIC SAFETY | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Pedestrian area of light, one-way traffic. | 10 |
| Moderate two way traffic | 5 |
| Busy main road. | 0 |

| LANDSCAPE | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Attractive well kept shrubbery, at least 1 plant per 50 m. | 10 |
| Some vegetation, fairly tidy, at least 1 plant per 100 m. | 5 |
| No vegetation | 0 |

| TRAFFIC PARKING | VALUE |
|---|--------------|
| No parked cars | 10 |
| Up to 10 cars per 100m | 5 |
| More than 20 cars per 100 m, safe crossing difficult. | 0 |

Environmental Index

| AIR POLLUTION | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Clear, fresh air, few fumes. | 5 |
| Some fumes | 3 |
| Smoggy air, smell of petrol and car fumes. | 0 |

| STREET FURNITURE | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Well arranged street furniture in good condition. | 10 |
| Fairly well arranged street furniture, mostly in good condition. | 5 |
| Badly arranged and in bad condition. | 0 |

| PAVEMENT | VALUE |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Flat stable surface in good repair. | 10 |
| Some cracks, slightly uneven. | 5 |
| Very uneven, unstable, large cracks. | 0 |

| LITTER | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Generally clear hardly any litter. | 10 |
| Some litter. | 5 |
| Very untidy, a lot of litter unpleasant to walk. | 0 |

| BUILDING CONDITION | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Buildings well maintained, well painted ect. | 10 |
| Up to half the buildings well maintained. | 5 |
| Under a quarter of building well maintained. | 0 |

| SHOP DISPLAYS | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Displays attractive and appear recently updated. | 5 |
| Most displays are well presented. | 3 |
| Few good displays, old displays. | 0 |

| NOISE LEVELS | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Hardly any noise. | 5 |
| Moderate level of noise. | 3 |
| High noise level conversation difficult. | 0 |

| ADVERTISEMENTS | VALUE |
|--|--------------|
| Less than 15 advertisements per 100 m. | 5 |
| Approximately 25 per 100 m. | 3 |
| More than 45 per 100m. | 0 |

| ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR | MAXIMUM VALUE | ACTUAL SCORE | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | BRECON | MERTHYR | CARDIFF |
| Street Layout | 10 | 8 | 4 | 9 |
| Landscape | 10 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| Air Pollution | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Pavement | 10 | 6 | 9 | 4 |
| Building Condition | 10 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| Traffic Safety | 10 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Traffic Parking | 10 | 2 | 9 | 10 |
| Street Furniture | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Litter | 10 | 9 | 5 | 6 |
| Shop Displays | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Noise | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Advertisements | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL= | 100 | 67 | 69 | 82 |

Limitations

The results of this survey may not be quite accurate as they are based on personal opinion and not facts or figures. The survey was taken in different areas of a settlement; the Cardiff survey was done in the centre of the CBD whilst the Brecon survey was done in the outskirts of the CBD. This may have affected the results.

Description

Cardiff had the highest score followed by Merthyr, and then Brecon.

Explanation

Cardiff has the highest score as expected. This is because Cardiff as the capital city is a wealthy settlement so would be able to afford a high quality public service for road sweeping and other cleaning services. Cardiff is also designed to attract tourists so the landscaping and street layout would be of high quality. Cardiff's CBD is a pedestrian area, so pollution and noise would be low, and traffic safety and parking high. Planning permission in Cardiff would be difficult to gain, so the CBD is well ordered. The shop displays are high class because only the richest companies would be able to afford land. Land prices in the CBD are high, especially in a capital city.

Merthyr has the second largest score. However, this score is only slightly higher than Brecon. This may be because Merthyr is not a very prosperous settlement following the high unemployment levels after the collapse of the mining and steel industry.

Brecon has the lowest score, perhaps because Brecon is a small settlement, so the CBD is not pedestrianised. The streets are small and narrow.

The streets tend to be cluttered; planning permission restrictions in a small settlement are more relaxed. However, because Brecon is a tourist settlement, the buildings are in very good condition.

Conclusion

Cardiff, as predicted had the highest score, followed by Merthyr and then Brecon. My prediction was therefore proved right.

Hypothesis 4: The larger the settlement, the higher house prices.

Method

I investigated this hypothesis by gathering the prices for three different house types for each settlement from an estate agent. I then calculated the average house prices.

Prediction

I predict that Cardiff will have the highest house prices, followed by Merthyr the Brecon. I think this is because the larger the settlement, the bigger the demand for housing nearby, so the higher the prices.

Limitations

The house prices may be higher or lower depending on the status of the estate agent. This may affect results.

| | 2 bedroom terraced | 3 bedroom semi-detached | Detached | AVERAGE |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| CARDIFF | £74,770 | £111,570 | £194,380 | £126,907 |
| MERTHYR | £28,370 | £60,580 | £80,780 | £76,377 |
| BRECON | £45,600 | £75,600 | £186,390 | £102,530 |

These results are plotted in graph 4(a).

Description

Cardiff has the highest average house price, followed by Brecon and then Merthyr.

Explanation

Cardiff is a capital city; therefore there is a high demand for houses for those working in the city. People may also want to live in Cardiff to make use of the many recreational facilities. Because of this high demand, house sellers can afford to increase prices and yet keep their market.

Merthyr has the lowest house prices. This is because it is not a very wealthy settlement due to unemployment after the collapse of the steel and mining industry. The businesses in Merthyr are fairly small, which means fewer people are employed, so there is less demand for housing. House prices therefore stay low.






Brecon has the second highest house prices because it is a tourist settlement. Despite its small size, Brecon is quite wealthy because of the tourist industry. Because Brecon is in a rural area, those who are not farmers would want to live near to the shops and services Brecon provides, so there is a high demand for housing, and therefore higher prices.

Conclusion

As I predicted, Cardiff had the highest house prices. However, Brecon had the second highest house prices, not Merthyr. My prediction was therefore partly correct.

Conclusion

After investigating all four hypotheses, these are the results:

| | Hypotheses proved correct? |
|--|--|
| Hypothesis 1A: The larger the settlement, the larger the number of shops. |  |
| Hypothesis 1B: The larger the settlement, the larger the number of services. |  |
| Hypothesis 2: The larger the settlement, the larger the market area. |  |
| Hypothesis 3: The larger the settlement, the better the quality of the environment. |  |
| Hypothesis 4: The larger the settlement, the higher the house prices. |  |

Only one of my hypotheses was proved correct.

Hypothesis 1 was disproved mainly because of the prosperity of the settlements. Greater prosperity is reflected by a greater number of shops. Less prosperity means that the land in the CBD is less expensive; therefore more services can be built.

Hypothesis 2 was proved incorrect because of the type of market each settlement catered for. Cardiff catered for people on a national scale, while Merthyr served mostly local people. The site of a settlement also played a part, in the case of Cardiff and Brecon, market area was restricted by natural boundaries.

Hypothesis 3 was proved correct I think mainly because of the relative wealth of the settlement. A good environment shows that the council has extra money to fund what are seen as less important schemes that improve the environment. Cardiff and Brecon had higher environmental scores because they cater for tourists.

Hypothesis 4 was disproved, again because of the role and wealth of the settlement. The wealthier the town, the more attractive it is to businesses. The businesses offer employment and therefore attract people. Demand is high, so house sellers can afford to put up their prices but still keep their market.

This study seems to effectively meet my aim. However, it could have been improved by investigating more hypotheses to get a better perspective and therefore come to a more accurate conclusion. I also think that the three

settlements should be of similar type, for example all market settlements or settlements with a high percentage income. This would have made the study fairer and therefore more accurate.

The main problems with this study were the practical difficulties of collecting data. For example, busy streets and bad weather.

From this study, I have learnt that to place a settlement in a hierarchy, many criteria need to be taken into account, not just size. One important factor seems to be the function of the settlement and its history. If the town has experienced a lack of prosperity, this affects its status. On the other hand, settlements that are wealthy, perhaps because of the tourist industry, have a higher status than expected. By looking at my hypotheses, I feel I can redraw the settlement hierarchy for the particular settlements of Cardiff Merthyr and Brecon based on my four criteria:

