

# Critical School Geography

Education for global citizenship

John Huckle





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**To my grandchildren  
Jessica and Oliver**



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## Preface

Over thirty five years ago in the concluding chapter of *Geographical Education: Reflection and Action* I wrote

*A genuinely socialist approach to geography in schools should stem from a recognition that education is a means of both reproducing and challenging existing social and human-environment relations. Geography lessons can not only sustain prevailing beliefs and attitudes but may also allow pupils and teachers to examine alternatives openly and critically. There is scope for committed work within schools and the current crisis of capitalism provides geography teachers with significant opportunities. They teach about industry, towns, developing countries, resources, pollution, and world trade and are therefore well placed to explore the mounting contradictions of a mode of economic and social organization based on inequality and exploitation. By dealing with unemployment, resource depletion, environmental deterioration, and the global economic order in a manner which acknowledges conflict and seeks political literacy, they are more likely to counter the apathy, indiscipline and truancy with which pupils currently register their discontent. Such work would represent an attempt to break the prevailing correspondence between schooling, culture and economy and requires politically aware geography teachers who recognize their role as agents of change.* (1) p. 151

The crisis I mentioned in 1983 has not gone away. The turn to neoliberalism that was then just beginning, was an attempt to resolve it that ended in the financial crisis of 2008. By that time the economic, social and political geography of the UK had been transformed in the interests of a rich and powerful elite and schooling had been reformed to sweep away the progressive and radical ideas of the 1960s and 1970s. The decade from 2008 to 2019 was one of austerity when working people paid the price of bankers' excesses; real wages and living standards stagnated; welfare benefits fell; and the quality of many urban and rural environments declined. The impacts of globalisation and austerity on 'left behind' places and communities led to the rise of right and left populism with the former contributing to the Brexit vote of 2016 and the Conservative's election victories in 2017 and 2019. Corbynism offered a left

alternative that appealed to many young voters but it was defeated by strategy failures and a majority who considered it unrealistic and voted to ‘get Brexit done’. In 2020 coronavirus arrived confirming the unsustainable and unjust nature of contemporary capitalism and prompting debate on the ‘next normal’ or a more sustainable alternative.

It was partly the prospect of a Corbyn government that led me to return to my earlier writing on socialist school geography in 2016. Another stimulus was the publication of Unesco guidance on education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) and an associated publication on embedding this in school textbooks. My writing on ESDGC over four decades had convinced me that radical democracy is the key to sustainable development and that critical academic geographers and educators offer appropriate content and pedagogy (theory and practice) that can be adapted to embed ESDGC within the secondary school geography curriculum.

This book sets out to demonstrate what critical school geography should involve and reflects the following considerations:

- **Critical social theory** offers ways of understanding how the world works and how global society might develop in more sustainable ways. It informs both critical academic geography and critical education and represents powerful knowledge which school students should consider in ways appropriate to their age, ability and interests.
- **Critical pedagogy** seeks to counter false understandings (ideology); help people understand the causes of oppression; and offer liberating social alternatives. Three forms of critical pedagogy are particularly significant for geography teachers: eco-pedagogy, the pedagogy of place, and post-colonial pedagogy.
- **Relevance** Teenagers face a troubled and fast changing world. They are worried about school, future jobs and housing, the environment, racial inequality and their mental health. The curriculum units in this book seek to address these concerns.

- **Curriculum making** There is an urgent need for geography teachers to reclaim their professionalism and develop the curriculum in consultation with students and others.
- **Internationalism** There is value in geography teachers drawing on international guidance on ESDGC developed by Unesco and embedding this in the curriculum..
- **Open source** By publishing this text as an ebook readers have ready access to many of the sources cited that are freely available on the internet. Membership of [the Geographical Association](#) (2) and access to its journals, *Geography* and *Teaching Geography*, is assumed.
- **Professional development** By providing both theory (the chapters) and practice (the curriculum units) together with many references and follow-up videos, this book acts as a vehicle for the professional development of geography teachers.

The **chapters** in the book aim to provide teachers with a framework of critical ideas about political economy, nature, space, place, democracy and citizenship which should inform their curriculum making. The chapters on knowledge and pedagogy help them think about powerful knowledge and how it should be developed in ways that encourage critical thinking and foster democracy. The chapter on students, teachers, alienation and happiness, focuses on what encouraging happier students and happier geography teachers might involve. While chapter one introduces populist left ideas on radical democracy that underpin the book, some readers may prefer to also read chapter nine with its more thorough attention to theory before other chapters.

The **curriculum units** are attempts to demonstrate what curriculum making should involve. Each takes one or more publications by critical academic geographers that are relevant to a key concern of teenagers, and develops its understandings into a sequence of lessons reflecting the framework of objectives and topics provided by Unesco's guidance on ESDGC. Each unit will require revision to match it to students' and teachers' needs and will quickly date in terms of its content and relevance. The main purpose of these units is to show what is possible and to inspire teachers individually or in departments, to follow their example.

Radical democracy (3), the key theme running through the book, seeks to deepen and widen democracy as a means of redistributing wealth and power and thereby extending equality, liberty, solidarity and sustainability. Citizens should have powers to control the development of all aspects of society: the economy, politics, culture, and the environment, at all scales from the local to the global. This involves the reform of liberal democracies; the construction of a global accountable democracy; and the adoption of the principle of subsidiarity. Issues should be dealt with at the most immediate or local level that is consistent with their resolution, rebalancing representative and participatory democracy and encouraging such instruments as workers' and consumers' co-ops, worker share ownership, citizens' assemblies, constitutional conventions, participatory budgeting, popular planning, community schools and publically owned media platforms all of which act as vehicles for citizenship education. Critical education draws on both agonistic and deliberative perspectives on radical democracy and the tensions between these are dealt with in chapters five and nine.

Radical global democratisation requires global citizens who exercise responsibility across space, time and species, caring for others elsewhere in the world, others not yet born, and other species. Chapter nine suggests that it has wide reaching implications for political economy, global governance, international relations, and education for global citizenship. School geography has long promoted itself as a means of fostering international understanding and in its critical form explores the radical democratisation of the global economy and geo-politics in ways that reflect Unesco guidance.

I had largely finished writing this book when the global coronavirus pandemic arrived. As chapter six makes clear, it was entirely predictable and is bound up with other global issues that are addressed by the UN's sustainable development goals. It results from global society's failure to follow a path of sustainable development with fraying democratic norms, increased populism and nationalism, incompetent and ineffective government bureaucracies, and the growing reach of autocratic leaders all contributing to its outbreak and spread. Tackling the present and future pandemics requires a transition to sustainable development (the 'next normal' of chapter one, the new left modernity of chapter two) engineered by the radicalisation of democracy (all chapters but particularly chapter nine). While impacts of the pandemic feature in curriculum

units one, five and nine, this book does not contain a unit focussed directly on Covid-19. Ball's article outlining [ten lessons of the pandemic](#) (4) and a special edition of [Dialogues in Human Geography](#) (5) provide possible starting points for readers who wish to develop one.

The UK has not dealt well with Covid. It has one of the highest reported mortality rates in the world and one of the hardest hit economies. Austerity had cut public health spending; reduced the ability of local authorities and schools to respond; and left millions of people with few or no savings to draw on in the event of unemployment or forced self-isolation. As elsewhere, Covid's impacts are socially and spatially uneven as is evidenced by the 'digital divide', the higher mortality rate among the [working class](#) (6) and the BAME community, and the north/south divide in infection rates seen during the current second wave. Children and young people are hard hit with evidence of [their declining mental health](#) (7) and employment prospects (chapters three and five).

We have entered a new era that requires a more interventionist and strategic state, higher levels of government borrowing and, eventually, increased taxes on wealth and assets (curriculum unit nine). The nations of the UK are now adopting different strategies to control the virus and by outsourcing track and trace to private companies, the Johnson government shows its continued readiness to [shrink the state in order to make room for money and privilege](#) (8). Whatever the outcome of current negotiations with the EU, Britain's recovery from the current recession is likely to be prolonged with many more suffering unemployment and hardship. The new [Labour leader's pledges](#) (9) will be tested and there will be new opportunities for the populist left to update and campaign on the positive aspects of the Corbyn legacy (10). Rising job losses have already seen a cross-party group of MPs call for [the introduction of universal basic income](#) (11) (chapters one and five).

As regards schooling, the [NFER is issuing on-going reports](#) (12) on the impact of the virus. School leaders are concerned about the growing attainment gap; the continuing lack of mentoring and IT equipment for disadvantaged students; support for students' emotional and mental health and well-being; and the cost of keeping schools open safely. Following the examinations debacle in 2020 (13), the [One Nation caucus of centrist Conservative MPs](#) (14) has proposed the scrapping of GCSEs, a proposal supported by a group of state and independent school leaders. Scotland has decided to base 2021 examinations of continuous

assessment while England is requiring more rigorous mock exams in case the actual exams have to be cancelled. While [the NEU wants schools in England closed](#) (15) during the second national lockdown, the government and opposition supports them remaining open.

Meanwhile, challenged on the economic front and aided by the Tory press, Johnson and Cummings are [intensifying the culture war on woke](#) (16). This characterises as ‘dangerous extremists’ those who believe that Britain’s power structures, social relations and national identity should fairly reflect the country’s identity. The Department of Education has issued [new guidance on personal, social, health and economics education](#) (17) that instructs schools not to teach students about ‘extreme political stances’ such as the ‘desire to overthrow capitalism’ or to promote ‘victim narratives that are harmful to British society’. Geography teachers should reject what amounts to an [attack on free speech in schools](#) (18).

Critical school geographers sympathetic to the arguments in this book will already be using [resources produced by environment and development NGOs](#) (19) in their lessons. They are likely to support one or more of these and be active in the Labour or Green party and a trade union. They need to continually update their understanding of a fast moving world and [Open Democracy](#) (20), [Novara Media](#) (21) and [Double Down News](#) (22) are just three of the alternative media sites to which they are likely to constantly return.

The text ends rather abruptly. I considered a further chapter examining what has to happen for critical school geography to take root and grow. In the end I decided that readers were likely to consider this issue for themselves whilst reading the text. Suffice to say that there will need to be debate leading to change within school departments, the GA and its journals, examination boards and elsewhere, and that this can be aided by critical geography teachers in schools entering into dialogue with those in universities. Real change in England will require government to implement the type of reforms outlined in the section on democratic socialist education in chapter two, but there is already more accommodating educational policy in Wales and Scotland.

One has only to review GA journals over the past forty years to realise that school geography has made much progress. That it has largely failed to grasp the opportunities that critical geography and education offer is mainly a product

of the conservative educational reforms of the past four decades. In seeking to introduce those opportunities this book suffers from having an elderly author somewhat detached from the day to day realities of the school classroom. Nevertheless he hopes that it inspires younger teachers to take up the challenge it outlines and thereby help to develop the global citizens on whom the realisation of sustainable futures depends.

My thanks to Frances Slater who first encouraged me to publish my ideas in the mid 1970s; to my fellow editors of *Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education* who set me firmly on a radical path; to WWF for its support for much of my writing on ESD; to John Morgan whose writing is a continuing source of inspiration. And above all: to Margaret for her continuing love and support.

John Huckle

Bedford, October 2020

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# Chapter One

# Introduction

*Your era will be typified by the momentous clash between two opposing proposals: 'Democratize everything!' versus 'Commodify everything!' The proposal favoured by powerful and influential people and institutions is 'Commodify everything!' They want to convince you that the solution to our world's problems is to accelerate and to deepen the commodification of human labour, land, machines and the environment. 'Democratize everything!' is the recommendation that I have been building towards throughout this book. Take your pick. The clash of these two agendas will determine your future well after I am gone. If you wish to have a say in that future, then you and your contemporaries will have to form an opinion on this matter and articulate good arguments with which to win others to your point of view Yanis Varoufakis.(1) p. 180*

*The Sustainable Development Goals are no panacea but they have the potential to offer a bridge to a more sustainable future that unites economic, social and environmental imperatives. Geography and geography educators have a role in facilitating this process and empowering pupils to embrace Earth education and the needs of future generations. The SDGs have opened a door if we only care to walk through it. Alan Kinder & Stephen Scoffham (2) p. 9*

*By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. [Unesco](#) (3)*

In his book *Talking to My Daughter About the Economy*, Yanis Varoufakis (1) provides his fourteen year old daughter Xenia with a brief history of capitalism and an analysis of the choices facing her generation. His book makes the case for democratising the management of money and technology, together with the planet's resources and ecosystems, and examines the role of ideology in allowing powerful elites to maintain their power. He tells Xenia that her future will be determined by the clash of two agendas and she will need to take sides:

arguing and acting with those who seek to commodity everything or those who seek to democratise everything.

The vast majority of young people do not have an eminent left-wing economist to explain to them how the world works and how it can be changed for the better. The majority of 14 to 16 year olds in England are dependent of what state schools provide and that is grossly deficient. Economics and politics are not widely taught; PSHE (personal, social, health and economics education) occupies a marginal position; and education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC), as promoted by Unesco and others, has failed to gain a foothold. It is arguably school geography that currently has the greatest potential to provide the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to sustainable development and global citizenship, but to realise that potential it should incorporate critical theory and pedagogy and develop a curriculum that addresses students' concerns.

This book seeks to develop this argument and so fill a gap that the author perceives in the literature on geographical education aimed at classroom teachers. It seeks to show them how they can use critical theory and pedagogy in their curriculum making by drawing on work of critical academic geographers and critical educators. Since the world faces major challenges (the sustainable development goals) that can only be realised by 'democratising everything', it advocates the teaching of political economy within a geography curriculum that considers the democratisation all spheres of social life at all levels from the local to the global; evaluates green socialism as an alternative to neoliberal capitalism; and embeds education for sustainable development and global citizenship education in its aims, content, pedagogy and assessment..

Unesco guidance on ESDGC acts as a stimulus to such embedding but it needs to be more realistic about global political economy, acknowledge truly alternative forms of development; and reflect and act on the tensions between utilitarian and transformative forms of education that pervade its advocacy of 'quality education' (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4) and related guidance on ESDGC.

## A turning point in history

At the core of the United Nation's [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (4), adopted by 193 member states in 2015 are 17 sustainable development

goals (Figure 1.1). These seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure global peace and prosperity. The UK government has signed up to these goals and the Welsh government has adopted them as national aims. Failure to realize the goals lies at the heart of many social and environmental problems and the anxieties experienced by many young people. Discussion of a '[next normal](#)'(5) in the context of a just and sustainable transition from the coronavirus pandemic has given the goals increased relevance.



**Figure 1.1 [The Sustainable Development Goals](#)** (6)

Critical social theorists relate failure to realise the goals to the power of economic, political and cultural elites to subvert the interests of the majority in development which meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. For the past forty years the dominant form of development in the world has been neoliberal financialised capitalism (the 'old normal'). This has sought to 'commodify everything' turning more of the world's human and non-human nature, its spatial organisation and places, into means of making profit. The result is a world marked by [stark inequality](#) (the richest 1% own 45% of the world's wealth) (7); nearly 1.3 billion people live in extreme poverty on less than 90p a day; and 22,000 children die each day due to poverty (8). The global economy is sustained by a [mountain of debt](#) (9) (\$255 trillion or 322% of GDP in 2019) and ecological resources and services continue to be degraded. We face a [climate emergency](#) (10) and a [mass extinction of species](#) (11),

Meanwhile digital technology is slow to be put to useful ends and is being used mainly to control rather than liberate. People around the world are [losing faith in democracy](#) (12) as they realize that the global economy is rigged to reward those at the top who buy elections and whose allies in the media manufacture consent to an undemocratic global order (13). There is an alarming rise in populism, authoritarianism, and nationalism which feeds off, exploits and amplifies the resentments of those left behind by globalisation and technological change and fans the flames of ethnic and racial hatred. The multilateral order is weakened; goodwill between countries is in short supply; politics is held in low regard; false news and anti-intellectual rhetoric flourishes; and institutions that defend the public realm are weakened (14). World leaders have targeted the 2020s as a ‘decade of delivery’ for the goals but [other challenges](#), including the [coronavirus pandemic](#) that broke out in 2020 may continue to distract them (15) (16).

As Xenia was told there is another agenda. The age of neoliberal capitalism finally ended with the financial crisis of 2008 and the climate emergency. A digital revolution of limitless clean energy, circular production, easy access to knowledge and learning, supply of goods and services at zero marginal cost, and [universal basic income](#) (17) and [services](#) (18) has been waiting to be born. It can allow us to feed and heal our bodies; conserve critical ecological capital; and help us develop new forms of democracy, global governance and citizenship (democracy in all spheres of life at all scales from the local to the global). It can render the development of nature, space and place subject to citizen deliberation but with Xenia, we should realise that such progress is not inevitable but requires us to ‘democratise everything’ so that new technologies can be applied to the common good. [Unesco’s monitoring of progress in realising the SDGs](#) (19) suggests that there are many political and social agents around the world seeking to create such a ‘next normal’ that links sustainability to democracy. Their efforts should feature in geography classrooms where present and future forms of democratic socialism should be evaluated alongside forms of capitalism.

## **Teenage Britain**

Too many of the older students in our secondary schools are unhappy, anxious or [mentally ill](#) (20). Their anxieties stem from such [issues](#) (21) as poverty, family breakdown, social media, drugs, consumerism, climate change, and school examinations, and from the realisation that they are unlikely to enjoy the

jobs, housing, living standards and pensions that many of their parents and grandparents took for granted. They have little access to social education and critical media and little understanding of formal politics, but are concerned about the environment, racial inequality, Britain's future in relation to Europe and the wider world, and what their future will be like in a world recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic..

Against this background it is important that geography teachers address issues of sustainable development in relation to students' futures. A relevant curriculum should consider the SDGs in relation to such issues as schooling, housing, work, health care, happiness, and the changing world order, exploring with the students what social changes, including more radical forms of democracy, might best deliver the associated SDG. This is the rationale underpinning the curriculum units that accompany the chapters of this book.

This opening chapter outlines the core knowledge, or key ideas from political economy, that should be explored in the geography curriculum by the time students reach the age of 16. These ideas pay particular attention to how power is distributed in global society; the need for radical global democratisation; and the potential of the populist left to grasp the opportunity of the 'next normal' and deliver an international green new deal. Such a deal should stabilise capitalism, render it more ecologically and socially sustainable, and ease the transition to postcapitalist societies that employ emerging technologies to offer abundance and universal freedom.

The chapter then introduces Unesco guidance on ESDGC and considers the extent to which national curricula encourage ESDGC in the nations of the UK. Finally it introduces the related curriculum unit that focuses on the Chavez revolution in Venezuela and its record in delivering radical democracy and social welfare. It focuses on health care ([SDG 3 Good Health and Well Being](#) (22)) and global citizenship education (GCE) topic 7 (actions we can take individually and collectively). It introduces left populism, 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Latin America, and the factors leading to Venezuela's current crisis by drawing on the work of academic geographers and other commentators on this topic.

## **Political economy**

*[Political economy](#) analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes within a society: the distribution of power and wealth between*

*different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time.* (23)

Political economy deals with the way people interact with one another by focussing on the economy, state, society and culture and the powers which govern them. Since capitalism is the prevailing form of social organisation in the contemporary world, it seeks to understand the structure and dynamics of the various forms of capitalism, their interactions within the global economy, and postcapitalist alternatives. It recognises that our understanding (lack of understanding) of capitalism and its alternatives informs our actions, and that reflection and action are the keys to creating the kind of world in which we want to live.

**Capitalism** (24) (organising society through the operation of markets and money) is a contested concept with several schools of political economy (essentially those of followers of Adam Smith; Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes; and Fredrich Hayek) adopting different theories of how the economy works and how social development is best realised. The ideas of Keynes were dominant from 1945 to the early 1970s (social democracy) and those of Hayek from 1980 to the financial crisis of 2008 (**neoliberalism**) (25) (26). Those of Marx underpin much critical geography and education and suggest that capitalism displays inherent contradictions (conundrums) that cause periodic crises. These make postcapitalist alternatives desirable and justify anti-capitalist action (27).

## **Key ideas**

The following key ideas underpin critical school geography and should be explored through critical pedagogy (chapter five) in ways that take account of the age, ability, interests and prior learning of the students. They are written in teacher rather than pupil friendly language, and the references are to aid teachers' understanding. It is the author's contention that they can be understood and evaluated by 14-16 year olds if appropriately presented. Like all such ideas they are provisional and far from comprehensive (other ideas are relevant). They require constant updating and revision after debate amongst critical geographical educators.

1. The geography of planet earth is the result of bio-physical and social structures and processes interacting with each other. Bio-physical structures and processes create limits within which global society can

develop sustainably as long as development is governed by a radical global democracy and associated forms of global citizenship.

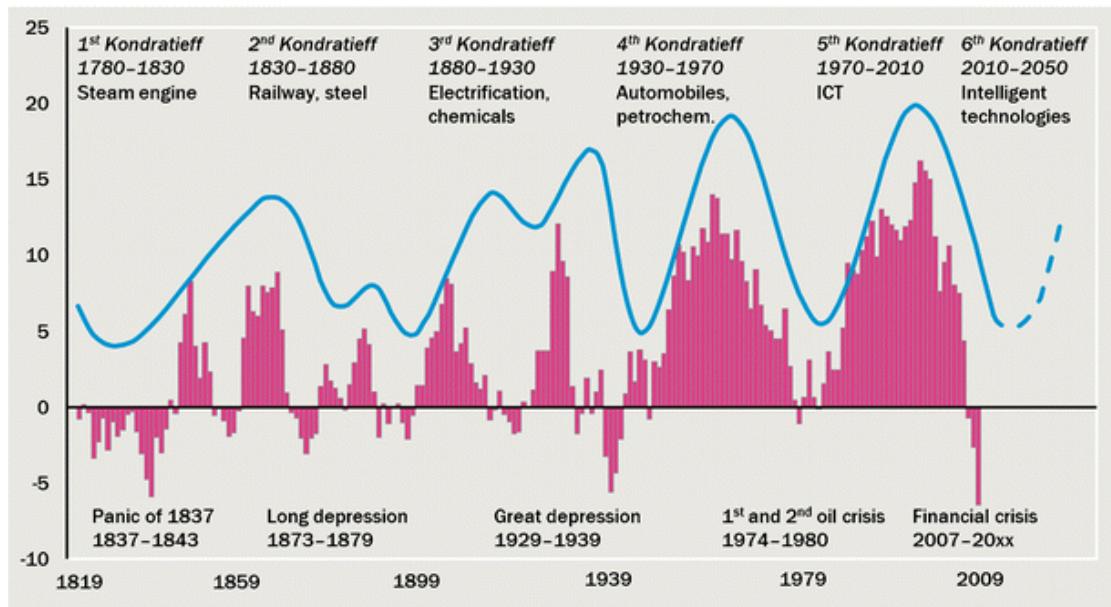
2. A radical global democracy is one in which global citizens have the power to exercise popular control over their relations with the rest of nature (environmental democracy) and with one another (economic, political and cultural democracy) at all scales from the local to the global. It enables them to realise their common interest in sustainable development.
3. Radical global democracy requires the world's private and publically owned enterprises, nation states,, institutions of regional global governance, civil society organisations and citizens to act as global citizens. They should exercise responsibility for others including others distant in space and time and other species. This requires them to abide by such ethical principles as those in the [Earth Charter](#) (28); to establish laws that ensure sustainable development; and to create globally accountable systems of international relations and global governance that include a global government with powers to enforce international laws.
4. Currently too much power in global society is unaccountable to the world's people. Powerful economic, political and cultural elites continue to promote global capitalism and profit making at the expense of the majority of the world's people and its ecology. They are opposed by political parties and social movements that promote radical global democratisation. In many but not all societies such democratisation is associated with green left politics and [international socialism](#) (29).
5. Global society (global capitalism) depends on a division of labour. Different people and different countries (nation states) do different parts of the world's work and the associated reward system divides societies into social classes and counties into richer and poorer (more or less well developed) states. Social class is an important way of understanding politics as an arena where citizens can realise greater freedom, equality and sustainability through active citizenship that seeks to extend democracy. The process of of [uneven and combined development](#). (30)

among nation states is an important way of understanding world history ([colonialism and imperialism](#) (31)) and international relations.

6. While the working class is disadvantaged by its position within the division of labour, other citizens are disadvantaged by virtue of such social classifiers as race, gender, disability and place. Class and [identity politics](#) (32) give rise to political parties and social movements, including those that seek [radical democracy](#) (33) and global citizenship. (An illustration of the current class structure of Britain accompanies an article by [O'Brien](#) (25)).
7. Global society (global capitalism) develops unevenly over space and time. It shows periods of high economic growth linked to new technologies, commodities and markets, and periods of low or negative growth (recessions) when all it produces cannot be sold, debts cannot be repaid, and workers have to be laid off. In western economies (USA and Europe) capitalism suffered major [crises](#) (34) in the 1870s, 1930s, 1970s and the early 2000s when profits fell, workers were laid off and living standards fell. The global [coronavirus pandemic](#) (35) of 2020 resulted in [a further crisis](#) (36)
8. These crises are a result of capitalism's inherent [contradictions](#) (37). It must sustain a sufficient level of economic growth to provide new opportunities for investing capital generated as profits and it must sustain the conditions that allow the production of these profits. The financial crisis of 2008 happened when financial products invented to absorb surplus capital proved worthless. The coronavirus crisis of 2020 happened when habitat destruction, the mistreatment of animals, global travel, and the erosion of public health services, allowed the SARS-CoV-2 virus to spread to humans. In both cases the logic of capital accumulation (profit making) overcame the logic of sustaining the conditions for human flourishing and social development.

## Modern economies fluctuate in a cycle of 40–50 years

Rolling 10-year yields of the Standard & Poors 500 equity index and  
the Kondratieff's waves



Data source: Datastream. Allianz Global Investors Capital Market Analysis, Wilenius 2011

**Figure 1.2 Waves of capitalist development linked to technological innovation (38)**

9. Each wave of capitalist development produces distinctive geographies (relations between human and non-human nature; relations between phenomena in space; and places that people inhabit). The era from 1945 to the mid 1970s (the age of the motor car, electrical consumer goods, aviation, nuclear power, etc – see Figure 1.2) was one of prolonged economic growth, strong trade unions, full employment, universal welfare (health, education, pensions, etc), and a large public sector (railways, water, etc). Firms, workers and government managed capitalism to their mutual advantage, a form of capitalist development known as social democracy (39). Inequality between the rich and the poor decreased but a crisis of capital over accumulation (too much capital invested in plant that is no longer profitable), linked to rising oil prices, inflation and falling profits, led to a crisis in the 1970s. It was at this time that the modern environmental movement emerged and the first Earth Summit took place (1972) to debate issues of the environment and development.

10. **Neoliberalism** (40) a new form of capitalist development, replaced social democracy in the 1980s and lasted until the financial crisis of 2008. It aimed to restore the level of profits for capitalists by increasing their power and decreasing that of organised labour. Neoliberalism repurposed the state to create “free” markets and trade deals (41). Neoliberal states pursued policies of privatisation, marketisation, financialisation, and deregulation that further promoted capital accumulation over sustainability. Neoliberalism accelerated **globalisation**, (42) the process whereby global flows of energy, materials, capital, labour and technology mean that the lives and fortunes of citizens in one locality are linked with those in distant localities elsewhere in the world, and thereby reinforced the case of global citizenship.
11. Neoliberalism is associated with the rise of information and digital technologies (6<sup>th</sup> wave, Figure 1.2); new products and services; new ways of working and consuming; new divisions of labour; new geographies; new types of schooling; and new ways of thinking about oneself and the world (an individualistic and narcissistic culture). Social life accelerated as technological change and global flows quickened. The impacts of neoliberalism are spatially uneven and cause many people stress with more suffering from mental ill health.
12. Advances in information and bio-technologies enable the needs of all the world’s people to be met in sustainable ways; their health and that of the world’s ecosystems to be restored; and new forms of democracy to be practiced. They also enable universal basic income and services to be provided in ways that liberate people from dull and unrewarding work.. Such advances are not inevitable and require radical global democratisation to unlock their potential and so realise realistic utopias.
13. The impacts of neoliberalism were most strongly felt in the USA and UK. *Both saw a huge expansion of financial services and the growth of consumer debt, as well as the reorganisation and marketisation of their public sectors and public services, a large increase in welfare dependency and unemployment, and a widening of inequality* (43) p. 4. **Financialisation** (44) (45) enabled tax avoidance and further shifted the focus of the UK economy from manufacturing towards financial services.

This reduced economic growth, lowered productivity, boosted inequality, and drained other sectors of talent. Following the financial crisis of the 2008, the British left was slow to set out a radical response. The right argued that the crisis was caused by too much public borrowing; introduced a period of [austerity](#) (46) (cuts to public spending and a further reduction in the role of the state) and won all the elections held till 2019. The main features of the ‘bubble years’ 1990 to 2007 and those ‘after the crash’ are summarised in Figure 1.3.

The ‘bubble years’ 1990 to 2007	After the crash 2007 to 2019
<p>Belief that rising profit share would lead to higher investment, faster productivity growth, more well paid jobs. Did not happen.</p> <p>Deregulated banks issue huge amounts of cheap credit leading to finance led growth.</p> <p>Financialisation favours mergers, acquisitions, dividends and share buybacks over productive investment.</p> <p>Rich use increased profit share to buy assets.</p> <p>Cheap credit, cheap consumer goods (due to globalisation) and rising house prices mask growing inequality</p> <p>Decline of unions and collective bargaining - workers share of output falls</p> <p>Identity politics more important than class politics</p> <p>Financial logic enters public sector – private financing, public/private partnerships</p>	<p>Collapse of finance led growth largely due to under-regulated banks</p> <p>Stagnant wages, falling investment, rising consumer debt, increased social and spatial inequality</p> <p>Quantitative easing further inflates asset prices and inequality</p> <p>Austerity and right populism (Brexit, ‘take back control’)</p> <p>Millennials face falling living standards/expectations – ‘generation rent.’ Rise of millennial socialism.</p> <p>Return to class politics – advocacy of state, worker and community ownership. Corbynism</p> <p>Advocacy of sustainability led development as in green new deal (a key element of left populism)</p> <p>Corbynism and Labour defeated in 2019 as constituencies ‘left behind’ in the bubble years and by austerity turn right in a desire to ‘get Brexit done’.</p>

**Figure 1.3 The main feature of UK political economy in the bubble years and those following the crash of 2007 (based on [Blakely](#) (47) (48))**

14. Neoliberalism increased social and spatial inequalities and many in Europe and the USA were ‘left behind’ in areas adversely affected by de-

industrialisation and globalisation. Here economic decline, loss of agency and dignity, cuts to public services, nostalgia for the past, and the loss of local institutions (high streets, pubs, buses, youth centres, etc) drove a loss of trust in conventional politics and support for [nationalist](#) (49) and [populist parties](#) (50) of both the right and left. Right populist parties were found throughout [Europe](#) and the USA championing an “oppressed” in-group and blaming their hardships on an out-group (Muslims, migrants, welfare scroungers, liberal intellectuals, EU bureaucrats, mainstream politicians etc). Popular anger was turned away from the powerful and towards the powerless with racist and sexist language and [post-truths](#) (51) deflecting attention from the real causes of economic hardship and the erosion of community cohesion. While rightwing populists in Europe attacked immigrants and the EU bureaucracy, [leftwing populists](#) (52) advocated radical democracy and attacked a global elite that benefitted from globalisation and financialisation, and governments that imposed austerity.

15. The rise of populism was partly due to politics failing to offer citizens real alternatives. The UK Labour party had embraced neoliberalism and globalisation too uncritically and it was not until 2017 that it offered a real alternative. By then rightwing populism had determined the results of the European referendum of 2016 ([Mapping the Brexit vote](#) (53)) when a majority voted to leave the EU. Labour’s 2019 manifesto offered a return to social democracy promising a green industrial revolution, an end to austerity, the renewal of public services, the nationalisation of the railways and utilities, the building of more council houses and worker share ownership. Labour was heavily defeated and the Green Party failed to increase its representation, as many previously loyal Labour supporters in ‘left behind’ areas turned to the Conservatives who promised to ‘get Brexit done’ ([see BBC analysis of results](#) (54)). Labour needed to reclaim these voters by further developing the local politics of place and community; reinventing trade unionism; promoting radical democracy; telling a convincing national story based on sustainability; and finding more imaginative ways to fight the culture war with the right.
16. The [coronavirus pandemic](#) (55) further exposed the fragility of neoliberal capitalism, government incompetence, and the extent of social and spatial

inequalities. It led to a recession and presented [new opportunities for Labour and left populism](#) (56). While the Conservatives abandoned austerity and borrowed heavily to preserve the economy and jobs (a form of reactionary Keynesianism to sustain ‘the old normal’) and ‘level up’ the country, Labour was challenged to adopt a policy agenda focussed on a just transition towards a sustainable green economy ([the ‘new normal’](#) (57)). This would need to tackle long standing issues (poverty, rising inequality, low productivity and investment, declining social mobility, failing public services, etc) along with the disruptions caused by Brexit. It would also need to preserve jobs through a more strategic and discerning use of the state’s resources whereby the use of public money creates value for the state. Borrowed money should be invested in the low carbon economy; state aid should only be provided to companies after social and environmental impact assessments; state aid should be dependent on the state taking a share in the company and these shares would then be used to start a UK sovereign wealth fund; and welfare should be reformed to provide a robust safety net during the downturn and transition.

17. Neoliberalism has divided the world’s most significant economies into those countries dependent on debt-fuelled consumption (USA, UK, Spain, Ireland and others) and those reliant on export-led growth (China, most of Asia, Germany and the global South). The US and China are, like the UK, sustained by credit and central bank support and in 2020 were entering a new cold war over geopolitical influence. The policies of right populists (Trump, Johnson, Bolsonaro, Modi, etc) threatened the imperfect rule-based international order on such issues as trade, human rights and climate change. Given this retreat from [multilateralism](#) (58), it is important for radical democrats in the UK to support [a reformed European Union](#) (59) that offers European citizens real control over issues of mutual concern. Hopefully its example would then inspire wider progress on global democracy, citizenship and governance, updating ideas on [a new international economic and political order](#) (60) and developing an associated international left populism capable of delivering the sustainable development goals; controlling emerging pandemics (61) and dealing with existing and emerging conflicts in east Asia; eastern Europe; and the Islamic World (41).

18. People's mental conceptions of the world are a key constraint on the realisation of radical democracy, global citizenship and sustainable development. While everyday life in capitalist society (consumerism, popular media) transmits mainstream ideas supportive of existing environmental and social relations, publically funded educational institutions have a responsibility to foster critical thinking around critical ideas and postcapitalist alternatives. School geography has such a responsibility.

## **Postcapitalism**

The key ideas claim that radical global democratisation would enable green new deals, stabilise unsustainable forms of capitalism, and lay the foundations for sustainable postcapitalist societies living within the limits imposed by planetary boundaries (chapter six) and based on technological abundance.

Postcapitalism (64) refers to the diverse ways that economies and societies can be fostered beyond capitalism. It is a set of activities and ideas that have multiple and interconnecting characteristics; a history as long as capitalism itself; and act as sources of radical hope and examples of concrete utopias. Postcapitalists seek not merely an alternative capitalism (social democracy) where the relation between the market and state is re-regulated to produce more optimal economic, social and environmental outcomes (65), but alternatives to capitalism that emphasise social and civic goals rather than capital accumulation. Socialism and anarchism, underpinned by critical social theory, are the alternatives that prompt most postcapitalist activists (66) (67) (68) (69) and critical geographers. They campaign, research and teach on three 'terrains of transformation' outlined in Figure 1.4 (page 15).

Wright (70) provides a detailed analysis of the means whereby socialists might transcend capitalism by living real utopias. Their task is fourfold: to elaborate normative foundations or core values (equality, democracy, community, and sustainability); to diagnose and critique the world as it is by reference to these values; to assess alternatives that might better realise the core values; and lastly, to determine how we get from here to there. The last step is the most difficult and can be carried out in four ways to which Wright attaches the slogans smashing (revolutionary socialism); taming (social democracy); escaping (alternative life

styles); and eroding (workers' and citizens' initiatives that create elements of postcapitalism within capitalism: workers' co-ops, alternative currencies, alternative

<b>Capitalism</b>	<b>Postcapitalism</b>
<b>Enclosure</b> Capital encloses or privatises the means of production (land, labour and technology) via such processes as slavery, forced labour, dispossession of land and property, the factory system, gentrification, and structural adjustment. It encloses (or seeks to enclose) natural resources, people's free time, public spaces, housing, neighbourhoods, knowledge, the internet, schools and universities, and the economies of developing countries.	<b>Commons</b> Postcapitalist politics includes action to defend and extend common or collective property. It promotes co-ownership, co-production, and co-management of social goods, services and spaces. Examples are campaigns to prevent the patenting of seeds; protect public education; and promote social and self-build housing.
<b>Commodification</b> Capital seeks to turn more and more of the goods and services people need or want into commodities that are only available for money in markets. As more and more aspects of people's lives are commodified their identities, relations with others and values become distorted. They become inclined to think of themselves as commodities that compete in markets for employment and friendship (social media).	<b>Social production and reproduction</b> Postcapitalist politics seeks to take control of the economy and develop new social forms of production and social reproduction. These involve such innovations as barter markets; co-operatives; local currencies; universal basic income; community enterprises; participatory economics; and co-operative schools. Supporters include anti-globalisation; anti-growth; deep green; eco-socialist; and eco-feminist campaigners.
<b>Alienation</b> Capitalist society requires people to engage in unsatisfying work that stifles their full development; erodes community; and fails to develop their economic, political and cultural literacy. It separates them from the products of their work; their own human nature; their fellow human beings; the rest of nature; and the knowledge needed to understand the world. Consumerism acts as a temporary and ultimately unsatisfactory compensation for the resulting feelings of loss and estrangement.	<b>Useful doing</b> Postcapitalist politics seeks useful and rewarding work that creates use value rather than useless work that creates exchange value. It requires collective and universal action to destroy capitalist social relations and create societies based on the popular control of new technologies that offer an end to alienation through the automation of boring and demeaning yet necessary work. Freed from such work people would be better able to develop themselves and their community in sustainable ways.

**Figure 1.4 Three terrains of social transformation** (Based on (71))

economic strategies, basic income, community enterprises, slow towns, community forums, open source software, alternative television channels, co-operative schools,

etc). He believes that the optimal strategy combines taming and eroding and that an unconditional and universal basic income is a key demand since it allows citizens to live and experiment outside the capitalist mainstream.

Wright's analysis rejects utopian blueprints imposed from above that have led to the failures of 'actually existing socialism' in the past and present. Socialist goals cannot be reached by a new directing and governing class substituting itself for the capitalist ruling class, but only by workers and citizens taking control of society. The 2019 election result would suggest that Corbyn's Labour party had not fully absorbed this analysis. Despite claims that Labour had become a popular movement shaping a coherent alternative economic strategy, an entrepreneurial state, and an associated narrative of sustainable development, sufficient voters did not regard its programme as realistic or trust its leadership to deliver. In what remained an essentially social democratic agenda, its economic advisers (72) (73) (74) sought a high wage, high productivity economy orientated away from finance and towards production. Public banks, public investment and public ownership were to play a significant role, along with the co-operative sector (75). An active industrial policy would encourage the transition to a post-carbon society through a '[Green New Deal](#)' (76) (77) while spending on healthcare, childcare and education, would sustain a robust system of social provision.

<b>Four objectives for government</b>	<b>Four lessons the political class should learn</b>
<p>Downsize and deglobalise the finance sector.</p> <p>Boost the wage share of GDP (which means shrinking the profit share).</p> <p>Rebalance the private sector through state-directed investment.</p> <p>Outlaw the rent-seeking business models of Facebook, Amazon, Uber, the oil giants and property developers.</p>	<p>No return to austerity. The state should <a href="#">borrow and spend</a> (78).</p> <p>No let up on Paris climate commitments – green job creation.</p> <p>Shut down offshore tax system and force finance and tech monopolies to book their profits onshore.</p> <p>Look honestly at the broken world system and the need for system wide reorganisation.</p>

**Figure 1.5    Objectives for government and lessons for the political class in enacting a new deal for the UK (79)**

As key idea 15 above suggests, such policy agendas became more relevant in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic caused recession and led both right and left to seek inspiration from [Roosevelt's new deal](#) (80). A right populist government sought a

rapid return to a slighter greener version of ‘business as usual’ that would ‘level up’ Britain and deliver Brexit, while postcapitalists,, such as [Mason](#) (79), sought a green social democracy that would redistribute power and wealth while protecting minorities and human rights (Figure 1.5 and (57)).

Sunkara (81) reminds us that while social democracy is dependent on the success and goodwill of capitalists, it opens avenues for further class-based struggle and transition to postcapitalism. Class based politics was weakened in the 70s and 80s and subsequent decades saw the rise of identity politics which realised significant gains in the realm of culture and representation. But *without the bedrock of class politics that identity politics has become an agenda of inclusionary neoliberalism in which individual questions can be addressed but structural inequalities cannot* p. 235. Sunkara provides a manifesto for reviving democratic class politics that can accommodate the agendas of postcapitalist accelerationists.

Left [accelerationists](#) (82) seek technological evolution beyond that currently facilitated by capitalism and advocate the repurposing technology for socially useful and emancipator ends. Mason (83) outlines three changes linked to information technology that provide an escape route from capitalism: the reduced need for work; the increased difficulty of fixing prices in markets for goods that can be produced at marginal cost (84); and the rise of the sharing economy with its new forms of ownership, contracts, and collaborative production. Srnicek and Williams (85) see in full automation and universal basic income the foundations of a populist left project that can undo the current constraints on modernity’s promise of universal emancipation (see new left modernity, page 52) (86). A post-work society would allow the controlled dissolution of market forces; the delinking of work from income; and the liberation of creativity for personal and community development. Artificial intelligence would be harnessed to socially useful production and new forms of participatory economic and political democracy at all scales from the local to the global. Bastani (87) sees in the digital revolution the prospect of abundant goods, information, and clean energy, allowing a future fully automated luxury communism. Central to all such proposals is the need for a new hegemony beyond social democracy and neoliberalism.

## Hegemony, left populism and Labour’s future

The Marxist theory of cultural hegemony, associated with [Antonio Gramsci](#) (88), suggests that the ruling class can manipulate the beliefs and values of a society so that their view of the world becomes accepted as normal, inevitable, and common sense.

During long periods of hegemony (post WW2 social democracy, late 20C neoliberalism) politics gets concealed and becomes a mere issue of managing the established order, a technocratic domain reserved for experts. New Labour sustained Thatcher's neoliberal hegemony and it was not until the rise of left populism in the 2010s that this was seriously challenged. In the battle to establish a new hegemony everything depends on strategies, tactics, and the ability to seize the initiative before the adversary. The battle encompasses party politics, civil society, the media, and education, influencing how ordinary people feel as well as think. Currently, left populists (radical democrats) construct 'us', 'the people', democratically to include strangers and newcomers and oppose 'them', a corporate and political elite. Right populists construct 'us' on the basis of nation or race and add a third party to 'them', usually immigrants who the elite are accused of favouring (89) (90). See [Team Populism's](#) research (91).

In addition to opposing right populism (nationalistic, nostalgic, racist, xenophobic, fascist) as an irrational, extreme, immoral response by the uneducated, the left should acknowledge its democratic nucleus and seek to take it in [more progressive directions](#) (92) (93). Left populism should move beyond the traditional left/right cleavage of industrial capitalism, recognise the diversity of networked social movements that challenge diverse forms of domination, and bring these together with a new kind of party to recover and deepen democratic institutions, articulate the collective will, and campaign for equality, social justice and sustainability. Wright's eroding (page 14) is the key to 21C socialism, a project for collaborating citizens as much as political parties and governments (94).

This argument took on added relevance in the light of Labour's election defeat in December 2019 and the possibility of the party revising policy in the light of the Covid-19 crisis. An [election review](#) (95) attributed defeat to a number of factors including Corbyn's unpopularity; an unrealistic manifesto; ambiguity on Brexit; failure to deal with antisemitism; inability to speak to voters in 'red wall' seats in the north and midlands; and an election strategy that spread resources too widely. Defeat leaves Labour with the tasks of further deepening and localising democracy in order to win back those voters and places 'left behind' by neoliberalism and maintaining the support of young people (generation left (96)) who identified with the Corbyn project and the issues of practical morality it raised. Rutherford (97) blames Labour's defeat on the capture of the party by the new middle class (cosmopolitan, pro-globalisation, authoritarian, antagonistic to the working class) and suggests that its focus on personal freedoms has resulted in social disintegration

(irregular patterns of work, marriage and family; growing mental ill health, poverty, feelings of exclusion) and the rise of right populism. Believing that UK politics is moving in a [post-liberal direction](#), (98) (99) that rejects the economic and social liberalism of the last forty years, he is among those on the right and left ([Bright Blue](#) (100) (101) (liberal conservatives) and [Blue Labour](#) (102) (radical and conservative socialists)) who suggest there is a need to develop policies and language that addresses the concerns of working class voters and their concerns for family, community, patriotism and security.

### **Geography and left populism**

In their review of the possibilities and potential of left populism, [Featherstone and Karoliotis](#) (103) urge us to consider it in relation to space and place. It emerges in places with diverse political repertoires, emotions and solidarities, shapes diverse trans-local connections and disconnections across space, and gives rise to diverse discourse and geographical imaginations. They note that in Europe left populist parties such as Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain have constructed ‘the people’ in nationalistic terms, and urge the European left to learn from trans-national movements like Occupy and such trans-national cooperation as that fostered by 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Latin America (curriculum unit one). The potential for co-ordinated left populism across the world and associated radical global democratisation provides the argument underpinning chapter nine. It draws on Mouffe’s theory of radical democracy (104) and [Ruttenberg’s](#) (105) associated notion of radical democratic citizenship education to provide a rationale for implementing Unesco guidance on global citizenship education (GCE).

### **And . . . school geography?**

And yes, school geography is not an innocent bystander in the culture wars between right and left populism, or indeed between capitalism and postcapitalist alternatives. To the extent that it has failed to explore ideas such as those listed above and so failed to explain what was happening to nature, space and place in Britain and beyond, it has contributed to political illiteracy and / or apathy; the rise of right populism; and Brexit. To the extent that it has failed to acknowledge and connect with the views of students of all classes and identities, it can be seen to be a biased enterprise. And to the extent its delivery of ESDGC reflects the perspective of the new middle class to the exclusion of other perspectives it can be seen as undemocratic. A more socially aware and critical school geography is needed and guidance from Unesco points a way forward.

## **Unesco's guidance on Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship**

If school geography is to explore critical ideas like those listed above, alongside more mainstream ideas, then it requires a rationale for doing so. Unesco's guidance on ESDGC offers such a rationale albeit that its attention to democratic alternatives to current realities is somewhat deficient. Brisset and Miller (106) suggest that a contradiction between utilitarian and transformative discourses on education pervades the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2) while Huckle and Wals (107) claim that key publications resulting from the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014) fail to challenge neoliberalism.

*Global citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependence and interconnectedness between the local, the national, and the global.* (108), p. 14

*Global citizenship education aims to be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners need to be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world. Global citizenship education takes a multifaceted approach, employing concepts and methodologies already applied in other areas, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for international understanding and aims to advance their common objectives.* (108), p. 15

School geography has long concerned itself with environmental and development education and many geographical educators will claim that the subject can provide ESDGC without external guidance. Such a view is short sighted since Unesco offers a progressive and internationalist vision that can counter the narrowing of vision resulting from neoliberal educational policy and prompt teachers to see themselves as part of a global community of ESDGC practitioners.

Following the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Unesco has integrated education for sustainable development (ESD) into global citizenship education (GCE) and incorporated such education into sustainable development goal (SDG) target 4.7 (3). Five of its current policy documents

provide insights into its approach: *Rethinking Education* (RE) (109); the *Roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme for ESD* (RM) (110); *Global citizenship education, topics and learning objectives* (GCTLO) (108); *Education for Sustainable Development Goals, Learning Objectives* (ESDGLO) (111); and *Textbooks for Sustainable Development, A Guide to Embedding* (TFSD) (112).

These recommend that:

- **Knowledge** should be understood broadly, encompassing information, understanding, skills, values and attitudes. **Competences** are abilities to use knowledge in given situations. Education should go beyond the processes of acquiring, validating and using knowledge, to address the creation and control of knowledge. (RE)
- Education should develop the **four pillars of learning** as advocated in the Delors Report (113): learning to know (broad general knowledge and depth in some subjects), to do (occupational skills, skills for living), to be (personal development, moral autonomy), and live together (understanding of other people and interdependence). Competences and pillars relate to geo-capabilities considered in chapter three. (RE)
- **Humanistic values** should lie at the heart of education and include respect for human dignity, equal rights and social justice, cultural and social diversity, and a sense of human solidarity and shared responsibility for our common future. Learners should develop a commitment to a common core of universal values, such as those set out in the [Earth Charter](#) (114) (see chapter six), these include a sense of responsibility for others (other humans and sentient species, locally and distant, now and in the future) that shapes conceptions of ecological sustainability and global citizenship. (RE)
- Education should respond to **global challenges** (eg. ecological stress, greater wealth but rising inequalities, growing interdependence but rising intolerance and violence) and offer **alternatives** with regard to development models, knowledge systems, worldviews, and explanations of reality that may foster more sustainable futures. This will involve

consideration of alternative understandings of such **concepts** as time, nature, human well-being, progress and democracy. (RE)

- Education should be **empowering** and use a **dialogical approach**. It should reject 'learning systems that alienate individuals and treat them as commodities, and social practices that divide and dehumanize people'. It should foster **critical thinking and independent judgement** instead of unreflective conformity. Education is firstly a **public good** that socializes future global citizens under the influence of **professional teachers** with appropriate expertise in curriculum and pedagogy. (RE)
- ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and act in ways that promote environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. ESD should be **holistic and transformative**, enabling learners to rethink the social and environmental relations that govern their lives. (RM)

Global citizenship education (GCE) should be based on three domains of learning (the cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural) that correspond to the four pillars of learning featured in RE. On the foundations of these domains, the authors of GCTLO construct key learning outcomes and key learner attributes (Figure 1.6 & 1.7), and nine topics with learning objectives at four different age related stages (Figure 1.8). Particularly significant in terms of geocapabilities (115) (see chapter four) are **learner attributes** (traits and qualities that GCE seeks to develop that are arguably equivalent to geo-capabilities). One attribute is specified at some length for each domain: being informed and critically literate (cognitive); being connected and respectful of diversity (socio-emotional) and being ethically responsible and engaged (behavioural). Nine topics, with age related objectives and themes provide the means for developing these attributes and Figure 1.8 suggests the objective and themes that should guide the study of the topic Underlying Assumptions and Power Relations at the lower secondary stage (12 to 15 year olds). (GCTLO).

<b>Cognitive</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations</li> <li>■ Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-Emotional</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights</li> <li>■ Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioural</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world</li> <li>■ Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.6 Key learning outcomes of global citizenship education (47) p.22**

<b>Informed and critically literate</b>
<p>Knowledge of global governance systems, structures and issues; understanding the interdependence and connections between global and local concerns; knowledge and skills required for civic literacy, such as critical inquiry and analysis, with an emphasis on active engagement in learning.</p> <p>Learners develop their understanding of the world, global themes, governance structures and systems, including politics, history and economics; understand the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups (for example, women's and children's rights, indigenous rights, corporate social responsibility); and, recognise the interconnectedness of local, national and global issues, structures and processes. Learners develop the skills of critical inquiry (for example, where to find information and how to analyse and use evidence), media literacy and an understanding of how information is mediated and communicated. They develop their ability to inquire into global themes and issues (for example, globalisation, interdependence, migration, peace and conflict, sustainable development) by planning investigations, analysing data and communicating their findings. A key issue is the way in which language is used and, more specifically, how critical literacy is affected by the dominance of the English language and how this influences non-English speakers' access to information. There is a focus on developing critical civic literacy skills and a commitment to life-long learning, in order to engage in informed and purposeful civic action.</p>

**Figure 1.7 Key learner attributes, cognitive domain (47) p. 23**

### **Lower secondary (12-15 years)**

**Learning objective:** Investigate underlying assumptions and describe inequalities and power dynamics

**Key themes:**

- ▶ Concepts of equality, inequality, discrimination
- ▶ Factors influencing inequalities and power dynamics and the challenges some people face (migrants, women, youth, marginalised populations)
- ▶ Analysis of different forms of information about global issues (locate main ideas, gather evidence, compare and contrast similarities and differences, detect points of view or bias, recognise conflicting messages, assess and evaluate information)

**Figure 1.8 Learning objectives for one topic for 12 to 15 year olds- (47) p, 34**

- ESD should deliver content related to the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). This should be done in a way that develops the key competences needed by **sustainability citizens** who understand the complex world in which they live and are able to collaborate, speak-up and act for positive change. Eight **key competences** are necessary and can be understood as transversal, multifunctional and context independent. They do not replace specific competences necessary for successful action in certain circumstances and contexts, but they encompass these and are more broadly focused (e.g systems thinking competency; critical thinking competency; integrated problem-solving competency). These key competences (again similar to geo-capabilities) are developed by addressing learning objectives (cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural) for each SDG through the suggested topics using the suggested learning approaches and methods. Guidance on implementing ESD at all levels covers the curriculum, classroom, transformative pedagogy and assessment. (ESDGLO)

- *Textbooks for Sustainable Development* provides textbook authors with guidance on embedding Unesco's guidance on ESD in their texts. Like this book it accepts the reality that subjects dominate the curriculum in most countries and the immediate best prospects for ESD are to embed it in these. After an introduction that sets out general principles, TFSD offers guidance for authors of textbooks on mathematics, science, geography and language. We will return to that guidance in subsequent chapters. (TFSD)

The curriculum units in this book draw heavily on Unesco guidance and readers may wish to download their own copies of GCTLO; ESDGLO; and TFSD. Lists of learner attributes; competences; and objectives will be constant points of reference as will the TFSD chapter on geography.

## **ESDGC in the United Kingdom**

Education is a devolved responsibility in the UK. Neoliberalism has had its greatest impact in England while Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have maintained a more socially democratic approach. ESDGC embraces such fields as environmental education; development education; global education; and global learning along with ESD and citizenship education. The Global Learning Programme (2013 – 2018) funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) (see chapter seven) funded curriculum development in all four nations of the UK and the GA's research report on its outcomes has an appendix outlining the approaches to global learning in each jurisdiction.

The 2014 [national curriculum \(NC\) in England](#) (116) makes no explicit reference to concepts such as sustainability, globalisation and interdependence although teachers may explore these if they choose. This contrasts markedly with the past when environmental education and citizenship education were cross-curricular themes with their own guidance (early 1990s) and all schools were expected to become sustainable schools with appropriate policies on curriculum, campus, and community (late 1990s). In Wales GCE is well established and [a new NC is being developed for use in 2022](#) (117) based on four purposes including 'Ethical informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world' The new curriculum has six areas of learning and experience, with geography taught within the humanities alongside history, religious education, business and social studies (see chapter six).

In Scotland, the [Curriculum for Excellence](#) (118) introduced in 2010 aims ‘to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century including skills for learning, life and work’. Its purposes include responsible citizenship and learning for sustainability is an entitlement for all that includes ESDGC and outdoor learning. Geography is taught through social studies alongside history, citizenship and business. [Northern Ireland’s curriculum](#) (119) aims are for young people to develop as individuals and as contributors to society, an aim that includes citizenship and cultural understanding. An areas of learning approach means geography is taught with alongside history through ‘Environment and Society’ studies for older students.

The [Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning Programme](#) (2018 – 2021) (120) provides opportunities for GCE. [Eco-schools](#) (121) continues to encourage ESD as do [SEEd](#) (122) and the [Sustainable Schools Alliance](#) (123). In all four nations NGOs play key roles in promoting ESDGC and providing resources and courses of professional development.

Key resources for teachers on ESDGC include Oxfam’s curriculum [guidance on global citizenship](#) (124) and the journals [Policy & Practice](#) (125), [Environmental Education Research](#) (126) and the [International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning](#) (127)

## **The curriculum units**

The curriculum units that accompany the chapters in this book are designed to show how curriculum can be made by drawing on the writings and research of critical geographers, educators, and others. Each is planned according to guidance offered by Gilbert (128) and is linked to objectives for one of the SDGs as outlined in ESDGLO and one of the topics in GCTLO. There are guidance notes on preparation, related background resources, and a possible procedure for a sequence of lessons that teachers will wish to adapt according to their own ways of working and the age, ability and interests of their pupils. In introducing the units, teachers should overview the related SDG and GCE topic with reference to their relevance to students’ present and future lives.

Ideally the social education curriculum would be integrated (across the social and earth sciences and humanities); project and community based; and shaped by

democratic discussion between students, teachers and democratically elected school governors informed by the kind of broad guidance that Unesco provides. The reality is subjects, classrooms, examinations and national guidance and inspection. Nevertheless geography has considerable potential to offer a more critical form of social education and it is this potential that the units seek to demonstrate. The curriculum unit linked to this chapter introduces populism, left populism and its Latin American variant, 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism.

### The Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela and its impact on healthcare

Left populism in Latin America inspired the left elsewhere in the world before failing to live up to its democratic promise. The curriculum unit focuses on the attempt to create 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism (129) in Venezuela and thereby improve people's health and well being (SDG 3). Following the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela and Hugo Chavez's presidency (1998 – 2013), such socialism was widely adopted in Latin America and claimed to be devolving power to local communities so that people and political economies could be developed from below (radical democracy).

Principles		Practices
Re-socialization	Re-founding the state (around the social sphere)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-regulation of the social sector and social services (reforms to welfare; public provision of basic services, particularly in relation to public goods such as water)</li> <li>• Nationalization</li> <li>• Regulation of big business</li> <li>• Domestic market stimulation and the regulation of capital</li> <li>• Building a solidarity economy (co-operatives, associations, community organizations)</li> <li>• Strengthened labour relations</li> <li>• Decommodification</li> <li>• Re-establishing common property rights (territorial and collective governance)</li> <li>• Participatory budgeting</li> </ul>
	(Re-)Socialization of the market economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spaces of consensus building (place-based; issue- or resource-based; identity-based), which may challenge dominant, hierarchical scales of decision-making</li> <li>• Institutionalization of participatory decision-making mechanisms</li> <li>• Pluri-nationalism and pluri-culturalism</li> <li>• Social mobilization as 'politics-as-usual' (incorporation of movements into referendum politics for stability; national identity as hegemonic struggle)</li> <li>• Regional co-operation (economic trade; knowledge exchange)</li> <li>• Financial autonomy (from international financial institutions)</li> <li>• (Regional) Political autonomy (anti-imperialism)</li> </ul>
Deepened democracy	Re-politicization of civil society ( <i>autogestión</i> )	
	Regional integration (new regional political economy)	

**Figure 1.9 Principles and practices associated with post-neoliberalism in Latin America (130) p. 10**

Geographers [Yates and Bakker](#) (130) recognised it as a form of post-neoliberalism that sought to redirect the market economy towards social concerns and revive citizenship via a new politics of participation and alliances across social and cultural sectors and groups. It reflected the principles, and processes, outlined in Figure 1.9 (page 27) and [Hawkins](#) (131) reflects on whether Chavismo represented liberal or radical democracy. The curriculum unit encourages students to engage in media analysis to evaluate the gains made by 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Venezuela, debate the reasons it failed, and explore the resulting ongoing crisis.

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## Videos for teachers

[What are the sustainable development goals](#), 3 minutes

[Political Economy explained](#), 4 minutes

[A Brief History of Socialism](#), 3 minutes

[Populism Explained](#), 2 minutes

[Yanis Varoufakis, Western Democracies need a new deal](#), 3 minutes,

[Yanis Varoufakis on Talking to my daughter about the economy](#) 1 hour 30 minutes

[David Harvey, the future of global capitalism](#), 25 minutes

[David Harvey, a history of neoliberalism](#), 25 minutes

[Eric Olin Wright Transcending capitalism through real utopias](#) 35 minutes

[Bhaskar Sunkara on the case for socialism](#), 15 minutes

[Paul Mason on postcapitalism](#), 16 minutes

[Nick Srnicek – demand the future, beyond capitalism](#), 16 minutes

[Aaron Bastani on fully automated luxury communism](#), 15 minutes

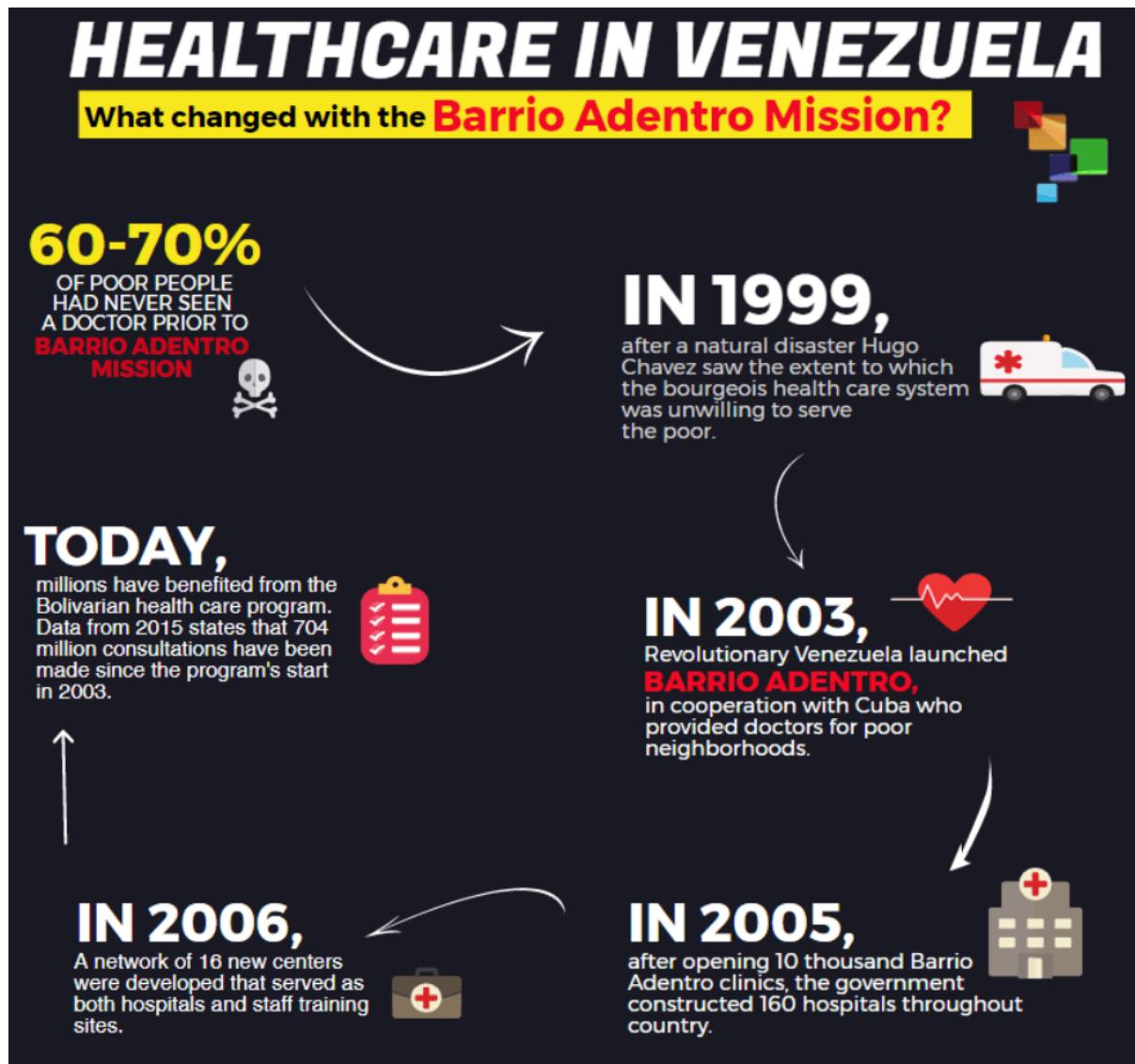
[Michael Lebowitz on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism in Venezuela](#) 1 hour, 50 minutes

[Unesco Global Citizenship Education](#), 2 minutes

[Global Citizenship and the spirit of Unesco](#), Irina Bokova, 50 minutes

# Curriculum Unit One

## Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution and its Impact on Healthcare



*Latin America, however is ploughing its own furrow and huge gains have been made, in poverty reduction, health, education, and social and political confidence and voice amongst the previously disenfranchised. There is more that we could learn from what I have touched on here. These are 'good examples' on which we can draw in the current crisis and the search for an alternative way ahead. Doreen Massey, 2012, p. 139*

This unit addresses SDG 3 (health) and GCE topic 7, (actions that can be taken individually and collectively), in the context of Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution. It introduces students to Left populism; the impact of the revolution on health care; contrasting explanations of the revolution's failure; and the continuing social and health crisis in the country.

## **Curriculum Plan**

### **Key idea**

21<sup>st</sup> Century socialism in Venezuela claimed to be an alternative to neoliberalism that sought to improve people's lives. It offered welfare gains for a time but eventually failed. Commentators disagree on the reasons for this failure.

### **Inquiry question**

Why did 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Venezuela fail to offer a long term alternative to neoliberalism?

### **Key understandings**

Venezuela was colonised by Spain and achieved independence in 1821 under the leadership of Simon Bolivar. It has a post-colonial society made up of immigrants who have diverse origins.

Oil was discovered in large quantities in 1922 and the subsequent history of Venezuela is much shaped by the price of oil on world markets.

In the 1980s Venezuela suffered a debt crisis as the price of oil fell and it was unable to pay its debts to foreign banks. Under pressure from the IMF it was forced to take a neoliberal turn. A structural adjustment programme meant liberalising the economy, privatising state assets, and cutting welfare benefits.. GNP fell by 40%. There were riots in Caracas in 1989 when the military killed 3000.

In 1992 populist leader Hugo Chavez, a military officer, led a coup by the revolutionary Bolivarian movement on behalf of poor Venezuelans. After a spell in prison and reforms that allowed more parties to run for office, he became president in 1998. He bypassed parliament with a new constitution in

1999 that established a national assembly with candidates from government approved lists. He attacked the power of Venezuela's rich who were supported by the USA. A coup in 2002 briefly removed him but he was re-instated when citizens mobilized to defend him.

Chavez was a charismatic but divisive figure, revered by most of the poor but hated by almost all the urban middle classes, social elites, and traditional political parties.

In 2005 Chavez announced that Venezuela would follow a new form of development that he called 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism. Socialism had to be built slowly from below by developing pockets of power in communities based on solidarity, workers' self-management, and cooperation. Community councils were established with the claim that these would gradually take over the functions of the existing capitalist state. Social missions were set up to bring healthcare services and education to the poorest communities. Cheap oil was sold to Cuba in return for Cuban doctors who delivered health care missions in Venezuela.

After 2010 when oil prices and government revenues fell, corruption spread and state-run enterprises and services, including health care, were mismanaged. Growth slowed and it had became clear that the United Socialist Party that Chavez established had become a 'top down' party that had failed to devolve power in the ways that 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism advocated. Chavez died of cancer in 2013 and his place was taken by his foreign minister Nicolas Maduro.

Maduro failed to increase oil production to fund the social welfare and to reform the economy. Oil prices collapsed in 2014, living standards began to fall, and the Chavismo movement lost its political dominance. By 2018 Venezuela was facing an economic and humanitarian crisis with many millions fleeing the country. Maduro dealt with discontent by packing the supreme court with loyalists who overturned laws passed by the national assembly that he opposed. In 2018 he called an election to consolidate his power but the UN, EU and Organisation of American States rejected the polls as rigged. Opposition parties refused to take part but despite the social crisis, Chavismo continued to have millions of supporters amongst the poor and be firmly embedded in the military.

In January 2019 Juan Guaido was made chairman of the national assembly as it was the turn of his party to take the chair. He had led student protests against Chavez's socialism in 2007 and his party had launched a movement in 2014

designed to force Maduro out of office. He declared himself interim president using a clause in the constitution that states that the chair is allowed to assume interim power and declare new elections in 30 days if the legislature deems to president to be failing to fulfil basic duties or to have vacated his post. He was immediately recognised by the US, Canada, and a group of Latin American governments and later by several European governments including Britain. The US imposed new sanctions; seized Venezuelan oil-related assets on US soil, and started making threats of military intervention. National and international dialogue was urgently needed to avoid possible US intervention and/or civil war.

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 revealed the extent of Venezuela's health care crisis.

Reasons for the failure of 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Venezuela include:

- the failure of leaders to deliver on their promise of radical / grassroots democracy and their disrespect for parliamentary democracy;
- failure to diversify the economy, over reliance on oil revenues and the fall in oil prices;
- corruption within state run enterprises and services;
- the US and its allies who imposed sanctions on Venezuela, treated Chavismo as a criminal rather than political organisation, and limited the country's access to capital markets thereby accelerating the decline of the oil industry.

**Key concepts** socialism, populism, participatory socialism, neoliberalism, 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism, structural adjustment, imperialism, community economy, health, well being.

**Key values** democracy, social justice, solidarity, social welfare.

**Key skills** Forming a provisional judgment when faced with conflicting media accounts of events.

### **Learning outcomes**

Knowledge of Venezuela's economic geography, recent political history, and the impacts of neoliberalism and 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism on healthcare in Venezuela.

The ability to recognize that different media sources provide different accounts of Venezuela's experiment with 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism and that they reflect the politics of their journalists, editors, and publishers.

The ability to relate knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism in Latin America to efforts to establish 'bottom up' socialism and participatory democracy in the UK and elsewhere.

### **Learning activities**

Media analysis, debate, decision-making, presentation skills.

### **Assessment task**

Prepare a three minute newscast on the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and its impact on healthcare.

### **Links to Unesco guidance on ESDGC**

<b>SDG 3 Good health and well-being</b>	<b>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	The learner understands <b>the socio-political-economic dimensions of health and wellbeing</b> and knows about the effects of advertising and about strategies to promote health and well-being.
Socio-emotional learning objectives	The learner is able to encourage others to decide and act in favour of promoting health and well-being for all.
Behavioural learning objectives	The learner is able to publicly demand and support <b>the development of policies promoting health and well-being</b> . The learner is able to propose ways to address possible conflicts between the public interest in offering medicine at affordable prices and private interests within the pharmaceutical industry

GCE Topic 7	Actions that can be taken individually and collectively
<p>Learning objective (12-15 year olds)</p> <p>Examine how individuals and groups have taken action on issues of local, national and global importance, and get engaged in response to local, national and global issues</p>	<p>Key themes:</p> <p>Defining the roles and obligations of individuals and groups (public institutions, civil society, voluntary groups) in taking action</p> <p>Anticipating and analysing the consequences of actions</p> <p>Identifying actions taken to improve the community (political processes, use of the media and technology, pressure and interest groups, social movements, non-violent activism, advocacy)</p> <p>Identifying benefits, opportunities and impact of civic engagement</p> <p>Factors contributing to success and factors limiting success of individual and collective action.</p>

## Preparation

Read Activity Sheet 1.1 pages 46 and 47. This provides an overview of change in Venezuela in recent decades and how it shaped healthcare

This unit is based on the following publications that you should read:

[Hugo Chavez's legacy and the transformation of Venezuela, Lee Brown & Francisco Dominguez, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, 2017](#)

[Why “Twenty-First-Century Socialism” Failed, Eva Maria, Jacobin August, 2016Eva Maria](#)

[How today's crisis in Venezuela was created by Hugo Chavez's revolutionary plan, Pedro Carrillo, The Conversation, July 2016](#)

[Debating the ‘post-neoliberal turn’ in Latin America, Julian Yates & Karen Bakker, Progress in Human Geography, 2013, 1 – 29](#)

[Socialized health care system collapses in Venezuela, no more hospital beds no matter how sick you are, Lance Johnson, Natural News, 8.11.17.](#)

## Human Rights Watch on Venezuela

Learning from Latin America, Doreen Massey, *Soundings*, 50, 2012, 131- 141.

Available to download for a small charge [from the Soundings website](#)

It also makes use of three **websites**:

<https://venezuelanalysis.com/search?keyword=health>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health\\_care\\_in\\_Venezuela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_care_in_Venezuela)

<http://www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk/> The UK Venezuelan solidarity campaign.

Relevant **videos** include:

The TES has a short video on [socialism](#);

[Explainity](#) and [One Minute Economics](#) have short videos explaining populism

[Paul Mason on what is driving the rise of populism worldwide](#)

[Al Jazeera. Don't blame socialism for Venezuela's woes \(2017\)](#)

[Chavez advocating revolution](#)

[Demonstrations in May 2017 calling for constitutional recognition of communes and a 'truly communal state'](#)

[Four Things to Know about the US and Venezuela](#)

[Venezuelan Barrios vote for Chavez and participatory democracy](#)

[Michael Lebowitz on the socialist alternative \(a video for teachers which considers issues of teaching about socialism\)](#)

Graphic on title page is from

<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/multimedia/Health-Care-in-Venezuela-20170420-0022.html>

## **A Possible Procedure**

Ask students to suggest reasons for the appeal of Nigel Farage, Donald Trump, Jeremy Corbyn and Hugo Chavez?. What do they know and understand about these politicians? Are they all populists? What is populism? Draw on the

chapter and Paul Mason's video to explain the rise of populism around the world. Make reference to the UK, Europe and Latin America, and explain that populism and nationalism are often found together. While populism is constructed through a down/up antagonism (people vs elite), nationalism is constructed through an in/out distinction (insiders vs outsiders).

Now show one or both of the short videos on populism. Distinguish between right and left wing populism and allow students to discuss the appeal of populists and the disadvantages of populism explained in the videos.

Introduce Venezuela its geography and people. Refer to [basic facts](#) about the country and [compare it to the UK](#).

Outline Venezuela's economic and political history making clear that it was colonised by Spain; achieved independence in 1821; and has been much shaped by the changing price of oil. Explain neoliberalism, [structural adjustment](#) and the Bolivarian revolution led by Hugo Chavez. Explain that he claimed to be following a programme of 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism that offered an alternative to neoliberalism. Outline the main features of this type to socialism and the associated programme. Help students to distinguish between a political theory as theory and a political theory as practice (the reality). What can explain why a political theory when applied does not deliver the benefits it is claimed it will deliver?

Give out copies of Activity Sheet 1.1. Healthcare in Venezuela. Read it through to aid comprehension. Also draw attention to the claims regarding healthcare made by Brown and Dominquez (pages 20 – 22). Explain that commentators and journalists disagree on several issues relating to the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela: the extent to which it improved people's lives, whether or not it failed, the reasons why it failed or had limited success. The Bolivarian Revolution continues to have its supporters and critics in the UK and elsewhere.

Show the Al Jazeera video and discuss it with students. Was socialism the reason why Venezuela's revolution failed? Were their other reasons? Do attempts to implement 21C socialism elsewhere in Latin America suggest it can avoid the problems encountered in Venezuela? Do other sources support Al Jazeera' claims about Bolivia? See [article in Independent](#).

Divide the class into groups and explain that each group is to prepare a 3 minute newscast on the health crisis in Venezuela and its causes. They can research

their content and argument from the sources listed above and other sources on the internet. The newscast can be for radio, television or the internet and may contain relevant images.

Each group presents its newscast and there is discussion and evaluation of each. How should we view 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism as practiced in Latin America? A failure of theory or a failure of practice, or a combination of the two?

In concluding the unit comparisons can be drawn with Britain. Why is the NHS such a popular institution? In what ways does the NHS embody socialist principles? How was it affected by austerity and privatisation in recent years (2008 to 2019)? Why was it ill prepared for the coronavirus pandemic? What policies on health and social care would students like to see government adopt in the near future?

## Activity Sheet 1.1

## Healthcare in Venezuela

**1998:** In the large urban barrios (poor neighbourhoods) and countryside, the population has little access to healthcare. Apart from some deficient public hospitals, healthcare is provided by private clinics and the booming pharmaceutical and medical insurance sectors. Healthcare requires credit cards and insurance. Medical care for the poor is almost non-existent

**2000:** The Bolivarian revolution led by Hugo Chavez starts the Bolivar Project to provide urgent medical assistance to those most in need. It includes military surgical units that move around the country to attend to thousands who for years waited for the inaccessible operations that they needed. Simply, it's a civic – military program for the health of the people. Between 1998 and 2000 healthcare spending increased from 4 to 6% of GDP.

**2003:** The Bolivarian government with the help of the Cuban Republic launches the operation Barrio Adentro (primary care clinics). In exchange for cheap oil Cuba sends 20,000 doctors who offer primary medical attention to the people in their communities. The program is totally free, even the medication.

**2005:** The Barrio Adentro programme is extended together with Comprehensive Diagnostic Centres, which are clinics equipped with the latest technology and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Clinics. The third phase of Barrio Adentro improves hospitals.

**2012:** The first two groups of community doctors graduate: the first in August with 8,000 and the second with 6,000 more, which adds up to 14,000 young doctors. Other advances include Mission Miracle to operate on people's cataracts and prevent blindness and the building of a children's cardiology hospital. All of the projects mentioned offer free services to users.

Throughout Hugo Chávez's presidency (1998 -2014), the Health Ministry changed ministers many times. According to a high-ranking official, the ministers were treated as scapegoats whenever issues with public health arose in Venezuela. The official also explained that some Health Ministry officials were corrupt, enriching themselves by selling goods designated to public healthcare to others

**2015** Venezuela's economy is performing poorly. The price of oil has fallen by 60% since 1998, the currency has collapsed and the country has the world's highest inflation rate. Healthcare spending has fallen to 3% of GDP and only 35% of hospital beds are being used. One third of patients attending hospital die and 15,000 doctors have left the public healthcare service due to poor pay and shortages of medicines.

**2018** Venezuela's health care system is on the verge of collapse. Doctors continue to leave and 85% of medicines are in short supply. Infant mortality increased by 16% in 2016. There have been rapid increases in the incidence of such diseases as malaria and measles. Inflation is running at 13,000%; and the local currency is virtually worthless. Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's successor, refuses humanitarian aid, blames Venezuela's problems on foreign economic sanctions that seek regime change. He won a second term in the May elections but these were boycotted by his rivals who claimed widespread voting irregularities. 2.5 million people have left the country since 2015 and these include many health care workers.

**2019** Juan Guaido declared himself Venezuela's interim leader in January and was recognised by dozens of foreign governments including Britain and the US. His backers believed Maduro would fall with days but this did not happen. Representatives of Guaido and Maduro are engaged in talks which optimists hope will lead to free elections in 2020. Russia and China continue to back Maduro. Polls suggest that 57% support Guaido and just 10% Maduro. 18,400 Venezuelans applied for asylum in Europe between January and May.

**2020** Venezuela's health care system is in crisis and ill prepared for the Covid-19 pandemic. A third of hospitals have no water supply and two-thirds only an intermittent supply; 60% of hospitals report shortages of gloves and face masks and 90% shortages of sanitising gel. The government is accused of not revealing the true number of cases and deaths and blames the health crisis on continuing US sanctions. The UN has launched a humanitarian response plan for Venezuela and the central bank of Venezuela has appealed to the Bank of England to release \$1bn of gold reserves. This it is not prepared to do as the British government does not regard Venezuela's government as legitimate.



## Chapter Two

### Critical geography, critical education

*A democratic ethos is already evident in much radical geography – one that is decolonising, keenly sensitive to structural injustice, and situated in a careful politics for a liveable life. An ethos is always negotiated and situated but is also guided by ethico-political principles that are shared. Let's name them.* Sophie Bond (1) p.17

*New Labour's efforts in this spirit entailed creating the educational context in which national subjects could be effectively trained to succeed in a globalized economy. For Blair, this meant education for the knowledge economy. He believed government should prepare its workers with the skills necessary to implement the new technologies of a changing world, one of rapid transformation and intense global competition.* Katherine Mitchell (2) p.60

*The neoliberal trend often pushes to the periphery those public goods that schools and colleges facilitate and epitomise. If we are hoping that state education, in the manner of John Dewey, acts as a laboratory in which students learn to collaborate and cooperate as emerging citizens in both the educational community and the wider community, then its consumerisation potentially negates that hope.* Neil Hopkins (3) p. 1

This chapter locates critical geography and critical education (the key ingredients of critical school geography) within the rise of modernity and critical social theory. It argues that the left needs to recapture the modern idea of progress with a universal project, sustainable development. This alternative to neoliberal capitalism should be open to difference or local interpretation as long as universal values are respected. A positive notion of freedom is central to such progress and requires everyone's basic needs to be met; their critical social literacy to be developed; and new technologies to be deployed for the common good. Schooling has a key role to play in exploring how this might be done and equipping students with relevant attributes and competences (Unesco guidance, pages 20 -25).

Having introduced a new left modernity focussed on sustainability, the chapter then traces the background to critical geography and critical education and outlines their current characteristics. It next shifts its focus to schooling and the manner in which recent neoliberal reforms further limit students' and teachers' freedoms. Critical educators contest schooling's enclosure (privatisation); commodification (a commodity to be chosen in market where schools compete for students); and the alienation experienced by many students and teachers. Critical geographers highlight new spatial divisions of schooling encouraged by the discourse and realities of parental choice. Both argue for the establishment of truly comprehensive and democratic community schools that produce socially useful young workers, consumers and citizens by deploying critical knowledge and pedagogy.

The associated curriculum unit focuses on SDG 4 (quality education) and GCE topic 8 (ethically responsible behaviour). It allows students to examine the impact of parental choice on spatial divisions of schooling and the quality of education in their local area.

## **Modernity**

Schools and geography are products of [modernity](#) (4), a distinct form of social life that has a history stretching back to the Age of Enlightenment in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It can be understood as a period of history associated with such events as the French and industrial revolutions; a set of institutions and processes such as colonisation, bureaucracy, and liberal democracy; and as a repertoire of conceptual innovations revolving around universal ideals of progress, freedom, equality, and democracy that had developed independently in numerous cultures around the world but which took on a particular resonance in Europe (5).

Modernity's history in the West reveals four basic elements:

- **Economically**, modernity involved the expansion of a global capitalist economy with a related division of labour. Economic production was increasingly shaped by the profit motive; wage labour was increasingly the main form of employment; and industrial technology was increasingly harnessed to transform natural resources into commodities. This involved colonialism and imperialism.
- **Politically**, modernity involved the consolidation of the centralised nation state together with the extension of bureaucratic forms of administration

and liberal democratic forms of government. The state serves to protect property rights, maintain law and order, and transmit ideology supportive of capitalism via such processes as schooling.

- **Culturally**, modernity offered a world of progress (liberty, equality, fraternity) as science and rational thinking were applied to the running of society. It involved a break with a traditional and holistic worldview that emphasised the inter-connectedness of all living and non-living things; the importance of divine will and provenance; and the virtue of things remaining the same. This was replaced with a reductionist and modern worldview in which the world is seen in an objective, instrumentalist and reductionist way, and change in the form of social development was valued. Romanticism developed as a counter culture within modernity stressing subjectivity and holism, and drawing inspiration from nature.
- **Socially**, modernity involved the re-sorting of social classes and increasingly complex patterns of social stratification. Socialism gained the mass support of working people because it promised the fulfilment of the modern project in ways that better realised liberty, equality and fraternity.

While the key ideas in chapter one focussed on the political economy of global capitalism, modernity encompasses these ideas but casts its net more widely. Capitalism is an expansionary universal within modernity (6) that weaves itself through multiple cultural fabrics, reworking them as it goes along producing locally specific forms of capitalism that cohabit the world (7). Postcapitalism (page 14) represents a project aimed at subverting this universal and taking modernity in new directions. It is guided by critical theory.

### **Mainstream and critical social theory**

The rise of modernity saw the emergence of mainstream and critical social science. While all science should be critical (reflexive, questioning, testing answers carefully and thoroughly, logical, rigorous, and dealing with important issues) the critical tradition in the social sciences distinguishes between mainstream (problem solving) theory and critical theory (8). While the former ‘takes the world as it finds it’, the latter ‘stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about’ (9), p. 129. So ‘critical theory can be a guide to bringing about an alternative order, whereas problem solving theory is a guide to tactical actions which, intended or unintended, sustain the existing order’ (9), p. 130.

Critical social theory originated with the early anarchists, Marx, and the Frankfurt School (10) (11), now incorporates some aspects of social constructivism (12), and is applied in such fields as radical ecology, feminism, and post-colonialism. Critical theory attempts to understand, analyse, criticize and alter social structures and phenomena (environmental, economic, political, cultural, technological, spatial and psychological) that have features of oppression, domination, exploitation, injustice, misery, and unsustainability. It does this with a view to changing or eliminating these structures and phenomena and expanding the scope of freedom, democracy, justice, happiness, and sustainability (13). The philosophy and sociology of knowledge associated with critical social theory is explored in chapter four.

While the [new optimists](#) (14) claim the world is better than ever and Alcock (15) argues for their views to be reflected in the geography classroom, we saw in chapter one that global development is contradictory and progress is not inevitable. Critical theory focuses on the dark side of European modernity associating it with among other things, colonial exploitation, genocide, imperialism, climate change, a global order premised on waged labour and capital accumulation; and progress that relies on borrowing financial and ecological capital from the future. Chapter one argued for an alternative to the current dominant neoliberal form of development and linked this to postcapitalism, left populism, or a new left modernity.

## A left modernity

The unsustainable nature of the current world order suggests that we need an alternative expansionary and inclusive universal to combat and supersede neoliberal capitalism. It would contest the meanings of progress, development and the future; be associated with future orientated politics and education; and recognize that political strategies designed to defend localities, create autonomous spaces, identities and lifestyles, and tackle single issues are often desirable but insufficient (6).

Sustainable development has a strong claim to be considered such a universal provided it is guided by critical theory and such universal values as those incorporated into the [Earth Charter](#) (16) and is open to difference. Sustainable development should integrate rather than eliminate difference; allow for living in common despite a plurality of ways of life; and be open to co-creation by global citizens from around the world. As such sustainable development is ‘a

subversive and emancipatory vector of change' (6), a placeholder that a variety of ideals, practices, collectives and technologies come to occupy. This text sees radical social movements and parties on the populist left that are committed to radical democracy and a global green new deal, playing a key role in establishing a new left modernity (the 'next normal') in much of the world, but acknowledges that other political and cultural traditions may be more appropriate to realising sustainability with social justice and democracy elsewhere. Central to critical theory and sustainable development is a positive conception of freedom.

## **Freedom**

Under capitalism citizens have negative freedom. They are free to do what they wish within the law; have freedom to sell their labour power; and freedom to choose consumer goods and services. Rich and poor are considered equally free despite their different freedom (power) to act. Negative freedom is compatible with poverty, homelessness, unemployment, inequality, and wide variations in the quality of schools and educational outcomes.

Positive freedom is more substantial and recognises that rights are worthless if citizens lack the means and capacity to exercise them. Freedom and power (the capacity to produce desired outcomes or get what one wants) are related and the more power we have the freer we are. Sustainable development (17), as reflected in the sustainable development goals seeks to maximise positive freedom and the flourishing of all humanity by three means:

- The provision of basic needs: clean air and water, income, time, health, education, etc. This may require the provision of [universal basic income](#) (18) and [services](#) (19).
- Social literacy or the empowerment of citizens so that they have the knowledge, skills and values (attributes, competences, capabilities) to pursue their common interests in sustainable development.
- Technological capacity or the harnessing of new technologies to free people from the drudgery of routine work, improve their health, and heal their relationships with the rest of nature.

The moral case for democratic socialism is that by fighting inequalities and injustices, and standing up for the powerless against the powerful, people can realise positive freedom and improve their lives. We will turn to the

consequences of a left modernity and positive freedom for schooling once critical geography and education have been introduced.

### **The development of critical geography**

Radical geography (20) originated with 19C anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin who critiqued the role of mainstream geography in facilitating and legitimating the rise of global capitalism. It resurfaced in the 1960s when new social movements, concerned with such issues as peace, the environment and women's rights, prompted some academic geographers to develop a more relevant and engaged discipline (21). They were disenchanted with mainstream geography: its philosophy and methodology; its inability to solve pressing social problems; and the way in which it functioned as ideology to mask the true causes of those problems. By the 1970s they had shifted from liberalism to Marxism and geographical-historical materialism, recognising the key role of Marxist political economy in explaining the development of space, place and nature. Marx's dialectical method (see chapter 4) represented a more objective and holistic approach to studying society that was able to counter ideology or 'systems of ideas which give distorted and partial accounts of reality with the objective and often unintended effect of serving the partial interests of a particular social group or class' (21) p. 9.

A Marxist critical social geography, concerned with social and spatial inequalities and issues of social justice and social reproduction, was challenged by the emergence of post-modernism and post-structuralism (chapter 4) and a cultural geography concerned with meaning, identity and representation. Post-structuralism rejects modernist claims to universal knowledge, reason and values, together with the claim by Marxist structuralists that every historical event and social feature (eg. schooling) can be explained as a component of some more general overarching system (structures) be it a mode of production or an ideology. Knowledge, rationality and morality are socially constructed, historically and geographically contingent and laden with power relations (they reflect and shape the social relations between people).

The 'cultural turn' in geography in the 1980s and 1990s saw both political economy (a form of structuralism) and post-structuralism claim authority over the social at a time when neo-liberalism was on the rise and the political left weakened, partly due to the rise of identity and single issue politics. The new cultural geography concerned itself with the representation and cultural analysis

of such topics as gender, sexuality, youth, place, and nature, and drew on the critical theory of the Frankfurt School as well as that of post-structuralists such as Michel Foucault.

[Valentine](#) (22) suggests that the ‘cultural turn’ can be explained in terms of shifting understandings of society. These have moved from the large scale explored by political economy to the smaller scale of everyday social relations. Questions of identity and difference are now understood to underpin individual and group experiences of oppression as seen in the heterosexist, ablest and adultist nature of everyday spaces. Critical geography should accommodate both political economy’s explanations focussing on structural inequalities and the large scale distribution of power and resources AND post-structuralism’s explanations framed in terms of lifestyles, consumption, meaning, identity, and cultural representation (the ‘texts’ relating to place, space and nature that saturate people’s everyday experience).

Despite Valentine’s claim that the ‘cultural turn’ had not squeezed out the social but merely redefined it, others were more critical, suggesting the turn has led to the dematerialisation of human geography together with its political paralysis and fragmentation. [Sayer](#) (23) argues that in crucial respects the new cultural geography is uncritical since it ignores or marginalises economic matters and neo-liberal hegemony, and its treatment of culture is highly compatible with a neo-liberal worldview. Both post-structuralism and neo-liberalism treat values as subjective: mere expressions of individual preferences, measurable in terms of exchange value, and simply discursive constructions. Critical geography should cling to the distinction between use values and exchange values (substance and appearance) and critique the aestheticisation of aspects of life that might otherwise be considered moral and political issues.

By 2000 ‘critical geography’ rather than ‘radical geography’ had become the privileged descriptor of left geographical inquiry. Castree (24) attributes this to the professionalisation and academicisation of left geography associated with the shift from modern to postmodern forms of higher education during the previous three decades. While the field was more vibrant and varied than ever before, incorporating a wider range of critical theories, including critical aspects of post-structuralism introduced by the ‘cultural turn’, it had become disengaged from activism and engagement with the real world. In an analysis which finds echoes in school geography, Castree argues that change in the political economy of the university (school), resulting in such features as

austerity; greater managerial control; performance indicators; more flexible and segmented academic divisions of labour; and uncertain tenure, led to a ‘taming’ of the academic left at a time when the non-academic left was in decline. He outlined a manifesto to contest these neoliberal changes in education, improve conditions for students, and promote critical pedagogy, that remains relevant to the work of teachers in universities and schools almost twenty years later.

## Contemporary critical geography

The article on postcapitalism by [Chatterton and Posey](#) cited in chapter one (25) begins by reviewing work by critical academic geographers that builds understanding of the ‘shortcomings of humanity’s present condition’ and proposes ‘a range of progressive alternatives to articulate a more equal and sustainable world’ ((25), p. 1). Over 30 publications are cited and they provide insights into knowledge and methodologies on which school geography can draw. [Keywords in Radical Geography: Antipode at 50](#) (1) indicates the breadth of the field and Bond’s entry on its democratic ethos (see head of chapter) reminds us that the extension of democracy is a key concern.

Further insights will be proved in later chapters and curriculum units and readers seeking an inspiring overview of contemporary geography are advised to read Dorling and Lee’s introductory text (26). This tells a series of stories focussed on maps, sketching where we are and where we are going, and using three organising concepts (globalisation, sustainability, and equality) that are central to ESDGC. The [Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers](#) (27) has a range of resources for schools written by academic geographers. The GA launched its learning platform [GEO](#) (28) in 2020 when the [Oak Academy](#) (29) was also supplying elearning for students required to isolate at home due to coronavirus.

For the moment it is sufficient to note that contemporary critical geography has six characteristics (30):

1. **A commitment to theory and a rejection of empiricism.** Critical geography is not content to merely describe the world (empiricism). It consciously deploys critical theory from such sources as Marxism, feminism and post-structuralism, to explain the structures and processes at work in the world that shape, and are in turn shaped by, nature, space and place..

2. **A commitment to reveal the processes that produce oppression and injustice.** Critical geographers seek to unveil power, uncover inequality, expose resistance, and cultivate liberating politics and social change.
3. **An emphasis on representation as a means of domination and resistance.** A common focus of critical geography is the study of how representations of nature, space and place sustain power; or are used to challenge power.
4. **An optimistic faith in the power of critical scholarship.** Critical geographers believe that critical theories and ideas can be used to resist the dominant representations of reality, and that scholars and teachers can challenge people's partial or false understandings and so help free that from oppression. They have an implicit confidence in the power of critical theory and pedagogy to reach those alienated from the world, and in the capacities of people to defeat alienation by means of reflexive self-education.
5. **A commitment to progressive practices.** Critical geographers want to make a difference. They claim to contribute to and work with social movements and activists committed to social justice, democracy and sustainability. The relationship between critical geography and activism continues to be much debated.
6. **An understanding of nature, space and place as critical tools.** Critical geographers pay special attention to how relations between people and the rest of nature, relations between people in space, and the relations between people in any one place, and the representations of these relations, can be the sources of oppression and inequality. Critical geographers identify how nature, space, and place can be used to both exercise power and to mask it.

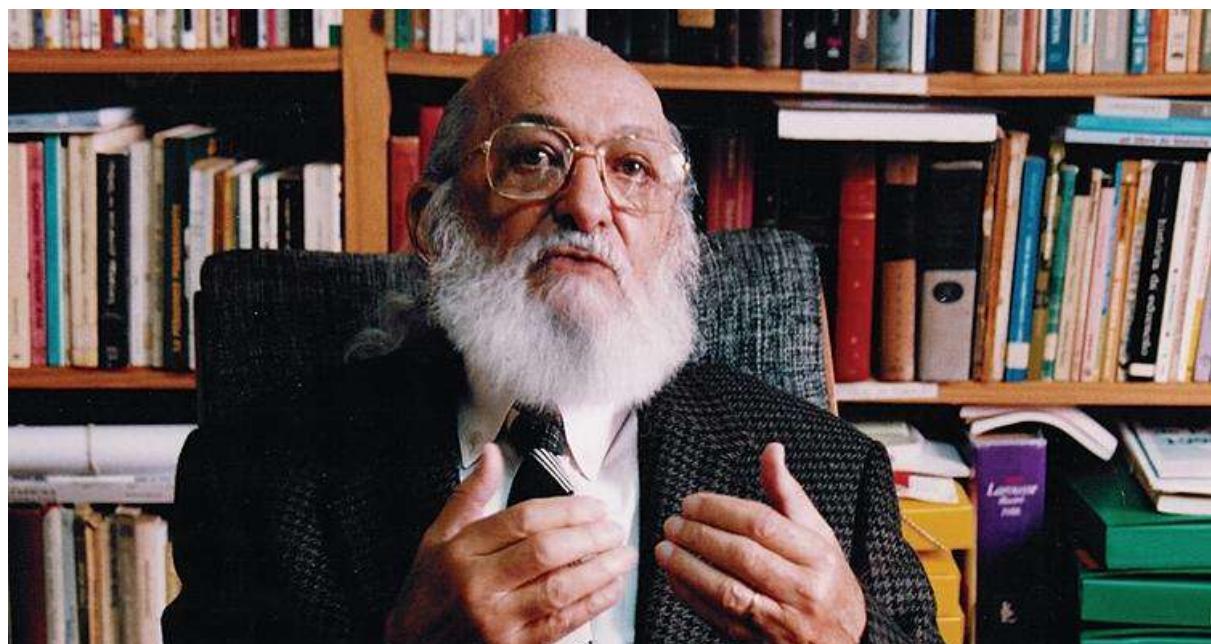
These characteristics are somewhat abstract and readers wishing to know how they are reflected in the life of an individual geographer might read [an obituary to Doreen Massey](#) (31) who died in 2016.

## Critical education

Like critical geography, critical education has a history dating back to the 19C. The Chartist established popular schools to serve the interests of the working class and the threat posed by such schools, together with the need for a more literate, numerate and disciplined workforce, led to the establishment of state

schools. Fielding and Moss (24) trace the history of radical education in England. Elsewhere in Europe folk schools were established in Denmark, modern (anarchist) schools in Catalonia, and progressive schools in Reggio Emilia in Italy (32). In Brazil it was the work of Paulo Freire that advanced our understanding of the differences between mainstream and critical education.

*There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.* (33)



**Figure 2.1 Paulo Freire**

Freire (1921 -1997) (Figure 2.1) was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was a key figure in the Third World liberation movement and a leading advocate of critical pedagogy (chapter 5). He is best known for his influential text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (33) and gives his name to the [Freire Project](#) (34), a primary resource for teachers seeking to research critical pedagogy. His educational ideas are based on classical authors such as Plato and on Marxist and post-colonial thinkers. Education should allow the oppressed to regain their humanity largely through their own efforts. This will involve them in rethinking their way of life and examining their own role in their oppression. We will

examine the extent to which students and teachers in UK schools are alienated and oppressed and in need of critical education in chapter three.

Freire's distinction between the dominant banking model of education and that of education as consciousness raising (or conscientization) (Figure 2.2) summarises the differences between mainstream education and critical education. Critical theorists tend to refer to the former as 'schooling' since its primary function is socialization rather than the development of students' critical powers together with their moral autonomy and social literacy.

Freire believed that education cannot be divorced from politics; that the acts of teaching and learning are political acts in themselves; and that teachers and students should be made aware of the 'politics' surrounding what is taught and how it is taught and assessed. People learn through praxis (chapter 5) that by learning they can remake themselves and their community. Hence he has inspired literacy schemes throughout South America (including literacy missions in Venezuela – curriculum unit one) and shaped the theory and practice of development education in both the global North and South (35).

<b>Banking Model</b>	<b>Conscientization</b>
The student is an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge imparted by the teacher.	Everyone in the classroom is both a teacher and a learner. Students produce knowledge guided by the teacher.
Students are users of knowledge rather than producers of knowledge.	Education to explore problems of living in the world suggested by students.
Knowledge is an instrument of power and domination that stifles critical thinking.	Education to develop critical consciousness or knowledge of how the world works and how it might be changed in order to work more sustainably.
The world is presented as a fixed and abstract reality to which pupils are expected to conform.	Learning is active and experiential.
The teacher is active, the student is passive. The teacher has nothing to learn and is thus disempowered.	Critical literacy is a central aim of education.
A mainstream pedagogy of oppression.	A critical pedagogy of liberation.

**Fig. 2.2      Two models of education** (based on (36) & (37)

### **Three forms of critical education**

[Edwards and Canaan](#) (38) outline the history and characteristics of radical, critical and Marxist educations, noting the continuities and differences between these three overlapping perspectives (see Figure 2.3, pages 61 & 62). Like critical geography they are underpinned by diverse critical theories, flowered with the emergence of new social movements from the late 1960s, and were affected by the ‘cultural turn’ from the mid 1970s to the late 1990s. A focus on social class then shifted, under the influence of post-structuralism, to identity, gender, sexuality, race, and nation. In the more recent period there has been a return to class analysis now integrated with these other analytical concepts. While radical and critical educators view class, gender, sexuality, race and nation as equally significant in shaping exploitation and oppression, Marxist educators argue that the exploitative relations forged in and through labour (class) provide the basis for all other oppressive relations. All agree that critical pedagogy (in different but related forms – see chapter five) has a role in revealing and transforming such relations

This text uses critical education to refer to all three perspectives. They had a significant impact on schooling in the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s under the label progressivism (39). This was characterised by integrated curricula, student centred learning; mixed ability teaching, greater awareness of the politics of the curriculum, and increased autonomy and professionalism for teachers. Critical education has had a greater influence on environmental education, development education, and ESDGC than on geography (see chapter four), and its overall influence faded as neoliberalism reshaped schooling from the late 1980s. Edwards and Canaan argue that they now need to work together to analyse neoliberal educational reforms, ‘mobilize workers, forge alliances and articulate a vision in and outside formal and informal educational spaces to help build another education and world’ (38) p. 71.

	<b>Radical</b>	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Marxist</b>
<b>Foundations</b>	Progressive socialist and libertarian/anarchist political critiques of society and education associated with popular agitation and subversive dissent.	Eclectic and contradictory range of philosophical and theoretical traditions. Marxist, neo-Marxist, pragmatism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, feminism. Critical theory of Frankfurt School.	Marxism that assumes workers and citizens can transform capitalist social relations and that dialectics explains the process by which such transformation can be realised.
<b>Key concepts</b>	Autonomy, popular sovereignty, personal freedom.	Critical rationality, critical consciousness, discursive ethics and democracy.	Class struggle, praxis, ideology critique, revolutionary consciousness.
<b>Defining features</b>	Rejection of hierarchy and an affirmation of self management invoked through both educational process and product. Anti-authoritarianism. Anti-rationalism. Romanticism. Participatory democracy rather than state governance.	Critiques ways in which education is connected to relations of exploitation and domination in society. Critical rationality as a means of defining what restraints on personal freedom are justifiable in a democratic society, and a tool to eliminate false consciousness.	Capitalist education systems are sites of class struggle. Teachers and learners in dialectical relationship with one another and the state. People's minds and understanding are constituted within inherited forms of life and consciousness that include state institutions.
<b>Basis of education</b>	The realization of personal development and freedom. Child-centred progressivism.	The development of higher states of rationality and democracy.	Praxis or the continual refining of knowledge by testing it in action.

<b>Strategy</b>	Grassroots initiatives, direct action, autonomous collectives and informal communities. Free schools, deschooling, informal learning. Critical pedagogy.	Aims to disrupt oppression and discrimination by developing critical consciousness (political awareness that citizens develop through working with others to transform the world) via media analysis, discussion and project based learning. Critical pedagogy.	Teachers and learners educate each other by exploring the contradictions of everyday life and how they might be resolved. Ideas from critical theory, including Marxist political economy, prompt the critique of ideology. Critical pedagogy.
<b>Theorists</b>	Rousseau, Godwin, Stirner, Read, Neill, Freire, Kelly, Ward, Young	Dewey, Bourdieu, Bernstein, Apple, Frieire, Habermas, Carr & Harnett.	Marx, Gramsci, Simon, Vygotsky, Bowles & Gintis,
<b>Indicative texts</b>	<i>The Libertarians and Education</i> , Michael Smith, 1983 <i>Assessing Radical Education</i> , Nigel Wright, 1989	<i>Critical Theory and Education</i> , Rex Gibson, 1986 <i>A Critical Theory of Education</i> , Robert Young, 1989	<i>Teachers and Classes: A Marxist Analysis</i> , Kevin Harris, 1982 <i>The Education of Radical Democracy</i> , Sarah Amsler, 2015
<b>Critique</b>	Risks utopianism and detachment from mainstream politics.	Cultural turn from 1970s resulted in relativism and inability to arbitrate between knowledge claims	Risks degenerating into the transmission of what the teacher believes to be (is led to believe to be) revolutionary consciousness.

**Figure 2.3 Radical, critical and Marxist educations compared (based on Edwards & Canaan (38))**

## Towards democratic socialist education

The supporters of [Reclaiming Education](#) (40), a coalition of trade unions and pressure groups, would endorse such aims. It seeks to influence Labour's education policy and among its recommendations are the ending of the academies and free school programme; the restoration of powers to local authorities to provide, allocate and manage school places; the ending of selection at 11; a broad and balanced 14-19 curriculum to include academic, creative and technical courses; and stakeholders, including parents and employers, having a role in decision-making on the curriculum. The [Socialist Educational Association](#) (41) is a member of the coalition and its proposals on the curriculum (42) are enabling of ESDGC.

Included in the coalition and association are democratic socialist educators (3) who believe that education is a public good (not a private commodity); is primarily about developing active and critical citizens (alongside socially useful workers and creative and well adjusted individuals); and is a collaborative rather than transactional process. Schools should be places where students are introduced to democratic culture and practices and acquire the competences to become active and critical citizens. Morgan (43) reviews 'what's left for education?' noting that the comprehensive revolution is uneven and unfinished (see [Education for the Good Society](#) (44)) and that there is an urgent need to modernise the common school and to engage with the cultures students bring to the classroom. He contrasts the progressive views of modernisers who have written reports for Compass and the IPPR with the more conservative views held by post-liberal communitarians associated with Blue Labour (page 19).

[Gilbert](#) (45) makes the case for the democratic governance of schooling and allowing students to experience democratic self governance in [citizen schools](#) (46). [Together with Fisher](#) (47) he advocates the reform of public institutions such as schools in line with the values of radical democracy and co-production (by local authorities and local communities) and the abolition of the machinery of neoliberal regulation, for example league tables and standardised testing. Elsewhere, [Adnan and Lawson](#) (48) in a report influenced by the accelerationists (page 17) and the concept of network society (chapter seven), propose education for life. Its prime purpose would be to 'learn how we live together, each of us finding our unique and fulfilling way to participate and

contribute'. It should 'help each of us to search for our own understanding of 'the big picture' of history and ecology (and geography) that our lives are lived inside' p. 31. Such thinking is echoed in the [final report of the Compass education group](#)(49) that noting the current narrowing of education in terms of content, ambition and imagination, advocates 'big education' that 'rests of values of equality, democracy and sustainability and has a sense of citizenship at its heart that looks to build a coherent and consistent educational framework for the fast emerging networked society we live in' p. 25 (see Figure 2.4), It is to the reforms that have led to the narrowing of education that we now turn.

Small Education	Big Education
Narrow	Expansive
Competitive	Collaborative
Bureaucratic	Democratic
Restricted	Lifelong
Targets	Freedom
Centralised	Localised
Elitist	Equal
Selective	Comprehensive
Imposed	Organic
Individualistic	Generous
Closed	Open
Mechanical	Professional
Directed	Creative
Fragmented	Coherent
Remote	Accountable

**Figure 2.4 The key features of small and big education (49)**

### Neoliberal and neoconservative reform further marginalises critical education

From the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988 to the present, educational reform in England and [elsewhere in the world](#) (50) has sought to recast education not as a right or entitlement that develops critical citizenship, but as a commodity, produced, valued and exchanged in a kind of market place, that instils social conformity. [Marxist commentators](#) (51) on global reform see it

as a product of neoliberalism and neoconservatism (a desire for hierarchy and control together with traditional morality (52)), producing the impacts listed in Figure 2.5.

Neoliberalism	Neoconservatism
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Privatisation/ Pre-Privatisation of public services such as schooling and universities</li> <li>2. Cuts in public spending/ salaries/ pensions/ benefits</li> <li>3. Marketisation, Competition between schools and between universities</li> <li>4. Vocational education for human capital (except for the ruling class, who, in their elite private schools, are encouraged into a wider and less 'basics' driven education)</li> <li>5. Management of the workforce: 'New Public Managerialism' in schools and colleges, with hugely increasing differentials in pay and power between managers and workforce</li> <li>6. Encouragement of competition between workers, through performance related pay and the 'busting' of trade union agreed of national pay scales</li> <li>7. Casualization/ 'Precariatisation' of public and private sector workers, with a decline in tenured and in full-time 'secure' jobs for teachers and university faculty</li> <li>8. Attacks on trade unions, on workers' rights, on centralised pay-bargaining</li> <li>9. 'Management speak' e.g. students as 'customers', 'delivering' the curriculum, discourse of the market replacing that of social responsibility</li> <li>10. Denigration / Ideological attacks of public sector workforce</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Control of Curricula of schools, of teacher education and universities, with the removal of 'dangerous' content</li> <li>2. Control of Pedagogy teaching methods, pedagogic relations between teacher and students</li> <li>3. Control of Students, through debt, and through actual or fear of unemployment</li> <li>4. Control of Teachers and Professors, through surveillance, a culture of having to meet targets, punishment of dissidents and union activists, dismissals and closures of schools, closures of university departments</li> <li>5. Brute force and 'the Security State' within schools and the wider society- the use of tear gas, sound grenades, stun grenades, beatings, prosecutions, draconian sentencing, and in some countries, imprisonment, killings (e.g. murders of trade union activists in Colombia).</li> </ol>

**Figure 2.5 How Marxists view the impacts of neoliberalism and neoconservatism on schooling (51)**

Successive English administrations have viewed the primary purpose of schooling as economic, to raise standards, develop human capital, and thereby restore the UK's competitiveness in the global economy. School reform has been justified in terms of raising the aspirations of working class pupils, tackling low achievement, promoting social mobility (53) (rather than social justice), creating a diversity of schools in what was formerly a landscape of

uniformity, and providing parents with choice. It locates responsibility for class inequality with schools and teachers rather than with the structures of capitalism, and sustains a deficit model of working class culture and values (54) (55). Yes there are low expectations, but an emphasis on standards, which many cannot achieve, may only worsen the problem of students' alienation (see chapter three) and give rise to '[meritocratic hubris](#)'(56) that feeds populism.

Reform encompasses curriculum reform that marginalises critical ideas and pedagogy (the national curriculum) (39); parental choice that sharpens social divisions in schooling; new ways of involving the private sector in the financing and governance of schools, and new forms of managerialism that further erode teacher professionalism. This agenda diverts attention from poverty and social injustice to opportunity and social mobility, and has been resisted in the more socially democratic nations of the UK as noted when considering their provision of ESDGC in chapter one.

Schooling as a commodity needs to be measured and compared, so that consumers (parents, employers) know what they are getting, politicians can claim to be raising standards, and providers (schools, teachers) are accountable for what they are providing. Hence an age of 'performativity' and 'deliverology' dawned with teachers told what to teach and how to teach; schools, teachers and pupils continually tested, inspected and ranked against externally imposed standards and targets; and market values of individualism, cost efficiency, competition and choice, coming to dominate the life of schools (57). At the same time new types of schools and school governance were introduced. [Academies](#) (58) receive funding directly from central government, exist outside the control of local authorities, are designated as 'all-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds'. Promoted as a means of giving schools more autonomy (spending, teaching, organisation) they are controlled by private organisations called charitable trusts. Multi-academy trusts (MATS) have greater access to government than local authorities; are likely to have a government minister or appointee as a trustee; and the decisions they make are not as transparent as those made by local authorities. While schools have gained new freedoms, parents and carers have lost the freedom to know about the people running their schools, to question them, and have a voice in decisions that affect their lives (59).

Free schools are a type of academy that can be established without the involvement of parents or the local authority, and while required to deliver a ‘broad and balanced’ curriculum, academies need not follow the national curriculum as local authority schools are required to do. In 2017 31% of English secondary state schools were local authority schools, 7% were free schools, and 62% were academies with 36% belonging to a multi-academy trust (60).

	Mainstream	Critical
<b>Education</b>	A means of control that reproduces economic, social and cultural inequalities.	A means of empowerment and liberation, that can contribute to social justice and democracy
<b>Learning and teaching</b>	Just in case learning. Learning and teaching for some anticipated future. Curriculum and pedagogy assume that pupils will need a particular skill or knowledge set when they are examined or move to the next level of education or the workplace. Knowledge is seen as an accumulation of information that lies in wait for an appropriate moment of application.	Just in time learning. Mirrors learning and teaching in the workplace and other out-of-school settings. Here teaching and learning are linked to activities that are complex, collaborative, and authentic. They require the co-ordinated efforts of groups of people and evaluation is immediate. Such learning is spontaneous, co-operative and exciting.
<b>School</b>	An examinations factory or assembly line for transmitting chunks of abstract information. Largely separated from the community and segregated by subjects, activities, and age. Consequently many pupils find school alienating.	A hive of dialogue and activity with individuals and small groups working in co-ordinated ways across projects. Projects of differing lengths and scales. Many projects based in the community and the school a resource for community learning.

**Figure 2.6 Two critical educators' views of mainstream and critical education, learning and schools** (Based on Unwin & Yandell, (36))

While education policy claims to offer parents choice, the reality is that wealthy parents can afford to move into the catchments of the best performing schools and they determine their admission policies in ways that favour already advantaged students, excluding those from poorer families and those with special educational needs who are seen as likely to struggle in the classroom or require additional expenditure. (61). The original goal politicians claimed for academies (to raise the standards in underachieving areas) has becomes self-

defeating as many underachievers are denied entry to the best performing academies and the definition of achievement (examination results in academic subjects) reflects the very processes of social stratification that has led to underachievement in the first place. Studies show that academies do not reduce segregation; do not increase social equity in education; and [do not out-perform local authority schools](#) (62) (63). Critical educators claim that neoliberal reform has sharpened the distinctions between mainstream and critical education (Figure 2.6) and wasted the potential of many students (64).

### **Geography teachers enacting the curriculum under the pressures of reform**

Mitchell (65) has analysed how four geography departments enact the curriculum in the face of the pervasive forces of capitalism. He recognises a tension between the teacher's potential agency to make a curriculum and the controlling socio-economic climate of accountability, performance pressure, and technological change resulting from the reforms outlined above. Pressure to meet students' needs as future workers and satisfied consumers; to comply with the demands of Ofsted (66), school managers, and parents; and to use new globalised technology to develop and share content and pedagogy; can all obscure the balanced process of curriculum making proposed by Lambert and Morgan (67) and subsequently incorporated into GA guidance. Mitchell found that the 'curriculum thinking' questions (around key concepts, geographical thinking, appropriate learning activities, and progression) could be pushed into the background or hidden but were not completely lost. He concludes that curriculum making in late capitalism is contingent on teachers effectively navigating the pressures that threaten to distract from and obscure curriculum making. This is a theme that this text seeks to illustrate and to which we will return in subsequent chapters.

### **Spatial divisions of schooling**

In any local authority area there will be a hierarchy of schools, spread across space and reflecting the area's social geography (the spatial division of schooling). Until relatively recently local authorities were able to plan school catchments and admissions to render school intakes as mixed or comprehensive as the social geography allowed but educational reform means their powers have been reduced and a pseudo market in education has been created along with a discourse of parental choice. The result has been to sharpen the spatial

inequalities in schooling as rich parents buy houses close to 'good' schools, and schools chose pupils from 'better' homes.

In an interview with the Guardian, [Diane Reay](#) (68) (69) summarised the situation whereby working class pupils lose out:

*There are predominantly middle class comprehensives and predominantly working class and ethnically mixed comprehensives - and despite all the rhetoric around pupil premiums, pupils in the more working class comprehensives get less money per head. They get less qualified teachers. They get higher levels of teacher turnover and more supply teachers. Even if they are in the same schools as middle class children, they are in lower sets and yet again they get less experienced teachers.*

A [study](#) (70) using geodemographics (the analysis of data by postcodes) has shown that the overwhelming factor determining how well children do at school is not what type of school they attend but the social class of their parents. League tables measure not the best, but the most middle-class schools; and even value-added tables fail to take account of the most crucial factor in educational outcomes, a pupil's address. For schools, selecting pupils whose homes are in high-status neighbourhoods is one of the most effective ways of retaining a high position in the league table..

More recently [Dorling](#) (71) has addressed the problems of greater inequality produced by richer parents buying or renting homes in areas with better performing schools. He notes that this has been a factor in fuelling the speculative bubble in house prices in the South East of England and that what often started as a small difference between schools has grown into a 'chasm dividing some towns and cities up starkly'. Competition between schools has been accentuated by the establishment of academy and free schools, and the left needs to recognise how housing, growing economic inequality and education, are linked, not just through who can live in each catchment area, but in the high turnover of young teachers in the south of England.

Dorling seeks solutions in new ways of democratically managing schools so that they can work co-operatively with one another, and local universities, sharing teachers and expertise and attracting middle-class parents away from the independent sector. He suggests that the 800 [Co-operative Trust schools](#) (72)

already established in the UK provide a model for such a future and that the financial crisis affecting schools may prompt schools to co-operate, share resources and pupils, and so promote social cohesion rather than division.

### Critical theory and spatial divisions of schooling

Two critical theories of education shed further light on spatial divisions of schooling using the analytical concepts of the state, social class, discourse, and governmentality. Harris summarizes the Marxist view of education in this way:

*To begin with, education is an instrument of the state, and serves the ruling class interests and power elites of the state. Its job is to maintain and stabilise the social order, and it does this in interaction with other social institutions and ideologies; and there is no way that education could possibly extract itself, become autonomous, and then dictate the social order.* (73), p.183

Marxism (74) maintains that state education developed to sustain capitalist systems of accumulation by reproducing workers and citizens with appropriate dispositions. Schooling introduces the discipline of the workplace and respect for ones' 'elders and betters'; is provided in different forms in different places for different social classes; and transmits cultural capital along with ideology that legitimates inequality, defuses conflict, and fosters appropriate social norms and expectations. The structuralist tone of early work (75) was rejected as too deterministic and later work (76) acknowledged the agency of working class youth and its ability to form its own culture in opposition to school despite the consequences. Later still the focus shifted to schooling's role in creating a particular type of citizen, one schooled in the norms of proper codes of behaviour required of liberal democracy (77).

Neoliberalism (page 10) with its changed forms of accumulation and governance, requires changed dispositions, new forms of cultural capital, and new forms of global citizenship. Hence the focus of contemporary Marxist theories is on the restructuring of schooling to meet its needs (78) (51) and the nature of socialist alternatives (39) (3). We will revisit this theme in chapter five in the context of the economy, education and the future of work. For the moment it is sufficient to note that Marxist theories would predict sharper spatial divisions of schooling as neoliberalism seeks to tilt the balance of power further towards the upper and middle classes, and that these divisions are

legitimated using ideology associated with the myths of elitism, meritocracy, choice and social mobility.

Dorling (79) (80) explodes the myth that there are inherent genetic differences between people that justify an elite having advantages of wealth and power. He argues that all students in rich countries are capable of learning without limits and that IQ tests, and those that claim to measure attainment, are primarily designed to fit students to a bell curve of distribution and label them successes or failures. Such testing does great harm to the ‘failures’ who must assume ‘that there is something wrong with them because of who they are, that they are poor because they have inadequate ability to be anything else.’ (79) p.35

James echoes Dorling by insisting that modern education has been sold under a false prospectus containing three untruths:

*The first is that it will bring meritocracy, which it has not; and the pretence of it, requiring absurdly long hours devoted to passing mind-sapping, pathology-inducing exams, is hugely harmful to our children’s (and especially our daughters’) well-being. The second is that by enabling people to rise up the system, it will confer well-being, which it does not. The third is that exam results are crucial to our individual and national economic prosperity, and that is simply not true.(81) p. 301-2*

Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) was a poststructuralist (82) who claimed that domains of knowledge such as medicine, criminology, and education create new spaces and rationalities that render people governable as they freely submit to technologies developed by professionals. Foucault saw people governed through discourse (83) (systems of thought composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak). Governance results primarily not from the laws, rules and regulations established by governments, but by the beliefs, values, and rationalities transmitted in everyday spaces such as the home, GP surgery, supermarket, and school.

Governments are not absent from this process. Governmentality refers to the way in which a government thinks about itself and its role, how it goes about shaping and guiding the choices and lifestyles of citizens. In the neoliberal era workers and citizens are required to be entrepreneurial beings, self-promoting

enterprises that are responsible for their own welfare and development. Government offers them ‘normalizing technologies’ (agreed goals and procedures that are made to appear obvious) such as recycling, losing weight, contributing to Sport Relief, donating to a food bank, choosing the ‘best’ school for one’s child, and paying university fees. Neoliberalism functions as discourse, in the ways we talk to friends and neighbours and the ways in which government and the media talk to us, encourage us to accept these technologies and behave in certain ways. By developing a nudge unit (now [the behavioural insights team](#) (84) the UK government found perhaps the most dangerous way to govern: by presenting everything as a free choice and giving the impression that it is not governing at all. Foucault’s ideas suggest that the discourse of choice is a key factor shaping contemporary spatial divisions of schooling.

## The curriculum unit

In curriculum unit 2 pupils explore the spatial divisions of schooling in their local area in the context of SDG 4 (quality education) and GCE topic 8 (ethically responsible behaviour). They locate local secondary schools and with an appropriate degree of help from the teacher, research the average house prices in the postcodes surrounding each school, and the social composition of heads of households in those postcodes. They also research the performance of the schools before going on to examine the influence of house prices, and the social grades of surrounding heads of households, on school performance.

Data is provided for secondary schools in Bedford Borough, a town with a significant number of private schools and sharp social and spatial inequalities partly linked to immigration. Teachers are encouraged to use this as a model to develop a unit based on their own town or city and their own students’ experiences of schooling and school allocations.

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## Sources for illustration

[Photo of Paulo Freire](#)

## Videos for teachers

[A brief introduction to Marxism](#) 5 minutes

[Critical theory](#) 6 minutes

[Pedagogy of the Oppressed, a 5 – 10 minute tour](#)

[Key thinkers, Michel Foucault](#) 30 minutes

[Danny Dorling, Education, Inequality and the One Percent, 2014](#) One hour

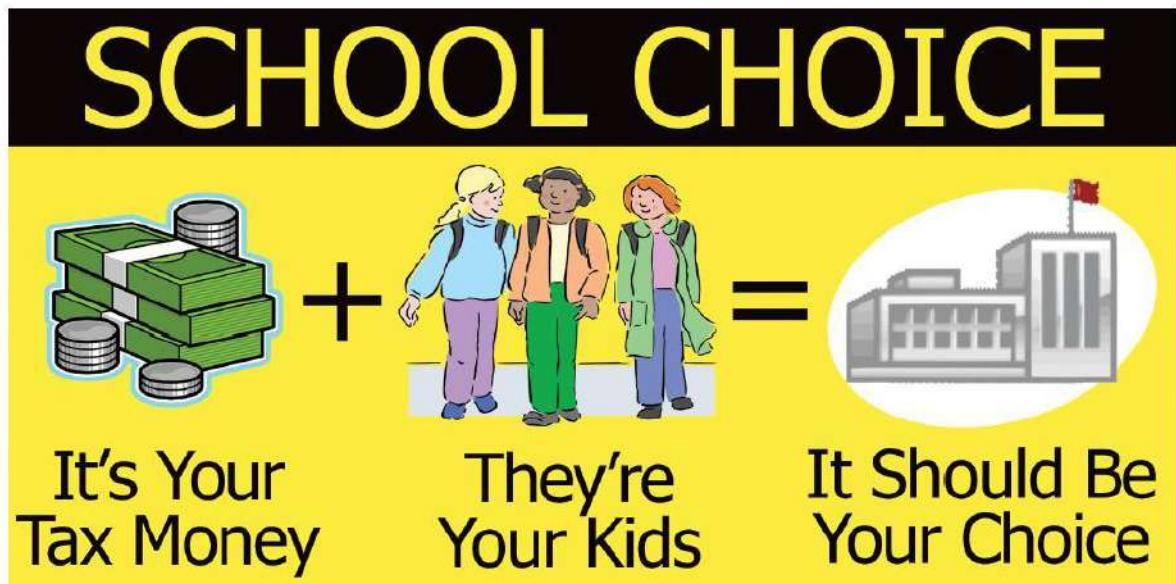
[Doreen Massey on the Kilburn Manifesto](#) 50 minutes

[Diane Raey speaking on inequality in education, 2015](#) 15 minutes

[Fiona Millar – School Choice is a Big Fat Myth in Skipton Yorkshire \(11+ and grammar schools\), early 2000s](#) 6 minutes

## **Curriculum Unit Two**

### **Spatial Divisions of Schooling**



*The English schools hierarchy is as powerful as ever, with some choices only available to a select group of parents who can afford hefty fees, move to the catchment of a successful school, or pay for costly private tuition to pass high stakes entrance exams. Popular schools haven't expanded to accommodate all comers, as pure market advocates predicted, and failing schools have proved hard to close down.*

*The complex interaction between choice, admissions practices, house price and performance measures has led to segregation typified by schools with radically different profiles from their local communities.*

Fiona Millar, *Education Guardian*, May 8<sup>th</sup> 2018

This unit examines issues of secondary school provision, parental choice and social justice in one local authority area. The data presented is for Bedford Borough but it is hoped that teachers will research and use data for their own local area using the Bedford data as a guide.

It focuses on SDG 4 (quality education) and GCE topic 8 (ethically responsible behaviour).

# **Curriculum Plan**

## **Key idea**

School reform over recent decades has promoted parental choice. This has undermined the principle of comprehensive secondary education and led to sharper social and spatial divisions of schooling.

## **Inquiry questions**

What is the ethically responsible way for parent/carers to choose a school for their son / daughter?

What is the ethically responsible and socially just way for politicians to provide secondary schooling?

What is the relationship between school performance and social class (as indicated by postcode) in the local area?

## **Key understandings**

National government has passed laws that claim to give parents more choice as to which schools their children attend. These laws have reduced the powers of local government to plan school catchments and admissions in ways that promote community cohesion and make school intakes as mixed or comprehensive as possible.

A 'market' in schooling has been created by means of 'quality' indicators such as examination results, league tables, and inspection reports. This has widened spatial inequalities in schooling as rich parents buy houses close to 'good' schools and schools chose pupils from 'better' homes.

While Government policy claims to provide choice, such choice is not equally available to all parents. Some are privileged by virtue of location, income, status and other factors, whilst others are disadvantaged.

The key factor determining how well a child does at school is not the type of school they attend but the social class of their parents. Spatial inequalities in schooling can be reduced by restoring powers to local government so that it can manage provision in its area, and/or creating co-operative schools, and/or encouraging schools to share teachers, pupils and resources.

**Key concepts** social class, social geography, spatial inequality, spatial divisions of schooling, local democracy, co-operative schools

**Key values** social justice, democracy

**Key skills** Research location and performance of local secondary schools using internet. Research social geography (census data, house prices) of areas surrounding schools. Record and correlate data. Hypothesis testing,

**Learning outcomes** Pupils gain an understanding of the spatial division and politics of schooling in the local area. They consider whether the current ways in which schooling is provided and allocated is morally responsible and socially just and consider alternatives that claim to promote greater social justice.

**Learning activities** Researching schooling, social class and house prices in the local area. Researching the politics of education in recent decades, nationally and locally, and the policies of the main parties. Debating the results of the research and the desirability of alternative policies and provision designed to reduce social and spatial inequality.

**Assessment task** Write a parents'/carers' guide to secondary schooling in the local area explaining the spatial division of schooling and the impact of schooling on social inequalities

## Link to Unesco guidance on ESDGC

<b>SDG 4</b>	<b>Quality Education</b>
Cognitive learning objective	<p>The learner understands education as a public good, a global common good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights.</p> <p>The learner knows about inequality in access to and attainment of education, particularly between girls and boys and in rural areas, and about reasons for a lack of equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objective	<p>The learner is able to recognize the intrinsic value of education and to analyse and identify their own learning needs in their personal development.</p>
Behavioural learning objective	<p>The learner is able to publicly demand and support the development of policies promoting free, equitable and quality education for all, ESD and related approaches as well as aiming at safe, accessible and inclusive educational facilities.</p> <p>The learner is able to promote the empowerment of young people.</p>
<b>GCE Topic 8</b>	<b>Ethically responsible behaviour</b>
Learning objective (12-15 years) Analyse the challenges and dilemmas associated with social justice and ethical responsibility and consider the implications for individual and collective action	<p>Key themes:</p> <p>Different perspectives about social justice and ethical responsibility in different parts of the world and the beliefs, values and factors that influence them.</p> <p>How these perspectives may influence fair/unfair, ethical/unethical practices.</p>

## **Preparation**

Familiarise yourself with SDG 4 quality education, its [aims and related facts and figures](#). Note the [UN's Covid-19 Global Education Coalition](#) and its four aims.

Before teaching this unit you will need to decide whether you are going to use the data on secondary schools in Bedford that is provided or whether you are going to use data for your own area. The [SchoolGuide website](#) provides a means of comparing and mapping schools in any locality. It allows you to compare up to five secondary schools at a time using 14 measures. In addition to those used for the Bedford schools (Activity Sheet 2.2, page 87) it provides measures for A levels, pupil/teacher ratios, persistent absence happiness, pupils first language not English, and pupils on free school meals. Under view full data for each school it also maps the area from which a school draws its pupils. SchoolGuide does not provide data on the social grade of heads of households or average house prices in each school's postcode. You will need to obtain these from [streetcheck](#) and [zoopla](#) as suggested on page 91. [Nomisweb](#) provides data on the social composition of local authority areas while the [ONS](#) provides local census data. Your local authority may have a map of social deprivation similar to that on page 89.

Hopefully you or your students, or a combination of you and your students will be able to compile a table, like that on page 87, for your own local area.

Familiarise yourself with SDG 3, good health and well being; its [aims, some basic facts and figures](#) and [progress](#) in realising it.

## **Possible procedure**

Begin by setting the unit in a global context. What do students understand by quality education? What are some of the characteristics of such education as Unesco defines it? How many children and young people in the world lack a quality education? What has been the impact of Covid-19 on schooling worldwide? Keep the objectives relating to SDG 4 in mind whilst you facilitating this and subsequent discussions (page 81).

Then switch focus to the local context. How does the quality of education vary in the local area? Are there good and bad schools? Better and less good schools? What determines the quality of the education that a school delivers? What

degree of choice do local parents/carers have over the school their daughter/son attends? Is the local system of school allocation fair? Is it democratic? Who gains? Who loses? Gather students' views and introduce the inquiry questions.

Then carry out a values clarification activity (Activity Sheet 2.1). Pupils should indicate where they stand (with which of the two characters they most agree) on the values continua set out on this sheet by ticking one of the boxes in each row. Debrief this activity by exploring the values reflected by each the imagined parents/students and exploring with students why school choice can be considered a moral and political issue. Ask students for their own experiences of school choice and school allocation. Did they agree with their parents' choice? Did they get the school they chose? Is the system of allocation fair? What has school choice to do with ethically responsible behaviour?

Now introduce or revise the concept of social class using resources from the [Revise Sociology website](#).

Draw attention to the Registrar General's five categories and its link to the social grades (A – E) used in the current census. This originates with the [National Readership Society's system of social grading](#) that is based on the occupations of heads of households and distinguishes the upper and middle classes (ABC1) from the working classes (D2DE).

Since this system was devised, the composition of social classes has been transformed by deindustrialisation, globalisation and the rise of the precariat. Discuss the [New British Class survey](#) (further [illustrated here](#)) and the importance of a family's cultural capital in determining how well a child succeeds in school.

Ask students what advantages students with parents in social grades A&B have over those with parents in social grades D&E when it comes to finding and choosing a secondary school. Why might choice work in favour of the already privileged? What do students think would be a morally responsible and socially just way to organise secondary school provision?

Now introduce the concept of the spatial division of schooling and the hypothesis that in any area there will be a hierarchy of schools reflecting the social geography (the distribution of social classes within the area). In general, the best performing schools will be in the areas of highest social status (highest house prices) and the less well performing schools in areas of lower social

status. This hypothesis can be tested by examining the relationship between school examination results and average house prices in postcodes surrounding the school?

Continue by substituting your own data for that from Bedford if you have chosen to do so.

See Activity Sheet 2.2 that provides relevant data for the borough of Bedford which includes both urban and rural (commuter village) schools. Background notes on Bedford are provided on Activity Sheet 2.3 and Activity Sheet 2.4 shows areas of multiple deprivation within the borough. If these are used, rather than similar sheets for the local area, the locations of the schools listed on 2.2 should be determined using Google Earth and then mapped onto sheet 2.4.

You may wish to introduce an element of questioning at this stage. How is the data on 2.2 used to guide parental and student choice? Is it a valid indicator of a ‘good’ school? How else might we measure or assess a ‘good school’? Note that educational researchers are sceptical about such measures:

*There is ample evidence that the use of tests at secondary school level to create similar ‘value added’ measures (to those used in primary schools) does not lead to scientifically meaningful distinctions between schools and is of little use for parental choice of schools.*

Professors Moss, Goldstein & Sammons, letter to *The Guardian*, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2018

Local authority and school websites provide information on admissions policies and groups of pupils might research individual schools and give presentations designed to persuade parents to send their child to that school.

Using the data table discuss with students where they might look for correlations to support the hypothesis that a school’s performance is related to the social class of its pupils (as indicated by postcode which in turn indicates average house prices). What can we conclude from analysing the table? Is there a clear relationship between the attainment of students in the schools and social composition (social grades of households) of the postcodes bordering the school? Between attainment and house prices? How may school choice be working to increase or decrease social inequalities? Does local school provision support Fiona Millar’s claim (on the title page on this unit) that *the complex interaction between choice, admissions practices, house price and performance measures has led to segregation typified by schools with radically different profiles from their local communities?*

Having investigated spatial divisions of schooling in their local area, students should debate alternative future scenarios including the establishment of more selective grammar schools, the abolition or end of charitable status for independent schools, the introduction of vouchers that parents can take to any school of their choice, the desirability of common (comprehensive) schools for all pupils, the desirability of [co-operative academies](#), the return of powers over the running of schools, their financing, catchments and management to local authorities.

Finally students might complete the assessment task outlined above or a similar task that they negotiate with you. Clearly there are follow-up opportunities to study schooling in other parts of the world as suggested by the relevant Unesco guidance on ESDGC. Curriculum unit three examines the contribution of schooling, along with other factors, to the happiness of citizens in Finland.

When reporting on schools Ofsted provide data on the percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree with the statement ‘My child is happy at school’. The majority of the Bedford schools listed on page 87 score in the 80s and 90s with Bedford Academy the exception with a score of 55 (SchoolGuide, August 2018).

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**Activity Sheet 2.1****As parents and students seeking a secondary school – where do you stand?**

<b>Comprehensive Colin.</b> I want my daughter to be educated with a mix of students some bright, some less bright.					<b>Grammar school</b> <b>Gerry.</b> Ideally my daughter will go to a grammar school and be educated with other bright students.
<b>Mover Mary.</b> We are moving house this year so that we will be in the catchment area of an outstanding school					<b>Stay put Susan.</b> We cannot afford to move and it is important that Sam stays with the friends he has made at the local primary school
<b>Secular Shavan.</b> We are looking for a school that promotes moral values but not religious faith.					<b>Religious Richard.</b> We are looking for a faith school that reflects our religious beliefs
<b>Outstanding Oswald.</b> We are looking for a school judged outstanding by inspectors with good exam results.					<b>Caring Clive.</b> We are looking for a caring school where student happiness and all round development is valued more than exam results
<b>Specialist Sarah.</b> I want to be an engineer and it is important I go to an a specialist STEM academy.					<b>Generalist Geraldine.</b> I want to keep my options open so it is important I go to a school with a wide and varied curriculum.
<b>State Susan</b> We want our son to attend a state school. We do not believe in private education.					<b>Private Parveen</b> We are paying for our son to attend a private school where they get better results.
<b>Democratic Duncan.</b> I want to go to a school where students, parents and local politicians have a real say in how the school is run.					<b>Academy Alan.</b> I want to go to a school run by an academy chain. These chains are run by expert managers.

School	Location Postcode	Average house price thousands	Social Grades AB %	Social Grades DE %	Number of pupils at end of KS4	Progress 8 score	Attainment 8 score	Grade C or better in English & Maths	Achieving the English Bacc %
Bedford Academy	MK42 9TR	227	8	39	175	0.41	49.6	55	3
Bedford Free School	MK42 9AD	227	19	34	95	0.32	48.6	65	12
Biddenham Upper School and Sports College	MK40 4AZ	296	61	11	220	-0.01	45.2	50	6
Hastingsbury Business and Enterprise College	MK42 7EB	227	6	48	147	-0.38	41.4	42	13
Mark Rutherford School	MK41 8PX	295	45	8	281	0.14	50.9	58	23
Sharnbrook Upper School	MK44 1JL	467	62	3	395	0.32	56.2	74	31
St Thomas More Catholic School	MK41 7BD	295	44	3	198	0.52	52.1	65	21
Wootton Upper School	MK43 9HT	357	27	8	320	-0.07	48.9	58	16
All state funded schools in England					540,656	-0.03	49.9	63	25

	Number of heads of households	Social grades AB %	Social grades DE%
Bedford Borough urban	33,434	21	29
Bedford Borough rural	14,210	32	14
Bedford Borough total	47,644	25	24

**Activity Sheet 2.2 Performance of state funded secondary schools in Bedford Borough and social composition of the Borough's population.**

## **Activity Sheet 2.3**

## **Secondary schools in Bedford Borough**

Bedford Borough consists of the towns of Bedford and Kempston and surrounding villages such as Wootton and Sharnbrook. Bedford is a unitary authority around 60 miles north of London and many residents commute to London to work. Bedford's population is ethnically mixed and it has some areas of significant social deprivation. The social composition (social grades) of rural and urban wards is shown on sheet 2.2 while 2.4 shows social deprivation in urban wards. In the 2011 census Asian/Asian British were the second largest ethnic group, contributing 15% of all 10 to 14 year olds.

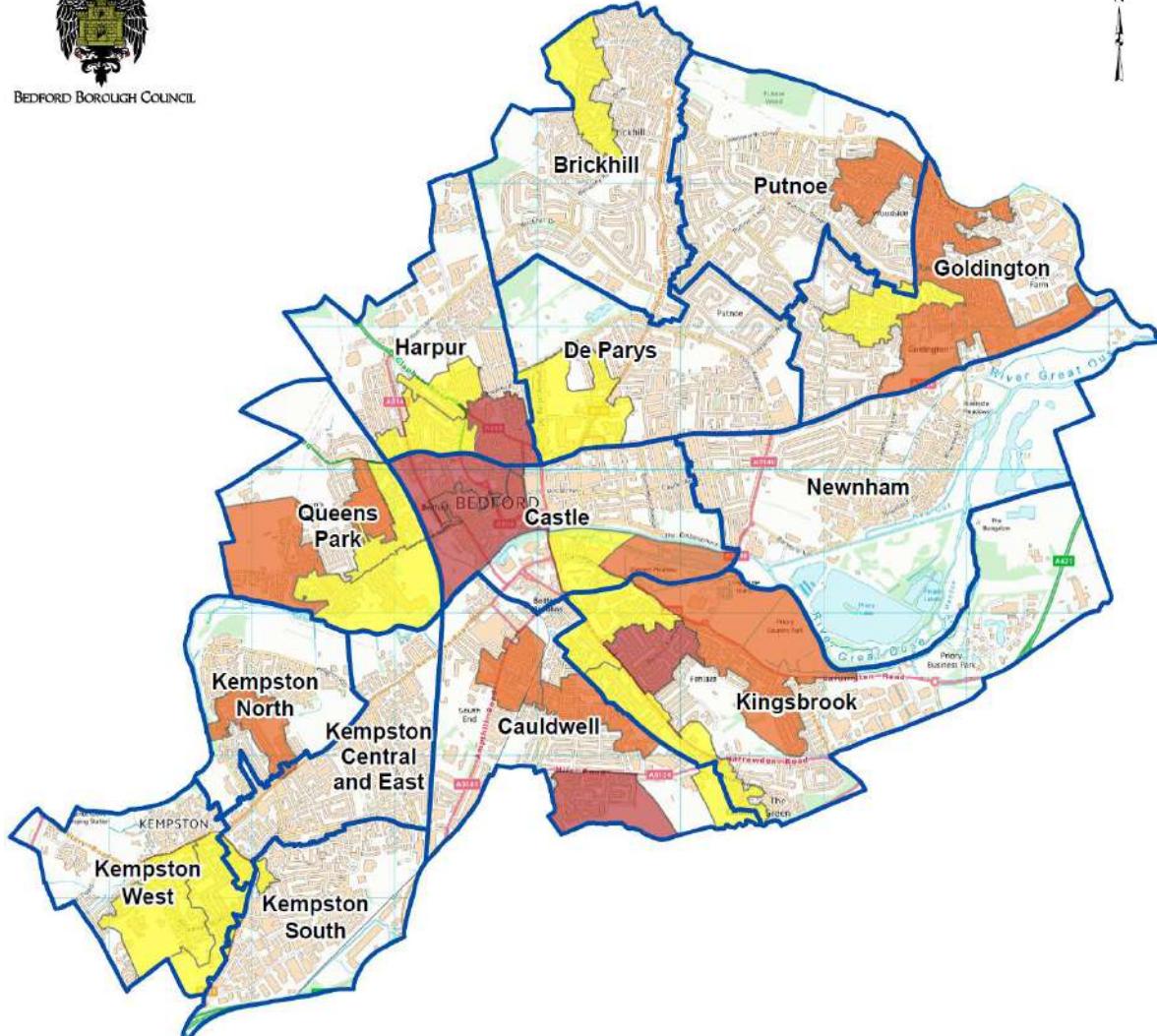
In 2017 schools in the borough were being reorganised, moving from a three tier system with lower, middle and upper schools to a two tier primary/secondary system. Admissions were complex with some upper schools giving a degree of preference to pupils from feeder middle/primary schools and the religious school, St Thomas More, giving preference to catholic pupils. Bedford also has three independent, fee-paying, secondary schools run by an educational charity, the Harpur Trust. They draw pupils from within and outside the Borough, including overseas, and have around 380 16 year olds on roll. Of the schools listed on the data sheet Biddenham and Hastingsbury were maintained schools at the time the data was collected, the rest were academies. In September 2017 Hastingsbury Upper became Kempston Challenger Academy.

The data on social grades within a school's postcode should be interpreted cautiously. Biddenham Upper School, for example, is on the edge of the high class suburb (former village) of Biddenham, but draws many of its pupils from Queens Park, a part of the town which is less privileged and contains many families of Asian origin. Bedford Free School was established in 2012, and takes some pupils whose parents were dissatisfied with education in Kempston.

The influence of social grade (social class) and house price on school attainment is best seen in relation to Sharnbrook and Wootton Upper Schools. Originally built to take pupils from rural areas, these schools now educate significant numbers of pupils who are bussed in from Bedford. Bedford Academy and Hastingsbury Upper have the most lower social grade households, and cheapest house prices, in their postcodes and this appears to correlate with lower attainment 8 and GCSE English and Maths scores and fewer pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate. Note however, that Bedford Academy has a progress 8 score well above the average for England.



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Miles Kilometres  
1 2.5 1.43500

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2015.

Bedford Borough has 5 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which fall within the 0-10% most deprived areas in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015. These are located in Castle (2), Cauldwell, Harpur, and Kingsbrook wards. There are a further 9 LSOAs within the 10-20% most deprived areas, and 11 LSOAs within the 20-30% most deprived. All 25 of these LSOAs are located in Bedford or Kempston Towns.

#### IMD National Ranking

0 - 10% most deprived
10 - 20%
20 - 30%
All Others

Ward Boundary

## Activity Sheet 2.4 Areas of Multiple Deprivation in Bedford Borough

## References

### Data sources for Figure 2

**House prices.** Average price as shown on Zoopla in May 2017. These average prices are for postcodes MK40, MK41, MK42 etc, hence the same average price for areas surrounding three schools in MK42.

**Social Grade.** % of head of households below the age of 64 in occupational categories A & B (higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, or professional) and D & E ( semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, those on state benefits/unemployed and lower grade workers). Data based on postcodes provided by streetcheck, and based on labour market statistics.

**School performance data** is from <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/compare-schools>

### Progress 8

This score shows how much progress pupils at this school made between the end of key stage 2 and the end of key stage 4, compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2. This is based on results in up to 8 qualifications, which include English, maths, 3 [English Baccalaureate](#) qualifications including sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages, and 3 other additional [approved qualifications](#).

The average Progress 8 score for 'mainstream' schools in England is 0. Mainstream schools are schools that aren't special schools or 'alternative provision settings' (for example pupil referral units). Most schools score between -1 and +1. If a school scores +1 and above, it shows that pupils made exceptionally good progress. If the score is below -0.5, the school may come under increased scrutiny and receive additional support.

A score above zero means pupils made more progress, on average, than pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

### Attainment 8

Schools get a score based on how well pupils have performed in up to 8 qualifications, which include English, maths, 3 [English Baccalaureate](#) qualifications including sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages, and 3 other additional [approved qualifications](#)

## Achieving the English Baccalaureate

The [English Baccalaureate](#) is not a test or qualification; it is a measure used to provide information about a particular range of qualifications. A pupil is considered to have ‘achieved’ the English Baccalaureate if they got a grade C or better in the following subjects: English, maths, sciences, a language and either history or geography.

**Social Grade of Heads of Households in Bedford Borough** from  
<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

**Neighbourhood statistics** from the 2011 census date are available at

[http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadAreaSearch.do?  
a=7&r=1&i=1001&m=0&s=1493637120634&enc=1&areaSearchText=MK40+  
%A3SE&extendedList=false&searchAreas&nsjs=true&nsck=false&nssvg=false  
&nswid=1920](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadAreaSearch.do?a=7&r=1&i=1001&m=0&s=1493637120634&enc=1&areaSearchText=MK40+%A3SE&extendedList=false&searchAreas&nsjs=true&nsck=false&nssvg=false&nswid=1920)

Information on social deprivation in Bedford is available at:

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/bedford\\_borough\\_jsna/wider\\_determinants/deprivation.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/bedford_borough_jsna/wider_determinants/deprivation.aspx)

All data retrieved from websites listed in May 2017/

Bedford’s school transfer booklet can be downloaded from  
[https://www.bedford.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/schools\\_and\\_colleges/secondary\\_admissions/transfer\\_to\\_secondary\\_school.aspx](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/secondary_admissions/transfer_to_secondary_school.aspx)

Graphic on title page is from

[http://neoliberalismeducation.pbworks.com/w/page/50187279/CURRENT%20  
RESEARCH%20ABOUT%20NEOLIBERALISM%20AND%20MARKETIZATION%20IN%20EDUCATION#NeoliberalisminEducationIdeologyandPrinciples](http://neoliberalismeducation.pbworks.com/w/page/50187279/CURRENT%20RESEARCH%20ABOUT%20NEOLIBERALISM%20AND%20MARKETIZATION%20IN%20EDUCATION#NeoliberalisminEducationIdeologyandPrinciples)

## Chapter 3

### Students, teachers, alienation and happiness

*I am a year 11 student who is currently sitting their GCSE examinations. Many people I know suffer from depression and anxiety, we lose sleep, we don't want to wake up in the mornings and we are afraid to walk into the exam rooms.*

*We are told over and over again that if we do not achieve level 7 or above we will not be able to progress in the future. I am not very academic and my skills are in the creative arts. However, my passion for those things is taken away when I have to sit a written drama exam for 40% of my grade.*

*What are we teaching the younger generation by forcing year 11s to sit these exams? We are teaching them that the only way to achieve their dreams or be successful in what they want to do is by getting amazing GCSE results.*

*Please, our voices are not being listened to. GCSEs damage our perception of ourselves beyond belief. If the government refuses to hear the people sitting the exams, maybe it will listen to the Guardian. Thank you.*

Fiona Doyle (1)

*Intensely collaborative processes of curriculum enactment are adopted by teachers as a way of coping with ‘performance’ pressure which threatens to ‘squeeze out’ time and space to think about geography in the curriculum. This is somewhat alienating for the individual, who might ask ‘where do I fit in?’ or ‘who am I in all this?’ The research finds that committed geography teachers are indeed asking these questions (albeit implicitly) and turning to their personal identities as geography teachers as a form of resistance to the threat of overwhelming power from society ‘outside’ controlling their lives and work as geography teachers. David Mitchell (2) p. 160*

*How do we slow down? This is what I am thinking a lot about. It feels like every time we slam our foot on the accelerator market “business as usual” or “back to normal!, the virus surges back and says “slow down”. Naomi Klein (3) p. 6*

In 2018 Fiona Doyle was among the first cohort of students to take the new harder GCSE examinations introduced by Michael Gove when he was education secretary. These made it more difficult to achieve the top levels, excluded coursework, and put a premium on English Baccalaureate subjects, including geography, thought to be favoured by universities. A product of the reforms outlined in the previous chapter, the examinations damaged many of the

students who sat them and contributed to what the National Children's Bureau termed a '[mental health crisis in our classrooms](#)' (4).

Mitchell's research (2) examined how teachers in four secondary geography department enacted the curriculum in the face of the pervasive forces of what he terms 'late capitalism' (neoliberalism). He found a tension between the teachers' potential agency to make a geography curriculum and the controlling socio-economic climate of accountability and performance pressure linked to educational reforms. Teachers' coping strategy is to work together both at school level and in wider virtual and unidentified communities. Curriculum enactment has become 'hyper-socialised' in a 'speeded-up' world (p. 169). Note Mitchell's use of the phrases 'alienating for the individual' (in the quote at the head of the chapter) and 'speeded up world'.

This chapter seeks to interpret student and teacher unhappiness using the [Marxist theory of alienation](#) (5) as applied to education and the [critical theory of social acceleration](#) (6) as developed by Rosa. After introducing the Marxist theory and its six overlapping concepts, it examines evidence that students and teachers are alienated and considers their responses and those of school managers and policy makers. The mainstream response is what Davies (7) terms the 'happiness industry' that prompts the teaching of happiness and well-being in schools. The chapter argues that this is an inadequate and flawed response, too focused on the individual. The critical response is to explore the social causes of unhappiness and the social changes needed to promote happiness or end alienation.

A critical school geography that includes a focus on the geography of happiness is one way of doing this. Rosa maintains that the speeding up of social life leads many to experience the world as indifferent or repulsive to their true needs, and suggests that the solution lies in changed forms of development that allow the self and the world to resonate with one another. The increased resonance which some people experienced during the lockdown associated with coronavirus in 2020, suggests a more humanistic school geography that fosters resonance; examines the factors that make some societies happier than others; and pays attention to both the cognitive and affective domains of learning.

Students and teachers are unhappy or happy (alienated or not) to varying extents and for varying reasons. Hence the curriculum should draw on [intersectionality theory](#) (8) to acknowledge the different identities and personal geographies that

students bring to the classroom and ways of using these as a resource to discover similarity and develop solidarity by starting from difference. Teenagers are more attracted to identity and single issue based politics than traditional forms of electoral politics and studying the [geography of happiness](#) (9) can encourage them to reflect on the latter as they acknowledge the role of the state in promoting happiness by promoting equality and citizens' welfare.

The geography of happiness suggests that in Scandinavian countries, with a different culture and an alternative form of capitalism, citizens and school students are happier. The associated curriculum unit focuses on SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and GCE topic 3 (underlying assumptions and power dynamics) by examining Finland: the reasons why citizens report higher levels of happiness and well-being, and the role of schooling in fostering these.

### **Alienation and schooling**

Reference has already been made to [alienation](#) (5) in the context of postcapitalism, where it was contrasted with useful doing (page 15). Marx's thesis was that the way in which people relate to one another in capitalist societies denies them their true human nature. While they are naturally communal and co-operative, the economic organisation of capitalism, based on private property and competition, thwarts these tendencies. The result is their general impoverishment and disempowerment, a condition that Marx termed alienation (estrangement from the world). Instead of controlling and developing in common the products of their manual and mental labour (useful doing), most people find the reverse to be the case. The products come to control them as they are subject to the unpredictable movements of markets, dependent on the cash economy, and governed by economic and political elites. Students and teachers are alienated by processes at work both within schools (10) and in the wider society.

[Kesson](#) (11) outlines the development of ideas on alienated labour in the work of Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx, and uses six related and overlapping concepts (Figure 3.1) to explain the comments of her graduate students about their work in Brooklyn schools. She claims that in this poor, multi-cultural neighbourhood, neoliberal educational reform is serving to deskill teachers leaving little opportunity for reflection, creativity and professional growth. One result is that teachers serve as role models of alienated labour rather than models of the professional workers that students need and deserve.

<b>Deskilling</b>	The teacher loses autonomy or control over the curriculum and pedagogy. Curriculum planning and delivery are increasingly separated with school managers, exam boards, inspectors, and ultimately the government having increased power over teachers' work. Deskilling is used to ensure uniformity of thinking and marginalise critical thinking.
<b>Proletarianisation</b>	To the extent that teachers lose control of the labour process and lack autonomy in the work place, they are moved from the professional middle class to the working class. This process is enabled by a distinct class of school managers who play by bureaucratic rules and have power to monitor, sanction or promote teachers.
<b>Objectification</b>	The student becomes an object or commodity to be schooled in ways that ensure the highest possible test score or exam grade. Schools become 'exam factories' with assembly line production, unable to respond to the desires and needs of their students. School work becomes an 'alien object' produced under pressure, often entirely unrelated to what students already know and value.
<b>Intensification</b>	The pace and timing of teachers' work is speeded up or accelerated to accommodate new production demands linked to educational reforms. Teachers are required to deliver rising standards; deliver a growing number of school policies; and maintain the interest of ever more discerning students who can learn from an expanding range of media available outside school.
<b>Reification</b>	Rather than being made by a professional teacher taking account of the needs of students and community, and the potentials of the subject, the curriculum becomes a thing in the form of a textbook, exam syllabus, or a worksheet downloaded from the internet. Teachers and students then behave according to the logic of these 'things' – if content is unlikely to come up in the exam then it is not worth teaching or learning.
<b>Resistance</b>	Teachers engage in conscious and unconscious attempts to challenge the dominant / hegemonic beliefs and values of society with acts aimed at social and cultural transformation. Critical teachers draw on critical approaches to their subject and critical pedagogy underpinned by critical social theory.

**Figure 3.1 Six concepts relating to alienation and education** Based on (11)

As regards school students, alienation results from an often authoritarian regime in which students are required to follow an imposed academic curriculum which some find boring, and complete tasks that some find meaningless. Many are emotionally damaged by competitive individualism, constant testing, and labelling as failures, with low achievers having the lowest levels of well-being. Working class students are over-represented amongst low achievers; tend to be

in the lower sets where streaming exists; and are generally found in ‘less good’ schools with less experienced teachers. Their culture, knowledge and ways of learning are rarely acknowledged with the result that they are more like to misbehave and more likely to be temporarily or permanently excluded than their middle class peers (12). Student alienation is related to the concepts of objectification; intensification, and reification in Figure 3.1 and their resistance takes the form of disruptive behaviour and/or attempts to realise a more relevant curriculum.

Teachers are alienated or made unhappy to varying extents by all five of the processes listed in Figure 3.1 and their resistance takes the form of seeking fulfilment through their subject and subject community; engaging in trade union or other political activity; seeking compensatory happiness in their life outside school; moving to a school with fewer ‘problems’ (including international schools abroad); or leaving the profession.

As noted above, unhappiness results from lives lived both within and outside schools. It is to the external sources of student unhappiness we now turn since unhappiness originating beyond the school is brought into the classroom.

### **UK teenagers’ unhappiness**

In April 2015 an OECD report *Students’ Well Being* (13) linked to its Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) suggested that school students in the UK were among the least happy in the world. Asked to rate their life on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the worst possible life and 10 means the best, UK students came 37<sup>th</sup> out of 47 countries with a mean score of 7.0 against an all country mean of 7.3. Pupils in eastern Asian countries who were top performers in the PISA tests – such as those in China and Japan – were all less happy than those in the UK. The Dominican Republic had the happiest students.

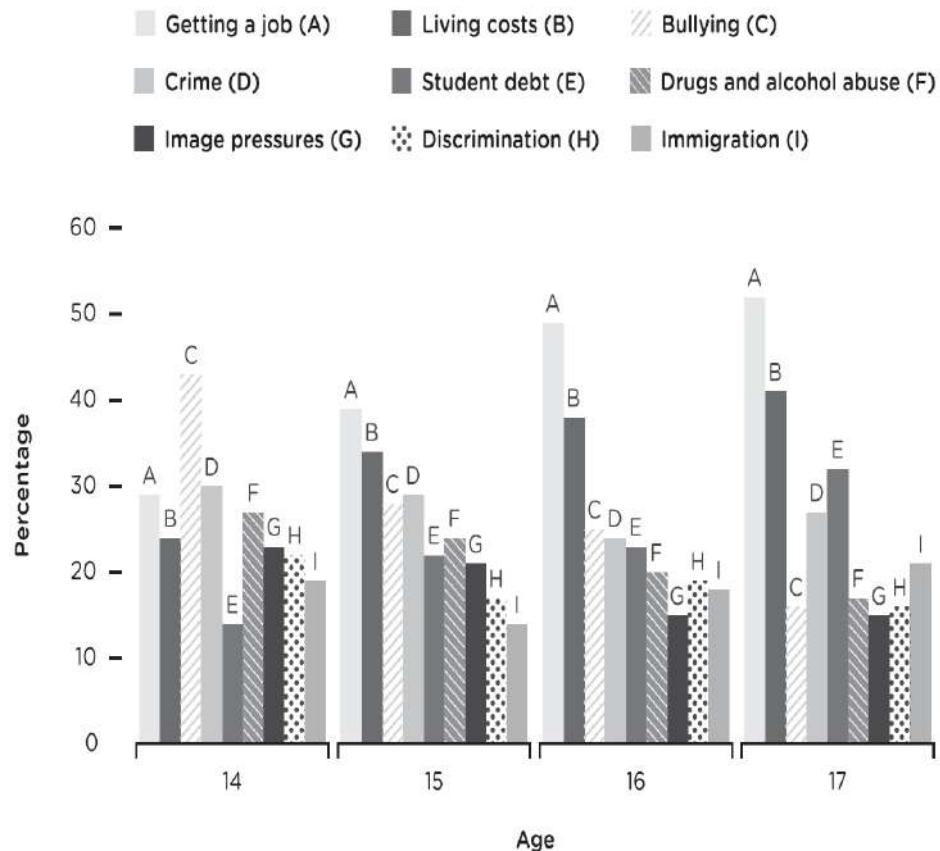
Further evidence that many UK teenagers are unhappy is provided by the Children’s Society’s *Good Childhood Report* (2018) (14). It examines the impact of multiple disadvantage on children and young people’s happiness, with the one million 10 to 17 year olds facing 7 or more of the 27 serious problems identified being ten times more likely to be unhappy than those with none. Disadvantages are grouped into four categories: parent-child relationships; family / household factors; material factors; and neighbourhood factors. Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of UK children and the estimated

number of 10 to 17 year olds affected by a sample of the disadvantages in the latter categories. The report shows a linear relationship between multiple disadvantage and children's reported level of subjective well being. 29% of children with seven or more disadvantages report low well-being. England ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 14 countries for life satisfaction and 11<sup>th</sup> for feelings of happiness and feeling positive about the future.

Type of disadvantage	% of children	Estimated population of 10 to 17 year olds experiencing disadvantage in UK
Debt. Household has problem debt.	29.9%	1,7000.000
Child poverty. Equivalised income is less than 60% of median household income.	15.1%	850,000
Destitution. Family has used a food bank.	8.5%	450,000
Homelessness. Family has been homeless.	6.9%	400,000
Overcrowding. Child shares room.	10.4%	600,000
Safety of neighbourhood. Worried about two or more crimes/anti-social behaviours happening.	37.8%	2,200,000

**Figure 3.2 A sample of the disadvantages reported in the Good Childhood Report (6) p. 9**

*Introducing Generation Citizen* (15) a report from Demos commissioned by the National Citizenship Survey, drew on a representative survey of a thousand teenagers aged 14 to 17, three focus groups with teenagers and three focus groups with teachers, carried out in 2013. It examined the issues that most concerned teenagers. Figure 3.3 shows that as they get older concerns over getting a job and living costs steadily increase. For 14 and 15 year olds, image pressures and bullying are the biggest issues but by the time they are 17, student debt is one of the biggest issues. *Rates of anxiety and depression* amongst teenagers have increased by 70% in the last 25 years (16). . *Choose Childhood* (17) a report from Action for Children in 2019, claimed that 53% of 16 year olds were worried about their mental health with schoolwork and exams being their top concern followed by falling out with friends.

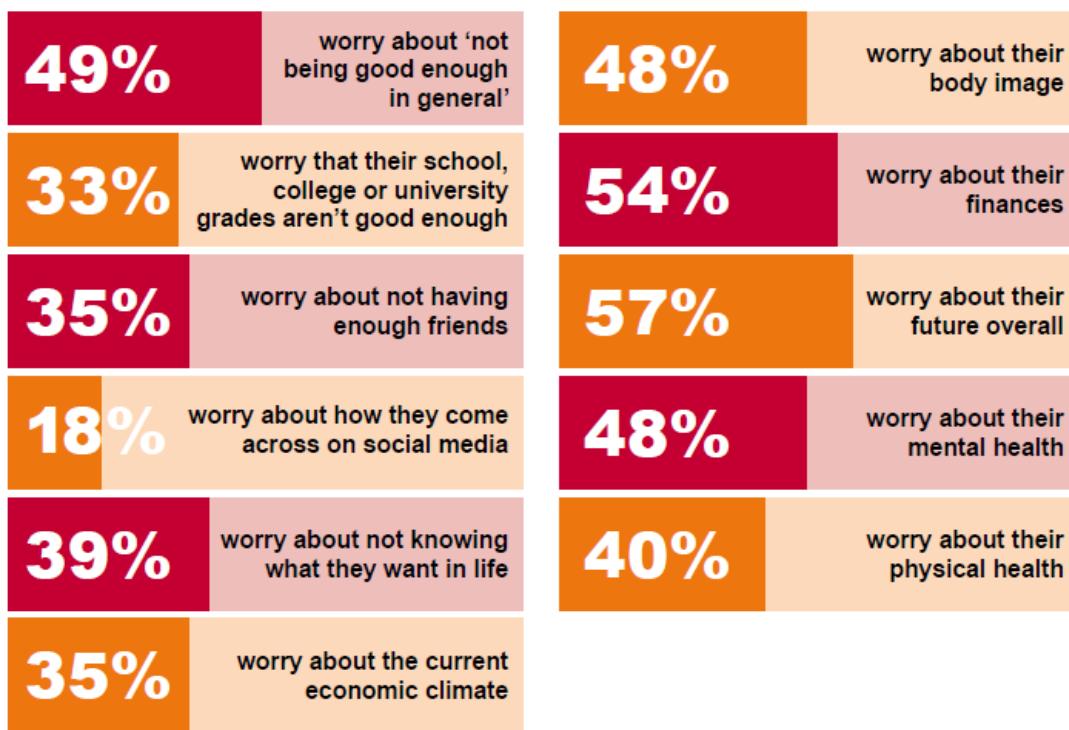


**Figure 3.3 The top social issues of concern according to teenagers 14 - 17 (7) p. 64**

Covid-19 disrupted the education and lives of all teenagers with those already marginalised and disadvantaged becoming more so. [Young Minds](#) (18) surveyed its impact on those with mental health issues, finding that it had worsened symptoms, increased feelings of loneliness and reduced support for the majority, with only 11% reporting that their mental health had improved during the crisis.

### UK young people's happiness

Moving from children and teenagers to young people aged 16 to 25, the Prince's Trust commissions an online survey each year to measure their happiness and confidence about different areas of their lives. In 2018 the resulting [Youth Index](#) (19) was at its lowest level since the survey started in 2008 with respondents worried about employment, education and money, and challenged by a highly competitive labour market and the rising costs of both housing and higher education (Figure 3.4). Such concerns are transmitted to younger siblings still at school.



**Figure 3.4 Concerns expressed by young people (16 to 25) on being asked what they worry about (19)**

The [Trust's 2019 report](#) (20) highlighted the role of social media in encouraging young people to compare themselves with others online, a habit that intensifies insecurities and instabilities and may lead to despair (Figure 3.5). It also reported that nearly two thirds of young people (65%) always or often felt stressed

Over half (57 per cent) of 16 to 25 year-olds say that social media creates an overwhelming pressure to succeed  
 Nearly half (46 per cent) think that comparing their lives to others on social media makes them feel "inadequate"  
 Two in five (41 per cent) young people feel more confident online than they do in person  
 A third (32 per cent) think that social media makes them feel like they can have a voice for their generation to influence positive change  
 Sixty per cent of young people find it difficult not to compare their lives to others online  
 Nearly half (48 per cent) say they feel more anxious about their future when seeing the lives of their friends online

**Figure 3.5 Life Online, compare and despair (20)**

## **Young people, austerity and intergenerational inequality**

The concerns of teenagers and young people remind us that they have grown up in age of austerity and borne the brunt of cuts to public spending. [Funding of services for children and young people in England](#) fell by almost a third between 2010 and 2019 (the equivalent of £3bn) with cuts to children's centres, youth clubs, and other services supporting families (21). [Spending per pupil](#) in English schools fell by 8% between 2010 and 2016 (22) and [austerity](#) also led to the ending of the educational maintenance allowance and cuts to advice and support, mental health, leisure, and disability services for young people (23) (24) . [Reform of welfare benefits](#) left an increasing number of families and children in poverty (25) yet [individualisation](#) (26) fostered by neoliberalism, encourages teenagers and young adults to face [risk society](#) (27) alone. They must negotiate their own way in a [global network society](#) ((28) and chapter seven) where social media offer both key resources for identity construction and political participation and a means of social control.

School students learn from their older siblings (generation left (29)) that the chances of getting a 'good' job, finding somewhere to live, and attaining a standard of living comparable to that of their parents and grandparents are slim. Millennials (born between 1981 and 2000) risk becoming a 'jilted generation' (30) with some commentators suggesting that baby boomers, born in the decade after WW2, have 'stolen their future' (31). The most severe symptom of this is [environmental breakdown](#) (32) with biodiversity loss and climate change accelerating since 1945 (chapter six).

Recent Conservative governments have been charged with implementing socialism for the old and capitalism for the young (33) with the result that the intergenerational contract has been broken; [intergenerational inequality](#) has increased (34); and [social mobility](#) has declined (35). Working class young adults who are denied the benefits of 'the bank of mum and dad' are particularly hard hit and over-represented amongst those [not in employment, education or training \(NEETS\)](#) (36).

In 2018, [the Intergenerational Commission](#) proposed a new generational contract (37) with radical proposals to rebalance the economy between baby boomers and millennials and redistribute wealth between generations. These require an active state prepared, for example, to raise taxes on property and corporations and put new obligations on employers and richer pensioners.

While the proposals had the support of business leaders and trade unions, the history of such think tank reports suggests that it is unlikely to lead to significant change. Milburn (29) argues that solidarity between the generations requires the ending of the hold of private property ownership on the old and precarity (chapter five) on the young. The provision of basic income / services for all would facilitate a realignment of what are essentially class interests: social security in both youth and old age with the old offering their free time to support the young and the young offering social contact (sociality) to counter the currently all too common isolation and loneliness of old age.

The [coronavirus crisis](#) (38) impacted most severely on those already disadvantaged by austerity and the severe recession likely in its wake will impact on young people's employment prospects and may further widen intergenerational inequality.

### School students' resistance

Students' resistance to schooling takes the form of disruptive behaviour and efforts to secure a more relevant curriculum. Some would claim there is little evidence of alienation in schools. Student satisfaction is high, classroom behaviour is good, and permanent exclusions at a low level. Others would disagree.

People who are alienated, oppressed, exploited or discriminated against, including school students and teachers, may report that they are happy due to a state of [false consciousness](#) (39). They have not experienced alternative ways of organising society and schooling and would rather assume happiness than face up to the truth of their unhappiness, a phenomena that should be taken into account when considering reported levels of student and teacher satisfaction with schooling.

A somewhat dated [Department for Education report](#) (40) found only 4% of secondary students dissatisfied with their school. and among its findings was that 'satisfaction levels are high in schools that actively seek, value and act on pupils' views, but the quality of teaching, range of enrichment activities and leadership of the headteacher are among many other factors that correlate strongly with pupils' satisfaction'. Hadyn (41) questions the official assertion that behaviour is satisfactory or better in 99.7% of English schools and suggests ways in which classroom climate might be improved. An [independent review](#) in 2017 (42) that made recommendations on improving school cultures as a route

to improved behaviour, admitted ‘many children are expected to learn in conditions that could be substantially improved’ (p.14). It reports over 75% of teachers considering student behaviour to be good or better, a finding that conflicts with a [NUT commissioned report](#) of 2004 (43) that found ‘most teachers interviewed mentioned classroom disruption as their biggest problem’ (p.16). Television series such as [Educating Essex](#) (44) or the more recent [School](#) (45) support the claim that alienation leading to poor behaviour affects a significant minority of pupils.

For a small minority of students, alienation and associated disruption leads to permanent exclusion. Figure 3.6 (page 104) shows exclusion rates across the UK but the [real number of excluded students](#) may be four or five times greater than the official figures (46). Students are increasingly [‘off-rolled’](#) or taken off the register to improve performance data or are subject to ‘over exclusion’ when schools refuse to deal with their problems (47). Some are [‘internally excluded’](#) by being sent to isolation booths (48).

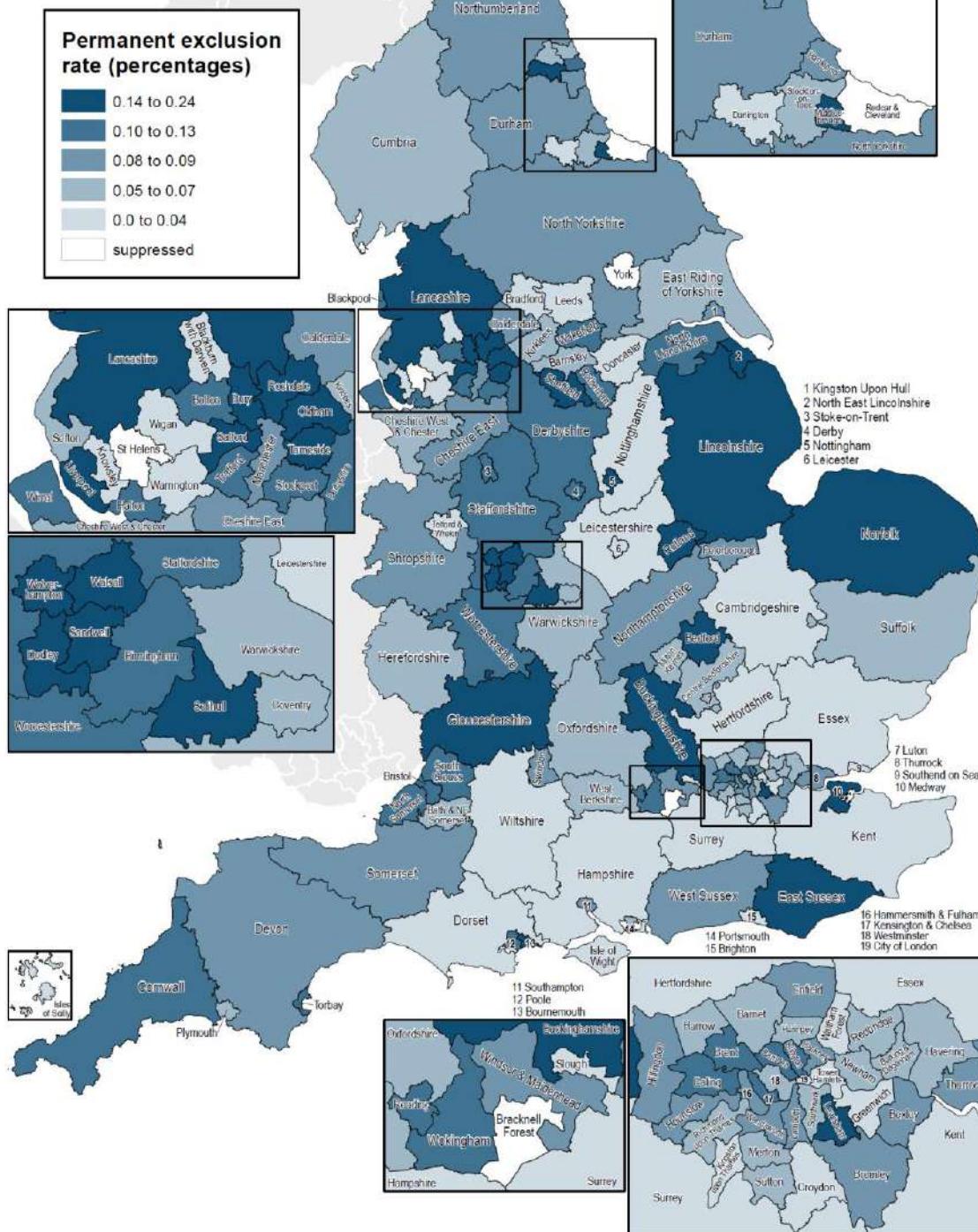
*Excluded children are the most vulnerable: twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and 10 times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems. Yet our education system is profoundly ill-equipped to break a cycle of disadvantage for these young people. (49)*

Of 29 gang members on a north London housing estate, 17 had been permanently excluded from school. Marginalisation resulting from schooling and other factors leads such young men to attempt to make their way in life in the brutal and unpredictable world of the illegal drug trade where research shows the most traumatised and frightened are frequently the most violent (50).

As regards students’ efforts to secure a more relevant curriculum, in 2018 the Youth Parliament was campaigning in England for what it termed [A Curriculum for Life](#) (51). It wanted personal, social and health education (PSHE) in schools to address what all young people needed to actively participate in life: finances, relationships and sex, the political system, cultural awareness and community cohesion, sustainable living and citizenship. It wanted this to be taught by trained teachers, and to be delivered as part of the regular timetable. Not merely as a time filler or random lessons

**Map 1: Permanent exclusion rate by local authority**

England, 2015/16



**Figure 3.6 Permanent exclusion rate by local authority (42)**

In 2019 students were striking over the climate crisis and had formed [Teach the Future](#) (52) to campaign for a government review into how education is preparing them for this and the related ecological crisis (chapter six). Young

people's engagement with identity and formal politics is considered in chapter eight. There the implications for curriculum making of students' increased use of social media to identify with radical movements are considered.

### **Teacher unhappiness**

[A survey of 3,500 members of the Nasuwt in 2015](#) (53) suggested that around 90% of teachers regarded workload as a problem, followed by pay 45%, inspection 44%, curriculum reform 42% and pupil behaviour 40%. Over 65% thought the job affected their mental or physical health and over 80% had reported workload stress. In 2018 a [NEU survey](#) (54) found that 80% of teachers had considered leaving their job in the past twelve months citing workload, lack of support, and poor pupil behaviour among their reasons. Teacher recruitment and retention had become a key policy issue with only 80% of secondary training places being filled. An [Ofsted report](#) in 2018 (55) identified five causes of teacher stress: Ofsted itself; low wellbeing; parents; less than half working week spent teaching; and senior leaders who aren't sufficiently supportive, [NFER statistics](#) from the same year suggest that the secondary school system faced major problems of teacher supply and retention (56). Young teachers are impacted by intergenerational inequality, student debt, and the high cost of living in many parts of Britain.

Teacher unhappiness is linked to the climate of 'performativity' and 'deliverology' (page 66) that accompanies educational reform. Geography teachers are required to produce more data on pupil progress; follow numerous school policies on such issues as teaching and learning, assessment, and safeguarding; obtain good examination results for their students; submit to constant inspection and appraisal by a new managerial class (the senior management team); and sustain the interest and engagement of students who have a wealth of media to educate, entertain and distract them. Geography is the third hardest subject into which to recruit teachers after science and maths; only two thirds of secondary geography teachers have a post A level qualification; and schools serving the lower income communities have less experienced and less qualified teachers, and higher rates of teacher turnover (57).

### **Teacher resistance**

One way in which teachers resist alienation is to take refuge in their subject community. Mitchells' research (2) shows that under the pressures of late capitalism, many geography teachers cope by sharing, borrowing and

‘contracting out’ their curriculum making (relying heavily on the internet) and by turning to their identity as geographers.

*Paradoxically, hyper-socialised curriculum enactment can be alienating for the individual, because the intensely ‘socialised’ nature of curriculum making removes the time and space for geographical curriculum making – described by one teacher in the study as a ‘luxury’.* p.174

Their turn to their subject as a form of resistance to the threat of the ‘overwhelming power of society controlling their lives and work’ means that some adopt a critical geography stance. But he finds the teachers in the four departments he visited are generally ‘somewhat ambivalent with respect to handling change’. Much of the curriculum is recycled, shared and re-used and resort to geographical identity in changing times ‘does not always translate to driving curriculum change’ p. 175

Given the pressures of recent years, one might expect an increase in the number of geography teachers who adopt critical geography identities; express an interest in democratic socialist education; and rediscover the case for more integrated forms of curriculum with relaxed classification and framing of educational knowledge (see chapter four). The contents of GA journals do not suggest such an increase.

## **The Happiness Industry**

Davies (58) notes that the science and business of happiness has come to pre-occupy corporate leaders and politicians in advanced industrial economies. They have pioneered a happiness industry that uses neuroscience, psychology, pharmaceuticals, smart apps, human resources management, and counselling of many kinds to turn happiness into a means of making profit and exercising social control. The industry is dependent on the measurement of happiness and an associated geography of happiness, and is impacting on schools where lessons on happiness and well-being are now more common (59).

Smith (60) provides background on happiness and education, drawing on the work of Richard Layard (61) and Jean Baudrillard, that attributes unhappiness to changes in family structures that increase students’ insecurity and restrict routes to civic engagement; possessive individualism that prompts students to compare themselves unfavourably with others; suburban sprawl that erodes the spatial integrity of communities; and electronic entertainment and social media

that lead to privatised leisure time (62). Declining involvement in associations and civic life also leads to loneliness and the erosion of social solidarity.

Smith concludes by suggesting that happiness is promoted in schools by:

- Caring for the needs of the whole person;
- Promoting opportunities for informal and community learning and adopting a dialogical approach;
- A curriculum that does not alienate students; and
- Easy access to counselling and pastoral provision.

Davies locates the causes of unhappiness in the workings of contemporary surveillance capitalism (63) and its associated technology. Capital now circulates at a faster rate producing a 24/7 culture in which digital devices can track our health, moods, and job performance. Post-industrial (neoliberal, postmodern, late capitalist) consumer culture captures our desires, opinions and values, channels advertising, products and ‘friends’ towards us, requires our psychological and emotional engagement, but creates unrealistic expectations. The result is that many fail to keep up and retire ‘hurt’, withdrawn and mentally depressed. Others strive to keep up and become increasingly stressed and alienated, eventually realising that the dream of affluence is unattainable. The ideas of Smith and Davies overlap and when linked to the ideas about alienation, schooling, austerity and intergenerational inequality explored above, largely explain the concerns and worries of teenagers, and young people.

Rather than turning the issue of unhappiness inwards towards people’s feelings as the happiness industry seeks to do, Davies argues that we should turn it outwards to critique society. Countering alienation by empowering people to rediscover their dignity, exercise judgement, and gain greater control over their lives, is the real solution to unhappiness. Ultimately it is institutions rather than people that should change and he cites research evidence in support his argument that leads to the following generalisations:

- Mental illness correlates very closely to level of economic inequality across society as a whole;
- The nature and availability of work plays a key role in determining happiness as do organizational structures and managerial practices;
- Participatory decision-making and distributed authority foster well-being in workplace;

- Austerity policies lead to deteriorating mental and physical health;
- Work is more fulfilling in non-profits and co-ops;
- People with materialist values who measure their worth in terms of money have lower levels of happiness. Materialism and social isolation are mutually reinforcing.

These generalisations support more sustainable forms of development and critical education that seeks to make schools more comprehensive and democratic; classroom work more enjoyable; teachers more professional; and the curriculum more open to negotiation. They require no student to arrive at school with unmet basic needs; all students' concerns to be recognized and responded to; and schooling to explore alternative forms of social organisation and development that are less materialistic and provide defences against the affluenza virus. (64).

### **Living in Times of Acceleration**

Rosa (6) (65) (66) an accelerationist (67) (page 17) follows earlier critical theorists who have focussed on the downsides of modernity (68), adding theoretical depth to Davies' ideas and offering a response to alienation (the need for resonance) that has implications for school geography. He begins by asserting that a society or institution can be described as modern when its mode of stabilization is dynamic: when it systematically requires material growth, technological acceleration and cultural innovation to reproduce its structure and to maintain the institutional status quo. Acceleration is a requirement of modern society that produces time-space compression (69) (chapter seven) and is seen in the economy (eg. faster delivery); science (faster publication of research); politics (faster redundancy of election promises); art and literature (faster fashions), the art of living (faster lifestyle changes) and education (faster policy changes and curriculum directives).

Accompanying dynamic stabilization is a cultural programme linked to the dream of 'the good life' that fuels social acceleration. Happiness and freedom are to be realized by making more of the world available, accessible, and attainable, a goal that is institutionalized in science, the economy, politics and education. The programme fails (and alienation results) because not all spheres of life can be accelerated at the same pace. Faster systems and groups put pressure on slower ones and four crises arise:

- Ecological – ecological resources and services cannot be renewed at the rate the economy requires;
- Democratic – political decision making cannot keep pace with economic and social change;
- Economic – financial markets move faster than the real economy of production and consumption;
- Psychological - people's psychic dispositions cannot adapt to the speed of social life.

Rosa's solution is a post-growth society beyond dynamic stabilization which does not need to grow, speed up and innovate just to maintain the status-quo. It should still be modern in the sense of being liberal, pluralistic and democratic and should still grow if citizens decide change is needed and desirable. The associated structural and cultural revolutions draw on aspects of democratic and ecological socialism (chapters one and six) such as economic democracy, basic income, and new conceptions of happiness and quality of life, and allow sustainable development and a new left modernity (page 52).

For Rosa the key to realizing such a society is resonance: 'a mode of being in which the self is moved, touched, and 'meant to be' or 'addressed', but also feels capable of reaching out and touching or moving the external world' (p. 300). Alienation and resonance describe difference modes or relationships between self and the world Alienation refers to the first two modes in the following list where the world has lost its propensity to 'resonate' while resonance refers to the third:

1. Indifference – the self is disengaged from an indifferent world which it might seek to use or control while it is subject to its effects. The relationship is instrumental or casual in nature.
2. Repulsive – the subject feels thrown into a remorseless, hostile, cold, inimical and merciless world full of obstacles and dangers.
3. Resonance – the subject experiences the world (or a specific segment of it) as 'answering', responding, or supporting him or her. The relationship is of an intrinsic nature and constitutive of the subject's identity.

In everyday terms a person, place, landscape, lesson, decision, or institution resonates with us if it moves or touches us in a way that triggers an internal 'response' that signifies a benevolent mutual response between self and world.

Such experiences are usually associated with art, nature and religion, are celebrated by [romanticism](#) (70), and are studied by humanistic geographers. The basic tenet of resonance theory is that they can be generalised into modes of existence and thus be used to evaluate and criticise the quality of life and social conditions. Modes of life (such as those experienced by the citizens and school pupils of Finland featured in curriculum unit 3) can thus be measured in terms of their ‘resonability’.

We will return to experiences of resonance when considering eco-pedagogy and the pedagogy of place in subsequent chapters. For the moment it is important to note that they are always and necessarily temporary, transient and fleeting, and cannot be controlled, intensified, accumulated, or brought on by will. The geography curriculum can be planned in ways that optimise the probability of resonance and such planning will be considered in chapter five.

Rosa’s theory risks idealism or the notion that the world can be changed by merely changing our ideas or opening our senses to resonance. Yes, we need to overcome alienation and resonance has a role to play, but it can and is being co-opted by the happiness industry that promise resonance when, for example, we go on a retreat or take a therapy. To be truly critical, it must be linked to the structural and cultural revolutions that Rosa begins to outline. Class conflict is somewhat lacking from Rosa’s theory, yet acknowledging class is key to countering alienation in classrooms. Fisher (71) offers an alternative critical theory of students’ alienation and political disengagement using the concepts of reflexive impotence (‘they know things are bad, but more than that, they know they can’t do anything about it’ p.21) and anhedonia (‘an inability to do anything else except pursue pleasure’ p.22) to explain their classroom behaviour.

### **Living in times of slowdown**

In his book [Slowdown](#) (72) Dorling accuses accelerationists of being naive and failing to take account of the evidence. He argues that human progress has been slowing since 1970 and uses a series of [figures](#) (73) to show deceleration via such indicators as population growth, GDP/capita, income inequality, technological innovation, and the frequency of new social movements (only carbon emissions, the planet’s temperature, flights, and graduate numbers were

accelerating prior to coronavirus). An end to ‘rampant capitalism’ offers a kinder and more sustainable forms of society and politics with [Finland](#) offering ‘a model of a future stable society with remarkably low inequality, remarkably good health, and the lowest infant mortality rate on the planet’ (74). As the world population shrinks and ages, and becomes more aware of the costs of consumerism, there are real prospects for sustainable development and more opportunities for resonance that the Covid-19 pandemic and discussion of the ‘next normal’ served to highlight.

### **Young people’s identities and geographies, acknowledging difference**

Before examining how the geography curriculum can incorporate the geography of happiness together with the contemporary critical ideas about happiness examined above, we need to consider young people’s identities, private geographies, and politics. Subjective feelings of well-being; concerns about personal and social issues; levels of identification with consumer capitalism; political beliefs; and sensitivity to varied forms of resonance are part of students’ identities or the qualities, beliefs, personalities, looks and expressions that make them as persons. Students’ identities are emergent, multiple and hybrid and are best accommodated by a critical or ‘multiculture’ view of multiculturalism (Figure 3.7, page 112).

Different identities and aspects of identity co-exist in classrooms and the geography teacher should find ways of acknowledging these and facilitating communication and solidarity amongst them. A focus on young people’s identities and geographies, rather than those of adults, is seen as a way of making school geography more relevant and less adultist. Hopkin et al (75) explain that young people’s geographies (their ways of understanding and responding to the world which form part of their identities) are shaped by

- **Everyday geo-politics** – the economic and political structures and processes operating at local, national and global scales that shape young people’s everyday lives. Key ideas about geo-politics at the global level are outlined in chapter one, seven and nine. Chapter two examined the local geo-politics of schooling.
- **Intersectionality** – a way of picturing social relations that acknowledges the complexity of young people’s different experiences of

marginalisation, exclusion and oppression and enables the teacher to be attentive to their structural vulnerabilities and social positions.

- **Place** – places offer detailed frameworks (the body, home, institution, neighbourhood, social media, city, nation, etc) for exploring young people's geographies or how they are affected by, engage with and respond to political issues in particular places. See chapter eight.

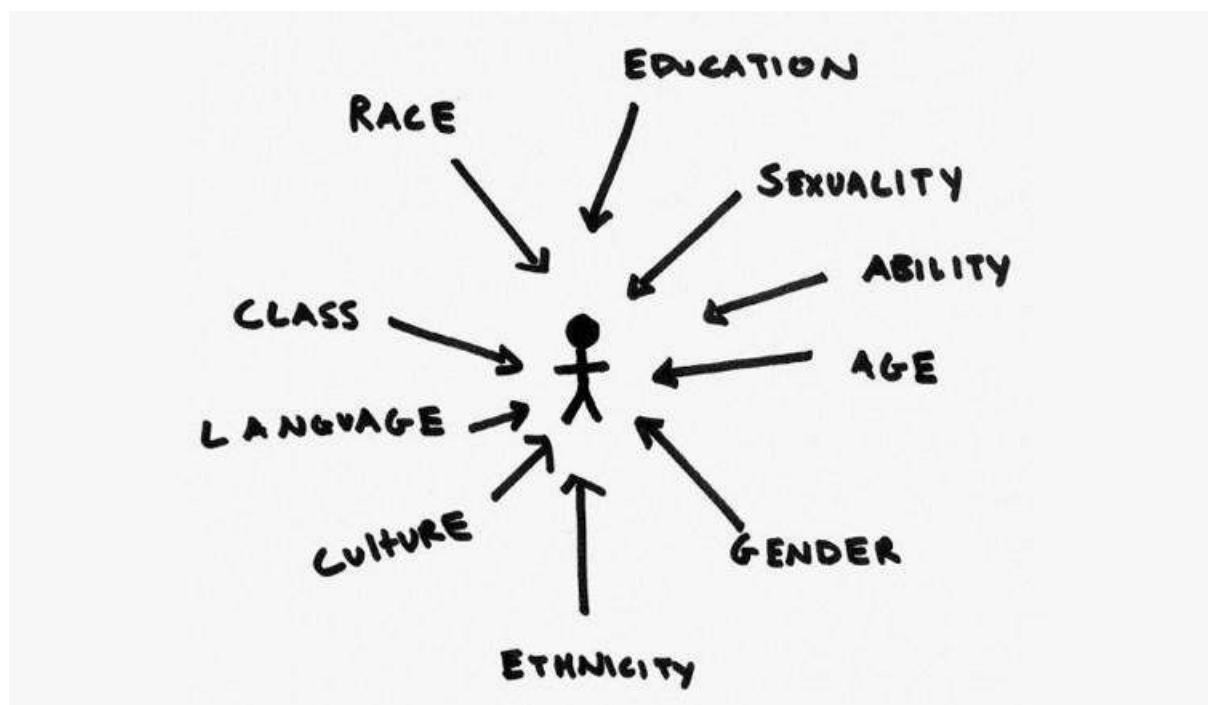
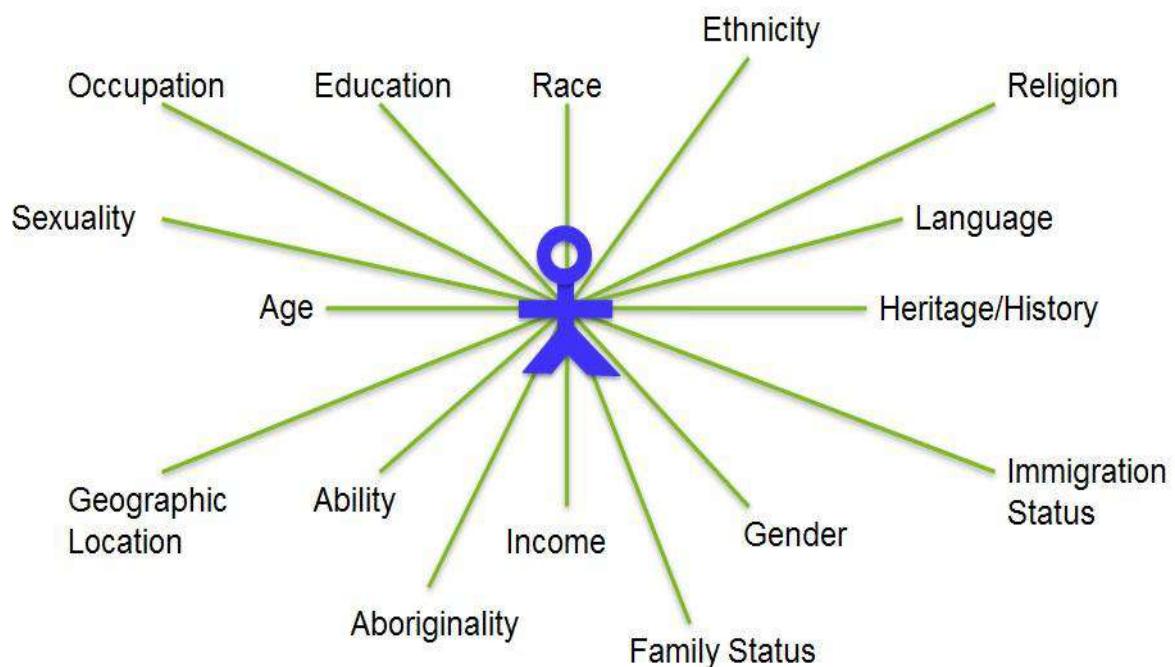
A relational understanding of culture based on interaction between groups (neither 'minority' nor 'mainstream')
No unitary or separate cultures but intercultural fusion or hybridity (creative blending)
Emphasises social relations and cultural practices rather than ungrounded notions of identity
Takes a broad view of 'the political' (transcending boundaries of culture and economy)
Linked to ideas of a progressive or global sense of place
Tendency to romanticise cultural creativity ignoring material conditions of production

**Figure 3.7 A 'multiculture' model of multiculturalism (76) p. 319**

Intersectionality (8) refers to the fact that what are often perceived as disparate forms of oppression, like racism, classism, and sexism, are actually mutually dependent and intersecting and together they compose a unified system of oppression (see Figure 3.8 page 113). The theory originated with black lesbian feminist socialists in Boston during the 1970s and led to the original concept of identity politics: a means of organising people of different identities in a project of universal emancipation devoted to dismantling all of the structures that make them unfree, including and especially capitalism itself.

Intersectionality helps us understand student identities and geographies but Figure 3.8 suggests that there is no consensus on what forms of discrimination/privilege should be considered or what role classism plays in relation to other social classifiers. Social (economic) class is not just another form of inequality and oppression (like age or geographic location) but a

mechanism that produces these conditions and allows diverse individuals and groups to find common cause in fighting economic exploitation.



**Figure 3.8 Two views of intersectionality (others are available) (8) (77)**

In the classroom social classes are intersected not only by gender, ethnicity, sexuality and dis/ability but also by different class factions. Different groups within the same class will position themselves differently. Some white working class boys will for example continue to engage and learn despite being labelled ‘nerds’ by another faction who have switched off and misbehave.

Martin (78) compares object-based (mainstream) and relational (critical) perspectives on identity and offers three models (differences ignored, differences celebrated, and difference the starting point to recognise similarities) that geography teachers have used to cater for difference during recent decades. Her preferred model is one that recognises culture, place and identity to be complex, hybrid and open to otherness, and difference to be the point from which determinations of sameness can be made rather than the other way round. Dialogue in classrooms (see critical pedagogy, chapter 5 and curriculum unit 8) is the means whereby students come to a more complex and deeper understanding of differences within and between cultures; have their assumptions challenged and reformed; and adopt a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective that provides the foundation for solidarity across difference. This involves commitment to universal values, conscientisation (page 59); and unlearning to make possible a perspective that can usefully guide participation in both identity and more traditional forms of politics.

### **The Geography of Happiness and the OECD Better Life Index**

Happiness studies based on purely subjective measures, such as the OECD’s *Student Well Being* report (13) are problematic due to the issue of false consciousness outlined above. To avoid this problem most happiness studies now combine more objective measures (e.g. income level, life expectancy) with some element of subjective assessment (79).

One example in this category is the [Better Life Index](#) (80) launched in 2011 by the OECD. The OECD consists of 35 member and 6 partner countries who are ‘committed to market economies backed by democratic institutions’ and seek to promote ‘better policies for better lives’. The index compares well being across countries based on 11 topics that the OECD has identified as essential in the areas of material living standards and quality of life. Web pages allow visitors to create their own index of well-being by rating the importance of the 11

topics, explore an interactive world map, and download publications and graphics summarising the state of well being in different countries.

Of key importance in terms of ESDGC, is that the country summaries provide an overview of inequalities and [trends in natural, economic, human and social capital](#) (81). These can be used to evaluate whether equality is linked to well-being and whether a country is undergoing sustainable development. The social capital data also gives an indication of [the quality of governance](#) (82) by including measures of trust in national government; voter turnout; and government stakeholder engagement. An alternative to the OECD study is the [World Happiness Report](#) (83)

## The Curriculum Unit

The curriculum unit linked to this chapter involves students exploring the Better Life Index website; comparing the performance of the UK and Finland, and seeking to explain the difference. It is an exercise in comparative political economy as while the UK has adopted a liberal form of welfare capitalism, Finland has sustained a [socially democratic model](#) (84). There are however other environmental, historical, economic and cultural factors that help to explain [why Finns are happier](#) (85) including Finland's more progressive educational system (86).

In focussing on SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and GCE topic 3 (underlying assumptions and dynamics), the unit draws on the work of epidemiologists Wilkinson and Pickett (87) (88) demonstrating that in more unequal countries, outcomes are worse for almost everyone in areas such as public health, education, and social mobility. They support the critical ideas of Davies and Rosa about the costs of contemporary development suggesting we should reduce inequality by increasing economic democracy, redistributing wealth, and moving towards an alternative development model. They also remind us that for 95% of human history, our societies have been ‘assertively egalitarian’.

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## Videos for teachers

[Fundamentals of Marx, Alienation](#) 6 minutes

[Mark Fisher on why modern life causes depression](#) 4 minutes

[William Davies on how the government and big business sold us happiness](#) 20 minutes

[Meet Germany's happiness teachers](#) 3 minutes

[Hermut Rosa on social acceleration](#) 50 minutes

[Conversation with Danny Dorling on Slowdown](#) 35 minutes

[Richard Wilkinson on inequality](#) 17 minutes

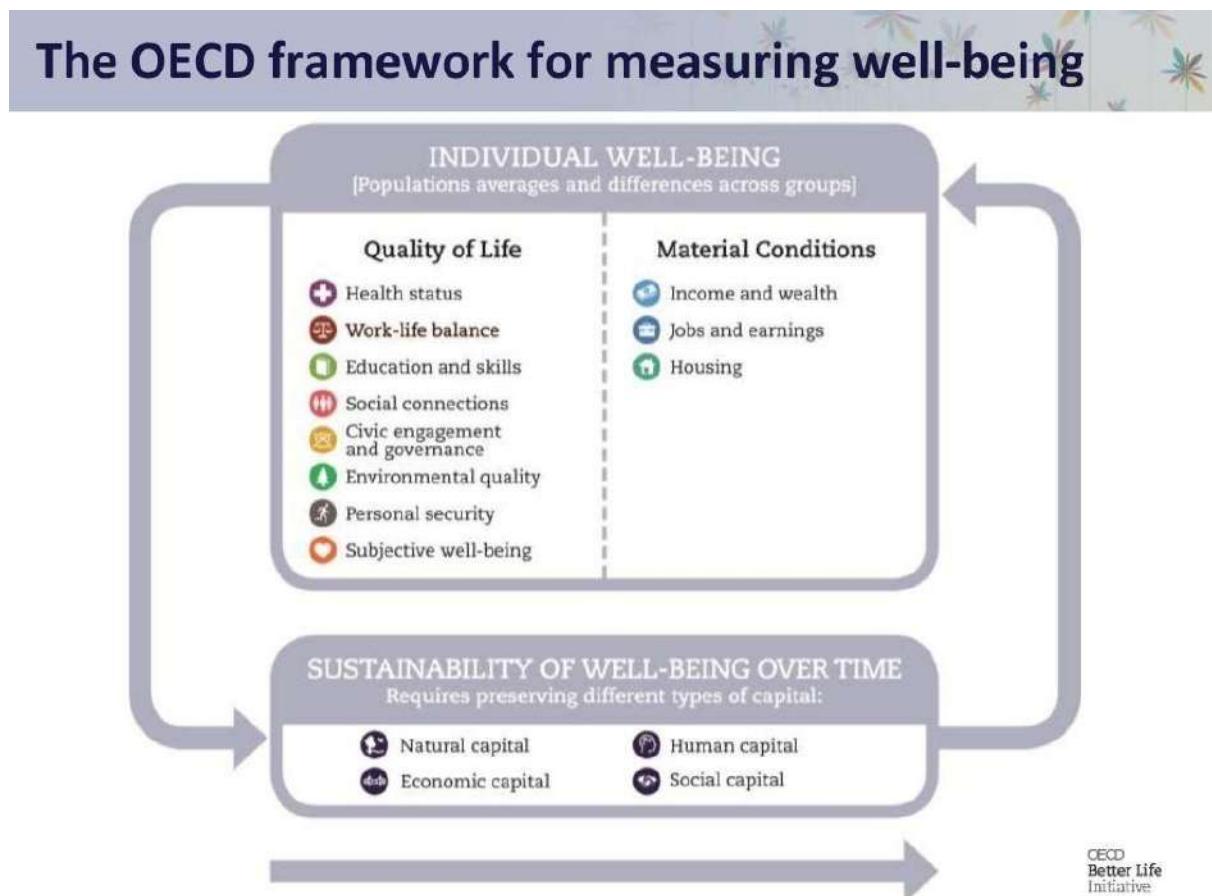
[Polly Toynbee and David Walker make the case for the state and public spending](#) 1 hour 20 minutes



# Curriculum Unit 3

## Happiness and Equality: UK and Finland compared

Students use the OECD Better Life Index to compare and explain differences in happiness in the UK and Finland



*For teachers and students of geography, The Spirit Level provokes a number of further questions. Why are some societies more unequal than others? We need to add to the international comparison of nations a temporal analysis that considers the different historical, economic and political trajectories that have given rise to different dominant economic and social relationships within different countries Grant & O'Hara, Geography, 95/3, 2010, p. 153*

This unit focuses on SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and GCE topic 3 (underlying assumptions and power dynamics).

# **Curriculum Plan**

**Key idea** Societies with a high level of equality are happier.

## **Inquiry questions**

What makes us happy? What indicators should be used in compiling a happiness index (well being or better life index) for countries?

Why are the citizens of Finland happier than those in the UK? What can Finland teach us about creating a happier society with a higher quality of life and a more sustainable form of development?

How can citizens shape liberal democracies so that they deliver higher levels of equality and happiness?

## **Key understandings**

High levels of inequality, poverty and disadvantage are neither necessary nor inevitable. They are integral and necessary parts of capitalist societies but governments can reduce them with welfare policies. To eliminate poverty, inequality and unhappiness, we may need to introduce more radical forms of democracy.

Measuring happiness and comparing levels of happiness in different countries is not easy. The OECD's Better Life index combines subjective and objective measures. Its results show that Finland's citizens are happier than those in the UK. Their society is more equal, provides a higher quality of life, and is undergoing a more sustainable form of development. To explain the causes of happiness / unhappiness we need to consider the different histories, economies, politics and cultures of different countries.

**Key concepts** happiness, inequality, power, democracy, welfare capitalism, social class, social exclusion, austerity, social acceleration, slowdown, lockdown, resonance

**Key values** social justice, democracy, human rights

## **Key skills**

Use of Better Life website to generate own index and interpret country and topic reports. Compare graphics for UK and Finland. Debate what factors account for Finland's superior performance.

## **Learning outcomes**

Students have a deeper understanding of the link between equality and happiness. They are able to explain and evaluate the diverse factors that account for Finland's citizens being happier than those in the UK. They can describe different forms of welfare capitalism and relate these to the policies of different political parties.

## **Learning activities**

Class survey of happiness and concerns. Use of Better Life Index website to compare UK and Finland. Ranking and discussion of factors that may account for Finland's superior performance.

## **Assessment task**

Using graphics from the Good Life website and elsewhere prepare a poster explaining why Finland's citizens are among the happiest in the world

## **Links to Unesco guidance on ESD and GCE**

<b>SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities</b>	<b>Reduce inequality within and among nations</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	The learner understands that inequality is a major driver of societal problems and individual dissatisfaction. The learner understands local, national and global processes that both promote and hinder equality (fiscal, wage, and social protection policies, corporate activities, etc)
Socio-emotional learning objectives	The learner is able to raise awareness of inequalities. The learner becomes aware of inequalities in their surroundings as well as in the wider world and is able to recognize the problematic consequences.
Behavioural learning objectives	The learner is able to identify and analyse different types of causes and reasons for inequalities.
<b>GCE Topic 3</b>	<b>Underlying assumptions and power dynamics</b>
Learning objective (12-15 year olds)	Concepts of equality, inequality, discrimination.

Investigate underlying assumptions and describe inequalities and power dynamics	Factors influencing inequalities and power dynamics and the challenges some people face (Immigrants, women, youth, marginalised populations)
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Suggested topics include: fiscal, wage and social protection policies; historical roots of current inequalities

Example of learning approaches and methods include: develop an enquiry-based project How does inequality influence people's happiness?

## Preparation

Ideally this unit requires students to have individual or group access to computers and the internet.

Familiarise yourself with SDG 10 reduced inequalities, its [aims and related facts and figures](#). The [Equality Trust](#) has information on inequality in the UK.

Read the article 'Spotlight on . . . The Spirit Level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett', Lyndsay Grant & Glen O'Hara, *Geography*, 95/3, 2010, pp.149-153. This provides much of the theoretical background to this unit. Note on page 152 the authors refer to Esping-Andersen's typology of [three forms of welfare capitalism](#). Those that characterise the UK and Finland are liberal and social democratic regimes:

**Liberal** regimes, characterized by modest, [means-tested assistance](#), and targeted at low-income, usually working-class recipients. Their strict entitlement rules are often associated with stigma. This type of welfare state encourages [market solutions to social problems](#) — either passively, by guaranteeing only a minimum, or actively, by [directly subsidizing](#) private welfare schemes

**Social Democratic** regimes, universalistic systems that promote an equality of high standards, rather than an equality of minimal needs. This implies [decommodifying](#) welfare services, to reduce the division introduced by market-based access to welfare services, as well as preemptively socializing the costs of caring for children, the aged, and the helpless, instead of than waiting until the family's capacity to support them is depleted. This results in a commitment to a heavy social service burden, which introduces an imperative to minimize social problems, thereby aligning the system's goals with the welfare and emancipation (typically via [full employment](#) policies) of those it supports

In the UK ‘welfare reform’ has been used, along with use of the terms ‘skivers and strivers’ to mask austerity policies and their impacts on the poor and disadvantaged. Being poor is portrayed as the result of some personal failure rather than bad policy and a social democratic regime as something we cannot afford. Food banks have become normalised and people with disabilities are repeatedly denied benefits.

Also read ‘Free and fair. [How Finland came up with the answers](#)’, Jon Henley, *The Guardian*, 13.02.18, pp. 24-5.

Activity Sheet 3.1 is based on [this article](#) (Finland is the happiest country in the world says UN report, Patrick Collinson, *The Guardian* 14.03.2018) and letters to the editors that it provoked.

Now familiarize yourself with the [\*\*OECD’s Better Life Initiative website\*\*](#) that measures and reports on well being.

At the bottom on this page are the key findings by country. You should download the findings for the [UK](#) and Finland as pdfs that you will need to display on the whiteboard.

Also on [this page](#) is a video ‘How’s Life? Exposes deep well-being divisions’ and a slide show ‘Measuring well-being’ You may wish to watch these.

Now go to [this page](#). Notice on the graphic at the top of the page you can display countries by rank. Finland comes 9<sup>th</sup>, the UK 14<sup>th</sup> (Norway, Sweden and Denmark are all in top 4) (Website visited July 2020).

Create your own better life index on this page and watch the country rankings change to match the parameters in your index. This allows you or a student to find the country that best matches their better life index.

Downloading [the index data](#) from the link on this page allows you to see what statistical data has contributed to the 8 measures of quality of life; the 3 measures of material conditions; and the four measures of sustainability of well-being over time. Note it is possible to customize this date and draw charts from it.

Now go to the countries tab at the top of [the page](#). From there it is possible to download longer summaries of how the UK and Finland perform. Also under topics, you can explore how countries rank on different topics.

[This page](#) compares statistics for the UK and Finland.

## Possible procedure

The unit falls into 3 sections: happiness survey; Better Life website (happiness and inequality); and looking for wider explanations. Each may require several lessons.

### 1 Happiness survey

Begin by asking students to rate their level of happiness or satisfaction with life on a scale from one to ten. Compare their average result with that revealed by [the PISA study](#) cited in chapter three. In 2017 an [OECD survey](#) found that Dutch teenagers were the happiest (Finland 4<sup>th</sup>) The UK did not rank in the top ten.

Discuss with students the validity and reliability of such surveys. Are they really measuring happiness? Would the results be the same if they were carried out at a different time, in different circumstances, with a different sample of teenagers?

Ask the students about concerns or things that make them unhappy: things that distract from their quality of life or their satisfaction with life. Compare their concerns with those of other teenagers outlined in the chapter. What would make their lives happier? What would reduce or take away their concerns?

Consider organising students to design and carrying out a wider survey of pupils in the school, their level of happiness, their concerns, changes they would consider would make them happier. Students then decide how to present and communicate results.

Now read or display three early paragraphs from Henley's article in *The Guardian*:

*Last year (2017) on the centenary of its independence, Finland was ranked by assorted international indices, the most stable, the safest and the best-governed country in the world. It was also the third wealthiest, the third least corrupt, the second most socially progressive, and the third most socially just.*

*Finland's judicial system is the most independent in the world, its police are the most trusted, its banks the soundest, its companies the second most ethical, its elections the second freest, and its citizens enjoy the highest level of personal freedom, choice and well-being.*

*The Nordic country's 5.5 million inhabitants are also the third most gender equal in the world and have the fifth lowest income inequality. Their babies are*

*the least underweight, their kids feel the most secure, and their teens perform the second best at reading.*

Discuss whether the students would like to live in Finland? What do they see as the advantages and disadvantages? Why do they think Finland performs so well on so many indices of quality of life and well being?

## 2 The Better Life website (happiness and inequality)

Introduce the [Better Life website](#). Demonstrate its main features and then allow students to become familiar with its contents and interactive features.

Demonstrate how the site allows visitors to construct their own better life index by weighting the eleven indicators (top right and useful help button). Allow students to experiment. How do the countries rankings change when the indicators are weighted differently? Which indicators are most significant for young people.

Display and discuss the two downloads (How's Life in UK/Finland). These present charts on current well being; resources for the future (kinds of capital); deprivations; gender inequality; inequalities between social groups; and life satisfaction measures. For example those living in relative income poverty (Finland 6%, UK 12%), life satisfaction scores of top 20% as a ratio of scores of bottom 20% (Finland 1.5, UK 2.1).

Focus attention on the pages that focus on inequalities between the top and bottom performing individuals in the two countries (page six). Here is a summary:

	United Kingdom	Finland	OECD average
Household incomes: top performing 20% relative to bottom performing 20%	6.2	5.4	3.8
Share of wealth owned by top 10%	52.0	45.2	51.7
Earnings of top 10% relative to bottom 10%. FT employees.	3.4	3.4	2.6
PISA score for science: top 10% relative to bottom 10%	1.69	1.64	1.67
Life satisfaction: top performing 20% relative to bottom performing 20%	2.1	1.5	2.1

Satisfaction with time use scores:	3.33	2.10	2.78
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top performing 20% relative to bottom performing 20%			
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Note these findings are blind to race, gender and disability. Figures on pages 3 to 5 do allow comparisons of inequalities between men and women, younger and older people, and those with different levels of educational attainment. In both countries there is evidence that middle aged and older people are doing better than younger people (page 4 shows intergenerational inequality).

Introduce students to The Spirit Level and the authors' claims. Do these levels of inequalities support the claim that countries with lower levels of inequality are happier countries? What other data can students find on the Better Life website to support or contradict the claim?

Students might make a similar table showing the two countries performance in relation to the four capitals (natural, human, economic and social) that sustain future well-being. How many indicators does each country have in the top (Finland 6, UK 2) and bottom tiers (Finland 2, UK 5)? How do the four capitals relate to sustainable development? How does sustainable development foster happiness?

Consider introducing students to the concepts of social acceleration and slowdown. How do the satisfaction with time use scores support the idea that more people in the UK are dissatisfied with their use of time (maybe feel rushed and pressured and hence alienated and unhappy) than in Finland?

### 3 Looking for wider explanations

But are other factors at work? Turn to the different historical, economic, and political trajectories of the two countries that have given rise to different economic and social relationships, mentioned by Grant and O'Hara. Turn to the 'power dynamics' (political economy) underpinning welfare policy and provision in the two countries.

Make copies of Activity Sheet 3.1 and cut each into eleven slips of paper each outlining one factor that may explain why Finns are happy.

Read through the factors with the students to ensure comprehension and then divide them into groups to rank the factors according to their significance in explaining why Finns are happy. They could arrange the slips of paper in a pyramid with the most significant factor at the top – 1, 2, 3, 5.

Discuss the results. Clearly other factors besides equality contribute to happiness and well-being in Finland. Clearly the country is not perfect but having a more socially democratic (rather than neoliberal) form of capitalism has benefitted the majority of its citizens.

What are the implications of what we have learnt about Finland and the UK for politics and citizenship? Is it desirable to radically reduce levels of inequality? Is it possible? What kind of democracy and citizenship might accomplish this?

## Possible externsions

### 1      **Schooling in Finland**

Activity Sheet 3.1 suggests that education is a factor to be considered in explaining why Finns are happy. Show the following videos to the class and discuss whether or not they would prefer to attend school in England or Finland.

[Five Reasons Why Finland is a Global Education Leader](#)

[Why Finland has the Best Education, Michael Moore](#)

There are many other videos on the same theme. Wrigley (Activity Sheet 3.2) provides a summary of the features of Finland's national curriculum that may promote happiness.

### 2      **The Shadow of Happiness Report**

In 2018 the Nordic Council of Ministers, an inter-parliamentary group comprised of representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, as well as some autonomous islands, published this report. It grouped people into three categories (thriving, struggling and suffering) based on their self reported life satisfaction (scale of 1 to 10). The populations most likely to be struggling or suffering were the very old (over 80) and the young. 13.5% of 18 to 23 year olds in the Nordic states rated their life satisfaction as less than six out of ten. The primary cause of this discontent, the authors concluded, was the rising rate of youth mental illness. In Finland suicide is responsible for a third of all deaths among 15 to 24 year olds.

In her 2017 book [iGen](#) the American psychologist Jean Twenge attributed the sharp increase in mental illuness among young people to the proliferation of smart phones and the rise of social media. The more time teenagers spent on social media the more likely they are to report feeling unhappy or depressed. Mental illness is complex and there is unlikely to be merely one reason so many

young people worldwide are miserable – or simple solutions. Nevertheless finding ways to protect young people from the harmful effects of digital culture could save lives.

Having been introduced to the findings of the report and the gap between adult and youth happiness in Finland, students might debate Twinge's hypothesis in the light of their own use of smart phones and social media and the ideas outlined in chapter three. [Ofcom report on children and adults' use and attitudes towards media](#), including social media is a useful resource (see chapter eight)

Should schools be phone free zones? Should governments regulate social media more? (See [Select Committee Report on Disinformation and 'Fake News'](#) 2019)

### Activity Sheet 3.1

### Explaining why people in Finland are happy

**Climate.** A cold harsh and remote place. Every person has to work hard for themselves. But you have to help your neighbours. This makes Finns self-reliant, private, but also dependent on a highly cooperative society, where rules matter.

**Sisu & Talkoo. Cultural traits.** Sisu is a kind of courageous persistence regardless of consequence. It is what, in 1939-40 allowed an army of 350,000 men to twice fight off Soviet forces three times their number. Talkoo means ‘working together collectively for a specific good’. Getting the harvest in, stocking wood, raising money. Its about cooperating, everyone together, equally.

**History.** Finland only became independent in 1817. Before that it was ruled by Sweden and then Russia. In the 19C there was an aristocracy whose wealth was based on timber, shipping, and cotton. In 1918 an alliance of industrial capitalists and aristocrats launched a war against Finnish workers and the same reactionary elite allied the country with the Nazis during WW2. Finland has tried to escape this dark past and now the gaps between social classes are smaller than in other countries.. You don’t look up at people, and you don’t look down. You look level. The tax paid by the top 10,000 earners is published in an annual list on ‘national envy day’. Finland is big on transparency.

**Education.** Finland’s free system was established in 1866 and regularly ranks amongst the world’s best. Children start school at 7 after play-based state run preschools. They then go to schools that are all publically funded and comprehensive where children are taught to care about each other. All teachers have masters degrees and a large degree of freedom to decide what to teach and how to teach. There is no testing or exams until the age of 16

**Economy.** For many years Finland’s economy was dominated by large mining and forestry firms, then by the once mighty Nokia. Today Finland is close behind Silicon Valley in the number of start-ups per head, and is ranked as the most innovative country, per capita, in the world by the World Economic Forum.

**Universities.** Academics led Finland’s independence movement and created Finland as a nation: its language, history, literature, music, symbols and folklore. Since independence, nearly 30% of Finland’s heads of state and government have been university professors. They shaped the country and created confidence in social mobility.

**Gender equality.** Finland ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world for gender equality. In 1906 Finnish women became the first to run for electoral office. Nearly 10% of MPs in Finland's first parliament were women (the figure is now 42%). As early as 1930, up to 30% of university students were women.

**Political leadership.** Finland's wartime and postwar leaders took big, sensible decisions and the citizens backed them as everyone knew the country was fighting for its existence. Responsible choices were made by coalition governments on such matters as infrastructure investments that have paid dividends many times over. Finland has made record investments in research and development and is very friendly to start-up businesses. Finns criticise their politicians but they do trust them.

**Welfare capitalism.** Finland's welfare system provides high quality services for all irrespective of ability to pay. Welfare is a right for all rather than a safety net for the poor. It seeks to minimize social problems by promoting social equality through high rates of taxation and other measures. It spends 31% of its GDP on its welfare state, the second highest proportion in the OECD (UK 27%)

**The Nordic theory of love.** In the family it is realising that relationships can only flourish between individuals who are equal and independent. In a society it means policy choices aimed at ensuring the greatest possible degree of independence and opportunity for everyone.

**Current trends (2018)** Recent trends cast a shadow over Finland's success. The ruling coalition is pursuing a policy of deregulation, including dismantling parts of the welfare state and education budgets have been cut back. Racism and neo-fascism are on the rise. The Finns party is overly nationalistic while the Nordic Resistance Movement aims to create a national-socialist state. The integration of immigrants has not been a success. Iraquis and Afghans who came to Finland in 2015 have been deported.

## **Activity Sheet 3.2**

### **Key features of Finland's national curriculum**

1. an enlightened set of aims, emphasising democracy, environmental sustainability, multiculturalism, community and self-esteem
2. an open view of culture – education is not only a means of ‘transferring cultural tradition from one generation to the next... it is also the mission of basic education to create new culture, revitalise ways of thinking and acting, and develop the pupil’s ability to evaluate critically’
3. formal schooling starting two years later than in England, around the age of 7, until which point children learn informally in kindergarten, and those speaking other languages at home being expected to learn Finnish more gradually
4. a gradual division into subjects, so that history is introduced in grade 5, and environmental and natural studies dividing up gradually, to become geography and separate sciences in grade 7 (the equivalent age to England’s Y7 and Y9);
5. cross-curricular themes are emphasised from the start
6. no national testing until age 19
7. a curriculum well matched to age and stage of development, in terms of interests and cognitive development
8. full recognition of modern media and genres
9. an emphasis on problem-solving, interpretation, creativity and experience.<sup>90</sup>

Source [Wrigley 2014](#) p. 41

# **Chapter Four**

## **Knowledge**

*Geography, in its modern-day form, grew out of German, French and British imperialism. It was about justifying exploitation as the supposed natural order and explaining away the hierarchy of races and places. All that bigotry and racism was presented simply as knowledge, knowledge that you had to learn to recite at school. Yet even back then, at the heart and height of the British Empire, there was an awareness of the power that geographical knowledge could unleash.*

*In 1879 in testimony to a Select Committee of the British Parliament one petitioner was in no doubt about the threat: ‘Geography, sir, is ruinous in its effects on the lower classes. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are comparatively safe, but geography invariably leads to revolution.’ That petitioner may have been over estimating the potential rebellions that would ensue when school children began to be taught what was where and where was what. However, we must not underestimate the power that comes from understanding the present and the future and how everything is connected to everything else, by its very nature geographical knowledge and understanding can be used to oppose the forces that want to maintain the status quo and pacify resistance.*

Danny Dorling (1)

Earlier chapters have argued that if school geography is to cultivate ‘the power that comes from understanding the present and the future and how everything is connected to everything else’ it should draw on critical academic geography in ways that engage students and teachers in dialogical enquiry (Freire’s conscientization (page 58). This requires the synthesis of everyday and academic knowledge that leads to new forms of reflection and action. Without critical geography, lessons will merely describe the status-quo; offer ideas to justify and/or reform it; and overlook radical alternatives.

This chapter explores the different philosophies of knowledge that underpin different forms of geography curriculum and curriculum making. It covers the transition from modern to postmodern school geography; the crisis in

curriculum theory resulting from a neglect of knowledge; and the potential of critical realism to resolve this crisis by offering a curriculum theory, based in social and critical realism, that can incorporate critical theory and facilitate critical pedagogy.

The concept of powerful disciplinary knowledge and its role in developing students' capabilities has been central to recent curriculum debate and this is examined in the context of the [Geocapabilities Project](#) (2). While that project draws on the sociological strand of Wheelahan's socially critical curriculum theory (3), it neglects the philosophical strand that links powerful knowledge to critical theory and critical realism.

The curriculum unit examines [SDG 11 \(sustainable cities and communities\)](#) (4) in the context of homelessness, social housing and anarchist ideas about the role of self builders in creating sustainable and affordable housing. It employs forms of explanation based in political economy and critical realism and seeks to counter myths about homelessness and the homeless and so address GCE topic 6 (difference and respect for diversity).

## **Origins of modern school geography**

As Dorling reminds us at the head of the chapter, modern school geography developed to serve the needs of an imperial nation whose citizens needed appropriate skills and outlooks. Early school geography was a catechism of 'capes and bays' to be learnt by rote and it was the need for school teachers of the subject that led to its establishment in universities by the end of the nineteenth century. By then a regional geography had emerged tied to the needs of colonial expansion. It sought to identify and explain different human cultures across the world in terms of the characteristics of the regions they occupied (environmental determinism). Underlying such geography was the belief that increased understanding of a region's resources and its people's habits and consumption patterns would serve the interests of capitalist manufacturers and traders.

Modern school geography was opposed from the start, notably by the anarchist geographers Elisee Reclus (1830 - 1905) and Peter Kropotkin (1842- 1921). They were key figures in a European movement of anarchist schools and popular universities that had links to libertarian educators such as Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859 - 1909) in Spain. Anarchist geography played an important role in the construction of libertarian pedagogy and due largely to the

scientific prestige of Reclus and Kropotkin, such pedagogy made a major contribution to the construction of contemporary European systems of public and secular education (5).

### **Mainstream and critical philosophies of knowledge**

Geographers do not agree on what things can be said to exist; what things matter and why; and how knowledge of these things can be produced. Their debates and differences (those between mainstream and critical geographers for example) reflect different underlying philosophies of knowledge or differences over ontology, epistemology and methodology. These terms are explained in Figure 4.1 (page 140) which also summarizes six of the philosophies that geographers use to guide their research, explanation, and teaching about the world.

Empiricism, positivism and to an extent social constructivism, underpin mainstream geography and geographical education that tends to present itself as scientific and objective. As we saw in chapter two, critical geographers claim that no geography can be value free; that there is no epistemological viewpoint from which the world can be described objectively; and that all geographical knowledge is socially constructed. Hence all geography lessons and curricula carry with them a series of assumptions, values and perspectives about what the world is and what it should be. They make certain worlds possible and intelligible and deny others.

The [International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme](#) (6) is designed for 16-19 year olds, rather than the 14-16 year olds on whose needs, interests and abilities this text is primarily focussed. Nevertheless its inclusion of a course on the [theory of knowledge](#) (TOK) (7) ‘fundamentally about critical thinking and inquiry into the process of knowing rather than about learning a specific body of knowledge’; examining ‘the nature of knowledge and how we know what we claim to know’; ‘encouraging students to analyse knowledge claims and explore questions the construction of knowledge’; and emphasising the connections between areas of shared knowledge and linking them to personal knowledge in such a way that an individual becomes more aware of his or her own perspectives and how they might differ from others’ points to a key component that is missing from most students’ education. It would introduce the ways of knowing outlined in Figure 4.1; their applications across subjects; and the differences between mainstream and critical thought.

**Figure 4.1 Six philosophies that underpin different forms of geographical explanation** Adapted from (8) p. 24

	Empiricism	Positivism	Structuralism	Social constructivism (post-structuralism)	Critical Theory	Critical Realism
<b>Epistemology</b>  What it is possible to know. The reality that exists and how it does so.	Knowledge is based in experience..	Knowledge is based in experience supported by verifiable evidence.	Knowledge is based in the world of structures, processes and relations. Experiences do not necessarily reveal this world.	Knowledge is a social construct that is epistemologically objective. People construct reality.	Knowledge is socially constructed in ways that reflect different interests. The dominance of the technical interest limits understanding.	Knowledge is created by building models of how real processes shape events and experiences in the light of contingent circumstances.
<b>Ontology</b>  How reality can be known. The criteria for judging the truth of a statement about reality.	The things we experience are the things that exist. Reality is what we experience.	What exists is what we can observe and experience, either directly or with the aid of scientific instruments..	What really exist are the structures, processes and relations that shape the world. These cannot be observed directly.	What exists is what people perceive to exist. As a social construct knowledge is ontologically subjective..	What exists is the possibility of understanding the world through communicative rationality based on consensus.	What exists are the related domains or levels of real processes, actual events, and empirical experience.
<b>Methodology</b>  An associated set of rules and procedures to guide research and inquiry.	The presentation of experienced facts.	Verifying regularities and connections between observations of reality, based on hypothesis testing and scientific method.	The construction of theories that relate observations and experiences to underlying structures and processes.	The investigation of personally and socially constructed meanings, representations, images and discourses in ways that stress subjectivity.	The construction of critical theories in conditions of free and open dialogue that allow all claims to knowledge to be fairly tested for truth.	The building and testing of hypothetical models of how real mechanisms shape events that we may or may not experience.

## **Dialectical materialism**

Structuralism, critical theory, and critical realism, underpin critical approaches that also draw on weak social constructivism (see page 149). Marxist structuralism, the critical theory originating with the Frankfurt School, and critical realism are all founded on [dialectical materialism](#) (9) (10). This understands the world in terms of material causes, not as a complex of ready-made things but as a system of processes, flows and relations (structures) through which all things come into being, exist, and pass away. Flows of energy, material and information, within and between the bio-physical and social worlds, create, sustain, and undermine human environments, and change results from the contradictory nature of the processes, flows and relations shaping social development. Dialectics seeks to explain the general principles of movement in the bio-physical and social worlds and in language and thought, These suggest that the environments and belief systems that people create are always contradictory and problematic because of the multiple relations and processes that shape them. The four principles of dialectics are outlined in Figure 4.2 (page 142).

Dialectics, and the related philosophies that underpin critical geography, claim that knowledge and truth are practical questions or that the validity and power of ideas is demonstrated by their utility. Knowledge starts from activity in the material world and is refined as it is exposed to other contradictory knowledge. The compromise reached is tested and evaluated by applying it in action such that theory is a guide to action and action a test of theory. Reflection and action (a process termed praxis, Figure 4.3, page 142) is the basis of critical pedagogy (see chapter 5) or the way in which teachers and pupils can create socially useful knowledge by reflecting and acting on the events, issues and ideas they experience from day to day. It also provides theoretical underpinning for curriculum development; professional development; community development and critical action research.

## **Unesco guidance**

Referring back to the Unesco guidance outlined in chapter one, we find RE offering a broad definition of knowledge (page. 21) and urging critical thinking and independent judgement (p. 22). RM states that ESD should be holistic and transformative (p. 22), a requirement that invites curriculum making that

embeds the principles of dialectics set out in Figure 4.2 and suggests an integrated curriculum rather than one based on separate subjects.

**Figure 4.2 The Four Principles of Dialectics (11)**

- **TOTALITY** or everything is related. Nature is a coherent whole. Things are related and reciprocally condition each other. They are to be understood in their concrete totality. Everything has something to do with everything else. Nothing is isolated.
- **MOVEMENT** or everything is constantly being transformed. Nature is in a state of becoming. Movement is a quality in everything. Nature, society and thought are not fixed but continually being transformed, never definitely established, always unfinished. The cause of movement is internal struggle or contradiction. The general movement of reality makes common sense. It accords with our experience of the world as one of becoming, existing and passing away.
- **QUALITATIVE CHANGE** or the tendency to self organisation and complexity. Transformation in nature is not a circular process of endless repetition but an evolutionary process towards higher states of self organisation and complexity.
- **CONTRADICTION** or the unity and struggle of opposites. The transformation or evolution of things is only possible because opposing forces coexist within them and simultaneously move toward unity and opposition. Such contradiction is inherent in all things (nature, society, language and thought) and is the cause of movement whereby contradictory aspects may attain a higher state of resolution (organisation, complexity) that is always conditional, temporal, transitory, and relative.



**Figure 4.3 Praxis**

Guidance in the geography chapter of TFSD (page 25) offers readers three ways of thinking geographically about the world: description (empiricism or idiographic approach); spatial analysis (positivism or nomothetic approach); and process analysis in space (approach focussing on actors). The third ‘looks at actors (including governments, corporations, etc) and their intentions and thereby draws the cultural, symbolic and political dimensions of space and of spatial facts to our attention . . . gathering humanistic and cultural approaches to geography’ (p. 107). Subsequent attention to aspects of this third perspective acknowledge critical geography and the summary invites praxis by suggesting that the three perspectives should be combined in such a way as to “read” the world to gain a better understanding of sustainability issues and to ‘write’ the world in proposing alternative ways of organising space for sustainable development’ (p. 109).

### **School geography and curriculum theory**

Figure 4.4 (page 144) summarises the history of school geography over the last 120 years. For much of this time it was dominated by empirical and positivist philosophies, the separation of human and physical geography, the neglect of students’ everyday knowledge or private geographies, debates over content and pedagogy taking place outside and within the professional community of geographers; and opposition to integrated curricula (social studies, environmental studies, ESDGC etc) that more closely reflected traditions in critical education (page 61) and claimed to more accurately reflect how students learn and to be more relevant to their present and future lives.

Mitchell provides an alternative and more expansive history recognising five periods and examining each through the lenses of five themes (power and control; conflict; scale of influence; value/belief systems; and change) that link together teachers, curriculum and society. His five periods are:

- Pre-1920 (ideas of education, schooling and geography curriculum)
- 1920-1976 (social democratic consensus, into the ‘golden age’ of teaching and geography of modernisation)
- 1976 – 1988 (crises of capitalism, the ‘new sociology of education’ and debate over the roles for geography education) (cont’d page 142)

**Figure 4.4 (page 144)      The Development of School Geography**

	<b>1900 - 1970</b>	<b>1970 - 1980</b>	<b>1980 - 1990</b>	<b>1990 - present</b>
<b>School geography</b>	Traditional school geography descriptive and laden with imperialist and racist ideology. Provided a simplified representation of the world focussed on human activity in its physical setting. Regional geography with some environmental and cultural determinism. Background narrative of human development and progress. Much memorization of facts. Challenged by progressivism that sought to engage with students' knowledge and experience and address social and environmental issues.	The modernisation of school geography. Rise of rational curriculum development and planning. Inputs from the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education. Shift to the new scientific geography of concepts, models and quantitative techniques. More active pedagogy, for example hypothesis testing, games and simulations.	Radical, critical and Marxist critiques of schooling. Ideology critiques challenge the political bias of much mainstream school geography. Some incorporation of behavioural, welfare, humanistic and radical geographies. Greater attention to values education , students' geographies, and language across the curriculum.	Reforming of education to better meet needs of capital. National curriculum from 1988. Curriculum to raise standards and equip pupils for a global knowledge economy. Greater attention to learning to learn. Generic learning skills come to dominate over content or geographical knowledge. Some influence from postmodernism and postmodern knowledge. Widening gap between university and school geography.
<b>Teacher education</b>	Geography developed in universities largely to supply school geography teachers. Geography periodically challenged by integrated studies in such forms as social studies or environmental studies.	Schools Council projects sought to raise professional status of geography teachers. More open and experiential pedagogy.	Influence of new sociology of education and its explorations of the politics of school knowledge and school subjects. Developing the reflective teacher.	Erosion of teacher professionalism. Diversity of routes into teaching. More attention to pedagogy and practice over content and theory. Then a 'knowledge turn' to reconnect with academic geography.
<b>Dominant educational ideologies</b>	Utilitarian/informational Liberal humanist	Liberal humanist Progressive/child centred	Progressive/child centred Social reconstructivist / radical	Neoliberal Utilitarian/informational Vocationalist
<b>Philosophies of knowledge</b>	Empiricism	Empiricism, positivism	Empiricism, positivism, structuralism, constructivism	An eclectic mix with empiricism , positivism and constructivism strong.
<b>Indicative texts</b>	<i>The Imperial Geography</i> , Gill, 1919 <i>The Teaching of Geography</i> , Gospill, 1958 <i>Geography for Schools</i> , Honeybone & Long, 1962	<i>Curriculum Planning in Geography</i> , Groves, 1979 <i>Geography and the Geography Teacher</i> , Hall, 1976 <i>New Ways in Geography</i> , Cole & Benyon, 1969	<i>Learning through Geography</i> , Slater, 1983 <i>Geographical Education: Huckle (ed.)</i> , 1983 <i>Teaching Geography for a Better World</i> , Fien & Gerber (eds.), 1988	<i>Thinking through Geography</i> , Leat, 1998 <i>Teaching Geography 11- 18</i> , Lambert and Morgan, 2010 <i>Debates in Geography Education</i> , Jones & Lambert (eds.), 2018

- 1988 – 2008 (neoliberal hegemony and the ‘emptying of subjects’)
- 2008 – 2016 (a new crisis of capital and a ‘knowledge turn’ in the curriculum) (12) p. 25

Curriculum theory seeks to understand how knowledge is selected and organised for learning. Since the 1970s, knowledge and curriculum have been viewed as social constructs that are ideologically saturated and [reflect power struggles](#) (13) (14) (15) (16). The geography curriculum is shaped by social and political groups outside and within the subject community. The former seek to reform (restructure or reshape) the school curriculum, mainly via national curriculum frameworks (NCFs), so that it more closely reflects their preferred political and educational ideologies. The latter are aware of this influence and ideologies and power relations within the subject community (amongst teachers, professional associations, exam boards, textbook publishers, academic geographers, geographical educators, etc) are key to how academic knowledge is recontextualised (17) as a school subject and then taught and assessed.

In chapter two we saw how education and curriculum has been reformed under the influence of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Rawling (18) traces the impact of [educational ideologies](#) (19) on the geography curriculum over the period from 1970 to 2000, suggesting that the dominant influence of informational / utilitarian ideology was temporarily broken in the 1970s and 1980s by more progressive / child centred and reconstructionist / radical ideas. When Bustin (20) introduced teachers to Rawling’s framework of ideologies at the GA conference in 2018, they felt that pressure to teach for examination results warranted an additional (neoliberal?) ideology.

Rawling (21) subsequently addressed more recent curriculum change and prompted by Morgan’s arguments (22) around geographical illiteracy linked the neglect of a critical overview of what the subject is and what it can provide to a failure of leadership and guidance at the national level (23). With NCFs that only provided lists of concepts and skills (2007) or places and topics (2013), too much had been demanded of subject associations, examination boards and classroom teachers. Ministers and civil servants had exercised increasing control from the centre (24) (25); there has been inadequate discussion of how academic geography relates to school geography; and too much curriculum research has become distant from teachers’ realities. The curriculum and teachers’ work needs to sit within the kind of thinking about education summarised on pages 63 and 64, and the kind of guidance that Unesco provides.

## **Critical geography in the 1980s, the challenge of curriculum integration, and setbacks due to curriculum reforms**

The three forms of critical education outlined in Figure 2.3 (page 62) had their greatest (though modest) influence on school geography in the 1980s. Earlier a new sociology of education had emerged that critiqued the assumed neutrality of mainstream liberal education; outlined schooling's role in economic and cultural reproduction; explored the related politics of school knowledge; and suggested that integrated curricula might better meet students' needs.

Adjectival educations (social, environmental, development, urban, etc) reflected the emergence of new social movements (26) and gained momentum after Bernstein, Young, and other advocates of the new sociology of education, influenced by social constructivism (see Figure 4.1 and below) argued that school subject knowledge could be seen as knowledge of the powerful designed to ensure working class students failed. Relaxing the classification (ordering of knowledge into school subjects) and framing (pedagogy or how knowledge is transmitted) of knowledge would benefit students, particularly those from working class backgrounds (27). Their argument suggested that geography was a vested interest in education (28) and that the professional community of geographical education would defend their subject against adjectival upstarts (16). While geography is itself a form of integrated studies, Dickens (29) has more recently argued that academic divisions of labour (the division of academic knowledge into specialist subjects and its separation from lay or everyday knowledge) are a cause of alienation since they prevent people from forming a coherent understanding of the world, how it works and how it might be changed.

In the 1980s Dawn Gill exposed the legacy of racism in the subject and founded the short lived Association for Curriculum Development in Geography that published *Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education* (1983 -1987). I edited a text that critiqued the 'new' positivist school geography that had developed in the 1970s and suggested that students' needs would be better met by drawing on emergent behavioural, humanistic, welfare and radical geographies (30); Rob Gilbert (31) exposed the ideology that continued to permeate school textbooks; an edited collection recommended *Teaching Geography for a Better World* (32); and I wrote a chapter examining how the subject continued to adapt to the needs of capital and the state (33). [Jo Norcup](#) (34) has analyzed the fortunes of *Contemporary Issues*, and the personalities

that surrounded it, In 1997 I drew on Habermas' theory of [knowledge constitutive interests](#) (35), as employed by [Kemmis](#) (36), to outline a socially critical approach to school geography (37).

[John Morgan](#) (38) has been the principal advocate of a more critical school geography over the past two decades. His 2011 article 'What is Radical in School Geography Today?' (39) covers the impact of neoliberal reforms (chapter two) on school geography; the resultant reshaping of teacher identities; and the emergence of postmodern forms of the school subject. He concludes by outlining five themes that radical (critical) school geography needs to develop and explore: capitalism as an economic system; welfare geography; the geography of consumption; society and nature; and social alternatives (postcapitalisms). Other contributions include those of [Fien](#) (40) and [Heyman](#) (41).

Morgan reminds us the critical revolt in school geography in the mid 1980s was too little, too late. By then a shift towards stronger classification and framing of knowledge had already begun.

*That is, a shift in the power relations and principles of control in educational organisations, a shift towards a collection curriculum, defined by tight boundaries, the authoritative specification of content and of the sequencing and pacing of knowledge.* (42) p. 113

Articles in such journals as [Environmental Education Research](#) (43) and [Policy and Practice](#) (44) suggest that critical ideas continued to influence adjectival educations to a greater extent than they did school geography.

### **Postmodernity, postmodernism and postmodern school geography**

In the 1980s some geographical educators, notably Frances Slater (45) and Margaret Roberts (46) became interested in the role of language in learning and the ways in which enquiry learning could link students' private geographies to the more formal geographies offered by academics. They drew on social constructivism and their ideas gained greater currency in subsequent decades when the focus shifted from what to learn to how to learn (from content to pedagogy). This shift was encouraged by neoliberal educational reforms that stressed the need for workers and citizens with the human capital to thrive in a postmodern society and by the cultural turn in the academic subject (page 54).

Theories of postmodernity suggest that modern societies have changed so fundamentally that they warrant a new descriptor. [Postmodern society](#) (47) is one where globalisation, consumerism and digital media change economic and social life; modern institutions lose much of their influence; work, fashion, music and community become more fluid and fragmented; and culture and identity are characterised by diversity and hybridity. [Postmodernism](#) (48) is the associated new way of thinking about thought and knowledge and it was this that largely shaped the cultural turn in academic geography and the rise of identity politics that were introduced in earlier chapters. [Critics of postmodernity](#) (49) suggest it is merely the current phase of capitalism (the fifth Krondratieff wave, Figure 1.2 page 9) with postmodernism the associated cultural logic.

[Postmodern geography](#) (50) views the world as a text that can be read and interpreted in many ways and has developed a wide variety of adjectival geographies. Their ideas continue to shape the school subject and their diversity poses [challenges to the geography teacher's identity and role as curriculum maker](#) (51) (52) .

## Social constructivism

Central to postmodernism is [post-structuralism](#) (53) and a [social constructivism](#) (54) built upon the observation that many aspects of our everyday experience are the consequences of implicit social agreement, institutional practices or collective social action rather than objective reality. They only exist within the contexts of such agreements, practices or collective action. Thus many of the things we take for granted (nations, money, language, places) are not actually objective facts about the world independent of human subjectivity, but are instead the product of human inter-subjectivity. These social constructs are epistemologically objective and ontologically subjective because they are meaningful objects of knowledge only within the framework of inter-subjective human understanding (Figure 4.1).

Social constructivism exists in strong and weak forms (Figure 4.5 page 149) and has had a major impact on theories of learning and pedagogy since it recommends teachers engage in knowledge making with their students rather than knowledge transmission.

Social constructivism challenges the foundationalism, totalization and utopianism of modern knowledge in the ways outlined in Figure 4.6 (page.

150). This suggests ways in which critical (social) realism offers a way of resolving the differences between modern and post-modern knowledge and we will be examining its assumptions later in this chapter.

<b>Weak social constructivism</b>	<b>Strong social constructivism</b>
All reality is socially mediated (perceived, understood, taught and learnt about) through subjective language and thought, but nevertheless an objective reality exists independent of our knowledge and can be discovered (social realism).	All reality is socially constructed. It does not exist prior to its social invention and cannot be discovered. Our view of reality is simply a discourse or narrative rooted in consensus.

**Figure 4.5** [\*\*Weak and strong social constructivism\*\*](#) (55)

### **Grand narratives, myths and discourse**

Segall (56) explains how three interrelated concepts used in postmodern / poststructural thought lead to more robust and nuanced understandings of what social education is, what it does, and what that ‘doing’ helps to produce. Grand narratives, myths and discourse (Figure 4.7 page. 151) are not simply musings about such education but ‘an exploration of the very forms of identity, subjectivity, agency and voice it invites, celebrates, and dismisses, and the mechanisms through which those are circulated, governed and maintained.’ p. 479

Chapter one questioned the grand narrative of progress linked to the political economy of capitalism; chapter two examined how neoliberalism functions as discourse shaping school reform; chapter three suggested that teaching happiness in schools was largely a myth since it projects the causes of unhappiness onto the individual rather than locating them within social structures and dynamics. The curriculum unit associated with this chapter examines the myths surrounding homelessness and the discourse of home ownership, while subsequent chapters explore how space, place, nature, identity, democracy and citizenship come into being through discursive practices; how sustainable development and global citizenship are constructed as narratives; and how school geography operates to construct its students as subjects and citizens.

Modern Knowledge	Postmodern Knowledge	Critical realism
<b>Foudationalism</b> There are indisputable foundations for knowledge in sensory experience (empiricism) and rationality (rationalism). Scientific enquiry and reason can reveal the essential truth about the world.	<b>Anti-foundationalism</b> There are no indisputable foundations for knowledge; no general criteria to distinguish truth and falsity. Language, thought and reality are interdependent and all knowledge is mediated through language rather than being an accurate reflection of nature. Truth is relative and there are no guarantees of truth or reality outside language or discourse.	<b>Foundationalism VS Antifoundationalism</b> Acknowledging the inevitable mediation of reality does not mean that there is no criteria at all, or indeed general criteria, for deciding what is true or right. Nor does it mean that there is no connection between language and discourse and the real world.
<b>Totalization.</b> It is possible to advance general or universal theories about nature, society, geography and history. They each have an inner logic and are ordered according to universal laws.	<b>Anti-totalization.</b> It is arrogant to advance general theories that pretend to reveal universal truths or meanings. We should abandon such attempts and accept a diversity of limited theories and truths. We should be particularly sceptical of totalizing thinking that seeks to explain the world from centred and privileged positions of male power.	<b>Totalization VS Anti-totalization</b> Accepting a multitude of limited theories or texts should not mean abandoning the search for general theories that seek to show how these are related to one another.
<b>Utopianism.</b> The application of increasing knowledge brings constant improvement in the human condition. Science, technology and bureaucracy offer rational control of nature and society and thereby bring material prosperity, individual liberty, social equity, universal morality, and emancipation from natural calamity, poverty, disease, and political oppression. This is sometimes called the modern project.	<b>Anti-utopianism</b> Modern knowledge has not delivered utopia or enlightenment, but has resulted in oppression and domination. There is no justification for accepting grand stories or narratives of human progress that suggest that history has purpose and that things will continually get better.	<b>Utopianism VS Anti-utopianism</b> Modern rationality can be used to dominate or liberate. The problem is not the modern notion of progress but its partial realization. We should retain a realistic utopianism.

**Figure 4.6 Characteristics of modern and postmodern knowledge and how critical realism seeks to reconcile these Based on (57)**

**Grand (or meta or master) narratives** (33):encompassing, totalizing societal storylines that order and explain knowledge and experience, providing frameworks, structures, and forms of logic with which to make particular meaning in/of the world. Such narratives define what and who we ought to value and celebrate and/or dismiss and ignore and, as such, embody the stories we, as a society, tell ourselves in order to legitimate particular ways of life.

**Mythologies or myths** (34) Myths are socially constructed plot lines, ideas, and assumptions that are unquestioningly accepted as natural in a given society. Like extended metaphors, they express and organize shared ideas in a given culture, making dominant values, assumptions, and beliefs appear self evident and timeless, as if they are above and beyond ideology—or scholarly questioning—simply presenting things as they are.

**Discourses** are systems of thought comprising ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and practices that systematically construct subjects and the worlds in which they live and of which they speak. Like grand narratives and myths, discourses help maintain the power relations underlying them, producing “truths” and subjects who speak them. Discourses provide "conceptual order to our perceptions, points of view, investments, and desires" (35, p. 57), organizing structures that make the world intelligible and possible.

**Figure 4.7                    Three postmodern / poststructuralist concepts that can foster critical understanding via school geography (56)**

### **Critical realism (CR)** (58)

CR (59) (60) (61) (62) offers a means of reconciling modern and postmodern knowledge (Figure 4.6) and provides philosophical foundations for the selection and ordering of curriculum knowledge. It builds on dialectical materialism by maintaining that the world is to be understood in terms of material realities or things that are complex and internally differentiated. These things possess tendencies, liabilities and powers by virtue of the way in which they are structured and events happen as a consequence of things relating to and acting upon each other. CR is best understood in terms of four notions that will now be explained with reference to homelessness, the focus of this chapter's curriculum unit.

**Ontological depth.** CR argues that in order to understand the world, we need to identify three levels or domains of reality:

- **the real domain** consisting of **structures** (eg. the solar system, ecosystems, societies, systems of thought) and their **generative mechanisms** (eg. gravity, ecological succession, social class, language, discourse). Inter-related structures (relations) and mechanisms (processes) here generate events or happenings which we may or may not experience. The event of becoming homeless is the result of processes shaping the health, wealth, welfare and alienation of the individual interacting with economic, political and cultural processes that determine the availability of housing.
- **the actual domain of events** that are co-determined by the interaction of different mechanisms. The same mechanism and its underlying structures can produce different results depending on contingent circumstances. The sale of social housing may advantage some tenants while disadvantaging others.
- **the empirical domain of experience.** Events in the actual domain, caused by mechanisms in the real domain, may or may not be experienced. Many people do not experience homelessness and are unaware of its true extent. Most have little understanding of its complex causes as ideology, myths and discourses serve to conceal these.

The curriculum needs to acknowledge depth ontology (all three domains of reality) by encouraging forms of explanation that relate experience and events to underlying structures and mechanisms. Empiricism, positivism, and strong social constructivism, the dominant philosophies shaping the curriculum, fail to do this, seeking explanation in the ordering of observed events and experience, or suggesting that these are merely what people and language claim them to be. By assuming that what happens (or what is socially constructed in language) is all that could happen, dominant philosophies deny the possibility of realist alternatives (real utopias) anchored in the potentials of the real domain. Furthermore they encourage an understanding of the world devoid of structures and constraints, in which all that is necessary to change the world is for agents to act differently.

**Emergence.** The biological world is emergent from the physical world and the social world emergent from the bio-physical world. Higher level strata (society) emerge from lower level strata (the bio-physical world) and are governed by lower level laws (eg. the laws of physics and ecology). Individuals, communities, societies and states, are different kinds of things in the social world, with different properties,

and the ability to act reflexively to affect their ongoing development. The underlying causes of homelessness are located at the economic, political, cultural, interpersonal and individual levels of society and they interact via complex feedback loops. The balance of causes varies between different homeless groups.

**Stratification.** CR further maintains that the world is complex and stratified. The laws of physics, biology, ecology, capitalist economics, and psychology for example, operate at different levels and may interact to create social and environmental problems. We need to understand the relations between mechanisms operating at different levels to understand the many stratified outcomes we observe or desire (eg. homelessness has interacting structural (unemployment, benefit changes, housing market failure, poverty, etc) and personal causes (family conflict, ill health, complex needs, substance abuse, etc).

**Co-determination.** While things have propensities to act in certain ways they may or may not act in these ways when they interact with other things in open systems (explanations are contingent, events may or may not occur when things/systems interact). CR aims to identify the underlying generative structures and relational mechanisms or processes that give rise to events in the world that we may or may not experience (eg. a young adult in a distant city becomes homeless as a result of family breakdown and / or neoliberal housing policy).

### Critical realism and curriculum theory

Wheelahan (3) draws on critical realism in developing curriculum theory that combines insights from the philosophy and sociology of knowledge. The nature of knowledge itself (the philosophy of knowledge as revealed by critical realism) has implications for how knowledge is classified, sequenced, presented, paced and evaluated, while the social basis of knowledge (sociology of knowledge) needs to be identified if the curriculum is to provide equitable access to theoretical knowledge for all pupils and curriculum and pedagogy are to be understood as a space of interaction between different knowledge communities (17). These two strands have much in common, as indicated by the third column of Figure 4.8 but it is the philosophy of critical realism (column one) that should shape a critical and powerful school geography. To date, few geographical and environmental educators have realised this (63) (64) as can be seen by considering the ‘knowledge turn’ and the Geocapabilities Project.

<b>Philosophy of Knowledge (Bhaskar's critical realism)</b>	<b>Sociology of Knowledge (Berstein's social theory)</b>	<b>Agreement that:</b>
<p>Focuses on the extent to which knowledge portrays the real world of objects (structures) with generative mechanisms that shapes events and experiences.</p> <p>Identifies the causal and emergent properties of knowledge that arise from critical realism's notions of ontological depth, emergence, stratification and co-determination.</p> <p>The fallibility of knowledge and judgemental rationality are based on the need to choose between competing accounts of the same world.</p> <p>The theoretical is distinguished from the everyday because it represents our systematic knowledge about the relations between things which extends and supersedes our ordinary understanding of things.</p> <p>Theoretical knowledge, organised in disciplinary frameworks, is society's collective representation of the causal mechanisms the disciplines study by exploring the relationship between the real, actual and empirical. It enables society to transcend the everyday; provides access to the real world; and should play a key role in curriculum design, delivery and evaluation.</p>	<p>Focuses on the social relations shaping how educational knowledge is produced (classified) and reproduced / delivered (framed) in the curriculum.</p> <p>The distinctions between esoteric (theoretical) and mundane (everyday) knowledge structure social practices and social relations, including those associated with schooling.</p> <p>Argues that access to theoretical knowledge is a question of social justice.</p> <p>Identifies the causal and emergent properties of structures of knowledge. Distinguishes between theoretical knowledge as vertical discourse and everyday knowledge as horizontal discourse. Differentiates within vertical discourses and suggests that the resulting classification of knowledge provides the basis for connecting knowledge production with its reproduction in curriculum.</p> <p>Disciplinary knowledge is a social product marked by the social conditions of its production which include power and privilege.</p> <p>Enriches critical realism which does not generally pay sufficient attention to the structures of knowledge as a generative mechanism.</p>	<p>Both regard society as consisting of objective, socially differentiated social structures and in this sense are realist.</p> <p>Both see knowledge as real with properties that transcend the conditions under which it was produced.</p> <p>Both see knowledge as historically and socially constructed and agree that the social mediates practice and the creation of knowledge.</p> <p>Both seek to go beyond 'the facts' to identify the 'invisibles', that is, the objects and their generative mechanisms that structure the world, and each emphasizes the role of society in understanding and accessing the world and in building knowledge.</p> <p>Both are committed to a 'depth' ontology in which generative mechanisms in the domain of 'the real' interact in necessary and contingent ways to produce events and experiences in the domains of 'the actual; and 'the empirical' respectively.</p> <p>Both are committed to a notion of alternative possibilities because their analysis identifies the ways in which generative mechanisms interact and the ways in which they could interact differently to give rise to different outcomes.</p>

**Figure 4.8 The philosophy and sociology of knowledge as foundations for curriculum theory Based on (3)**

## The ‘knowledge turn’ and powerful disciplinary knowledge

By the start of the 21C academic subject knowledge was faring badly in schools. Neoliberal reforms used the acquisition of mainstream empirical and positivist knowledge as an indicator of student attainment and school standards and it was increasingly seen instrumentally and valued more in terms of direct applicability than for its intrinsic worth. Labour Governments’ reforms had shifted the focus to learning and ensuring that all students had access to ICT, numeracy, literacy, and citizenship education. Social competences, information handling, and identity formation were seen as more or equally important as acquiring academic knowledge that was readily available via the new media.

The subsequent ‘knowledge turn’ came from three sources (65). Sociologists of education now turned from strong to weak social constructivism (social realism). Young now claimed that he had earlier conflated powerful knowledge with knowledge of the powerful and began to write about powerful disciplinary knowledge (PDK) that all students have a right to learn (66) (67) (68). He suggested it enables them to understand and interpret the world in distinctive ways; to participate in society’s conversation about itself; think the not yet thought; see beyond appearances; and imagine alternative futures. Such knowledge provides access to political and policy arguments and is developed in disciplinary communities of scholars who are charged with discovering the ‘truth’. PDK drew critique from [White](#) (69) who compared it to Hirst’s earlier theory of [forms of knowledge](#) (70).

Around the same time, Lambert and Morgan (71) were lamenting the failure of school geography to address important issues of social change including the rise of neoliberalism. Their response was to recommend that school geography should foster capabilities or ‘the capacity of children and young people to use the key, organizing concepts of geography (such as scale and interdependence) in their enquiries and endeavours to make sense of the world’ (p. 53). Their thinking was influenced by Young’s notion of PDK and shaped the developments at the Geographical Association that are summed up in a series of metaphors: ‘thinking geographically’; ‘travelling with a different view’; and teachers as ‘curriculum makers’ with their own philosophy of teaching geography (72).

The second source of the turn was associated with the libertarian [Institute of Ideas](#) (73) and suggested that the teaching of knowledge was being undermined

by undue attention to students' feelings, emotions, and socialization. Schooling had become a form of therapy, paying too much attention to personal development, ethics and citizenship, rather than worthwhile knowledge and the 'best of what has been thought and said'. Standish's critique of education for global citizenship through geography (74) reflects such thinking.

Thirdly, renewed attention to subject knowledge in teacher education focussed attention on the [core knowledge](#) that beginning teachers should acquire. Conservative voices, (Hirsch (75) in the USA and Christodoulou (76) and [Policy Exchange](#) (77) in the UK) developed the concept of core knowledge which was taken up by some academies and free schools. They linked such knowledge to cultural literacy in ways that suggest it is key to upward social mobility.

Meanwhile Firth (78) was adopting ideas from Wheelahan (3) and Young and Muller (79) to familiarize geographical educators with social realism and alternative curriculum futures (80). Social realism (weak social constructivism) suggests a curriculum future not based on absolutism (content acquisition / empiricism and positivism), nor relativism (arbitrary content, stress on generic skills and competences / elements of strong social constructivism ) but on engagement (induction into disciplinary ways of thinking that foster capabilities / social realism). This third curriculum future informed a project that sought to introduce students and teachers to PDK and thereby foster their capabilities and professionalism,

### **The Geocapabilities Project (GCP)**

The GCP (that entered its third phase in 2018) is an international project that helps geographical educators in many countries explore the relevance and power of learning how to think geographically. Its website provides access to background articles, videos, training modules and curriculum vignettes, designed to develop teachers as curriculum makers and leaders.

GCP acknowledges aims in education by linking PDK to the development of human capabilities (81) or what people need to achieve their potential: to stay healthy, take part in economic, political and cultural life, and take responsibility for their own lives (82). The project maintains that access to specialised knowledge in school can influence human capabilities or that knowledge derived from the community of geographical scholars enables young people to 'think the not yet thought' (83).

Drawing on Nussbaum's classification of human capabilities, the project has identified three hypothetical geo-capabilities:

- Promoting individual autonomy and freedom, and the ability to use one's imagination and to be able to think and reason;
- Identifying and exercising one's choices in how to live based on worthwhile distinctions with regard to citizenship and sustainability; and
- Understanding one's potential as a creative and productive citizen in the context of the global economy and culture.

The characteristics of the PDK that contributes to these capabilities, as identified by the Project and [Maude](#) (84) (85) are outlined in Figure 4.9. You should pause at this point and compare geo-capabilities with the competences recommended by Unesco's RE; GCTLO and ESDGLO (pages 20 - 24). You should also consider which of the characteristics of PDK (Fig. 4.9) can only be realized if the curriculum incorporates significant elements of critical geography and education.

<b>Powerful disciplinary knowledge is:</b>	<b>Geography's five powerful knowledge types are:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence based</li> <li>• abstract and theoretical (conceptual)</li> <li>• part of a system of thought</li> <li>• dynamic, evolving, changing – but reliable ('testable' and open to challenge)</li> <li>• sometimes counter-intuitive</li> <li>• exists outside the direct experience of the teacher and the learner</li> <li>• discipline based (or at least in domains that are not arbitrary)</li> </ul> <p>(82)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge that provides students with 'new ways of seeing the world';</li> <li>• knowledge that provides students with powerful ways to analyse, explain and understand the world;</li> <li>• knowledge that gives students some power over their own knowledge</li> <li>• knowledge that enables young people to follow and participate in debates on significant local, national and global issues;</li> <li>• knowledge of the world.</li> </ul> <p>(85)</p>

**Figure 4.9 Characteristics of powerful geographical knowledge**

### Critical Geography and PDK

This chapter has argued that critical geography based on critical social theory is powerful because it reveals the structures and processes that empiricism,

positivism and social constructivism overlook (it acknowledges depth ontology).. By ignoring the philosophical (critical realist) strand of Wheelahan's curriculum theory the GCP is inclined to equate PDK with all academic geography (mainstream and critical). Considering the philosophy of knowledge and attending to the philosophical strand would suggest that it is critical geography (based in critical realism) that when coupled with critical education and pedagogy, has real explanatory power.

This text, together with its curriculum units, seeks to show that school geography can only deliver the objectives, attributes, and key competences associated with global citizenship and outlined by Unesco if it incorporates significant elements of critical geography underpinned by critical theory and critical realism. While there remains a strong case for an integrated social education that draws more widely on the social subjects and relevant aspects of the earth sciences, school geography has sound claims to be a 'second best' for such education. It should reveal to students the holistic and dialectical nature of the world using forms of pedagogy that will be explored in the next chapter.

### **And . . . the continuing culture war**

In early 2020 it was becoming clear that the Johnson government, under the influence of its advisor Dominic Cummings (previously with Michael Gove at the Department for Education) was pursuing a culture war in which 'the demographic and educational divisions that came to light around Brexit are amplified and exploited for political gain' ([Davies](#) (86)). A new right ideology that [O'Hagen](#)(87) termed the 'anti-woke backlash' was a product of right populism and post-liberalism (page 19) being against progressivism, political 'correctness', identity politics, and the new middle class. It coalesced around hostility to the modern humanities, including critical theory, and their role in creating an elite that it sees as dominating British public life. Thus the BBC, Channel 4 and universities were under attack as the humanities were targeted by both Thatcherite neoliberals (humanities degrees are a waste of money as revealed by the earnings of their graduates) and nationalists ("cultural Marxism" and postmodernism represent a foreign invasion).

Cumming's plan was for esoteric forms of knowledge (data science, game theory, futures forecasting, etc) to topple the humanities, overthrow the elite, and re-shape government thinking. This is to deny that culture or history or geography require any specialist interpretation (to deny PDK) but 'merely

provide more data for mathematical models'. Davies suggests the humanities are caught between hyper-modern futurism (Cummings) and pre-modern classicism (traditional conservatives who wish to reserve them for themselves). While modern humanities culture and education (including geographical education) is not without its failings (non-inclusive, non-democratic), he insists they should be defended. Critical school geography is part of that defence.

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## Illustrations

Praxis graphic <http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/praxis-makes-perfect/>

## Videos for teachers

[Modernism VS Postmodernism, the unemployed philosopher](#) 14 minutes

[TOK Theory of Knowledge explained](#) 6 minutes

[Dialectical materialism explained](#) 3 minutes

[What is praxis?](#) 4 minutes

[Bhaskar's 'critical realism' and multiple levels of reality, Alistair McGrath](#) 6 minutes

[Powerful knowledge, Michael Young](#) 25 minutes

[David Lambert argues for high quality knowledge in the geography curriculum](#) 6 minutes

[David Lambert on capabilities and powerful knowledge](#) 6 minutes

# Curriculum Unit 4

## Homelessness: causes and solutions



These students at [St Joseph's College in Swindon](#) are pictured with the goods they are going to donate to the homeless at Christmas. Such fund raising for the homeless is often carried out by older school students but what have their geography lessons taught them about the causes of homelessness and possible solutions? How is somebody becoming homeless explained in terms of underlying personal and social structures and processes? How might changes to these structures (for example improved mental health; more affordable and sustainable housing) reduce homelessness? This unit prompts investigation of such questions and introduces critical realism as a form of explanation without using unnecessary jargon.

At a time when an increasing number of young adults are [giving up any hope of ever owning a home](#); many are still [living with their parents](#); and [around 80,000 15 to 25 year olds may be living on the streets](#) housing is a topic that should feature in the geography curriculum.

The unit focuses on SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and GCE topic 6 (difference and respect for diversity)

## **Curriculum plan**

### **Key idea**

Homelessness results from personal and social factors and is often outside the control of the person concerned. Ending homelessness requires measures to tackle physical and mental ill health and to provide enough decent housing accessible to all no matter what their circumstances.

### **Inquiry questions**

How much would I need to earn to afford a house in my local area?

If I was living locally on benefit as a single person, what level of housing benefit would I receive?

What is the extent and geographical distribution of homelessness?

What personal and social factors cause people, particularly rough sleepers, to become homeless?

What roles do central and local government, planners, house builders, housing associations and landlords play in the provision of housing?

How has changing housing policy since 1945 led to declining provision of social housing and the current housing crisis?

What measures (including those suggested by anarchist architects and self builders) would ease the housing crisis and reduce levels of homelessness?

### **Key understandings**

Homelessness is the result of social (economic, housing) factors (unemployment, national minimum wage, benefit changes, housing market failure, government policies, reduced social housing,, etc) and personal and interpersonal factors (leaving home, family conflict, mental health problems, drug taking, etc). The majority of cases have social causes whilst the minority also result from interpersonal and individual factors. Among the group commonly labelled rough sleepers there are recognisable pathways into homelessness that often start with traumatic childhoods.

Social housing is accommodation let at affordable rents to those most in need of a stable home. It is usually provided by councils and not-for-profit organizations such as housing associations. The extent and role of social housing has changed over the past forty years with governments promoting home ownership and giving tenants the right to buy their council houses. A sequence of legislation has brought changes to planning law, housing benefit, and social housing provision that has promoted a free market in housing, inflated land values and house prices, benefitted private house builders, owners and landlords, and disadvantaged those who rent. In recent years councils have found ways to begin building social housing again on a significant scale.

Housing can play a unique and powerful role in ensuring a fair society. Councils plan, deliver and manage social and affordable homes that have multiple positive impacts. Social housing provides homes for those on low incomes and a welfare safety net for those who are disadvantaged by social and/or personal factors.

The sage of council housing (a form of commons) represents enclosure of public assets for private gain (chapter one, page 15).

Self builders can provide affordable and sustainable housing and neighbourhoods. These give residents a real say in the design and management of their homes and community.

Myths surrounding homelessness should be challenged in the interests of the homeless and wider society.

**Key concepts** Personal and social needs, deprivation, alienation, complex needs, pathways into homelessness. Social housing, housing tenure, housing policy, planning, welfare provision, privatization, deregulation, neoliberalism, hegemony, myths.

**Key values** Human rights, social inclusion, respect for diversity, democracy, charity, empathy

**Key skills** Ability to recognize and discuss the ways in which processes operating at the personal and interpersonal levels interact with those operating at the economic, political and cultural levels, to cause homelessness.

Ability to distinguish between causal structures and processes, events, and experiences (demonstrate a basic understanding of critical realism).

**Learning outcomes** Students have a greater understanding of the structures and processes causing homelessness and shaping social housing provision.

**Learning activities** Students consider myths and facts relating to homelessness and how and why myths should be challenged.

Students consider research evidence on the pathways that lead people into homelessness and rough sleeping. They understand how it is possible to recognise distinctive pathways into homelessness.

Students research the history of housing policy in England, and how it links to rising homelessness. They suggest measures to solve the current housing 'crisis' and reduce homelessness. They learn about anarchism, anarchist architecture, and self build housing projects,

Students meet with relevant 'experts' for example a housing officer, a homeless charity, a private developer, a local councillor

### **Assessment task**

Students in groups prepare board games (perhaps versions of snakes and ladders) to illustrate the pathways of young adults into home ownership, renting, homelessness, or other housing outcomes. The games are assessed with reference to the extent they display understanding of the interaction between generative mechanisms (real domain); events (actual domain); and experiences (experiential domain) that determines a player's housing outcome (see section on critical realism in chapter 4).

## Link to Unesco guidance

<b>SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>	<b>Make cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	<p>The learner understands basic physical, social and psychological human needs and is able to identify how these needs are currently addressed in their own physical urban, semi-urban and rural settlements</p> <p>The learner understands the historical reasons for settlement patterns and while respecting cultural heritage, understands the need to find compromises to develop improved sustainable systems</p> <p>The learner understands the role of local decision-makers and participatory governance and the importance of representing a sustainable voice in planning and policy for their area.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to use their voice, to identify and use entry points for the public in the local planning systems, to call for the investment in sustainable infrastructure, buildings and parks in their area and to debate the merits of long-term planning.</p> <p>The learner is able to reflect on their region in the development of their own identity, understanding the roles that the natural, social and technical environments have had in building their identity and culture</p>
Behavioural learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to participate in and influence decision processes about their community.</p> <p>The learner is able to speak against/for and to organize their voice against/for decisions made for their community.</p>
<b>GCE Topic 6</b>	<b>Difference and respect for diversity</b>
Develop and apply values attitudes and skills to manage and engage with diverse groups and perspectives (15-18 years)	<p>Mutual interdependence and challenges of living in diverse societies and cultures (power inequalities, economic disparities, conflict, discrimination, stereotypes)</p> <p>Values and attitudes of empathy and respect beyond groups to which you belong.</p> <p>Engaging in actions for social justice (local, national and global levels</p>

The unit examines SDG 11 in the context of social housing, housing policy, the planning system and anarchist ideas about the role of self builders in creating sustainable and affordable housing. It seeks to counter myths about homelessness and the homeless and so address GCE topic 6.

## **Preparation**

Familiarise yourself with [SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities](#) and the Unesco guidance for SDG11 and GCE topic 6. A sustainable community meets people's basic needs for housing; respects and cares for such groups as the homeless; and seeks housing policies and provision that embodies social justice.

This unit draws on two articles by academic geographers that you should read before planning the delivery of this unit. One addresses pathways into homelessness, and its authors employ critical realism to interpret the results of their interviews. The other examines the housing policy of the 2010 - 2015 coalition government and its links with earlier policies. They are now summarized:

**The article on pathways into homelessness** (Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., & Johnsen, S., 2013)

This article uses pathway analysis to interrogate the nature and causes of multiple exclusion homelessness (MEH) in the UK, drawing on a multistage quantitative study in seven cities. The study employed the following definition of MEH

*People have experienced MEH if they have been 'homeless' (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) and have also experienced one or more of the following other 'domains' of deep social exclusion: 'institutional care' (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals or wards); 'substance misuse' (drug, alcohol, solvent or gas misuse); or participation in 'street culture activities' (begging, street drinking, 'survival' shoplifting or sex work).*

Pathways analysis is used to chart the progress over time of an individual or household through both housed and homeless situations

The authors identify five experiential clusters within the MEH population based on the extent and complexity of experiences of homelessness; substance misuse, institutional care, street culture activities, and adverse life events:

1. Mainly homelessness 25% of cases
2. Homelessness and mental health 25%
3. Homelessness, mental health and victimisation 9%
4. Homelessness and street drinking 14%
5. Homelessness, hard drugs and high complexity 25%

Most complex forms of MEH are associated with childhood trauma (not enough to eat at home, physical abuse or neglect, experiencing homelessness as a child, parents with problems such as domestic violence or substance abuse etc) and nearly two thirds of those interviewed had poor experience of school..

The temporal sequencing of MEH-relevant experiences is remarkably consistent with substance misuse and mental health problems tending to occur early in individual pathways, and homelessness and a range of adverse life events typically occurring later. The research suggests that these later-occurring events are largely consequences rather than originating causes of MEH - which has important implications for the conceptualisation of, and policy responses to deep exclusion.

Pathways analysis is usually approached from a social constructionist perspective, focusing primarily on the meanings which people attach to their homeless and other housing experiences. In contrast, this analysis is primarily concerned with explaining the causation of MEH pathways. In so doing, it is informed by a critical realism. Realist explanations of the social world are both contingent (given the open nature of social systems) and complex (allowing for multiple, and multidirectional, causal mechanisms).

Thus for a critical realist, there is unlikely to be a single trigger for MEH or similar phenomena, with constellations of inter-related causal factors likely to 'explain' MEH in any particular case. The key challenge is to identify common patterns (experiential clusters) that can be explained by the qualitative nature of recurring antecedents—i.e. what it is about these factors that could tend to cause MEH or particular manifestations of MEH.

This theoretical approach allows for economic or housing structures to be all important in some cases of homelessness (probably the majority), and for interpersonal or individual factors to be far more significant in others (probably the minority).

### **The article on housing policy** (Hodkinson, S. & Robbins, G , 2013)

Neoliberalism is a set of economic and political policies based on a belief that free markets, limited government, and the responses of individuals provide better solutions to problems, such as a shortage of housing, than action by the state. Neoliberalism can be seen as a forty year project to downgrade, downsize and disparage the public sector and reduce the role and size of the state.

The privatisation of housing played a material and ideological role in the neoliberal project begun by the Conservative government in the 1980s and continued by the New Labour governments

The coalition government that came to power in 2010 justified austerity (cuts in public spending) in terms of the need to reduce the deficit in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. Cuts were used as ideological cover for far-reaching, market-driven restructuring of social welfare policy including an assault on the housing welfare safety net. This was designed to shut down alternative directions for housing, expand the market for private sales and renting, complete the residualisation of social housing, and draw people into an ever more economically precarious housing experience in order to boost capitalist interests.

In addition to the above two articles you may also wish to read [Shelter's 2017 report on homelessness Far from Alone](#). This can be summarized:

Someone is homeless if they do not have a right to occupy accommodation or if accommodation is of such poor quality that they cannot reasonably be expected to live there.

307 thousand people are recorded as homeless - rough sleepers, single people in hostels, homeless households being accommodated by social services. Many more sofa surfing with family and friends. 14% of the population has experienced homelessness at some time. Across the population as a whole at least one in 200 people are currently homeless.

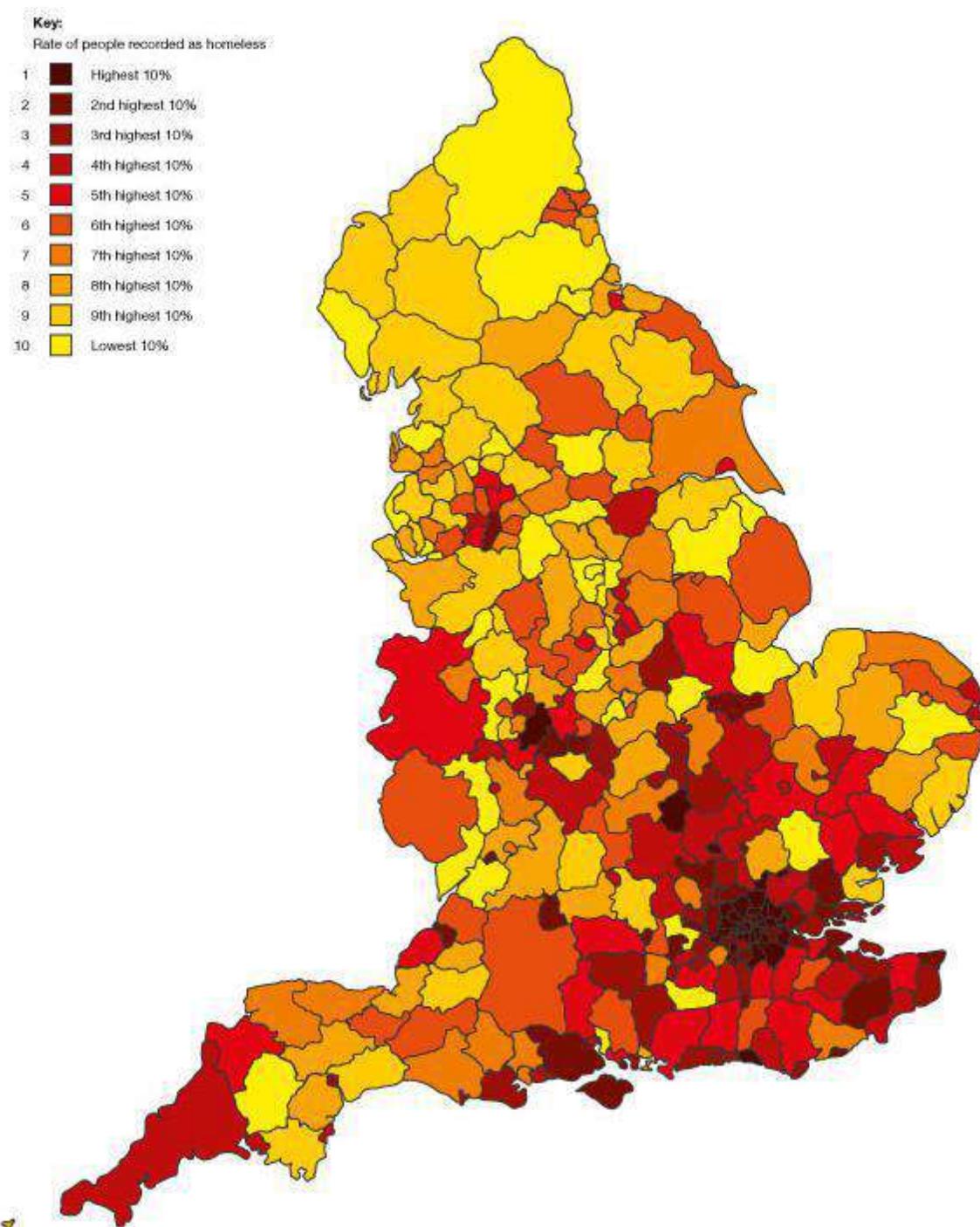
By geographical location (see map on next page). London has the highest rate of homelessness (1 in 25 people are homeless) but rates are also high in Luton, Birmingham and Manchester. The report contains a table of the 50 local authority areas with the highest rates of homelessness. Local authorities have a duty to find housing for the homeless but this may involve moving them to crowded sub-standard accommodation or to another area.

Why homelessness? Homelessness is linked to the housing crisis and the lack of affordable housing to rent. The loss of a private tenancy is a prime cause related to the rise of private rents and cuts in housing benefit.

Shelter urges the Government to adopt policies that result in more affordable homes for social rent in areas of greatest need; longer assured tenancies; and more realistic levels of housing benefit.

The Government passed the [Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017](#). It builds on earlier acts in 1977 and 2002. A Government report in June 2018 stated that 79,800 households in England were living in temporary accommodation, Two-thirds were single parent families. The most common causes of homelessness were relatives and friends not being able to provide accommodation;

### Rate of homelessness ranked by local authority area (Shelter 2017)



relationship breakdown with a violent partner; and the ending of a shorthold tenancy. The Government also announced a £50m fund to provide homes for people ready to leave homeless hostels or domestic abuse refuges as part of a wider strategy to end rough sleeping by 2027.

While the Conservatives claimed to be investing £1.2bn to support the homeless and to have introduced the most ambitious legislation in decades, Labour pointed to a steep drop in investment in affordable homes; cuts to housing benefit; reduced funding for homelessness services; and a refusal to help private renters.

In October 2018 [the introduction of universal credit](#) was linked by several commentators to the rise in homelessness.

Also in preparation you should review the five activity sheets, consider copying the graphics from sheet 4.3 into PPt slides and preview two videos: one on the Rural Urban Synthesis Society in Lewisham; the other on the anarchist architect Walter Segal and the Walters Way community. [Both available here.](#)

Shelter has information on [what causes homelessness](#); [the numbers of homeless people](#); and [housebuilding and the pandemic](#)

The BBC has a [house price calculator](#) – where in the UK can I afford to live?

## Possible procedure

The unit can be taught in four stages each requiring several lessons: attitudes and myths regarding homelessness; pathways into homelessness; the history of social housing; solving the housing crisis. At all stages you and your students should be guided by the inquiry questions and key ideas and understandings.

### 1 Attitudes and myths regarding homelessness

Begin by examining students' existing experience, perceptions, understandings and attitudes towards homelessness and homeless people: the extent and distribution of the issue; the causes and effective solutions. What causes a person to become homeless? What are the underlying and interacting personal, inter-personal and social processes that cause this event to happen?

Introduce and read Activity Sheet 4.1 with the students. This outlines five commonly held myths about homelessness. Have the students heard people / the media expressing these myths? Do they agree with The Cambridge Hub that

they are myths? If not, what further evidence do they need to convince them that they are myths? Whose interests do such myths serve?

Introduce and discuss Shelter's webpage [What causes homelessness?](#), just one attempt to counter myths. Refer to Shelter's 2017 report on the extent of homelessness in the UK and more recent events including the 2020 coronavirus lockdown when rough sleepers were offered accommodation in hotels.

## 2 Pathways into homelessness

Now explain to the students that there is a particular group of homeless people who suffer from multiple social exclusion (live outside mainstream society for several reasons). They use night shelters, sleep rough, may have been in institutional care, may engage in 'substance misuse'; and may participate in such street based activities as begging and shoplifting. Homeless people from this group (rough sleepers) are often seen on the streets of towns and cities and are the focus of charities such as Crisis at Christmas. What do students consider to be the major causes of their homelessness?

Explain the research of Fitzpatrick and her colleagues at an appropriate level.. What clusters of reasons for such homelessness did the research reveal? What experiences led people towards homelessness? How common were these experiences and at what age did they first occur? Use Activity Sheet 4.2 to introduce the concept of pathways into homelessness. Early experiences increase the probability of later events. Homelessness has multiple, interacting triggers.

Explain that a typical pathway to this type of homelessness begins with childhood trauma. This undermines coping strategies for adolescents and young adults who then have mental health problems and/or resort to substance abuse. Longer term consequences for health, well-being and social functioning result in street based activities and homelessness later. This is illustrated by the data on Activity Sheet 4.2. Invite students to suggest actions and policies that could help such people and prevent them following such a pathway.

## 3 The history of social housing

Now switch the students' attention to the provision of housing more generally. Introduce the roles of the principal actors: central and local government, the planning system, housing associations, private house builders, landlords, NGOs such as Shelter and the Town and Country Planning Association, etc.

Use the graphics on Activity Sheet 4.3 to introduce declining rates of home ownership amongst young adults; changing types of housing tenure; declining rates of house building by local authorities (council housing); the voting patterns of home owners and renters; and the amounts different groups spend on housing. Why is there talk of a housing ‘crisis’? Why are an increasing number of young adults still living with their parents? Why do so many think that they will never be able to afford a home of their own?

You might introduce the [BBC’s house price calculator](#) and allow students to investigate what sort of house people on different levels of income could afford in different parts of the UK. Additionally you might allow students to [calculate the local housing allowance](#) for a single person claiming housing benefit in the local area. What would they be able to rent with this allowance?

Consider inviting a housing and/or planning officer from the local authority or a representative of a local housing association to talk to the students about housing provision in the local area. Your local government website has documents on local homelessness; the local plan; housing strategy; and how to register/apply for social housing. The types of tenure in local streets are shown on the [StreetCheck website](#).

Use Activity Sheet 4.4 to outline the history of social housing in England. You might allow students to research this for themselves before introducing the sheet that they edit/revise/update in the light of their findings. Sheet 4.4 is somewhat detailed and is perhaps best regarded as a teacher resource from which you select the key events and legislation in the light of your students’ abilities and interests.

#### 4 Solving the housing crisis

Continue by considering possible measures to solve the crisis and reduce levels of homelessness. Allow students to suggest measures based on what they have learnt so far and then introduce the sixteen measures in the table on Activity Sheet 4.5, Aid comprehension of these measures and make it clear that this is not a comprehensive list. Ask students to add further measures to the table. You might cut the individual solutions out of the table and ask students to rank them using the activity [diamond ranking](#).

Focus on the measure: encourage local housing co-operatives; co-housing initiatives; community land trusts; and self-build communities. Explain how

these can give local people more control over their housing options and then focus on self build communities.

Introduce [anarchism](#) using the [anarchist architect Walter Segal](#) and the [Rural Urban Synthesis Society](#). Show and discuss the videos and link discussion to a local self build project if possible. Are such initiatives capable of producing affordable and sustainable housing on a larger scale? If so what policies should governments adopt to support them?

The suggested assessment task requires students to design a board game. See outline of task above in unit outline.

### **Additional sources**

[A history of UK housing](#)

[Streets Apart, a history of social housing, BBC Radio 4](#)

[Danny Dorling All that is Solid](#)

[TCPA Housing for a fairer society, the role of councils in ensuring stronger communities 2019](#)

[Channel4 series How to get a council house](#)

[What more can be done to build the homes we need](#) (The Lyons edited collection) IPPR, 2017

[On Persimmon and Jeff Fairburn's bonus](#)

[First-time buyer housing affordability in England and Wales 2017](#), Office for National Statistics

[Stacey Dooley, Why I followed four homeless teens for nine months](#)  
(Background to TV documentary broadcast November 2018)

[Robert Booth's article in The Guardian on the 2019 rough sleeper count](#)

[The Wrong Answers to the Wrong Questions](#), TCPA 2020 on government's proposed reforms to planning system.

### **Acknowledgement**

Thanks to Adrian Sinha for his help with Activity Sheet 4.4.

**1. “It’s their own fault.”**

It’s not. There are lots of reasons why people become homeless. Often, it’s because of a mixture of relationship, money and health problems that come together at the wrong time and make people’s lives spiral out of control. There are broader issues, too: the supply of affordable housing in this country hasn’t kept up with demand, and the recent economic downturn and changes to the benefits system mean more people are being made vulnerable, through no fault of their own. Between 2016 and 2017 rough sleeping increased by 16% and [between 2010 and 2017 it increased by 169%](#). Clearly, changes in the economy and benefit system are beyond an individual’s control.

**2. “They’re all dangerous and aggressive.”**

Homeless people are no more aggressive than anyone else. If they’re living on the streets, they’re 13 times more likely to be attacked than the rest of us, often by non-homeless passers-by. Many are too busy keeping themselves alive to even think about hurting others. And, if you stop to say hello, you’ll realise that most homeless people are friendly, interesting and grateful for the chance to chat. They are human, after all.

**3. “They’re all drunks or drug addicts.”**

Homeless people are as diverse and unique as the rest of us. As a group they are more likely to die from drug- and alcohol-related diseases. But that doesn’t mean they’re all crazy or dangerous. Many are teetotal. Others have an occasional drink to warm themselves on yet another night in the freezing cold. And of those who do suffer from addiction, the vast majority have never received the support they need to help address the childhood, relationship or mental health issues that got them there in the first place. But step inside a hostel, and you’d be surprised how many don’t do drugs or alcohol at all.

**4. “If they wanted to, they could sort themselves out.”**

Sadly, this is easier said than done. The sheer effort of keeping yourself alive with no food, money, shelter or support means you’ll have very little energy left

to do anything else. Getting a job is out of the question. Even finding a hostel to sleep in is difficult, as there aren't enough services for the rising numbers of people in need. In the current economic climate, funding for night shelters, addiction services and supported housing continues to be cut, making it even harder for people to break the vicious cycle of the homelessness trap.

## **5. “It’s got nothing to do with me.”**

Think there's no chance you'll ever be homeless? Think again. I've met people with a first-class degree, a supportive family, a good job and no mental health issues, who've still been made homeless. It can happen to anyone. The good news is, we can all do something to help. Whether it's campaigning for more affordable housing, donating to a homeless charity or simply stopping to chat with someone on the streets, we all have the opportunity to make a difference. The question is, will you take it?

Believing the homeless should be blamed for their lifestyle and that it is their responsibility to get out of it, is completely Victorian.

Source: [The Cambridge Hub 2014](#) with statistics updated

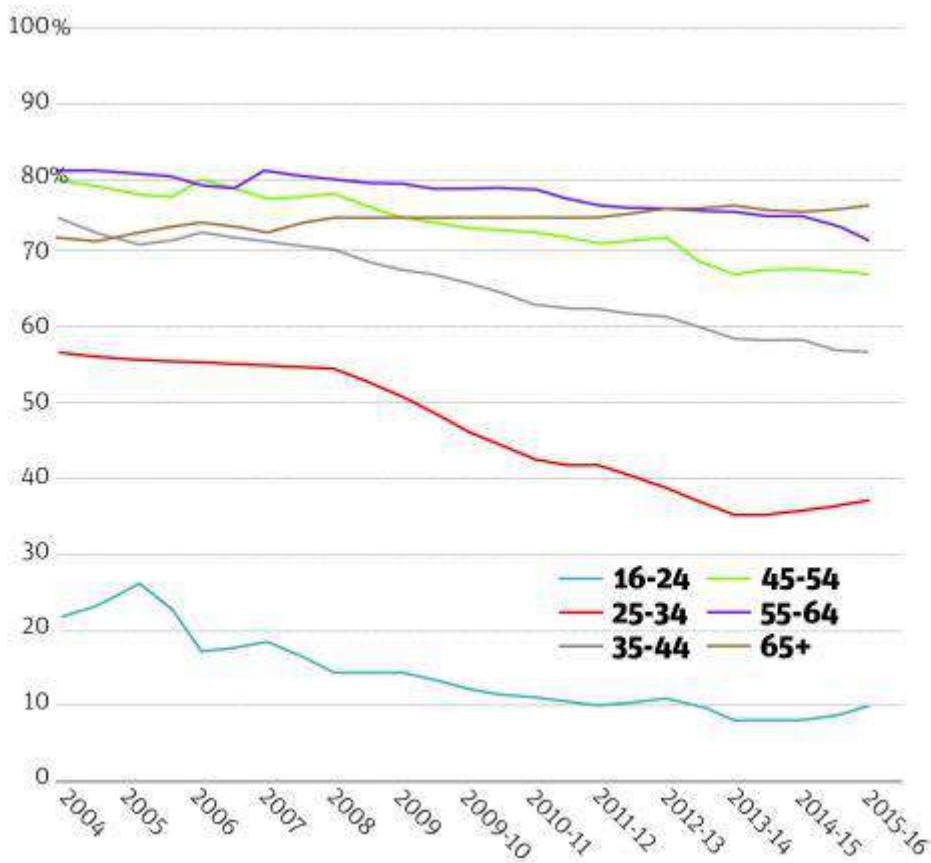
**Activiy Sheet 4.2****Experiences leading to homelessness**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Percentage of those interviewed</b>	<b>Median age of first occurrence</b>
Abused solvents, gas or glue	21	15
Left local authority care	16	17
Thrown out by parents / carers	36	17
Had sex or engaged in sex act in exchange for money, drugs, etc	10	17
Involved in street drinking	55	18
Used hard drugs	44	19
Had a period in life when they had six or more alcoholic drinks on a daily basis	63	20
Stayed with friends of relatives because had no home of their own	77	20
Shoplifted because needed things like food, drugs, alcohol or money for somewhere to stay	38	20
Were a victim of violent crime (including domestic violence)	43	20
Went to prison	46	21
Had a period in life when very anxious or depressed	79	22
Injected drugs	27	22
Slept rough	77	26
Admitted to hospital because of mental health issue	29	26
Made redundant	23	26
Applied to the council as homeless	72	27
Stayed at a hostel, foyer, refuge, night shelter or B&B hotel	84	28
Begged (that is, asked passers-by for money in the street or other public space)	32	28
Evicted from a rented property	25	28
Experienced bankruptcy	6	29
Divorced or separated	44	32
Home was repossessed	6	34
A long-term partner died	10	43

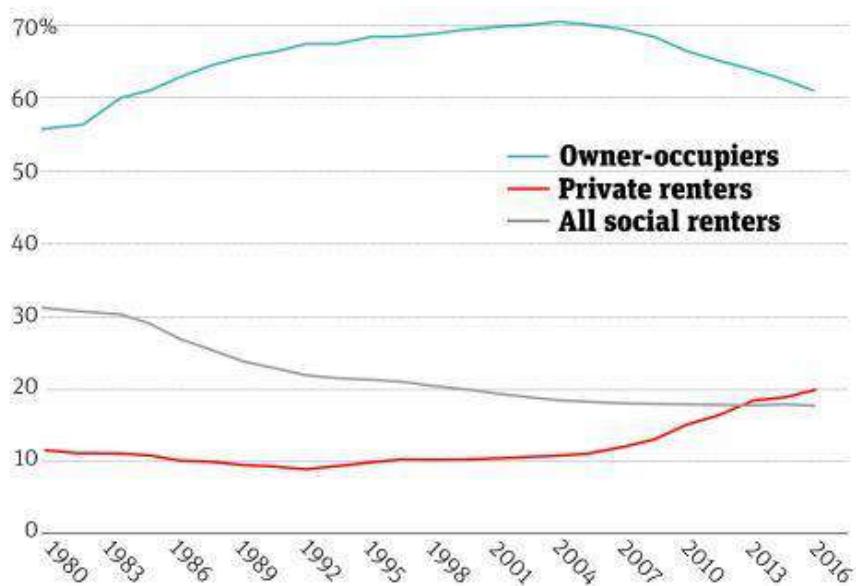
Based on around 450 interviews conducted in 2010 with homeless people using such services as street outreach, drop-in services, day centres, direct access accommodation, church based soup runs, etc. in Belfast; Birmingham; Bristol; Cardiff; Glasgow, Leeds; and Westminster (London).

Homeless people who sleep rough and use these services tend to be single men with complex needs associated in particular with drug and alcohol problems and physical and mental health issues.

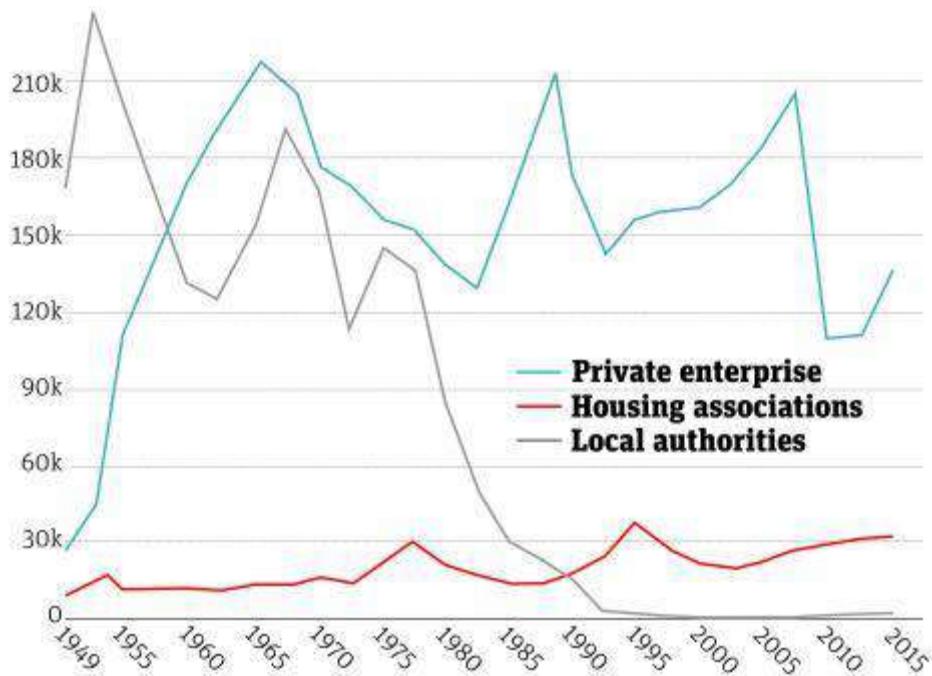
### Activity Sheet 4.3 Facts and figures about housing



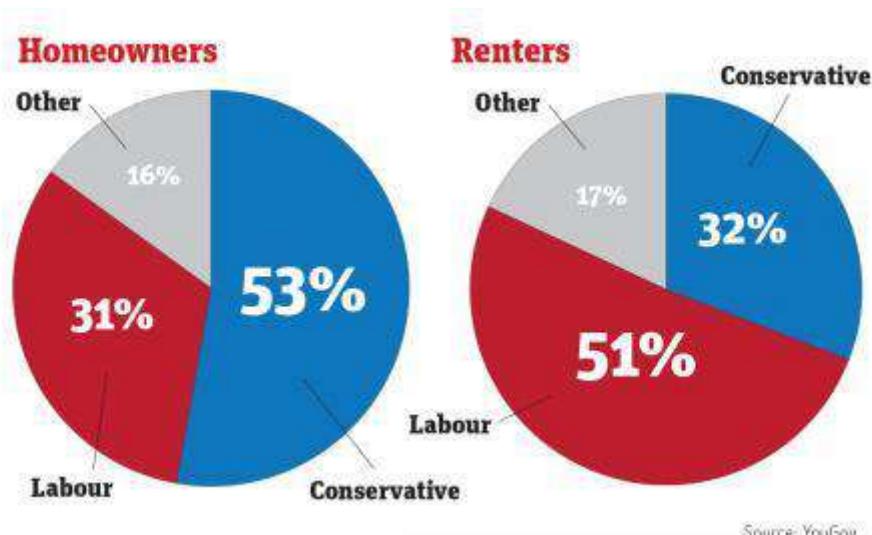
Percentage of each age group who own their own home



Who lives where? How the tenure mix has changed over time



Total new homes built each year by different kinds of organisation



Voting intention by housing type at 2017 election

<b>Owner occupiers</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>Private renters</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Local authority tenants</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
<b>Housing association tenants</b>	<b>28.6%</b>

Housing costs as a percentage of income, 2015-16

## Activity Sheet 4.4

## The History of Social Housing in England

The two main ways in which people have a right to occupy a home are:

- Home-ownership: this includes homes owned outright and mortgaged
- Renting: this includes social rented housing and private rented housing

Social rented housing includes housing rented from local authorities and housing associations: In 1981 32 per cent of households lived in the social rented sector. However, the level decreased to 18 per cent by 2003 and has remained at the same level since then

The first rented council houses were built for migrants, in cities like Liverpool, in the late 1800s. The Labour Government of **1945** introduced a national housing service and built a million council houses, many for service men returning from WW2. The homes were built to a new standard and many replaced slum housing. In 1949 Aneurin Bevan, the minister for health and housing, removed reference to housing ‘for the working class’ from housing legislation, insisting that council estates should be mixed communities with council houses available to all.

During the 1920s council homes were sold in small numbers. During the 1950s sales increased, 5,825 were sold in the single month of **May 1956**.

After **1951** Conservative and Labour Governments competed to see how many new houses they could get built. Many were of poor quality. In **1978** councils built 40% of new homes. In **2017** they built less than 2%.

**1969** New standards were introduced requiring all council houses to provide adequate space for living. These (Parker Morris standards) were abandoned in 1980 when a Conservative Government sought to reduce the cost of housing and public spending.

During the **1970s** Conservative ministers argued that council tenants had a right to buy their homes. They saw property ownership as self-improving, socially and morally as well as materially. While some Labour local authorities continued to build large numbers of council houses, the party leadership had begun to accept that ‘for most people, owning one’s house is a basic and natural desire’.

**1980** Mrs Thatcher’s government passed a law (the right to buy) that gave tenants the right to buy their council house and offered them a discount on the

price. Councils were forbidden to use the revenues raised by selling council houses to build new homes as the government intended to use the income to help pay off the public debt. In the decades that followed as housing stock was sold off and money for new building was rationed, social housing came to be seen as undesirable and council housing tenants as a new 'underclass'.

In **1981** the average English council rent was less than 7% of average income but the quality of service (tenants' rights, representation, advice, repairs and maintenance) was generally poor. In that year the average valuation of a Right to Buy property was around £19,500 yet most purchasers paid closer to £10,000 after discount.

In **2012** Conservative ministers increased the discount available to tenants in England who wished to buy their homes. Between 2012 and 2018, 30,000 council homes were sold and the average discount in 2018 was around £60K. 40% of sold council houses are now owned by private landlords. Housing campaigners suggest that the right to buy should be suspended in England. Scotland and Wales ended it in 2017/19.

**1985** The Housing Act required council house tenants to be selected on the basis of housing need. This led to the decline of estates where tenants had a range of incomes and were of mixed social class.

**1970s to mid-2000s** There were many 'hard to let' or 'sink' estates with empty houses. These estates were poorly maintained and used to house the most disadvantaged people. Sections of the public and the media labelled these people 'scroungers', 'cheats' and the 'undeserving poor' .

Today (**2018**) ninety percent of social housing is now managed by housing associations to whom many local authorities have transferred their stock of council houses. This transfer of housing has taken place mainly for financial reasons: to reduce public sector borrowing and increase the role of private finance in improving the quality of housing. In some areas tenants have voted to reject this option.

**1980 to 2017** Successive governments allowed the needs of owner-occupiers to dominate housing policy. A key factor prior to **2000** was mortgage tax relief which provided a subsidy to private ownership and led to a decline in renting.

The **1988** Housing Act introduced assured shorthold tenancies. These made tenancies shorter and riskier for the tenant.

**1991** Rents for council tenants were now 55% higher, relative to average earnings, than they had been ten years earlier. Without Right to Buy the council house sector would have generated sufficient surpluses from rental income to make such rises unnecessary.

**1993** The introduction of buy-to-let mortgages made it easier for small-scale private landlords to secure finance. This has resulted in an increase in the size of the private rented sector.

**2008** Three quarters of UK householders own their own home (**2018** two thirds); and 10% rented privately (**2018** 20% and rising). The waiting list for social housing reached 1.77 million.

**2008 to 2017** All political parties promised that private developers and housing associations would build 200,000 new homes a year. To meet the **2017** shortfall at least 300,000 homes would have to be built every year for a decade.

**2010** The government stops grant funding to local authorities for social housing.

**2011** The number of people renting privately overtook the combined number of those renting in the social sector from councils and housing associations.

The **2011 Localism Act** requires social housing applicants to have a 'local connection' to the area in which they register for housing in order to be housed. This enabled 32 London Boroughs to reduce their total waiting list by 125,000 between 2012 and 2014 as homeless people were moved to other parts of the country.

**2011/12** The National Planning Policy Framework gives priority to expensive private development while discouraging social housing. Land banking by house builders; slow building rates; and the use of housing for speculative investment; results in house prices becoming unaffordable for average wage earners.

The Planning Policy Framework introduces affordable housing. Under section 106 planning agreements, all major housing developments must include affordable homes at a level determined locally and based on an assessment of housing need. Affordability is defined by the housing cost to income ratio which varies from one local authority to another. Local planning policies seek 35 to 50% affordable homes in any new development.

The **2016** Housing and Planning Act makes all social housing essentially emergency housing, offered only on a temporary basis and to be withdrawn once tenants are out of dire economic circumstances. Many vulnerable people cannot afford to rent privately

**2016** The waiting list for social housing stood at 1.24 million but many councils and housing associations had closed their lists. Only 5,900 homes for social rent were built in 2016/17 compared with 39,560 in 2010/11.

**2016** The government launches the affordable homes programme. This aims to increase the supply of shared ownership and other affordable home in England by lending money to housing associations and local authorities to develop affordable housing.

**2017** £25 billion is spent each year on housing benefit (15% of the total benefit bill) making the government a prime funder of private landlords. Social housing is only available to the desperate and most vulnerable. Around 1.8m council homes have been sold off (privatised) since 1980. Of the homes currently sold under right to buy, 40% are rented out again privately. Government funding for social housing is now only 5% of what it was in 2010 with money transferred to building ‘affordable rent’ homes and to helping various forms of low-cost home ownership (help to buy/shared ownership).

**2017** Median house prices in England are now 7.9 times higher than median earnings. Most young adults cannot afford to buy a home and rent privately.

**2017** Following their election victory the Conservative government extended its help to buy policy.

**2017** The private house builder Persimmon build 16,043 homes and sold them for £3.42 billion, more than half to ‘help to buy’ recipients. The firm made profits of £950 million (27% of sales), donated £1 million to charity, and awarded Jeff Fairburn, its CEO a bonus of £110 million.

In **2018** the government launches Homes England to ‘accelerate house building, release more land to developers, improve neighbourhoods and grow communities’. and removes restrictions on councils borrowing money to build new homes.

**2018** The revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government’s policy for local planning and its approach to affordable housing.

Councils are largely dependent on private developers to deliver new affordable housing under Section 106 agreements. But viability testing allows developers to argue that they cannot afford to build affordable homes at the level councils require (35 to 50% affordable homes). Viability testing (how much affordable housing is viable?) favours developers as councils do not have the money and resources to legally challenge them and the levels of profit they expect

Since 2013 it has been possible to convert commercial buildings (eg. office blocks) into homes without making a full planning application. This has resulted in many sub-standard dwellings. The revised framework does not stop such development.

Some argue that the planning system should give voice to those in need of new homes as well as existing home owners. Others insist that houses are being built to poor space, accessibility and energy performance standards and revised planning controls are needed.

**2018** The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 comes into force. The government publishes its Rough Sleeping Strategy backed by £380 million funding and a commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027

**2018** Around 6,400 social homes and 47,355 affordable homes were delivered in 2017/18 (part of a total of 222,190 additional dwellings). Nearly half the affordable homes were delivered through section 106 agreements.

**2019** Shelter estimates that 1.2 million homes are needed for those on social housing waiting lists and that 3.1 million more social homes need to be delivered over the next 20 years at a cost of around £10.7bn a year to tackle the crisis of affordability. These could be paid for by a land value tax; by investment from pension funds; and/or by government bonds issued by a National Investment Bank. Some believe that the way to solve the housing crisis is for local self-builders to build sustainable and affordable neighbourhoods with council support.

**2019** Many councils are delivering homes without government grants. Around 13,000 council houses were built in 2018 generally to higher standards than houses built by the private sector. Doncaster and Norwich have won awards for their homes; Bristol is on target to deliver 800 affordable homes a year; Exeter is building homes to high (Passivhaus) energy standards. Councils have re-discovered powers that allow them to build (the 1963 Local Government Act;

the 2011 Localism Act). 42% of local authorities now have their own housing company and even after borrowing money at commercial rates they can deliver more affordable and energy efficient housing than is possible by partnering with private developers.

**2019** The right to buy remains an obstacle to councils wishing to provide social housing in England. Of the new housing being delivered by councils only 23% is socially rented (of the rest 42% is affordable at up to 80% market rent; 10% is intermediate (including shared ownership); 16% for sale; and 8% private rented). Rotherham which is building 340 new homes in 2019 used to have 40,000 council houses, it now has around 20,500 and is losing up to 200 homes a year.

**2020** Around 5,400 rough sleepers are moved into emergency accommodation in hotels during the lockdown linked to the coronavirus pandemic. The government promises to make 3,300 homes available within 12 months to prevent them returning to the streets. It also promises to bring forward £160m of its £380m rough sleeping services budget to build six thousand ‘housing units’ and provide support for those with mental health or substance abuse issues.

**2020** The recession caused by coronavirus leads to rising unemployment and an expected increase in homelessness as many tenants in rented accommodation will be unable to pay their rent.

**2020** One in three of the millennial generation, born between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s are expected to never own their own home.

**August 2020** The government announces a complete overhaul of the planning system in England. All land will be designated for growth (automatic planning permission), renewal (permission subject to some basic checks) or protection (with the status of the current green belt). It claims that is a need to ‘cut red tape’ and speed up the planning process to get houses built. Its opponents claim that 90% of planning applications are already approved and that more than a million homes with planning permission have not yet been built.

The proposals limit the scope for public input and democratic accountability. A two step process (consultation on the local plan and individual planning applications) is to be reduced to one (consultation of the design code for local housing). The government proposes to extend the exemption from section 106 agreements to more sites, meaning fewer affordable homes are likely to be built.

## Activity Sheet 4.5

### Some measures to reduce homelessness

Prevent foreigners from buying homes in the UK as an investment.	Bring the existing housing stock up to modern standards so that it is fit for 21C living and energy efficient.
Increase welfare benefits so that all those living on welfare can afford to rent a home.	Introduce a land value tax so that house builders do not hoard land and the wealth of richer postcodes can be spread to poorer areas.
Give local councils the power to regulate rents (rent controls) and license landlords	Encourage local housing co-operatives; co-housing initiatives; community land trusts; and self-build communities.
Reduce the high profits going to house builders so that the cost of buying a home reflects the real cost of supplying it.	Enforce house building targets on local planning authorities.
Provide more healthcare, mental health and substance misuse services to keep the vulnerable in their homes.	Increase taxes on buy-to-let landlords and second home owners.
Introduce laws to require empty properties to be used as dwellings (over 600,000 empty homes in England in 2015).	Even out growth across the UK with appropriate industrial and regional policy. House prices would then converge.
Only permit the right to buy in areas where social housing can be built at the same rate as it is sold off.	Relax planning controls on greenbelt land enabling houses to be built there.
End the rights of tenants in England to buy their council homes.	End permitted development rights that allow office blocks to be converted into accommodation units as small as 13 sq metres..



# **Chapter 5**

## **Critical pedagogy**

*This (teachers moving to classes rather than classes moving to teachers) is one of the ways in which the school (King Solomon Academy in Paddington) has tried to make the learning as efficient as possible. All the lessons have a similar structure. They start with 'Do Now', a short talk designed to engage the students' brains while the teacher prepares the lesson. This is followed by short pacy activities aimed at establishing a new concept through repetition. Lessons end with an 'Exit Ticket', another short task designed to check whether the students have learned what they are supposed to over the previous 55 minutes. The schedule for the lesson, the 'agenda' is written on the board; the teacher ticks off the tasks as the class completes them. These practices are lifted from Lemov's book Teach like a Champion: 'Do Now' is number 29 and 'Exit Ticket' number 20 George Duoblys (1) p. 24*

*And while the disclosure and generation of possibility for radical democratic thinking and action and for challenging domination and foreclosure cannot be taught, they can be learned through practices of collective meaning-making and action, experimental forms of problem-posing and problem-solving, and ongoing reflection and knowledge production.* Sarah Amsler (2) p. 192

In his article on the new school discipline, Duoblys (1) explains how the educational reforms discussed in chapters two and four have sought to sweep away progressive teaching and return to more traditional methods (discipline, high standards, chanting, setting, sitting in rows) that may be supplemented by pedagogical innovations borrowed from the US. The [Knowledge is Power Programme](#) (KIPP) (3) is based on Hirsch's notion of cultural literacy (page 157), places measurability above all else, and has inspired two influential books: *Teach like a champion* (4) and *Seven Myths about Education* (5). Its adoption undermines teacher autonomy and professionalism and increases the likelihood of teacher and student alienation.

There are alternatives which previous chapters and curriculum units have sought to outline and demonstrate. Critical pedagogy encourages democratic classrooms and negotiated learning; develops critical inquiry and thinking skills; and draws on critical theory to destroy illusions and allow students to

recreate themselves and their world through praxis. This chapter outlines the characteristics of critical pedagogy, including its links to moral and political education and the teaching of controversial issues, before examining its several approaches based on different critical theories. It then explores guidance on inquiry based learning and the development of critical thinking in school geography and its potential to deliver critical pedagogy.

The focus then shifts to the changing nature of capitalism and work shaped by the rise of digital technology. Automation and artificial intelligence offer an end to the drudgery and alienation associated with much current work, yet the reality of [rentier capitalism](#) (6) is a global re-division of labour, the rise of the gig economy and a growing [precarity](#) (7). Too many young workers in the UK are in low quality jobs with low pay; are over-qualified for the jobs they do; lack opportunities for training and advancement; are under-employed and non-unionised. Dominant ideas about work, and schooling as a preparation for work, are being challenged by those critical theorists who suggest [post-work futures](#) (8). Automation together with universal basic income and services could liberate people from work provided rentier capitalism is dismantled and the income that capitalists now obtain by enclosing public commons (data, land, water, public utilities, social services, etc) is captured and re-distributed by means of such instruments as a democratic sovereign wealth fund.

The associated curriculum unit focuses on SDG 8, ([decent work and economic growth](#) (9)), and GCE topic 9 (getting engaged and taking action). It examines the role of trade unions in improving the quality of members' jobs; the issues faced by young workers on average or below average pay; the future of work in the digital economy; regulation of the gig economy; and the policies unions and others might pursue to realise sustainable futures beyond work. All issues that the coronavirus pandemic and discussion of the 'next normal' have rendered more relevant.

### **Characteristics of critical pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy was introduced in chapter two (Freire's conscientisation, page 59) and four (praxis, page 143), It is a form of teaching and learning guided by critical theory and has the following characteristics that find echoes in the Unesco guidance on ESDGC (pages 20 -25):

- **Pupil centred learning.** Puts students and their self knowledge, rather than authoritative knowledge, at the centre of the learning process. Objectives, content and learning activities are negotiated and much learning is experiential (10).
- **Knowledge construction.** Acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by the possession of specific identities and the subjective experiences, 'languages', values and perceptions that shape and are shaped by these identities. Knowledge is not a body of information to be delivered to pupils but emerges through communication and dialogue whereby they come to see the world from the starting point of their own life experiences. This process which demystifies official or authoritarian knowledge is social and cultural and requires teachers to see schooling as a set of institutional practices that can both reproduce and/or challenge dominant structures of power.
- **Application of critical theory.** Seeks to explain events and experiences in terms of underlying reality (structures and processes); question mainstream theory; and invite pupils to consider explanations and alternatives based on critical theory. This recognises that while knowledge is a social construct, it refers to a real world of inter-acting bio-physical and social structures and processes.
- **Social justice, human rights and sustainability.** Critical pedagogy gives voice to those (including other sentient beings) excluded or marginalised in the dialogical construction of knowledge. It recognises the disparate forms of oppression of human nature acknowledged by intersectionality theory (page 113); the oppression of non-human nature; and the need to explore alternatives that offer emancipation.
- **Provisional truths, consensus and democracy.** Provides a democratic means of evaluating knowledge and values (debating what is technically possible, culturally acceptable, and morally and politically right) and arriving at a provisional truths about reality. This may draw on deliberative (11) and/or agonistic theories (12) of democracy.
- **Active and critical citizenship.** Develops social literacy or the ability to 'read' and 'write' one's social situation. This encompasses economic, political and cultural (media) literacy; enables learners to 'locate' themselves in relation to space, place, and nature; and develops the competences required by the active and critical global citizen.

- **Values education** Involves the analysis, clarification, development and exercise of students' values using classroom strategies related to each of these objectives (13) (14) (15) (16). Recognises that values education risks idealism unless accompanied by political education (17).
- **Political literacy.** Develops the student's political literacy (18) by drawing on such guidance as that developed by the Programme for Political Education (19) and [Education Scotland](#) (20). This suggests that students should learn about existing and alternative political systems of power and decision making operating at different scales from the local to the global.
- **Media literacy.** Provides the skills and knowledge needed to understand and question media content and make judgements about where it comes from and whether it is likely to be true. Critical pedagogy seeks to [reveal and counter false news](#) (21) post-truths (22) (23) and hate speech while exploring their links to populism and the decline of democracy. Some consider [Finland's education system](#) a world leader in tackling fake news (24). Critical pedagogy also draws on a wide range of media to foster [the affective domain of learning](#) (25) and resonance (page 110).
- **Controversial issues** Draws on concepts of balance, neutrality, commitment, and indoctrination when deciding how to address issues in the classroom. Recognises teaching strategies of procedural neutrality, stated commitment, balanced approach, and devil's advocate and their potential strengths and weaknesses. Emphasises such process skills as critically diagnosing information and evidence; asking awkward questions, recognising rhetoric; and cultivating tentativeness (26) (27) (28). See [notes and slides](#) provided by Education Scotland.
- **The role of the teacher and student autonomy** There are multiple perspectives on how universal principles, such as those set out in the Earth Charter, and the SDGs should be realised. The teacher's role is to present mainstream and critical perspectives as provided by different models of political economy; develop the students' ability to judge for themselves which offers the best prospect of a sustainable future; and guard against undue influence and indoctrination while ensuring that explanations based in critical theory and radical social alternatives are not overlooked.

## Approaches to critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is of several overlapping kinds reflecting the different critical theories that underpin it and the different oppressed groups to whom it seeks to give voice. Eco-pedagogy, the pedagogy of place and postcolonial pedagogy feature prominently in subsequent chapters (6, 7 and 8), so for the moment it is sufficient to summarize four other approaches.

**Marxist and Socialist pedagogy** engages in [ideology critique](#) (29) to reveal false ideas that mask the workings of capitalism and offers alternative socialist ideas.. As we saw in chapter one (page 17) the ruling class develop a hegemonic culture which propagates its own values, beliefs and norms so that they become widely accepted as 'common sense'. In this they are helped by such agents as schooling and the media with the result that people in other classes identify their own good with that of their rulers.

According to Gramsci, organic or transformative intellectuals have a key role to play in the transition to socialism by not simply describing social life in accordance with scientific (positivist) rules, but by articulating the feelings and experiences of excluded social groups which they cannot express for themselves. In doing this they should not impose Marxist ideas from without, but recover and extend the existing intellectual activity of people that is critical of the status-quo. In that it focuses on trade unions and workers' rights, the curriculum unit associated with this chapter might be considered an exercise in socialist pedagogy.

Mouffe (30) is a post Marxist who builds on Gramsci's ideas to advocate a left populism (page 18) whereby left parties and radical social movements create a new hegemony by campaigning on the virtues of [radical democracy](#) (31) and its ability to deliver sustainable futures. She is associated with an agonistic rather than a deliberative or autonomist perspective on such democracy and this has implications for global citizenship education and associated pedagogy that are examined in chapter nine. This draws on [Ruttenberg's](#) (32) notion of radical democratic citizenship education: a form of critical pedagogy that prepares students to act as political adversaries; educates their political emotions; fosters an understanding of power within the political; and explores how such concepts as equality, liberty and sustainability are interpreted and implemented by left and right.

Amsler (2) links education to radical democracy by drawing on the ideas of [Ernst Bloch on the education of hope](#) (33). Like Mouffe, he believed that right populism has a utopian dimension that can be turned in progressive directions and like Wright (page 14) he saw utopia as a project (linked to attaining a new hegemony and realising a new left modernity) rather than a pre-existing ideal state. Learning hope and refusing despair is part of this project and requires critical pedagogy that enables learners to imagine, build and sustain radical social alternatives by fostering radical democratic thought and activity. Bloch's concept of 'the Front' suggests that it should pay attention to emergent but not yet fully intelligible possibilities such as sustainable development.

Marxist and socialist ideas shaped the development of critical pedagogy in the US by such theorists as Apple, Bell-Hooks, Giroux, McLaren, Kellner and Shor and find expression in the journal [Critical Education](#) (34). Advocates of socialist pedagogy in the UK are to be found in the [Socialist Educational Association](#) (35) and writing for the [Journal of Critical Educational Policy Studies](#) (36). Such pedagogy had a limited impact on school geography in the 1980s (page. 147).

**Anarchist pedagogy.** [Anarchism](#) (37) (38) argues that the state and representative forms of democracy deny people their right to self-determination or direct democracy. [Anarchist pedagogy](#) (39) reflects the radical (page 62) or libertarian tradition in education (40) that supports de-schooling and free schooling (as practiced at Neill's Summerhill (41)) and believes that education should be an integral part of community life. During the 1970 and 1980s anarchist pedagogy had some impact on school geography (42) largely due to the work of [Colin Ward](#) (43) and his editorship of the *Bulletin of Environmental Education*. Practitioners are likely to draw on the [Libertarian Education website](#) (44). *The Radicalization of Pedagogy* (45) offers geography teachers an overview of the pedagogical insights contained in anarchist geographies.

**Critical theory and related pedagogy** is a development of Marxism that shifts the focus from economics to culture. Originating with the [Frankfurt School](#) (46) in Germany in the inter-war period, it explores the limitations of instrumental rationality, suggesting that the spread of such rationality, linked to technocracy, consumerism and the mass media, means that the working class have been seduced by capitalism and that the modern promise of enlightenment has not been realised.

Habermas (47) is associated with a deliberative perspective on radical democracy. He contrasts instrumental rationality (utilitarian calculation of expediency) with communicative rationality. This requires subjects to account for their beliefs and actions in terms that are intelligible to others and which they can contest or accept. Such rationality recognises different knowledge interests (technical, practical/hermeneutic, and critical); is at the heart of discourse ethics (48) and notions of deliberative democracy (49) (49) (consensus orientated approaches to agreeing values and policy that shape practical action that makes a difference (50)) that have been applied to environmental and global politics (51). Englund (52), Young (53), and Walsh (54) explore critical theory's relevance to forms of critical pedagogy that have had only a marginal impact on school geography (55). Curriculum unit three is an application of Rosa's critical theory and chapter nine compares GCE based on deliberative global democratisation with that based on radical or agonistic global democratisation.

**Postmodern or post-structuralist pedagogy** encourages pupils to view issues through the lenses of grand narratives, myths and discourses (Figure 4.7 p. 136), seeing how these give meaning to such terms as globalization, sustainability and global citizenship. Through media studies and the development of critical literacy, students consider how their identities or subject positions are constituted in discourse and how individuals and institutions (including schools) navigate between different positions. When studying an issue they should ask 'who and how can the subject speak?' and 'what are the silences and marginalisation produced by the dominant discourses?' (56). Post-structuralism invites relativism (strong social constructivism); rejects universal truths and grand narratives in favour of smaller, culturally specific, truths and perceptions; and is critical of the key assumptions of modern knowledge (Figure 4.6, page 151). Nevertheless its relativism can be moderated (weak social constructivism) and it has the merit of accommodating voices from the margins (minority and indigenous cultures) that are critical of modern culture and may be neglected by other approaches. Such pedagogies may be labelled post-critical (see Figure 7.3). Curriculum unit two explored how the discourse of choice impacted on spatial divisions of schooling and unit six explores discourses of hunger.

## **Enquiry based learning**

Margaret Roberts (p. 132) is the key advocate of enquiry learning in school geography (57) (58) and argues that powerful pedagogy (59) should accompany powerful knowledge if students are to acquire geocapabilities (60). She suggests that enquiry learning has four characteristics:

- *It is question driven and encourages a questioning attitude towards knowledge.*
- *Students study geographical data and sources of information as evidence.*
- *Students make sense of information for themselves in order to develop understanding.*
- *Students reflect on their learning.* (58) p. 50

She further explains that the approach is based in constructivist theory of learning, the central ideas of which are:

- *We learn about the world only through actively making sense of it for ourselves;*
- *Knowledge cannot be transmitted to us ready made. Each individual sees and understands the world differently; and*
- *To make sense of new information children and young people have to relate it to what they already know.* (61) p. 183

These ideas lead her to emphasise the central role of dialogic teaching that *encourages the kinds of whole class and small group discussions in which students can share and challenge ideas freely, listen to each other, consider alternative viewpoints, voice uncertainties, ask questions and work on their understanding.* (58) p.51

Elsewhere, in an article on critical thinking and global learning, Roberts makes one of the few references in GA journals to critical pedagogy:

*Whereas critical thinking encourages an approach to education underpinned by a commitment to reasoned rationality, critical pedagogy is concerned with the potential emancipatory power of reasoned thinking and is underpinned by a commitment to equality and social justice.* (62) p. 56

She then lists the characteristics of critical pedagogy that can be compared with those listed above:

- *Recognising the political nature of issues*
- *Asking questions that challenge the status quo*
- *Exposing hidden meanings of data, by examining the language used and what is included and excluded*
- *Examining power relations involved in an issue: who has the power to influence a decision about an issue and why?*
- *Considering ethical issues involved in situations and decisions. Are some situations or actions morally good or bad? Are some better or worse? Why? Who gains and who loses from decisions? What would be a socially just decision?*
- *Understanding different perspectives on issues including those related to class, race and gender*
- *Becoming aware of possibilities for changing things (62) p. 56*

Ten activities from *Geography Through Enquiry* (57) that can support critical thinking and critical pedagogy are then listed along with questions that focus on different aspects of the learning process. The article is a welcome prompt for critical pedagogy but teachers may need a deeper appreciation of its foundations in critical theory if they are to realise its potential. Similar reservations apply to curriculum outcomes from the Young People's Geographies Project.

### **The Young People's Geographies project (YPG)**



This was a five year (2006-11) curriculum development and research programme investigating how school students and teachers working together can effectively develop the school geography curriculum and students' geographical knowledge (63). It drew on academic geographers' research on the geographies of children and young people (how space and place affect them and are in turn affected by them) (64). The project's legacy was the [YPG website](#) (34) which provided ideas on how students and teachers can talk and work together and lots of activity ideas including film making, map making, photo

collages and a 'Big Brother' style diary room to find out what students really think about geography.

The project's engagement with critical pedagogy can be understood by reading [Helen Griffith's PhD thesis](#) (65) and her article in *Teaching Geography* (66). These show the influence of critical educators Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, and critical geographers Ian Cook and [Rich Heyman](#). Heyman (67) had drawn on Freire to argue for more democratic classrooms in which students are active creators of knowledge, while Cook had developed an approach to defetishing commodities (*Follow The Things* (68)) that seeks to prompt discussion of the ethics, injustices, and possible futures of international trade and influence the teaching of geography in schools (69). Using the example of mobile phones, the project suggests that pupils should explore the production, consumption and use of such commodities; creatively express their resulting concerns through creative writing, drama, and other media; and thus gain the confidence to take some form of political action.

Three examples of pupils working on YPG activities (70) reflect an admirable readiness to consult with pupils and follow their interests, but are less inspiring in terms of introducing critical ideas. A Yr8 topic on food miles (Valley School, Worksop) that examined the origins of the food pupils consumed, might have given more attention to the economic forces driving the globalisation of the food industry and the desirability of more locally produced food (see curriculum unit six). A Yr9 topic on contrasting areas in the school catchment (Tapton School, Sheffield) that involved sensory walks and data collection, might have covered social and housing classes and the local politics of neighbourhood renewal. A topic on Gateshead Quays (Heworth Grange School, Gateshead) involved family history and internet research, but the description fails to suggest what pupils actually learnt about urban change in Gateshead.

## Critical thinking

While references to critical theory and pedagogy are rare in GA journals, critical thinking gets more attention. In 2018 to 2020 the Association was working with the Association for Science Education on the [Critical Thinking for Achievement project](#) (71) funded by the DfE. Among its aims is to 'help teachers teach reformed geography and science qualifications and curricula effectively, focusing on knowledge application, the critical use of data and evidence,

construction of arguments and geographical and scientific investigation'. A [presentation](#) to introduce the project suggests that it will build teacher capability partly through 'confidence in curriculum planning and critical pedagogies' (72).

The GA's [\*Critical Thinking in Practice\*](#) (73) suggests that its approach to critical thinking is both a stimulus and a constraint to critical pedagogy. It suggest three ways of thinking about critical thinking (becoming better at thinking; making better use of information; and becoming a more open thinker) and while openness is equated with challenging assumptions through discussion and debate and realising moral autonomy, there is too little attention to political and social literacy. One section offers 23 questions in 7 categories that secondary teachers should encourage pupils to pose during an enquiry. Three of the categories are reproduced as Figure 5.1 and it is clear that pupils' ability to think about reasons, what different people think; and who makes decisions, and their teacher's ability to guide them in their thinking, will depend on both the pupils' and teacher's understanding of different forms of geographical explanation (philosophies of geography and ways of producing geographical knowledge).

Thinking about reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What reasons are given? What reasons did we think of?</li> <li>• What arguments could I use? Which are the best arguments?</li> <li>• Are there any arguments against?</li> </ul>
What different people think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I think? What do other people think?</li> <li>• Who should have a say and why?</li> <li>• Why do people have different views on this?</li> </ul>
Who makes the decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is making decisions about this?0 Which people or groups?</li> <li>• Is anyone left out of making decisions? Why?</li> <li>• Does anyone have influence or power?</li> <li>• Who might gain or who might lose from the decisions or changes?</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.1 Some questions for critical thinking (73), p. 9**

As we saw in chapters two and four, mainstream and critical geographies would approach these questions differently, think differently, and provide different kinds of answers. That the questions may limit thinking is suggested by their focus on individuals and their reasons, beliefs and values (I, who, groups, anyone) and their neglect of institutional actors (corporations, governments, social movements) and issues of politics and power. Activities such as becoming aware of deep structures (p. 27) and using argument frames (p. 33) have considerable potential to accommodate critical ideas but teachers require additional guidance on how best to do this (see curriculum unit five, activity sheet 5.5).

CRITICAL THINKING	CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to be "critical" means to be more discerning in recognizing faulty arguments, hasty generalizations, assertions lacking evidence, truth claims based on unreliable authority, ambiguous or obscure concepts, and so forth;</li> <li>• people do not sufficiently analyze the reasons by which they live, do not examine the assumptions, commitments, and logic of daily life;</li> <li>• the prime tools are the skills of formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemology. The primary preoccupation is to supplant sloppy or distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry;</li> <li>• can go deeper to focus on values, power and politics but rarely does.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to be "critical" means to regard knowledge claims, not primarily as propositions to be assessed for their truth content, but as parts of systems of belief and action (ideologies, discourses) that have aggregate effects within the power structures of society. It asks first about these systems of belief and action, <i>who benefits?</i></li> <li>• the primary preoccupation is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations;</li> <li>• critical thinking and critical pedagogy cannot be kept separate because the standards of logic themselves, and the ways in which they are invoked and interpreted, are a key concern of critical pedagogy.</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.2 Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy compared Based on (74) (75) (76)**

Critical educators suggest that critical thinking is based in a dialectical worldview and is ultimately about connecting everyday experience to underlying events shaped by interacting social and bio-physical structures and

processes. The relations between mainstream notions of critical thinking (necessary but not sufficient) and critical pedagogy (requiring critical theory) are outlined in Figure 5.2 (page 202) and future researchers may be interested in how *Critical Thinking for Achievement* project handled them.

### **Critical pedagogy and Unesco guidance**

Critical pedagogy is central to the delivery of Unesco guidance on ESDGC (see pages 20-25). RE states that such education should be empowering, adopt a dialogical approach, and develop critical thinking and independent judgement. RM requires it to be holistic and transformative. GCTLO seeks critically literate students (Figures 1.6 & 1.7, page 23 & 24) who are aware of power dynamics (Figure 1.8 page 24) while ESDGLO seeks integrated problem-solving capacity.

As regards school geography, TFSD has a section (pp. 111 – 114) on geographical pedagogies that covers inquiry, thinking like a geographer, and building on learner’s experience. While it acknowledges that geography should contribute to such cross-curricular elements as questioning the status quo; looking at things from different points of view; imagining future options; and taking action at the political level (p. 113) there is no explicit reference to the role of critical theory and pedagogy.

### **Critical pedagogy, the economy and the future of work**

Previous chapters have suggested that schooling no longer resonates with a growing number of students. While they are encouraged to view it as an investment in their human capital which will bring returns in terms of secure and rewarding employment, the reality is that these returns are increasingly uncertain. Rather than a route to self-development and expanded horizons (new pleasures, accomplishments, alternative lifestyles, etc) schooling has become a competitive race which too often leads to precarious and unrewarding work. Without critical education and solidarity with others similarly affected, students who do not succeed by the criteria of an increasingly instrumental school system are inclined to personalise failure, blame themselves and lose interest in education. Critical school geography therefore needs to explore the reasons why capitalism fails to produce rewarding and worthwhile jobs for all; why the mythology of work is so pervasive; and the potential for life beyond work (post-work) created by new technology. The curriculum unit associated with this chapter examines these issues including the precarious work associated with the gig economy.

## **Work is not working**

It is difficult to imagine a world without work. It dominates most people's lives (they work longer hours, commute further, strike less, do more unpaid overtime, retire later etc); politics ('hard working families', record numbers in work, etc); and schooling (preparation for work). For the majority paid work is the only way of obtaining the money on which all else depends and the principal way they experience the mechanics and impacts of neoliberalism.

Yet work is not working. In 2019 there were record levels of employment in the UK but a lack of adequately paid jobs and the real value of wages continued to fall. Wages were so cheap they deterred investment in new technology that could raise low rates of productivity. While the finance and property sectors continued to draw capital from elsewhere in the world, they harmed the rest of the economy by driving up the value of sterling and the price of manufactured exports; attracting high skilled workers; and diverting domestic investment from the knowledge intensive and technology sectors. Consequently the UK had a preponderance of low paid, low productivity employment in the service sector. Enfeebled trade unions and low productivity resulted in low wages and stagnant living standards that were also adversely affected by austerity (benefit cuts), the rising price of imports and uncertainties surrounding Brexit.

Jacobs and Mazzucato (77) provide a programme for reform that challenges the neoliberal view of markets as self regulating agents; argues for greater investment in technological and organisational innovation; and recognises the role of the public sector in the innovation process. Others are more radical including those who authored *Inventing the Future* (78), *Economics for the Many* (79); [\*Reclaim Modernity\*](#) (80); [\*An Economy for the People by the People\*](#) (81); [\*New Thinking for the British Economy\*](#) (82); and proposals for [a green new deal](#) (83).

Much work is precarious ([one in nine workers in 2018](#) (84)). Many workers are alienated from their employers and the work they do, suffering from authoritarian managers who suggest they should be grateful for the jobs they have (85). Much stress and unhappiness results from work with many people doing too much and others having too little (86). Women continue to suffer from the [gender pay gap](#) (87) and do 60% more unpaid work than men. [One third of graduates](#) are in jobs that do not require a degree (88).

While digital technology promises to empower workers and consumers in the sharing economy by encouraging participation, localism, flexibility, choice and horizontal networks, platform businesses defining the future of work (Amazon, Uber, Deliveroo, Airbnb. etc) tend towards monopolisation; depend upon AI and machine learning to process increasing amounts of captured data; and exert increasing market and political power. The resulting [gig economy](#) (89) is a form of social regression, increasing the exploitation and disempowerment of workers (90) (91). Solutions lie in regulating and taxing the owners of digital platforms adequately; enforcing anti-monopoly rules; promoting rival platforms that are democratically accountable; and taking collective action to rebuild and defend workers' rights and to rethink the role of work in an alternative socialist future (92). Such rethinking which involves acknowledging rentier capitalism and the rise of the precariat, accelerated in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Work during and after lockdown**

As the country locked down to control coronavirus as many as 9.5 million people, a third of the UK's workforce, were placed on the government furlough scheme, which covered 80% of workers' wages. The ending of this scheme in October 2020 could trigger mass unemployment not seen since the 1980s. Meanwhile high paid workers who could work from home had become used to a life without commuting while many low paid workers had to continue to provide essential services often at substantial risk of exposure to the virus. Government funded job retention schemes and unemployment benefits were keeping the economy and society under intensive care in the hope of a rapid recovery, but lockdown measures had forced the adoption of digital technologies at a pace never seen before. Some suggest firms will replace frontline workers with [artificial intelligence and automation](#) (93) to avoid risk of infection and disruption. Others predict reduced reliance on global supply chains and a rise of localism. Meanwhile there is increased attention to such initiatives as green deals, the 'next normal' and the [OECD's transition agenda](#) (94) as the UK also faces the likely challenge of no trade deal with the EU. While curriculum unit six was written prior to the pandemic it has arguably lost none of its relevance.

## Rentier capitalism

Chapter one introduced key ideas about capitalism that included mention of the fifth and sixth Kondratieff waves driven by ICT and artificial intelligence (Figure 1.2 page 9) that were subsequently associated with the rise of debates focussed on postmodernity and postmodernism (page 148). The digital revolution is changing the nature of capitalism with the wealth (capital) of the highest valued companies now held in intangible assets such as data, software, algorithms, brands, patents, and copyrights rather than factories, pipelines, offices and retail outlets. At the same time consumers are encouraged (find it necessary) to rent rather than buy their homes, cars, and entertainment. Some critical theorists associate this with the transition from neoliberal to [rentier capitalism](#) (95) that is producing a new global economy and a new global division of labour.

Standing (96) suggests that after three decades of neoliberalism a system of capitalism has emerged in which capitalists gain rents (interest, dividends, fees, rents, capital gains, etc) from ownership or control of assets (eg. patents, data, algorithms, platforms, real estate) rather than from capital or labour used in ‘free’ competitive markets. From the 1980s neoliberalism steered successive US administrations, backed by Britain and the EU, into constructing an international system of rent-seeking. They were aided by the World Trade Organisation and World Intellectual Property Organisation that adopted TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) in 1994. This encouraged monopolistic rent-seeking by multinationals that was aided by a technological / digital revolution that enabled capitalists to switch production and employment to where costs were relatively low and where it was easier to fragment occupations and job structures. The revolution also enabled platform capitalism that allows owners of digital platforms and related apps to extract rental incomes.

The intellectual property rights regime has fuelled the growth of monopolistic corporations that reject free market competition and buy up potential competitors. They gain from government subsidies, government contacts and generous tax cuts. Meanwhile financial institutions and governments created new and intensified forms of private indebtedness that earn vast revenues for financial capital.

Rentier capitalism (97) has produced a global labour market in which wages in China and other emerging market economies are gradually rising while pulling down wages in all OECD countries. After the financial crash of 2007/8 the share of income going to capital has risen and the share going to workers has fallen. At the same time the share of capital derived from rent has risen as has the share of rentier income going to the richest employers of labour. Now when productivity rises, wages do not follow. The links between profits and wages, and between employment and wages, are also broken.

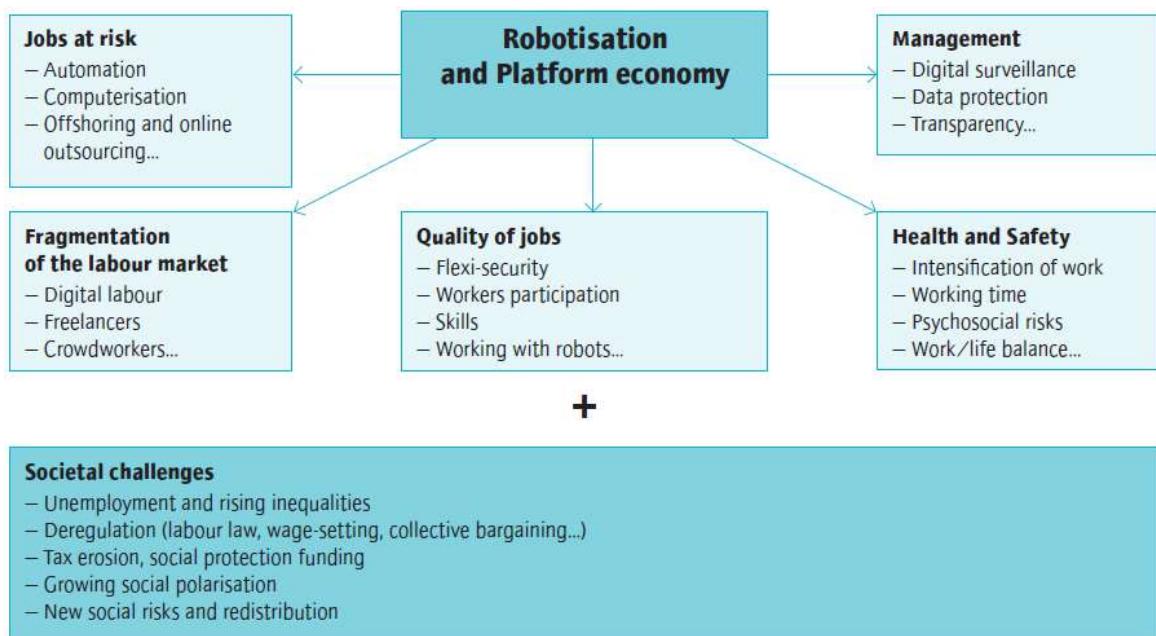
All of this has generated a new global class structure characterised by a plutocracy of multibillionaries with absurd power; an elite serving them; a shrinking salariat; a shrinking industrial proletariat; and a growing precariat. Each has distinctive work patterns; sources of income; and relations to the state. The precariat is profoundly different in experience and outlook from the proletariat (the old working class). It is a product of globalisation, a technological revolution, and reforms promoting ‘labour flexibility’. It suffers from pervasive insecurity which makes it a dangerous class.

### **Automation and the precariat**

A [report from PricewaterhouseCoopers](#) (98) suggests that 10 million UK workers are at high risk of being replaced by robots by 2032. Thirty percent of the jobs in Britain were potentially under threat from artificial intelligence and in some sectors half the jobs could disappear. Workers who had left school with GCSEs or lower were the most likely to be affected and the sectors most at risk were water, sewage and waste management (63% of jobs); transport and storage (56%); manufacturing (46%); wholesale/retail (44%); and admin/support services (37%). Automation is hollowing out middle class jobs; jobs are increasingly either high or low quality; and many graduates are over-qualified for the jobs they do.

But the fact that it was possible to replace a worker with a robot does not mean it is economically attractive to do so. It depends on the relative cost and productivity of machines compared with humans (hence the rise of the manual car wash while automatic car washers stand underused). Legal and regulatory hurdles, organisational inertia, and legacy systems slow down automation and perhaps give workers and businesses time to adapt. The impacts of robotisation and the platform economy on jobs and society are sketched out in figure 5.4.

As the figure suggests, growing social polarisation is a feature of the global transformation resulting from the digital revolution. A new mass class is emerging, the precariat, characterised by chronic uncertainty and insecurity. Their work is associated with casualisation, informalisation, agency and part-time work, and phoney self employment. Still a class in the making and divided within itself, [Standing](#) (99) (100) regards it as having the potential to resist capital's attempt to habituate it to unstable work and living, relying on discretionary and conditional hand-outs from the state or agencies and charities operating on its behalf. This class rejects old mainstream politics; takes alienation for granted; is less likely to suffer from false consciousness; and generally has a higher level of educational qualifications than the work it is expected to obtain and be obliged to do requires. This imbalance generates deep status frustration and anger about having no sense of a future.



**Figure 5.4** [The impacts of robotisation and platform economy](#) (101) p. 3

Such frustration prompts the precariat to join Generation Left (102), support such movements as Occupy (2011) and Extinction Rebellion (2019) and vote for such political leaders as Corbyn, Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez. Standing suggests that becoming a transformative class-for-itself will involve the precariat in a struggle for the key assets needed for a good life in a good society – not a struggle over the means of production, but over socio-economic security; time; quality space; knowledge (or education); financial knowledge and financial capital. [A Precariat Charter](#) (103) (104) (the new Magna Carta to

challenge neo-liberalism) sets out its demands and like Srnicek and Williams (page. 17) and a report from Compass (80), it seeks to reclaim modernity or develop a new left modernity (page 52) by re-orientating notions of progress and development towards sustainability. The 29 articles of the [Precariat Charter](#) include:

- Article 1 Redefine work as a productive and reproductive activity
- Article 4 Regulate flexible labour
- Article 23 Decommodifity education
- Article 25 Move towards basic income
- Article 27 Revive the commons, and
- Article 28 Revive deliberative democracy.

## **Post - work**

A world beyond the necessity, ideology and mythology of work, enabled by technological change, has long been a focus of critical theorists (Marx, Morris, Illich, Gorz, Fleming). They suggest that the ideology of work is neither ‘natural’ nor very old. It is essentially a modern concept linked to the rise of capitalism and the protestant work ethic with the 9-5, 5 days a week model of full time work dominant for only the last 60 years. The demands and quality of work changed under the influence of trade unions and political parties and by the mid 1970s the ideology was being challenged by counter cultures and the New Left. It was re-imposed by the rise of neoliberalism that strengthened the powers of employers; reduced the powers of trade unions; imposed welfare cuts; linked benefits more strongly to availability for work; and used the ideology of work as a form of social control.

[Advocates of post-work](#) (8) suggest that work could be calmer, more equal, communal, pleasurable, politically engaged, intellectually demanding and less alienating if automation was applied to dull, routine but necessary tasks; much unneeded work (and consumption) was eliminated; and the remaining necessary work was shared equitably. [Universal basic income](#) (105) or [universal basic services](#) (106) are key planks in their argument which is essentially about the politics of time. UBI is being trialled in several places around the world including [Scotland](#) (107). It would be paid for through increased taxes, a universal basic dividend imposed on corporations whose capital derives partially from collectively produced big data, and / or a public wealth fund

funded by environmental taxes, and / or a levy on incomes derived from the use of common property resources (eg. land value tax, intellectual property tax). See Activity Sheet 9,3, page 436.

Post-work would allow a new kind of freedom leaving people free to develop themselves and their communities in more sustainable ways. It would destigmatise welfare and partially decommodify labour by separating income from work. It could also strengthen workers' bargaining power since work would be judged by its desirability rather than necessity.

Critics of post-work suggest that people are happier at work rather than in a society of enforced leisure. They claim that post-work is essentially a middle class concept advanced by those whose lifestyles most closely resemble life in a post-work society. The post-work argument is naive as the power behind the ideology of work will not go away and the reality is that many in the UK already live in a post-work dystopia where unemployment is probably three times the official count; there are no real social policies to deal with automation and the disappearance of jobs; and many continue to be required to do more work for less pay.

### **Four scenarios for the future**

Among the critical theorists who have turned their attention to post-work is Frase (108) who reminds us that technology does not dictate outcomes but as the PWC report suggested, it merely sets the parameters of possibility. Real utopias (page 14) have to be struggled for as powerful elites will not simply disappear with automation and the realities of capitalist class relations; a warming planet; and a collapsing biosphere will remain with us. In what he has described as 'social science fiction' he sketches four futures (Figure 5.5, page 211) linked to whether or not society becomes more equal (we share the benefits of automation) and whether it finds a source of unlimited clean energy (perhaps from nuclear fusion). [Pochet](#) (109) has also considered ways of reconciling the digital revolution with the realities of climate change.

### **The role of trade unions in shaping the future of work**

Despite automation, the changing nature of jobs, and the changed composition of the workforce, the policies and infrastructures supporting employment and unemployment remained relatively unchanged prior to 2020. Covid 19 then

	<b>Abundance:</b> automation facilitates the flourishing of human life as clean sources of unlimited energy are found and the climate is stabilised.	<b>Scarcity:</b> automation maximises human misery because no sources of unlimited clean energy are found and climate change continues to impact on some people and places more than others.
<b>Equality</b>	<b>Communism.</b> Society is so productive and egalitarian that nobody has to work to survive. Robots provide the material basis for a post-work, post-scarcity and post-carbon world. Society is run on the principle 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'.	<b>Socialism.</b> Society finds a way to survive in some reasonable egalitarian way. Automation exists but cooling the climate requires a massive state-led campaign to remake infrastructure, landscape, and consumption patterns. This involves planning and the introduction of a universal basic income.
<b>Hierarchy</b>	<b>Rentism.</b> Abundance exists but the technologies to produce it are monopolised by a small elite. They own most of the robots and the software and data needed to operate them. They charge rent for personal robots and the services their robots provide. People need jobs to pay these rents but there are few jobs available. Rentism is prone to underemployment and stagnation because the economy requires consumers and the jobless masses cannot afford to consume.	<b>Exterminism.</b> The rich retreat to heavily guarded, climate controlled enclaves where the robots do all the work. Everyone else is trapped outside on a rapidly warming planet. Most people become superfluous to the needs of the rich and are 'warehoused' in prisons, refugee camps, and the poorest districts of cities. Eventually the rich may consider exterminating the poor as they are no longer needed as workers.

**Figure 5.5 Four scenarios for the future** (based on (108))

accelerated debates about [the future of work](#) (93) and if automation is to benefit workers in the ways envisaged by advocates of post-work there will need to be reform of labour laws; a new welfare settlement; and new public infrastructure (8).

Measures that are relevant to the nature of policies of trade unionism include:

- Shorten the working week
- Extend full labour rights to all members of the precariat and pay all overtime at a substantially higher rate
- Expand union membership, worker democracy, and sector rather than enterprise based collective bargaining
- Introduce new forms of welfare, a basic income supported by universal basic services, to enable a dignified life outside work
- Democratically managed automation to ensure that increased productivity is accompanied by both increased free time and increased income
- Provide lifelong education to develop the capabilities that workers and citizens need to adjust to and shape technological change in ways that reflect their common interests
- Ensure technological change reduces the economy's carbon footprint and support policies outlined by [the Green New Deal Group](#) (83).

These measures are consistent with the new social-democratic settlement or new left modernity outlined in chapter two that might prompt the emergence of a new green socialist hegemony. They require trade unions to redefine their ideology and purpose, campaigning not for any and all jobs but for 'good' jobs and reduced working time. Jobs should offer living wages, security, satisfaction, democracy and sustainability, and like reduced working time, job quality should prompt worker solidarity across countries. A [report from the TUC](#) (110) sets out its views on the digital revolution and the future of work.

### **Education for employability or citizenship?**

Chapter two outlined recent reforms of schooling designed to make it more responsive to the needs of the economy and the world of work. As we saw in chapter four, school geography has maintained a degree of independence from this agenda, emphasising progressive pedagogy (inquiry based learning, transferable skills, and attention to students' private geographies) before returning to knowledge and the development of geocapabilities. [Sharkey](#) (111)

warns against schooling servicing the needs of the economy, arguing that it cannot (the skills required by the market change too quickly) and should not (students will intuit instrumentalism and value learning only as a means to improving their job prospects). At a time when the links between qualifications and job status are weakening and the dominant ideology of schooling is failing, schools need to re-evaluate their function. True education has intrinsic value. It exists to cultivate citizens not workers. As this book seeks to demonstrate, school geography's role is to encourage students to engage with the project of modernity; to participate in debates about the future of humanity and society; and develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to become global citizens committed to sustainability. Coupled to critical pedagogy, these goals are conducive of agency and freedom, and reflect the utopian realism outlined in chapter one.

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## Videos for Teachers

[Critical pedagogy, meaning, definition, explanation](#) 9 minutes

[What is critical pedagogy and why is it important](#), the critical pedagogue 10 minutes

[Henry Giroux: Where is the Outrage? Critical Pedagogy in Dark Times](#) 1 hour 15 minutes

[The Big Debate about the Future of Work explained](#) 10 minutes

[The Future of Work Union TV](#) 10 minutes

[David Graeber on bullshit jobs](#) 1hr 25 minutes

[How to fix the gig economy – BBC Newsnight](#) 9 minutes

[Yanis Varoufakis Another Now – life after coronavirus](#) One hour

[What is the precariat, Guy Standing TED talk](#) 12 minutes

[John Maeda on the Future of Work and Collaboration](#) (Wired briefing, April 2020) 30 minutes

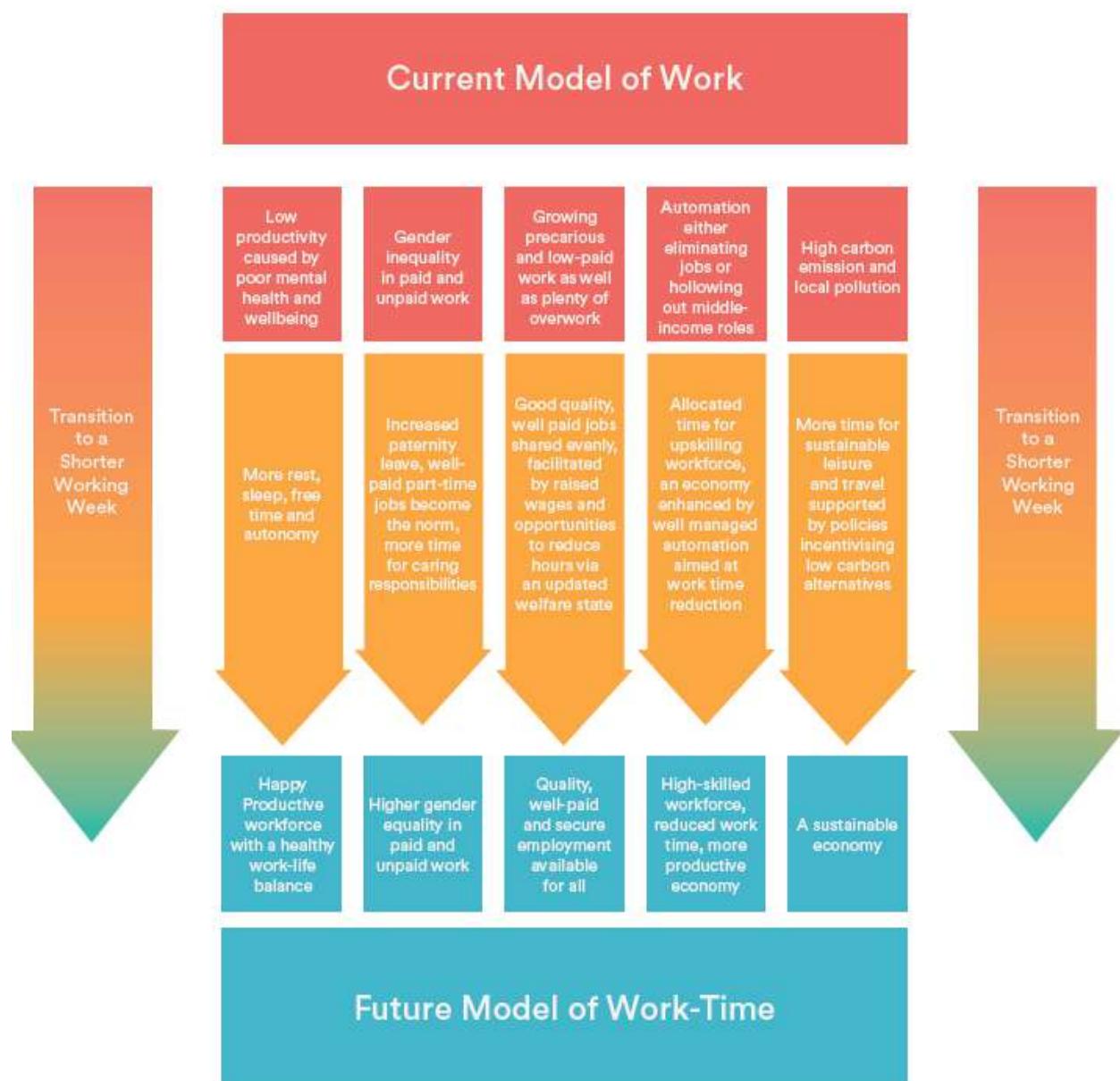
[John Bryson Coronavirus and the Economic Future](#) 3 minutes

[Trailer to Ken Loach's film Sorry We Missed You](#) 2 minutes

# Curriculum Unit Five

# The future of work

This unit focuses on SDG 8 decent work and economic growth, and GCE topic 9 getting engaged and taking action. It examines the role of trade unions in improving the quality of members' jobs; the issues faced by young workers; the future of work in the digital economy, and the policies unions and others might pursue to realise sustainable futures beyond work.



[The Shorter Working Week: A Radical and Pragmatic Proposal](#), W. Stonge & A. Harper, Autonomy, 2019, p.3

# **Curriculum plan**

## **Key idea**

Digital technology and automation are changing the economy and employment. Trade unions are seeking to protect the quality of young workers jobs; put pressure on government to regulate the gig economy; and consider the implications for society of a reduced need for workers.

## **Inquiry questions**

What factors contribute to job quality? Now does job quality vary across Europe? What roles do trade unions play in representing workers and improving their job quality?

What do we know about young workers in Britain on average or less than average pay? What challenges do they face and how do they respond to these challenges? How should trade unions attract them as members and represent their interests?

How does digital technology affect my future work prospects? Which jobs are most/least affected by automation? What future scenarios are possible / probable with digital technology? Is a future where people far less work to do possible? Is such a future desirable? Will it be more or less sustainable?

What is the gig economy? What sort of work does it provide? What is the precariat? What have the European Union and UK Government done to protect gig workers? What should they do?

What should trade unions demand and campaign on at a time when digital technology is reshaping the nature of work and social change? What arguments support campaigns for reduced working hours in high quality sustainable jobs?

## **Key understandings**

Several factors contribute to job quality. Trade unions exist to represent workers' interests and improve the quality of their jobs. Job quality is generally higher in workplaces and sectors where trade union membership is high.

Young workers in Britain on average and below average pay face a number of challenges including low pay, poor quality jobs, overqualification,

underemployment, precarious working conditions, and lack of voice in the workplace. These challenges affect their mental health

Digital technology is reshaping the employment market by creating new jobs; changing the nature of existing jobs; destroying jobs; and shifting the location of jobs. While digital technologies offer post-work and sustainability driven futures, these can only be realised if trade unions, employers and trade unions adopt appropriate policies.

The gig economy is made possible by digital platforms that allow workers to work flexibly. The European Pillar of Social Rights seeks to regulate this economy so that freelance workers do not suffer from having fewer rights than more permanent workers. The UK Government has also introduced laws that regulate the gig economy.

The digital economy and automation offer the possibilities of a shorter working week, a universal basic income, and a future without work as presently defined. Trade unions have to revise their demands and recruitment strategies as they take account of these possibilities.

The digital economy involves large corporations capturing public data and using it to develop algorithms that earn them profits. By developing alternative socially owned platforms and taxing the use of public data, society can develop a digital economy that serves public rather than private interests.

**Key concepts** job quality, worker representation, labour rights, spatial inequality, trade unionism, think tanks, economic democracy, job prospects, overqualification, underemployment, regulation of employment, automation, gig economy, platform capitalism, precarity, post-work, alternative economic models..

**Key values** high quality work, economic democracy, workers' voice, solidarity, sustainability (economic, social, environmental)

**Key skills** discussion, debate, media analysis, negotiating skills, political literacy, envisioning alternative futures

**Learning outcomes** students will have realistic attitudes towards their future job prospects, the merits of trade union membership, and alternative models of economic development

**Learning activities** discussion, data analysis, forecasting, SWOT analysis, media analysis, case study, critical thinking.

**Assessment task** Students carry out a job search online adopting the role of a young core worker. They shortlist three jobs to apply for on the basis of perceived job quality and then prepare a list of questions to ask at interview. These questions should be based on what they have learnt about work and the future of work while studying the unit.

## Links to Unesco guidance on ESDGC

<b>SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth</b>	<b>A selection from the objectives listed that are relevant to this curriculum unit.</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The learner understands the concepts of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and <b>decent work</b>, including the advancement of gender parity and equality, and knows about alternative economic models and indicators</li><li>2. The learner understands the relation between employment and economic growth, and knows about other moderating factors like a growing labour force or <b>new technologies</b> that substitute jobs.</li><li>3. The learner understands how low and decreasing wages for the labour force and very high wages and profits of managers and owners or shareholders are leading to inequalities, poverty, civil unrest, etc.</li><li>4. The learner understands how <b>innovation</b>, entrepreneurship and <b>new job creation</b> can contribute to <b>decent work</b> and a <b>sustainability-driven economy</b> and to the decoupling of economic growth from the impacts of natural hazards and environmental degradation</li></ol>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The learner is able to discuss economic models and <b>future visions of economy and society</b> critically and to communicate them in public spheres.</li><li>2. The learner is able to <b>collaborate with others</b> to demand fair wages, equal pay for equal work and labour rights from politicians and from their employer.</li></ol>

	<p><b>3.</b> The learner is able to identify their individual rights and <b>clarify their needs and values related to work.</b></p> <p><b>4.</b> The learner is able to develop <b>a vision and plans for their own economic life</b> based on an analysis of their competencies and contexts</p>
Behavioural learning objectives	<p><b>1.</b> The learner is able to engage with <b>new visions and models of a sustainable, inclusive economy and decent work.</b></p> <p><b>2.</b> The learner is able to facilitate improvements related to unfair wages, unequal pay for equal work and bad working conditions.</p> <p><b>3.</b> The learner is able to develop and <b>evaluate ideas for sustainability-driven innovation</b> and entrepreneurship..</p>

GCE Topic 9	Getting engaged and taking action (a selection from the objectives for 12 to 18 year olds)
Develop skills for active engagement and take action to promote the common good Propose action for, and become agents of, positive change	<p>1. Developing and applying necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes supported by universal values and principles of human rights</p> <p>2. Networking (peers, civil society, non-profit organisations, professional representatives)</p> <p>3. Learning to be active global citizens and how to transform one's self and society</p> <p>4. Contributing to the analysis and identification of needs and priorities that require action/change at local, national and global levels</p> <p>5. Actively participating in the creation of a vision, strategy and plan of action for positive change#</p> <p>6. Critically analysing the contributions and the impact of the work of various actors</p> <p>7. Practicing communication, negotiation, advocacy skills</p>

Among the suggested topics for SDG 8 are labour rights, economic ethics, and alternative economic models. Examples of learning approaches and methods include playing devil's advocate for different economic growth models; mapping out multiple life and career paths; and developing an enquiry based project on 'what my career can contribute to sustainable development'.

In this unit both SDG 8 and GCE topic 9 are addressed in the context of the future of work and the role of trade unions in securing and extending workers' rights in the European Union and UK.

## Preparation

Familiarise yourself with SDG 8 [Decent Work and Economic Growth](#) and the related objectives in the Unesco guidance. GCE topic 9 is interpreted in this unit to refer to students' future engagement and action as a potential trade union member.

First you may wish to reassure yourself that this unit deals with topics (trade unionism, automation, precarity, post-work) that are subjects of study by geographers. Peck's article [Pluralizing labor geography](#) traces its development over recent decades and states that labour geographies are concerned 'with the active roles, visions and strategies of workers and worker organisations as the would be makers of the world in their own image' (p.13). Labour geography is a variegated and evolving body of work that amongst other things has:

- *Mapped the shifting politics of production, together with old and new forms of labor organisation;*
- *Problematized the workplace as a site of struggle and as a place of performance and (re)production of social identities;*
- *Tracked the restructuring of labor markets as spaces of socioinstitutional stress and regulatory transformation; and*
- *Utilized labour (and labour relations) as a diagnostic, as the key to understanding different (local) varieties of capitalism, economies of care and reproduction, and alternative modes of socioeconomic organisation.*  
(p. 1)

Other relevant background by geographers includes Cumbers' entry on economic democracy in [Keywords in Radical Geography](#) (pp. 102=106) and Strauss' article on precarious work in the [International Encyclopaedia of Geography](#).

The unit is based on a number of reports:

[‘Bad Jobs’ Recovery? European Jobs Quality Index, 2005 – 2015, A Piasna, ETUI, 2017](#)

[Living for the Weekend? Understanding Britain’s young core workers, TUC, 2016](#)

[A future that works for working people, TUC, 2018](#)

[Digitization of the Economy and its impact on Labour Markets, C. Degryse, ETUI, 2016](#)

[Good Work, the Taylor review of modern working practices, M. Taylor, IPPR, 2017](#)

[Flexibility For Who? Millennials and mental health in the modern labour market, C. Thornley & W. Cook, IPPR, 2017](#)

[Background on the EU's position on gig economy workers](#), EU Logos

[Matthew Taylor review: Unions slam gig economy report for spectacular failure' to deliver on promises, Ben Chapman, Independent, 11.07.2017](#)

[The Shorter Working Week: A Radical and Pragmatic Proposal](#), W. Stronge & A. Harper, Autonomy, 2019

[Creative citizen, creative state: the principled and pragmatic case for a Universal Basic Income](#), A. Painter & C. Thoung, RSA, 2015

You may wish to refer to these as you read through the suggested procedure and prepare to teach the unit.

The [Institute of Employment Studies](#) provides up to date research on employment including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

You should preview these videos:

[Newsnight on the gig economy](#) (9 minutes)

[A level revision webinar on gig economy](#) (25 mins)

[James Bloodsworth on the impact precarious work has on society](#) (3 minutes)

[Universal basic income explained](#) (10 minutes)

## **Suggested procedure**

The unit is in four stages:

1. Students consider what makes a good job. What contributes to job quality? How might it be measured and how does it vary across space? How do trade unions seek to improve their members' job quality?
2. Students consider the quality of the jobs carried out by young core workers. What does the TUC's survey of these workers tell us about their jobs? How do their jobs affect their mental health? (Thornley & Cook) How should trade unions best recruit and represent the interests of young core workers?
3. Students examine the likely impacts of the digital economy on jobs guided by the report by Degryse and his SWOT analysis. They then look at the gig economy and how the EU and UK Government have sought to regulate it in the light of such reports as that by Taylor for the IPPR.
4. Students evaluate the prospects of a world with less work and a world beyond work drawing on the Autonomy report from Stronge and Harper that advocates a shorter working week and a video that explains universal basic income.. They use argument frames to address the desirability of a shorter working week and /or a universal basic income.

### **Stage one**

Begin by discussing the jobs that students hope to work at in the future? What do they understand by 'a good job'? Do they expect to get one? Do they expect to belong to a trade union?

Explore through discussion what factors contribute to job quality: wages, employment quality, education and training, working conditions, work/life balance, having a voice and collective representation. Students will suggest other factors. If they do not raise the factor of sustainability (does the job contribute to sustainable development), you should do this and ensure they understand what is meant by 'a sustainability driven economy' and a 'green new deal'.

Use Activity Sheet 5.1 to introduce the European Job Quality Index and its six categories of job quality. Note that these do not include the job's contribution to sustainability.

This paper updates the European Job Quality Index (JQI) with the latest available data, from 2015, and analyses how the quality of jobs for European workers has changed in the last decade (2005-2015). The JQI encompasses a broad range of work and employment characteristics, summarising them within six categories of job quality including wages, non-wage aspects of employment and work organisation, and collective interest representation. Overall, we observe a decline in non-wage job quality over the past decade and sluggish real wage growth in the years following the crisis. The results show great variation across EU member states, with an indication of deepening polarisation between countries, in particular in terms of forms of employment, job security and working conditions. Finally, we find a positive relationship between labour market participation and quality of jobs at country level.

Draw on this paragraph above from Piasna's report:

What could explain the variations in job quality across Europe? What are the characteristics of the economics and politics of countries with high / low job quality? Why may the UK be only middle-ranking in terms of job quality? Essentially the more wealthy (developed?) a country is; the more socially democratic its regime (p. 94); and the stronger the power its trade unions, the more likely it is to offer high quality jobs.

This is the point at which to introduce economic systems, form of enterprise ownership, and their impact on job quality. Are the best / worst quality jobs to be found in the private, public, co-operative, self employed or voluntary sector? What are the impacts of profit seeking, performance indicators, corporate responsibility, charitable status, trade union recognition, and other factors on whether an enterprise offers good quality jobs? To whom would students apply if they wanted a good quality job? What factors shape their answers?

Figure 23 shows collective interest representation. Is there a link between levels of trade union membership and collective bargaining and job quality? Do the countries that rank highly / low on this measure also tend to rank highly / low on job quality?

## **Stage two**

What do we know about the work done by young people in Britain? Introduce the TUC's report of 2016;

*This report sought to identify and understand Britain's young core workers, to help unions reflect their concerns and develop ways to recruit and organise them better. What it shows is that this group are often at the sharp end of labour market change. The recent shift towards a more hourglass-shaped labour market, as well as the increasing number of graduates, has meant that Britain's core young workers, who are middle-qualified, suffer from low pay, poor job quality and overqualification. The increasing casualisation of work has disincentivised employers to invest in their workers leading to fewer training opportunities and poorer prospects for progression. These long-term labour market shifts have resulted in Britain's young core workers becoming stuck in dead-end jobs, with very few able to progress more than a single rung up on the occupational ladder.*

*.In summary: young people's experiences of work are measurably poorer than those of previous generations – even if the young people themselves may not identify that. Their qualification levels are often higher than those of their parents and grandparents, but the middle-skill middle-pay jobs that those family members could get are not available to Britain's young core workers. (p. 33)*

Use Activity Sheet 5.2 to introduce the results of the survey in a creative way. You might ask students to estimate the results of each survey question remembering that it is based on data from 2015. What surprises them about the results? What results require explanation? What explanations can they offer? Why do the results vary across the regions and places of the UK? The survey fails to report differences across such social classifiers as gender, race, etc. To what extent is this a major limitation of the survey?

Focus on the ten challenges facing young core workers. How are these likely to affect their mental health? Draw on the 60 second summary from Thornley and Cook's report:

*Younger workers face a future employment landscape that could damage their mental health and wellbeing unless we take action. As a result of the evolution of the UK labour market over the past 25 years, today's generation of younger workers - millennials and centennials (those born during or after 1982) – risk losing out on access to permanent, secure and fulfilling work. Compared to previous generations, they are more likely to be in work characterised by contractual flexibility (including part-time work, temporary work and self-employment). Relatedly they are also more likely to be underemployed (and so be working fewer hours than they would like) and/or overqualified (being a graduate in a non-professional or managerial job). For some young people in part-time or temporary work (particularly where this involves being underemployed and/or overqualified), their experiences of work may be putting*

*their mental health and wellbeing at greater risk. New analysis reveals younger workers in part-time and temporary work are more likely to experience poorer mental health and wellbeing, while there is more of a mixed picture among those who are self-employed. Similarly, younger workers who are underemployed or overqualified also experience worse mental health. This is likely to be explained – in part, but not entirely – by part-time and temporary work being linked to low pay and insecurity. Employers and government should work together to promote better quality jobs that combine both flexibility and control for employees, enabling access to the benefits of flexible working practices – such as flexitime and remote working – without restricting autonomy and choice. As well as helping to boost mental health and wellbeing, this will help to stem the flow of younger workers moving onto out-of-work sickness benefits, and improve productivity and the UK's overall economic performance. P. 6*

Finally in stage two, introduce what the TUC is doing to recruit and represent young workers. Key to its strategy is an app [Work Smart](#). You might also draw on its 2018 report [A future that works for working people](#).

### **Stage three**

Switch attention to the impact of digital technology on the economy and employment by drawing on Figure 5.4 from chapter five. Explain what is meant by robotisation (robots take over jobs) and the platform economy (students will be familiar with such platforms as Amazon and Uber). Explain and discuss other terms and ideas in Figure 5.4. Explain what is meant by platform capitalism.

Ask students to predict which jobs will be changed, created, destroyed and shifted by digital technology. Use Activity Sheet 5.3 to explain what you mean and encourage students to relate these categories and jobs that they know.

Then introduce the activity SWOT analysis and provide groups of students with a blank grid. They are to enter strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to employment caused by the digital economy. You have Degryse's completed SWOT analysis from the ETUI report on the activity sheet. You can use this to prompt the students' thinking and discussion and to debrief them after groups have reported back with their results.

Shift attention to the gig economy using the Newsnight video. Explain the ideas introduced in the film (reduced transaction costs, outsourcing of services, half life of skills, access rather than ownership, monopolisation, erosion of tax base, etc). Compare the experiences of Jason the uber driver and Marin the graphic designer.

Focus on the issue of workers' rights and how existing or additional laws on pay and conditions can be applied to the gig economy.

Use Activity Sheet 5.4 to define and classify gig workers.

Show the short interview with James Bloodsworth and/ or read extracts from his book [Hired: Six Months Undercover in Low Wage Britain](#). He draws attention to precarious work, the decline of working class democracy, and the need for political action to give people hope.

Discuss the TUC's findings on young core workers and precarious work (Activity Sheet 5.4) and perhaps accompany this with a case study of industrial action by gig workers. The [dispute by cabbies at Luton airport](#) is an example and you might use this to introduce the [Independent Workers of Great Britain](#) trade union.

Remind students that workers' rights was a key issue in the debates surrounding Brexit. Some feared that workers' rights would be diluted if the UK left the EU.

Explain the EU's position on social rights and social protection for workers, and its [vote to extend rights to gig workers](#) in 2018.

*The European Union has since its very genesis been an advocate of social rights and social protection for workers, no matter which kind of jobs they were performing, even though historically social matters were state-centred prerogatives. Still, in the past, some measures have been put forward at the EU level in an attempt to improve EU workers' social conditions, such as the harmonization of social regulations and standards among EU countries, specifically focusing on health and safety at work, enhancing working conditions and equality in the workplace. These social measures are usually being gathered into the expression 'Social Europe', which represents the wish of the EU institutions to do more considering social rights and security EU-wise. The EU has known some successes and faced some failures in this policy area, but still strives to do more to reach a fully developed Social Europe, a European Union where economic liberalization would go alongside social rights protection. In the case of flexible workers and freelancers, the Union does not intend on letting this specific group of people undergo social inequalities without trying to improve their personal situations either*

*Regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship, workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to*

*social protection and training. The transition towards open-ended forms of employment shall be fostered. In accordance with legislation and collective agreements, the necessary flexibility for employers to adapt swiftly to changes in the economic context shall be ensured.*

*Innovative forms of work that ensure quality working conditions shall be fostered. Entrepreneurship and self-employment shall be encouraged. Occupational mobility shall be facilitated. Employment relationships that lead to precarious working conditions shall be prevented, including by prohibiting abuse of atypical contracts. Any probation period should be of reasonable duration.* ( extracts from [The Coming of the Gig Economy, a threat to EU workers, EU Logos](#))

Explain to students that both the EU and UK Government have to balance the need for workers' rights and protection (regulation of the economy) against the need to maintain competitiveness and profits for employers. Switch attention to the UK economy and [Taylor's report on modern working practices](#). Among the issues this addressed was insecure work. Introduce and aid comprehension of its seven steps towards fair and decent work (p. 6) particularly steps one (good work); 2 (platform working); 4 (regulation); 6 (workers' health) and seven (national living wage).

Now invite students to read [Chapman's article from the Independent](#). It summarises reactions to the report from trade unions and business leaders. How do they explain these different reactions? What do they reveal about the nature of industrial relations (relations between workers and employers)?

Finally in stage three turn to [UK Government's response to the Taylor report](#) and subsequent legislation on the gig economy. Is this response adequate? What persuaded the government to introduce these changes? What role did trade unions play?

#### **Stage four**

Shift the focus to the future of work. Would workers and society benefit from a shorter working week? What would be the costs and benefits of paying everyone a universal basic income so that work would not be so important in their lives?

Refer to the 2020 coronavirus induced recession and its ongoing impact on employment. Are work sharing and universal basic income alternatives to rising unemployment?

Show the students the diagram on page three of the Autonomy report [The Shorter Working Week](#). Discuss how the transition to a shorter working week might solve the five problems associated with the current model of work. There is a summary of the authors' argument on pages 8 and 9 of the report and much detail in the subsequent sections, including case studies of countries and companies that have adopted a shorter working week.

Activity Sheet 5.5 draws on the activity Making Better Arguments (p. 33) in the GA booklet [Critical Thinking in Practice](#). Students use argument frames to answer the enquiry questions relating to a shorter working week and / or a universal basic income.

Introduce universal basic income and the arguments surrounding it by means of a [short video](#). You will need to ensure comprehension of the concepts and ideas it contains and you may wish to support it by referring to the [RSA's model of basic income](#) and / or looking at [case studies of societies](#) that have adopted it in different ways.

Discuss how UBI might be financed. Refer to the arguments in chapter five that UBI and universal basic services could be financed by taxing use of public goods.

Conclude with an overview of the unit and by asking students about their hopes and fears regarding their future working lives and what they will need to do to ensure improving job quality for themselves and their fellow workers.

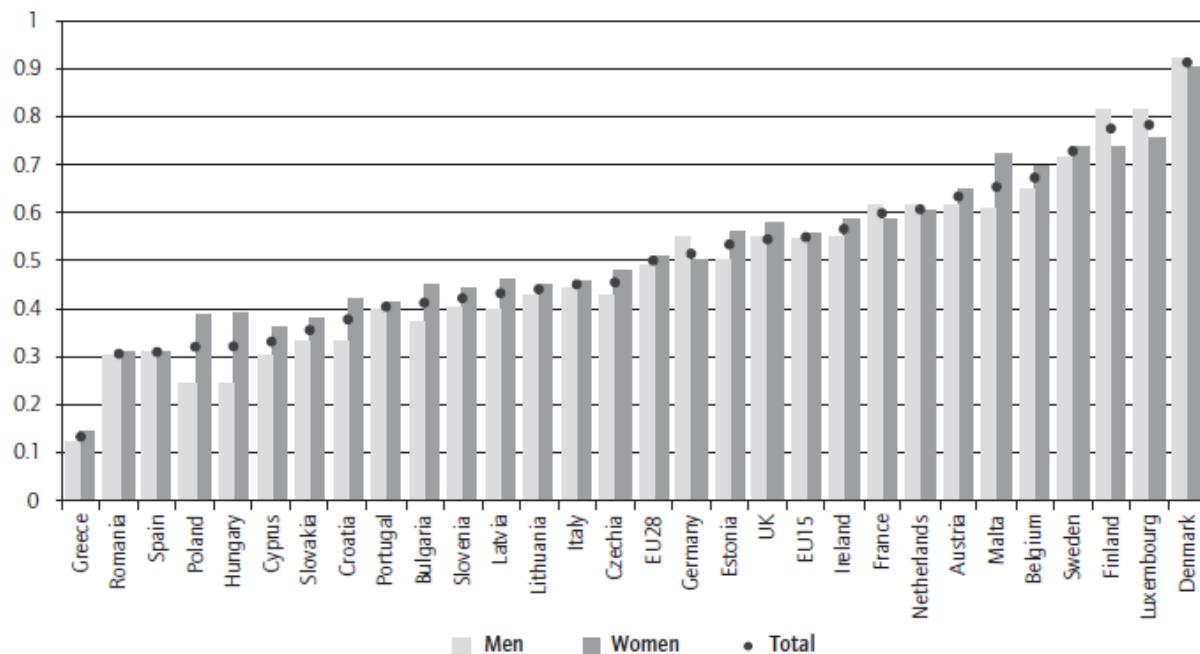
Introduce and discuss the assessment task.

## Activity Sheet 5.1

### What makes a good job? The European Job Quality Index

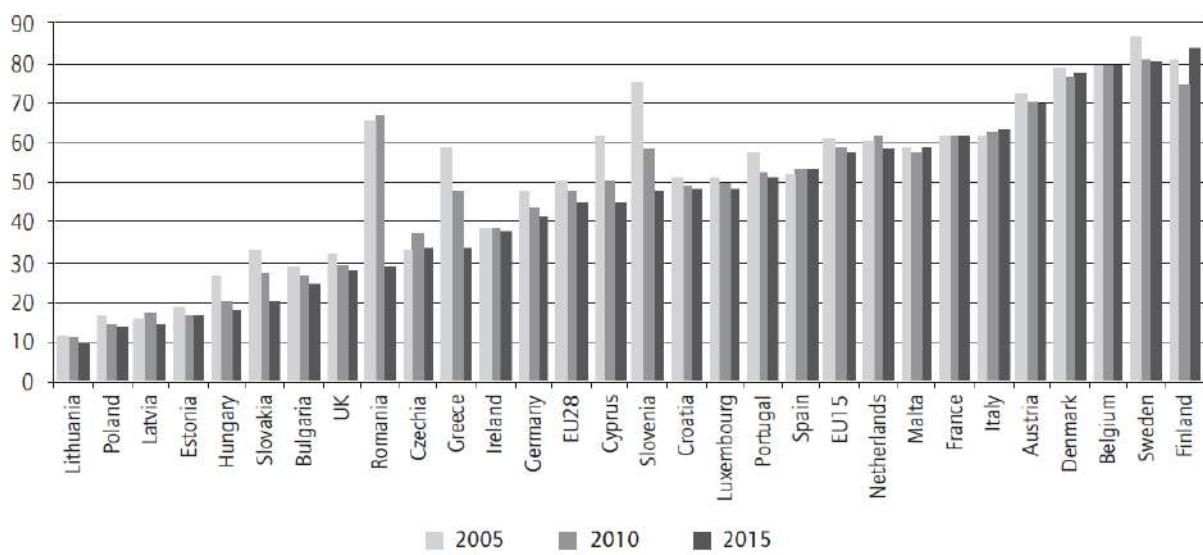
Sub-indices	Indicators
1. Wages	Average net monthly earnings from main paid job, adjusted for PPP (2015) Real compensation per employee
2. Forms of employment and job security	Temporary employment as a share of total number of employees*share of temps indicating that main reason was that they could not find permanent job Part-time employment as a share of total number of employees*share of part-timers indicating that main reason was that they could not find full-time job 'I might lose my job in the next six months'
3. Working time and work-life balance	Share of workers working more than 48 hours a week Average of share of workers on shift work; Saturday work; Sunday work; night work; evening work. 'Working hours fit with family/social commitments'
4. Working conditions	'Work intensity' (working at a very high speed, working to tight deadlines and not having enough time to get the job done) 'Work autonomy' (can choose/change order of tasks, methods of work, speed of work; can take a break when you wish) 'Physical work factors' (vibrations; noise; high/low temperature; breathing in smoke, fumes, powder, dust, vapours such as solvents and thinners; handling chemical substances; radiation (b), tobacco smoke from other people; infectious materials; tiring or painful positions; lifting or moving people; carrying or moving heavy loads; repetitive hand or arm movements)
5. Skills and career development	Share of population (25-64 years) participating in education/training over four weeks prior to survey 'My job offers good prospects for career advancement'
6. Collective interest representation	Collective bargaining coverage Trade union density Employee representation in the company/organisation (trade union or works council; health and safety delegate; regular meetings with employees)

Figure 2 Overall JQI in 2015, by country and gender



Notes: For the purpose of calculating the overall Job Quality Index, all sub-dimensions have been normalised to a range from 0 to 1. Overall JQI is the unweighted average of the six sub-dimensions.

Figure 23 Collective interest representation (collective bargaining coverage and trade union density), 2005-2015



## **Activity Sheet 5.2      Young Core Workers**

The TUC carried out a survey of young core workers in 2016. They were aged 21 to 30; they were not in full time education; and they worked full or part time for low or average wages, There were 3.5 million young core workers among the 6.75 million young workers aged 21 to 30.

Young core workers:

- were more likely to live in deprived areas (more likely to live in the North East and less likely to live in London);
- earned gross hourly wages that varied from £17.50/hr in London to £11.40/hr in the North East;
- 26% (40% of all young workers) had degrees;
- 30% (20%) had at least one dependent child;
- 37% (36%) live in the home of a parent or other relative; 15% (21%) own their own home; 25% (25%) rent in the private sector; and 13% (7%) in the social sector;
- 87% (80%) work in the private sector and 13% (20%) in the public sector
- worked in three main sectors of employment: wholesale, retail and vehicle repair 23% (17%); health and social work 13% (13%); and accommodation and food services 10% (8%);
- 75% (80%) work full-time and 35% (20%) part-time;
- 35% (28%) of those working part-time said they worked part-time because they are unable to find full-time work;
- 25% (29%) had taken part in work-related education or training in the last three months;
- 9% (16%) belonged to a trade union or staff association;
- 22% (24%) were aware of unions being present at their place of work;
- Only 16% (20%) reported that their pay and conditions are affected by union arrangement.

The ten challenges facing young core workers were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• low pay</li><li>• poor quality jobs</li><li>• lack of training opportunities</li><li>• overqualification</li><li>• weak opportunities for progression</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• underemployment</li><li>• precarious working conditions</li><li>• bullying and harassment</li><li>• pressure on working parents</li><li>• no voice in the workplace</li></ul>
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### **Activity Sheet 5.3      Young core workers and their mental health**

Younger workers today are more likely to be in part-time work, temporary work or self-employment. They are more likely to be in jobs for which they're overqualified and more likely to be underemployed.

Young people today are increasingly likely to report experiencing mental health problems. (16 per cent of young people (aged 16-32) experienced mental health problems in 2014, up from 13 per cent in 2004. This could be explained, in part, by reduced stigma and associated increases in rates of disclosure.)

The majority of mental health problems experienced by employees are work-related (Almost two thirds of employees (62 per cent) attribute symptoms of poor mental health to work, or say that work is a contributing factor.)

Younger workers in temporary jobs are more likely than those in permanent jobs to experience poorer mental health and wellbeing, particularly where they would prefer to be in permanent work. (Those in temporary jobs are 29 per cent more likely to experience mental health problems, compared to those in permanent jobs (22 per cent compared to 17 per cent.)

Younger graduates who are in jobs for which they're overqualified are more likely to experience poorer mental health and wellbeing, compared to graduates in professional/managerial jobs. (They are more likely to report being anxious or depressed (22 per cent compared to 16 per cent.)

Zero-hours contracts are causing poorer mental health among younger workers. (Those on zero-hours contracts are 13 percentage points more likely than those in other forms of work to experience mental health problems.)

Job insecurity and low pay are associated with poorer mental health among younger workers. (Young people in low-paid work are more likely to experience mental health problems compared to those in higher-paid work (21 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

[Flexibility For Who? Millennials and mental health in the modern labour market,](#)  
[C. Thornley & W. Cook, IPPR, 2017](#)

## Activity Sheet 5.3`

## Impact of digital technology on jobs

The adoption of digital technology will have four impacts on jobs:

1. **Job creation** the creation of new sectors, new products and new services.
2. **Job change** new forms of worker/machine interaction, new forms of jobs – for instance the so-called ‘uberisation’ – which result in new risks (work intensification, health and safety, increasingly porous private/working life boundary, training mismatches, discrimination, etc) effects of managerial level (new digital management).
3. **Job destruction** the jobs at risk of computerisation, automation and robotisation in the next ten to twenty years are increasing. While there is no consensus on just how many jobs will be lost, what is clear is that the numbers will be very high.
4. **Job shift** the development of digital platforms and crowdfunding where workers from countries with high levels of social protection are brought into competition with those from countries with low levels of protection and from developing countries. The relocation of services facilitated by certain platforms of the ‘sharing economy’ is applicable also to high-skilled jobs such as accounting, finance, etc.

**Digitization of the Economy and its impact on Labour Markets, C. Degryse, ETUI, 2016**

## Activity Sheet 5.3 cont'd

<b>Jobs at greatest risk of automation/ digitalisation</b>	<b>Jobs at least risk of autonomation/digitalisation</b>	<b>New jobs</b>
Office work and clerical jobs	Education, arts and media	<b>Top end</b>
Sales and commerce	Legal services	Data analysis, data miners, data architects,
Transport, logistics	Management, human resources management	Software and application developers, Specialists in networking, artificial intelligence etc.
Construction	Business	Designers and producers of new intelligent machines, robots and 3D printers. Digital marketing and e commerce.
Some aspects of financial services	Some aspects of financial services	<b>Bottom end</b>
Some types of services (translation, tax consultancy, etc)	Health service providers  Computer workers, engineers and scientists  Some types of services (social work, hairdressing, beauty care, etc)	Digital 'galley slaves' (data entry etc) working on digital platforms.  Uber drivers. Casual odd-jobbing (repairs, home improvement, pet care etc( in the 'sharing economy'.

## Activity Sheet 5.3 cont'd

### Main issues raised by the digital economy

Strengths	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected world, open systems, knowledge economy</li> <li>2. Networks, exchange, sharing and collaboration with access based on functionality rather than ownership</li> <li>3. Integration of industries and services, intelligent factories, energy systems, mobility, transport and cities and 'optimised' governance</li> <li>4. Automation, robotisation, learning machines</li> <li>5. Productivity, efficiency and profitability gains</li> <li>6. Zero marginal cost economy</li> <li>7. Innovative products and services, proliferation of mobile apps to 'make life easier'</li> <li>8. New autoproduction capacities, micro-factories</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New jobs (computer engineers and scientists, network experts, etc)</li> <li>2. More 'agile' work organisation; new forms of more flexible and more autonomous work</li> <li>3. Abolition of repetitive and routine tasks</li> <li>4. Better ergonomic help in performance of heavy or complex tasks</li> <li>5. New forms of collaboration and cooperation amongst workers</li> <li>6. Reshoring or onshoring (return of industries and new 'smart' factories – and jobs – to the country of origin)</li> <li>7. Possibility of new ways of distributing productivity gains (working time reduction)</li> <li>8. Possibility of social emancipation; change of economic model geared to peer-to-peer and common goods (post-capitalist society)</li> </ol>

[Digitization of the Economy and its impact on Labour Markets, C. Degryse, ETUI, 2016](#)

## Activity Sheet 5.3 cont'd

### Main issues raised by the digital economy cont'd

Weaknesses	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jobless growth, jobless future</li> <li>2. Emergence of super powerful oligopolies, new world data masters</li> <li>3. Concentration of power and wealth in value chains (equivalent losses for other companies, sectors and countries)</li> <li>4. Frequent problems of (non)-compliance with regulatory administrative, labour and taxation standards</li> <li>5. Protection of personal data exposed to intrinsic risks</li> <li>6. ‘Algorithmisation’ of individual behaviours; work and consumer habits; social and cultural preferences; normalisation and standardisation of the individual</li> <li>7. Hollowing out of the middle classes and polarisation of society between a reduced number of ‘top-of –the – scale’ workers and a mass of ‘bottom-of-the-scale’ workers</li> <li>8. Under investment and underutilisation of digital tools for the social emancipation of low-income sections of society</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Massive destruction of medium skilled jobs (computerisation)</li> <li>2. Intensification of ‘anytime anywhere’ work blurring of the boundary between private life and working life leading to stress and burnout</li> <li>3. Loss of control by workers of their own expertise and know-how and free will (becoming the tool of the machine)</li> <li>4. Digital management, policing of workers, risk of mutual loss of trust between employees and management</li> <li>5. Precarisation of jobs and statuses, total dependence on ‘data masters’, ‘servification’</li> <li>6. Weakening of collective action and industrial relations</li> <li>7. Skills and training / labour demand mismatch</li> <li>8. Exacerbation of inequality, wage stagnation</li> <li>9. ‘Digital Taylorism’ and emergence of a class of digital galley workers (crowd sourcing); world competition among workers for all jobs not requiring face-to –face contact</li> <li>10. Erosion of tax base and social insurance financing</li> </ol>

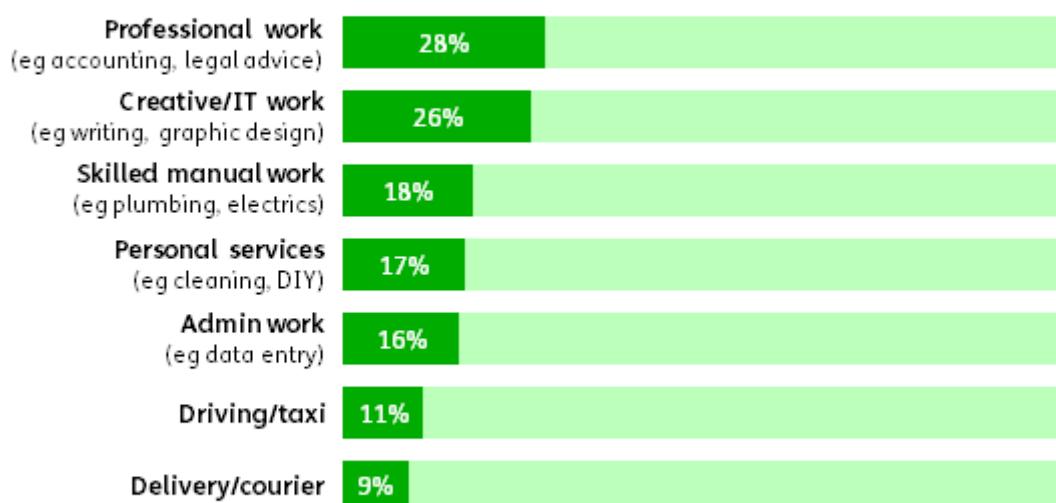
## Activity Sheet 5.4 Working in the gig economy

Gig workers:

- Provide labour, sell goods, or rent assets
- Have a high degree of autonomy
- Are paid by task, assignment or sales
- Have short-term relationship with their client

### What gig workers do

Breakdown of services provided by gig workers, UK (some provide more than one kind)



Source: RSA, Good Gigs, April 2017. Based on Ipsos Mori research



30% are free agents who choose independent work and derive their primary income from it. 40% are ‘casual earners’ who use independent work for supplementary income and do so from choice. 14% are ‘reluctants’ who make their primary living from independent work but would prefer traditional jobs. 16% are ‘financially strapped’ who do supplementary work as a matter of necessity. 70% of gig workers have chosen to work this way. 30% would prefer an alternative.

McKinsey: <https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/Independent-work-Choice-necessity-and-the-gig-economy>

**An extract from the TUC's report dealing with the challenge of precarious work**

Young people's experience of work is increasingly characterised by precarious working conditions, such as zero-hours or very short-hours contracts, agency work, temporary jobs or fixed term contracts. The flexibility of such contracts can be of significant benefit to employers, especially those in the retail and hospitality sectors where we know young people are concentrated, because they allow employers to respond to fluctuations in demand, and hence minimise excess labour costs.

Some young people do benefit from the flexibility of these contracts, particularly whilst they are in full-time education. However, precarious working conditions are often associated with a significant pay penalty, a loss of basic rights and greater vulnerability to exploitation in the workplace. There is also significant loss of stability, making it harder for workers to plan for the future.

Precarious working conditions are linked to the previously noted lack of progression in certain sectors of the labour market. For example, a longitudinal study of disadvantaged young people in the North East has found evidence of a significant degree of cycling between insecure low paid jobs, poor quality training schemes and unemployment, with little progress being made towards secure, rewarding permanent positions.

Britain's young core workers work in sectors characterised by precarious working conditions and high staff turnover which will have an impact on all employees. This was seen earlier, with high staff turnover leading to an unwillingness of employers to properly invest in their staff. And the experience of being an employee in a very transient workforce leads to perceptions of insecurity, and makes workers feel as if they should be grateful to have a job at all. This can make workers feel like they should simply accept their lot, rather than voice concerns and expect the employer to take them seriously.

Even where the individual's contract in itself is not precarious, a lack of opportunities in a workplace can lead to high turnover. The retail sector is characterised by churn, where workers do not consider there to be opportunities for progression with their current employer, and instead move between retailers to try and further their career. These horizontal job changes are rarely advantageous.

## Activity Sheet 5.5

### Making the case for a shorter working week and / or a universal basic income

Use enlarged versions of one or other of these argument frames shown below to answer these enquiry questions:

Should the UK government pass laws to shorten the working week?

Should the UK government pass laws to introduce a universal basic income?

You will need to research arguments for and against a shorter working week and / or a universal basic income. This will involve consulting a range of sources and opinions including those of workers (trade unions); employees (business owners); and politicians. It will also involve looking at the evidence. Have these innovations produced the benefits claimed for them in places where they have been introduced?

**Enquiry question:**

**Argument or statement**

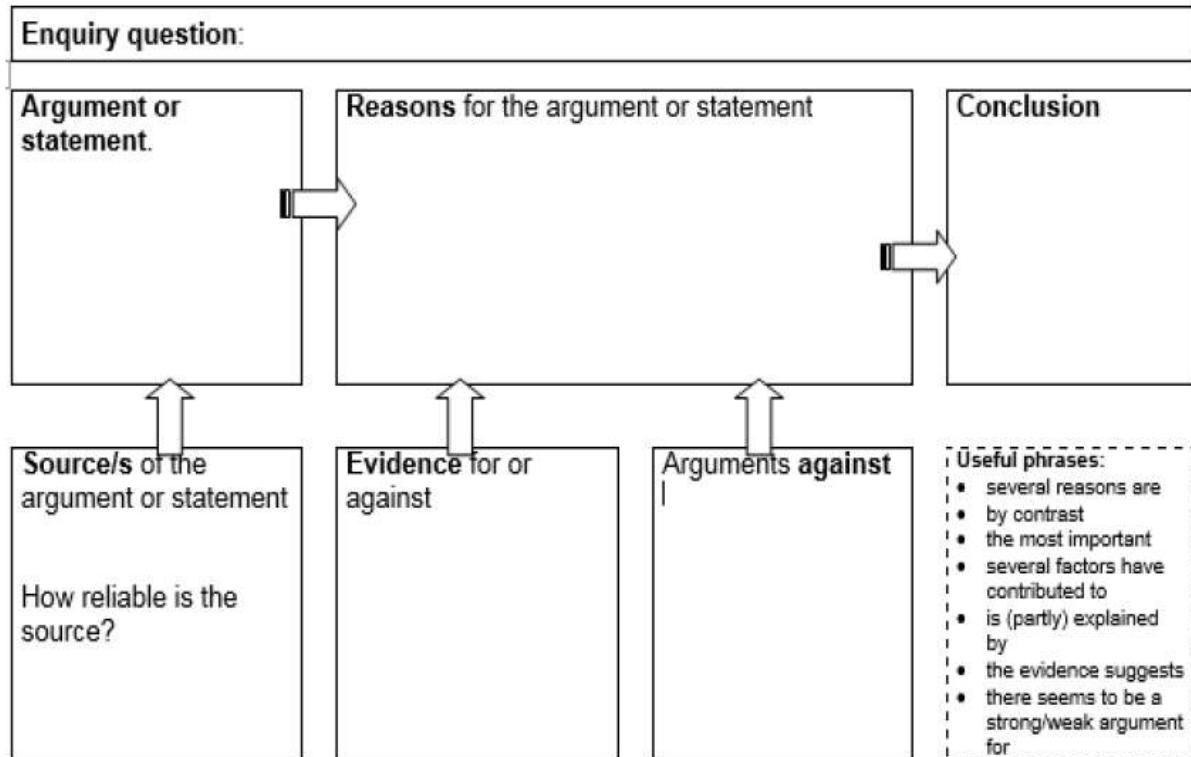
**Reasons and evidence for the statement**

**Arguments against**

**Conclusion**

The argument frames are from the activity Making Better Arguments on page 33 of the GA booklet *Critical Thinking in Practice* (2018).

## Activity Sheet 5.5 cont'd



# **Chapter Six**

## **Nature**

*One million species are currently threatened with extinction, and we are undermining the entire natural infrastructure on which our modern world depends. Nature powers human development: it underpins productivity, culture and even our beliefs and identities. But our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide are under threat. We are exploiting nature faster than it can replenish itself.* Robert Watson (1)

*The appropriation and production of natural forces for human needs should proceed apace but with the maximum regard for the protection of ecosystems, maximum attention paid to the recycling of nutrients, energy and physical matter to the sites from whence they came, and an overwhelming sense of re-enchantment with the beauty of the natural world, or which we are a part and to which we can and do contribute through our works.* (Mandate for political praxis 16) David Harvey (2)

*For way too long, the politicians and the people in power have gotten away with not doing anything to fight the climate crisis, but we will make sure that they will not get away with it any longer. We are striking because we have done our homework and they have not.* Greta Thunberg (3)

*Our national curriculum now includes challenging content for every age group so that pupils can gain the kind of awareness they need for careers in growing sectors like green technology. Biology, chemistry and geography programmes directly address climate change and environmental issues.* Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education (4)

Faced with a crisis in our relationship with the rest of the natural world that has caused the global coronavirus pandemic, and is labelled [environmental breakdown](#) (5), what competences should geography teachers be developing in their students? Answering this question involves retuning to political economy (chapter one) and a modernity that needs to be reclaimed and set on a more sustainable path (chapter two). It also involves introducing critical knowledge (chapter four) of the relations between social and bio-physical systems and applying ecopedagogy, a form of critical pedagogy (chapter five) that promotes such ethical principles as securing the earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations ([Earth Charter principle 4](#) (6)) and fosters sustainability citizenship along with well-being and happiness (chapter three).

The chapter starts by considering bio-physical limits to economic activity and how the need to live within planetary boundaries provides a new focus for geography teaching. This requires an acknowledgement of the Anthropocene; integration of human and physical geography using such frameworks as that offered by political ecology; and the application of critical ideas from anarchism, Marxism and post-structuralism. These ideas focus on the social construction of nature; distinguish between the greening of capitalism and socialism; explore contradictions arising from the concept of sustainable development, and point to the need for new forms of sustainability citizenship. Such citizenship has informed curriculum development in Wales in recent decades and the Curriculum for Wales, to be introduced in 2022, allows a continuing focus on ESDGC. Ecopedagogy is a means of developing sustainability citizenship that has anarchist roots and is based on Earth Charter principles. It deserves to be more widely acknowledged and used by geography teachers.

The associated curriculum unit seeks to develop sustainability citizenship by focussing on [SDG 2 \(Zero Hunger\)](#) (7) and GCE topic 2 (issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels). It is inspired by a chapter on discourses of hunger (8) that draws on post-structuralism and contrasts the solution to hunger offered by the global corporate food system to that offered by local and regional food systems. Students are introduced to food as a human right; reflect on the sources of the food they eat; and assess the capacity of both the corporate global food system and local urban farming to deliver food sovereignty, food justice, and sustainable development. Case studies of urban farms in Nairobi, Chicago and

Bristol are evaluated from the perspective of Earth Charter principle seven (patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being).

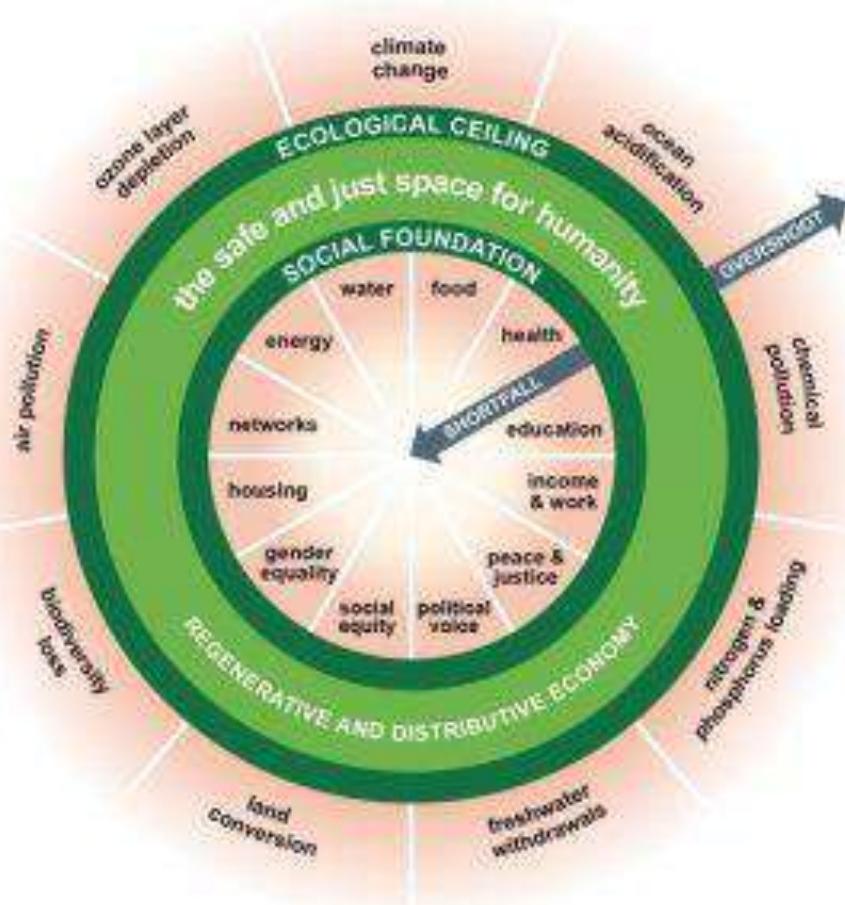
## Planetary boundaries

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES				
Earth-system process	Parameters	Proposed boundary	Current status	Pre-industrial value
Climate change	(i) Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration (parts per million by volume)	350	387	280
	(ii) Change in radiative forcing (watts per metre squared)	1	1.5	0
Rate of biodiversity loss	Extinction rate (number of species per million species per year)	10	>100	0.1-1
Nitrogen cycle (part of a boundary with the phosphorus cycle)	Amount of N <sub>2</sub> removed from the atmosphere for human use (millions of tonnes per year)	35	121	0
Phosphorus cycle (part of a boundary with the nitrogen cycle)	Quantity of P flowing into the oceans (millions of tonnes per year)	11	8.5-9.5	~1
Stratospheric ozone depletion	Concentration of ozone (Dobson unit)	276	283	290
Ocean acidification	Global mean saturation state of aragonite in surface sea water	2.75	2.90	3.44
Global freshwater use	Consumption of freshwater by humans (km <sup>3</sup> per year)	4,000	2,600	415
Change in land use	Percentage of global land cover converted to cropland	15	11.7	Low
Atmospheric aerosol loading	Overall particulate concentration in the atmosphere, on a regional basis	To be determined		
Chemical pollution	For example, amount emitted to, or concentration of persistent organic pollutants, plastics, endocrine disrupters, heavy metals and nuclear waste in, the global environment, or the effects on ecosystem and functioning of Earth system thereof	To be determined		

**Figure 6. 1      Ten planetary boundaries (9)**

Long term economic and social development on planet earth should respect planetary boundaries if it is to be sustainable. Such boundaries are associated with the earth's bio-physical subsystems and processes and define the safe operating space for humanity. Figure 6.1 shows ten boundaries, compares their

value in 2009 (current status) with their pre-industrial value, and shows that three had already been exceeded: climate change, biodiversity loss, and interference with the nitrogen cycle. Humanity is also approaching the boundaries for change in land use; global freshwater use; and ocean acidification as the 2019 [UN Global Assessment Report](#) (10) confirmed. A report from the [Stockholm Resilience Institute](#) (11) considers four scenarios for the future and concludes that only bold transformative development will allow the SDGs to be realised. Trying harder on all fronts; accelerating economic growth; or business as usual are not enough. (12). [Doughnut economics](#) (13) (Figure 6.2) offers a means of conceptualizing the challenge. The social foundations (SDGs) at the centre need to be realized without breaking through the ecological ceiling, but it offers no answers as what form/s of political economy and global governance will allow sustainable development hinting only at a regenerative and distributive economy.



**Figure 6.2 The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (14)**

We know that boundaries are tightly coupled (deforestation in Amazonia can affect water resources in Tibet); that many of the earth's subsystems react to change in non-linear ways and may be tipped into rapid change once the threshold value of a key variable is exceeded (run-away climate change caused by the melting of permafrost and release of methane); and that we know little about the resilience of many earth subsystems.

## The Anthropocene

Human impact on the earth has led stratigraphers to propose a new geological epoch, the [Anthropocene](#) (15). After a period of relative stability, the Holocene, in which civilization arose, they claim that we have entered a period of instability associated with human impacts on the earth system (16). Castree (17) traces the history of the concept; its promotion; strengths and weaknesses, and relevance for geography teachers.

Concern about the human impact on the earth's bio-physical systems has a long history (18) (19) but it was not until the early 2000s that the concept was proposed by Crutzen (a chemist) and Stoermer (a biologist). It claims that humanity's [ecological footprint](#) (20) is now unprecedented in scope and scale and is the major factor affecting the stratigraphic record. The Anthropocene is however disputed with some suggesting that it is being promoted for social rather than scientific reasons. As a rhetorical device it is designed to shape the thinking, behaviour and policies of business, governments, and civil society, reminding them that humanity is a geological force and that we should live within planetary boundaries exercising stewardship towards the rest of nature on which we depend.

Castree sees the concept as holistic in that it unites society and nature in a single frame; authoritative in that it is supported by both scientists and environmentalists; and relevant in that it suggests a precautionary approach to development. It does however pose challenges: there are huge gaps in our knowledge of earth systems and their interactions; the concept conceals who is responsible for our environmental predicament (others suggest [Capitalocene](#), [Plantationocene](#), [Chthulucene](#) (21)) and it can be seen to encourage geo-engineering and to delay a radical rethinking of our relations with the rest of nature. Lovelock (22) predicts that the Gaia hypothesis will save us for the Anthropocene will shortly be followed by the Novacene when machines created

by artificial intelligence will realise that they need organic life to keep the planet at a habitable temperature.

For geographers, the Anthropocene requires an end to the duality of human and physical geography and brings a new relevance to the subject as the pre-eminent one for studying human impacts on the earth. But chapter four has already reminded us that there is no single philosophical or intellectual framework for uniting society and nature and charting a more sustainable future. [Zimmerer](#) (23) surveys the scope of geography that focuses on human-environment relations reminding us that it ‘is focussed on the biogeographical elements of change from a perspective centred on the interactions and entanglements with modern human societies, political economies, environmentalism, and environmental movements. Such forces exert major influences on human-environment studies.’ p.2

Zimmerer identifies nine distinct yet related nodes of research and understanding in human-environment geography. Particularly relevant to SDG 2 is that relating to food, health and bodies in relation to the environment. This is frequently centred on the role of agricultural and fisheries systems that integrate the consumption choices of individuals, communities and societies with transportation networks and agro-ecologies and production systems. The vast majority of this production, consumption and transformation of food takes place within the global corporate industrial food system that is contested and challenged by alternative and often local food networks that may be based on forms of agro-ecology informed by the political ecology of health and wellbeing.

### **Political ecology and coronavirus**

Political ecology is the study of the relationships between economic, political, social and cultural structures and processes (political economy) and environmental issues. It differs from mainstream apolitical environmental studies by politicizing environmental phenomena and issues. Bryant and his contributors provide an overview of political ecology (24); Huckle and Martin trace the evolution of environments from pre-modern to postmodern times (25); Barry (26) outlines the ways in which the environment has been constructed and contested in social theory, while Death (27) edits a volume outlining critical theory’s contribution to understanding environmental politics. In outlining key elements of political ecology that are relevant to school geography, I follow

earlier classifications of critical theory into Marxist, critical (Frankfurt School) and poststructuralist approaches, after outlining political ecology's explanation of the coronavirus pandemic.

[Zoonoses](#), (28) human infections of animal origin (Ebola, Sars, bird flu, Covid-19 etc) have expanded in recent years with the virus SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19 thought to have crossed from animals to humans via a wet meat market in Wuhan China. The spread of industrial farming in China has marginalised millions of smallholder farmers some of whom now survive by rearing exotic species, such as pangolins, and moving closer to uncultivated zones, such as forests, where bats carrying coronavirus live. [Wallace and his co-authors](#) (29) offer a general theory of such neoliberal disease emergence that combines global circuits of capital (investment in Chinese agribusiness) with the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity, the rise of frontier communities shipping pathogens to city markets, global travel and livestock trade that delivers pathogens to the rest of the world, and the decline of bio-security and livestock regulations along with local mixed farming systems which foster disease protection as an ecological service. [Spinney](#) (30) reminds us that coronavirus is the product of enclosure (page 15) and an example of [the tragedy of the commons](#) (31). Only when we defend the commons through democratic governance of the food system and its use of land is [the incidence of such diseases](#) as Covid-19 likely to decrease (32).

## **Marxism and nature**

My consideration of Marxism and ecology is heavily guided by Harvey (2) (33). Marxism rejects nature / society dualism (a feature of the modern culture, page. 50) and sees nature as socially constructed. There is no nature on the surface of the earth that is untouched by society and society is made up of human animals who like the environments they inhabit are hybrids, part natural and part social. Capitalism is a global working and evolving ecological system (ecosystem) in which both nature and capital are co-evolving, continually being produced and reproduced. It has captured the dialectics of development, limiting the ways in which we can change ourselves by changing the world (and vice versa). As we have seen, acceleration in modern society means that ecological resources and services cannot be reproduced at the rate their economies require (page. 109). Environmentalists seek such alternatives as post-growth societies; resonant relations between people and their environments; and eco-socialism (34).

The social construction of nature suggests that school geography should seek to erode nature / society dualism by integrating elements of the subject that draw on the earth sciences, social sciences and humanities to focus on how nature is being constructed in unsustainable ways and how it might be constructed more sustainably. Such integration would erode students' alienation resulting from a disjointed subject based curriculum as suggested on page 147 and provide sources of resonance (page 110).

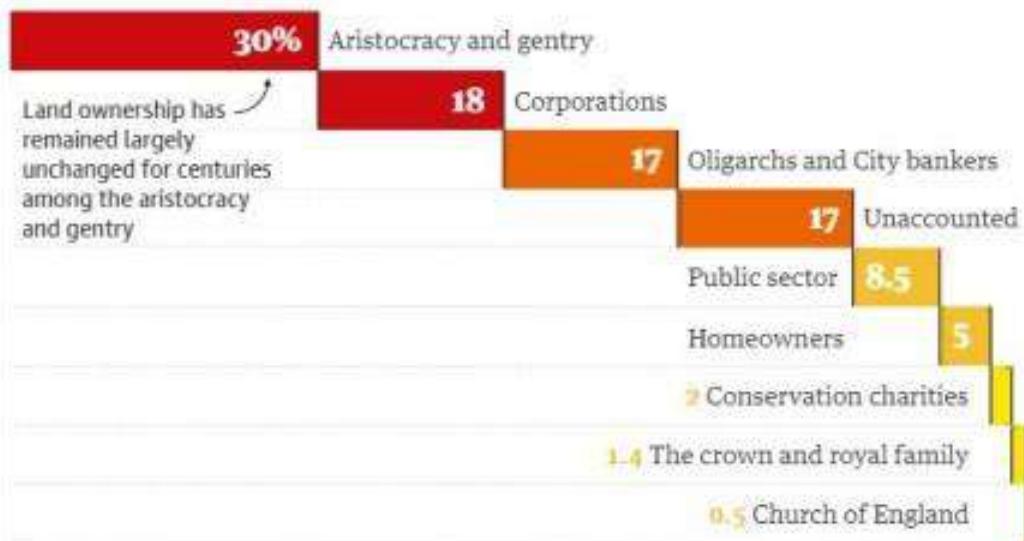
Under capitalism, nature becomes an accumulation strategy, a vast store of potential use values that can be turned into exchange values and profit (35). This involves the enclosure of natural commons (36), the commodification of nature; our alienation from nature; (page 15) and the formation of a private rentier class (page 206) that controls access to land, technology, and urban property. It is able to manipulate scarcities and speculate on the value of the assets it controls, as we will see when we consider food supply and hunger. Environmental and landscape history reveals the environmental impacts of changing capitalisms, including systems of colonial and imperial rule (37), while studies of contemporary commodity chains reveal the extent of ecological transfers that may underpin geopolitical tensions (38).

School geography should explore landscape and environmental history in ways that acknowledge class conflict and use contemporary commodity chains to investigate the social and environmental costs and benefits of global trade (see pages 200 and (39)). Lessons on [land ownership, reform, governance and taxation in Britain](#) (40) (41) (see Figure 6.3, page 255); the [extent of biodiversity loss](#) (42); the current state of wildlife conservation (43); the privatisation and deregulation of the environment; and such proposals as those in the [People's Manifesto for Wildlife](#) (44) should be included along with such topics as renaturing cities (45); rewilding the countryside (46); and [regenerative agriculture](#) (47). Such topics can be linked together by concepts and principles from ecology, [ecological design](#) (48) and [permaculture](#).(49).

## Nature as ideology

Capitalism constructs nature both materially and existentially (as meanings). Nature functions as ideology when it is seen to exist outside society and processes, events and experiences that are partly social are attributed to it. Nature is then blamed for such phenomena as failure at school (low

## Half of England is owned by 25,000 landowners - less than 1% of its population



Guardian graphic. Source: Guy Shrubsole, author of Who Owns England?

**Figure 6.3 Land ownership in England (50) (51)**

intelligence): ‘natural’ disasters; underdevelopment (environmental determinism) and can legitimate oppressive relations (patriarchy, neoliberalism) as being somehow ‘natural’ (women naturally inferior, humans naturally competitive rather than co-operative). Nature as ideology is used to sell a wide range of products and ‘greenwash’ corporations by associating them with an imaginary pure realm untouched by society.

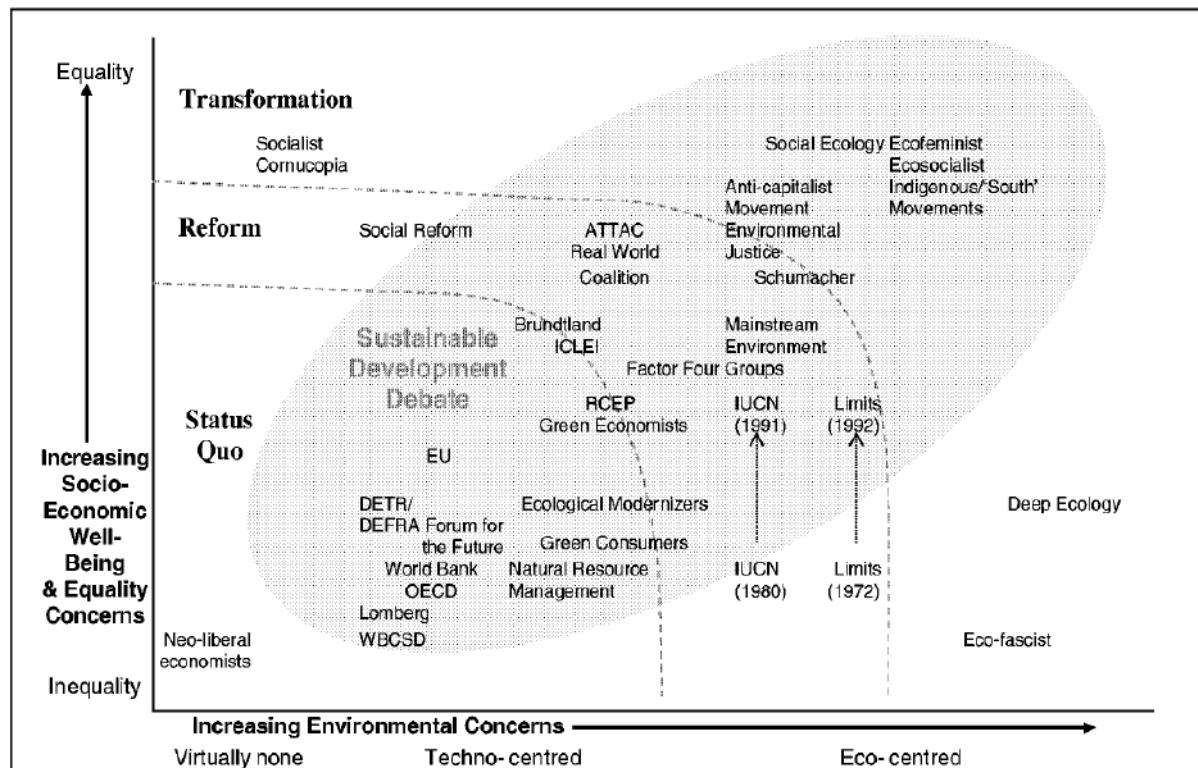
Geography teachers should work with colleagues in English and media studies to explore with students how nature and environmental issues are represented in media of all kinds. How do media represent and explore Rosa’s three modes of being in the world (indifference, repulsion, resonance – page 109)? Do children and young people need to ‘come home to nature’? (52) Why, when we are facing environmental breakdown has nature writing (53) become so popular? How do media evoke and explore nature’s economic, aesthetic, spiritual and existence values? Why is nature variously seen as a source of cures (‘green prozac’ (54)), wisdom, awe and wonder (55), respite, recovery and enchantment? Is seeing nature in this way merely a romantic and seductive myth? (56)

Melissa Harrison's *At Hawthorn Time* (57) is one example of a novel that stimulates discussion of nature writing, teenage lives lived in a changing countryside, and attitudes to nature. Similarly William Kamkwamba's memoir *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind* (58), and [the associated film](#) (59), prompts discussion of rural life in Malawi, the impact of drought and bad governance on people's lives, and the roles of education and technology in securing improvement. There is a wealth of media for teaching about the social use and misuse of nature, and these two examples point to the need for critical realism or the recognition that ending alienation from nature and fostering resonance requires a changed political economy and mode of development.

## Sustainable development

Capitalism seeks to address environmental breakdown on its own terms by treating it as a result of market failures: engaging in environmental and resource management; putting a price on nature (60), developing new 'sustainable' (clean) technologies, products and services, evolving new forms of 'disaster capitalism' (61) and engaging in 'greenwashing'. There are undoubtedly opportunities for the greening of capitalism, but legislation is necessary to regulate economic activity in ways that protect human welfare; plan land use, conserve wildlife, and require corporations and governments to think and act long term. The state acts as a mediator between corporations, governments, political parties and NGOs that have differing analyses and prescriptions for the environment and development.

The sustainable development debate involves those who support the status quo who are increasingly challenged by reformers and transformers. Since Figure 6.3 was published in 2005 the latter two groups have gained ground despite neoliberal hegemony. The key debate is now between socially democratic reformers and green socialist transformers (Figure 6.4, page 257) with the debate in Europe and the United States much concerned with [a green new deal](#) (62). Figure 6.5 (page 258) contrasts the greening of capitalism (reformist) with that of socialism (transformative). Most advocacy of a green new deal is reformist, socially democratic and unlikely to result in the systemic change that is urgently needed. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 suggest alternative futures and can be related to the four scenarios sketched in Figure 5.5 (page 211). The [Climate and Capitalism website](#) (63) has a reading list on ecosocialism

**Figure 6.4****Mapping views on sustainable development (64)**

Arguing that we are faced with two transitions, beyond carbon and beyond work, [Mason](#) (65) suggests the Left should respond with the type of transformative policies outlined in Figure 6.5 (also see page 16). But as an alliance of two projects it faces problems. Action by the old working class against austerity, atomisation, and a falling wage share seeks to set right the injustices of the carbon era by restoring well paid work. At the same time an offensive by the diverse educated workforce of the information era seeks to advance individual rights and social liberalisation by moving beyond work. Green new deals are designed to appeal to the former by promising decent jobs and so countering the appeal of the populist right. In reality a return to Keynesian full employment is impossible and the Left should grasp the opportunities presented by climate change and automation to create a new left populism (page 17) that can become hegemonic.

On the wider stage the temporal and geographical scales of capitalism's ecosystem had been shifting in response to exponential growth. While problems are more regional and global, we lack the effective institutions and mechanisms of global governance to deal with them effectively (chapter nine).

Sustainable development as the greening of capitalism. Reformist	Sustainable development as the greening of socialism. Transformative
<p>Continued capital accumulation requires greater attention to environmental protection and social justice (eg. corporate social responsibility and triple bottom line accounting). Doing more with less (ecological modernisation) is the key to new green enterprises. Favours market instruments rather than regulation to cut pollution and conserve the environment (eg. carbon trading).</p> <p>Decarbonisation and ecological modernisation restricted to what is in the interests of corporations and the limits of orthodox fiscal and monetary policy.</p> <p>Cannot deliver change fast enough or on the required scale. Change required conflicts with a global capitalism that is geared to financial speculation and deregulated economic space. Enlightened rich buy up land in cooler locations and establish private zoos and seed banks. Unenlightened rich continue to pollute.</p> <p>Development geared to profitability and efficiency; sacrificing critical ecological capital; personal rather than collective solutions (green consumerism); new forms of rentier capitalism and growing precariat; expert knowledge; global welfare through SDGs; technocentric and strongly anthropocentric values.</p>	<p>National government sets overall policy goals that respect planetary boundaries. It takes utilities and transport into public ownership. Vast expansion of renewable energy and investment in carbon sequestration. Expansion of mass transit systems; switch to locally grown food; meat farming ends; large scale rewilding. Goods and services priced to reflect full environmental and social costs.</p> <p>Implementation of policy allows for creativity, localism, and entrepreneurship. Key roles for economic democracy and automation: workers' shared ownership, co-operatives, less work; participatory planning to meet social needs; universal basic income / services. Goods and services increasingly supplied outside the market.</p> <p>Co-ordinated and participatory economic planning to meet social needs is the key to development within planetary boundaries.</p> <p>Development geared to sufficiency; collective solutions; conservation of critical ecological capital; global justice via redistribution; responsible consumption; expert and local knowledge (citizen's science); weakly anthropocentric and ecocentric values.</p>

**Figure 6.5 Sustainability as the greening of capitalism or socialism**

School geography should explore environmental and development issues at all scale as a means of developing students' political literacy and sustainability citizenship. This should involve learning about [ecological footprints](#) (66); alternative economic models (67) (including the [circular economy](#) (68)) and [alternative economic indicators](#) (69); the possibility of prosperity without

growth (70); the six rules that societies might follow to realise sustainability (71); different theories of social development (72) (chapter seven); how local action can aid the transition to sustainability (73); and what capabilities will be needed to thrive in the next economy (74). Different scenarios regarding [global population growth](#) (75) should be considered and the issue of [responsible parenthood in age of climate change](#) (76) and environmental breakdown should be debated.

Students might learn of the research being carried out by the [Smith school of enterprise and the environment](#) (77) and evaluate the arguments of those cornucopians who claim that new technology, guided by activist leftwing governments, should be used to intensify our ‘mastery’ of nature and deliver sustainability (78). In 2019 the politics of climate breakdown (79); the rise of [Extinction Rebellion](#) (80) (81) and [school students striking for a safe climate future](#) (82); provides one context for such teaching and learning focussed on the need for a [zero carbon Britain](#) (83) (84) in a [zero carbon world](#) (85). In 2020 the results of the [UK climate assembly](#) (86), an exercise in deliberative democracy, showed the public to be ahead of government on measures to tackle global heating; the [Institute for Government](#) (87) suggested the government had failed to realise the scale of the task; and a [Climate and Ecological Emergency bill](#) (88) was before parliament.

Harvey (2) concludes that capitalism may be able to resolve a crisis of environmental breakdown (the problems it has in reproducing the conditions of production (key idea eight, page 8)) on its own terms given sufficient pressure from state powers and civil society (89). A real threat to capitalism’s future in his view is the rise of the rentier class (page 206), its investment in unproductive capital and the associated lack of investment in productive capital. This ultimately leads to a fall in the rate of profit that inhibits future investment, including that in green technologies. A ‘green global golden age’ is possible but like previous technological revolutions it requires a radical set of policies and the redesign of institutional frameworks to allow the kind of transformation that will deliver the ‘next normal’ along with the SDGs (90).

What really threatens capitalism’s future, in Harvey’s opinion, is its [colonisation of the lifeworld](#) (91) (the world of everyday social interaction and moral action that is separate from the systems world of the capitalist market and bureaucratic, administrative state). As the systems world encloses and commodifies more and more of nature, it provokes alienation, reactions, and

resistances that claim that all of nature cannot be reduced to monetary values; that it is possible to be human in ways other than those that capitalism requires and dictates; and that alienation is not inevitable since a more caring, sharing and sustainable world, such as was [glimpsed during pandemic lockdown](#) in 2020 (92), is possible. School geography should showcase those who are resisting the colonisation of their lifeworld including those individuals and [groups who resist](#) (93) the colonisation of their bodies and communities by the corporate food industry (see curriculum unit).

### Critical theory and nature

Colonisation of the lifeworld is a key aspect of Habermasian social theory along with his theory of communicative action (94). The Frankfurt School of critical theorists shifted critique from capitalism to modernity (page 50) and from the economy to culture. Its followers claim that the cause of unsustainable development is the rise of instrumental rationality and an associated technocracy which leads to disenchantment with the natural world. The key to re-enchantment (resonance, page 109) and sustainability is therefore the creation of forms of global governance and citizenship guided by communicative rationality that can accommodate the interests of present and future generations including their interests in sustaining the critical ecological capital and earth systems processes on which their wellbeing depends. Evans (95) outlines a critical social theory of sustainability and considers its implications for higher education praxis.

Contemporary critical theorists suggest that ‘apocalyptic imaginaries’ of environmental breakdown displace social conflict and foreclose its proper political framing by suggesting that citizens are equally responsible, have an equal obligation to behave more sustainably, and should support technocratic solutions that fail to radically challenge existing patterns of power. The dominant discourse of sustainable development (sustainable development as the greening of capitalism) suggests that neoliberal capitalism and sustainability are compatible and interdependent when in fact they are not. [Post-ecology](#) (96) becomes a feature of post-politics and [post-democracy](#) (97) whereby a managerial (technocratic) approach to government and environmental policy deprives it of its proper political dimension (98) .

School geography should develop student’s ability to deconstruct representations of environmental issues in the popular media. Is environmental

breakdown presented as the result of overpopulation (99), over consumption, inappropriate technology, inappropriate beliefs and values; inappropriate behaviours or a combination of these, without mentioning their conditioning by political economy? Does the presentation acknowledge social class; social conflict; environmental justice (100); and the politics of sustainability? Does it deceive or educate the audience? Does it foster sustainability citizenship?

## Sustainability citizenship

Hinton (101) provides an overview of citizenship within environmental politics, distinguishing between republican, liberal and post-cosmopolitan approaches. [Cosmopolitanism](#) (102) claims that human beings belong to a single global community and that politics and citizenship should recognize their interdependence and be guided by communicative rationality and [discourse ethics](#) (103). Sustainability citizenship is a form of post-cosmopolitan citizenship that seeks to extend the spatio-temporal matrix of cosmopolitan citizenship to distant places, past and future generations, and acknowledges the material constitution of citizens. Dobson (104) defines a sustainable (sustainability) citizen as one who displays ‘pro-sustainability behaviour in public and private, driven by a belief in the fairness of the distribution of environmental goods, in participation, and in the co-creation of sustainability policy’.

Bullen and Whitehead (105) explain the thinking behind the concept of sustainability citizenship that informed the guidance on ESDGC introduced by the Welsh Assembly in 2002 and subsequently updated. They suggest that ‘learning to be a sustainability citizen is about recognizing the ways in which your own economic, social and environmental decisions / actions affect distant others, often located well beyond the national boundaries with which traditional brands of citizenship have been constructed’. They arrive at the notion of sustainability citizenship by acknowledging multiple forms of citizenship operating at different scales linked to intersectionality theory (page 113), and applying Soja’s understanding of geography (the study of interactions between space, time and matter / being) to a rethinking of citizenship. As an unbounded and relational form of citizenship and ‘paradigm for post-industrial living’, sustainability citizenship requires us to exercise responsibilities towards others distant in space and time (to whom we are always, already obligated by virtue of our ecological footprints) and non-human nature. It enlarges the public sphere in which citizenship is conceived and practised to include the

environment; embraces the private sphere of citizen's lifestyles and consumption, and is relational in the sense that it requires a keen awareness of the connections which exist between social actions, economic practices and environmental processes. While the Welsh guidance used the term global citizenship, its description of ESDGC (Figure 6.5) reflects sustainability citizenship in ways Bullen and Whitehead outline.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) is about the things that we do every day. It is about the big issues in the world - such as climate change, trade, resource and environmental depletion, human rights, conflict and democracy, - and about how they relate to each other and to us. It is about how we treat the earth and how we treat each other, no matter how far apart we live. It is about how we prepare for the future. Every one of us has a part to play.

**Figure 6.5 ESDGC as defined in a Welsh guidance document in 2008 p. 4**

Bullen and Whitehead suggest that sustainability citizenship failed to realise its potential within the Welsh curriculum as it was too often associated with generic and standardised, rather than local and embedded, content. With their emphasis on examinations and imposed discipline schools do not offer the most appropriate moral context required to foster ethically engaged citizens and they argue that sustainability citizenship is better developed in a range of geographical spaces and ecological contexts within the state and civil society – ‘from the home to the school, from the community garden to the workplace, from the commune to the parliament.’

The [Curriculum for Wales](#) (106) being introduced in 2022 claims to be a transformational curriculum and has four purposes the third of which is to develop ethically informed citizens of Wales and the world. It organises learning around six areas of learning experience (AoLEs) putting geography into the [humanities](#) (107) along with history, religious education, business studies and social studies. Each area of experience is guided by what matters statements and in the humanities there are five, foregrounding enquiry learning, acknowledging social constructivism, and including two that are particularly relevant to ESDGC:

- *Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by physical processes and human action*
- *Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenge and opportunities that face humanity and are able to take considered ethical and sustainable action* (108) p. 2

Elsewhere in the humanities guidance we find:

*Learners will develop an understanding of their role as citizens and the importance of creating a just and sustainable future for themselves and their communities in an interconnected world.* p. 8

*They will be asked to consider the impact of their actions and the actions of others, and how these are shaped by interpretations of human rights, values, ethics, religious and non-religious views, and philosophies. Through this they will come to understand, respect and challenge a variety of world views, knowing how to exercise their democratic rights and to make informed choices, conscious of the importance of a sustainable future for all.* (109)

While Rawling (110) argues that from the point of view of geography, the humanities AoLE framework is inadequate as a basis for a coherent national curriculum, there is much in the new Welsh curriculum that echoes arguments in this book: integration of subjects; a framework for schools to develop their own curriculum; inquiry and space for discussion and reflection; attention to representation and interpretation; critical thinking; and continuation of the previous focus on ESDGC albeit expressed in changed language. It is an appropriate vehicle for ecopedagogy.

### **Ecopedagogy**

Ecopedagogy (111) is a form of critical pedagogy that seeks to develop ecoliteracy or the ability of students to read and write (reflect and act) on their relations with the rest of the natural world. Toro (112) traces its origins to the work of 19C anarchist geographers, notably Kropotkin and Reclus, who were early environmentalists believing that knowledge should be integrative, holistic and emancipatory, and that geographical education should be transformative. He suggests that four essential features of ecopedagogy can be extracted from their writings:

1. Challenging the ontological confrontation of human-nature (overcoming nature / society dualism)
2. Developing the idea of earth consciousness (becoming aware that we are part of an intelligent global earth system that operates according to bio-physical laws and makes possible the conditions for human and social development)
3. Constructing a paradigm of human welfare based on justice and equity (advancing an alternative model of development to that offered by capitalism)
4. Fostering self-sufficient and cooperative communities (rethinking the basic principles of democracy and the political institutions of society and fostering communities characterised by self-management, self-sufficiency, cooperation and radical democracy)

Contemporary ecopedagogy seeks to critique mainstream environmental education and ESD along with the ‘greenwashing’ of education; intervene on behalf of oppressed groups; and acknowledge the diversity of thought, culture and ecosystems that includes traditional and indigenous eco-centred cultures.

An [International Handbook](#) published in Bulgaria (113) [an article](#) contrasting it to anthropocentric pedagogy (114) and a further [article](#) (115) linking it to global citizenship provide insights into its content. [Kahn](#) (116) suggests that ecoliteracy has cosmological, technological and organizational dimensions: the first relating to earth consciousness; the second to clean or appropriate technologies; and the third to praxis or knowledge generated in dialogue between academics and social movements.

[The Earth Charter](#) (117) has its origins in the deliberations that led up to the first Earth Summit in 1992. It is a statement of sixteen ethical principles that underpin sustainability, seeking to inspire in all peoples a sense of interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations. The charter resulted from a decade long conversation amongst communities around the world (an exercise in discursive ethics). It is endorsed by Unesco (page 22) and many universities and youth organisations, and is promoted by the [Earth Charter Initiative](#) (118) that has its own educational programmes and resources. [Antunes and Gadotti](#) (119) explain why ecopedagogy is an appropriate pedagogy for the Earth Charter process.

## **Ecopedagogy and school geography**

In addressing the challenges that environmental education poses to school geography, Rawding (120) presents an argument firmly rooted in the mainstream view of sustainable development as the greening of capitalism. He wonders whether geography teachers are presenting environmental issues in ways that are too simplistic, too negative, too doom laden, and too fixed, and suggests that ‘to condemn economic growth as unsustainable and undesirable runs the risk of presenting geography as a reactionary subject, not least because the alternative to economic growth is contraction, unemployment and political instability’ (p. 11). ‘How we represent capitalism is crucially important in education’ (p. 12) but by overlooking the understandings of capitalism, modernity, sustainable development and green lifestyles offered by critical environmental geographers, together with their advocacy of anarchist and socialist alternatives, Rawding merely compounds the errors of representation he seeks to correct.

Other contributors to the literature are more supportive of critical ideas and ecopedagogy. The curriculum I developed with local geography teachers in the 1980s introduced key ideas from political ecology, and fostered students’ political literacy, as they investigated *What We Consume* (121). Morgan (122) provided a key text for geography teachers and has subsequently outlined what all educators need to know about the environment (123). [Learning for sustainability](#) (124) has been the focus of Hicks’ writing over many years. Wright (125) makes the case for holism and overcoming nature / society dualism, a concept closely associated in EE with the work of [Sterling](#) (126). Walshe (127) examines Yr8 students’ conceptions of sustainability and how addressing the question of ‘enough for everyone forever?’ can introduce the concept to Yr10. Firth (128) offers some thoughts and questions about the nature of ESD through geography and readers will find other articles on this topic on [my website](#) (129).

Critical school geography would benefit from closer links with the theory and pedagogy of EE as three articles illustrate. Kopnina (130) considers three future scenarios for EE/ESD: imminent disaster (limits to growth), hope and innovation (ecological modernisation), or a return to the ethical (ecocentric) and instrumental basis of EE to protect all biodiversity (the ‘anthropocene park’). Ideland and Malmberg (131) report on a discourse analysis of ESD through the lens of Foucault’s notion of pastoral power, suggesting the ‘eco-certified children’ are constructed ‘through knitting together personal guilt with global

threats, detailed individual activities with rescuing the flock and the planet'. A neoliberal economic discourse it thus dressed in 'almost poetic language'. Dimick (132) considers pedagogical and curricular practices that educators can use to support youth in developing forms of environmental citizenship that actively disrupt neoliberalism's privatisation of responsibility for the environmental commons.

## **Discourses of hunger**

Curriculum unit six can be considered an application of postmodern pedagogy (page 199) in that it is inspired by geographer Lucy Jarosz's chapter (8) on discourses of hunger. She reminds us that hunger is the outcome of economic and social marginalisation and impoverishment; that discourses play a contested role in the management of the problem; and that local and regional food systems premised on food sovereignty and food justice offer a more just and sustainable solutions to hunger than those stemming from the global corporate food system (133). She traces the history of critical ideas that have challenged mainstream hunger discourse (hunger is the result of population / resource imbalance and can be solved by producing more food) and have led to the realisation that zero hunger can result from farmers and consumers exercising democratic control over food systems (food sovereignty) and citizens facing food insecurity campaigning against the neoliberal policies that cause this and insisting on food justice. Food sovereignty is associated with the growth of urban farming while the growth of food banks highlights the case for food justice. Ultimately zero hunger results from the poor and vulnerable gaining greater access to food and / or the means of producing it. This usually involves self help assisted by NGOs together with state intervention and appropriate agricultural and welfare policies.

Jarosz's details the environmental and social costs of the unsustainable global corporate food system; explains how the state is implicated in it through, for example, regulations, subsidies, and educational and nutritional programmes; and notes that discourses of hunger are linked to those relating to eating, identity and the body. The body becomes a battleground in the struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic food systems, a battle seen in debates over healthy eating, obesity, body image, slow food, 'planet friendly' diets, and '[sitopian economics](#)' (134) that would put food and its intrinsic value at the heart of economic life (135). In 2019 these focussed on the [IPCC's report on land](#) (136) and reaction from its [critics](#) (137)

The curriculum unit encourages students to consider the benefits of urban farming in Nairobi, Chicago and Bristol. It is designed as an exercise in values analysis requiring students to assess whether food supplied by the global corporate food system, or that supplied by urban farms, best embodies Earth Charter principle seven (adopt patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights and community well-being) and which best deserves to be termed sustainable.. What are the social, environmental and personal costs of the ways we eat? Should we be getting more of our food in the UK from urban farms? Should our school be an eco-school growing some of the food it serves up as school dinners? What does being a sustainable citizen mean in terms how we eat and how we ensure all citizens have a right to healthy food?

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## Videos for teachers

[David Harvey on the contradictions of capitalism](#) 20 minutes

[John Rockstrom Welcome to the Anthropocene](#) 2 hours

[Noel Castree Theorising Nature – Society – Capitalism](#) 40 minutes

[Maria Kaika explains political ecology](#) 15 minutes

[Joel Kovel What is Ecosocialism?](#) 20 minutes

[Laurie Anderson Coronavirus Connections, the ecology of a pandemic](#) one hour

[Leyla Acaroglu Why we need to think differently about sustainability](#)

20 minutes

[George Monbiot on UK climate emergency](#) 12 minutes

[Gail Seabrook on Extinction Rebellion](#) 50 minutes

[Caroline Steel on the good life and the true value of food](#) 25 minutes

[The Story of Stuff](#) 20 Minutes

[Kevin Higgins \(BC Wales\) How to be a global citizen](#) 20 minutes



## **Curriculum Unit Six**

### **Urban farming in Chicago, Nairobi and Bristol**



#### Roosevelt Square youth farm, Chicago

Students explore the stories (discourses) we are told about food and hunger. Those told by the corporate global food industry are contrasted with those told by small scale urban farmers.

Three case studies of urban farms are used to explore the contribution of such farms to food sovereignty, food justice and sustainable development. Students suggest ways in which community based and cooperative urban farming reflects Earth Charter principle seven (patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being) and compare such farming with the type of farming associated with the corporate global food system. The focus is on SDG 2 Zero Hunger and citizenship education topic 2: issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels. The unit seeks to develop students' sustainability citizenship in the context of the food they and others eat or fail to eat.

## **Unit plan**

### **Key idea**

The stories (discourses) we are told and tell each other about food shape our diets, health, body image, and beliefs, values and actions as citizens. The dominant discourse of hunger, promoted by the corporate global food industry, focuses on food scarcity. It is challenged by critical discourse that focuses on food sovereignty and food justice and is promoted by many urban farmers.

### **Inquiry questions**

What is the contribution of urban farming to reducing hunger and increasing food sovereignty and food justice?

In what ways is urban farming more sustainable than the type of farming associated with the corporate global food system?

Should UK agricultural policy give more support to urban farming and agro-ecology?

### **Key understandings**

The Earth Charter is a set of ethical principles agreed by people around the world for building a just, sustainable and peaceful future. Principle seven recommends the adoption of patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being. This principle should be applied to food systems.

The right to food is a fundamental right contained in many declarations of human rights including UN Declarations on Human Rights and the Rights of the Child. It has not been incorporated into UK domestic law and the restructuring of the welfare system over the last decade has resulted in a marked increase in food insecurity among low income families.

Urban farming is the growing of crops and the raising of animals within and around cities. It provides a wide variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs, meat, eggs, fish and non-food products. Its produce is often sold in weekend farmers' markets.

Urban farming gives low income residents access to fresh produce, greater choice, better prices, healthier diets, and food security. Garden plots within cities can be many times more productive than land outside the city.

Urban farming can contribute to food sovereignty (the democratic control of food systems by farmers and consumers) and food justice (everyone having a right to food that is recognised in law and reflected in government policies).

Much urban farming applies ecological concepts to the design and management of food production. It is an example of agroecology and is more sustainable than the energy and chemical intensive farming encouraged by corporations and many governments. Generally it is labour intensive, recycles nutrients, encourages biodiversity, involves minimal transport of inputs and outputs, improves community wellbeing and can increase climate resilience. It can however carry health and environmental risks: contaminated land and water, misuse of pesticides and raw organic manure, etc.

Urban farmers often have problems in acquiring land as more and more is being used for urban development and commercial farming. The FAO supports its integration into local and national agricultural development strategies, food and nutrition programmes, and urban planning. It helps member countries develop the sector's contribution to food security and provides technical support.

Urban farming in African countries like Kenya offers a form of sustainable development at a time when the numbers of young people are still rising and many are migrating to the cities. In Chicago it offers employment and training for marginalised youth and in Bristol it is innovating with vertical farming.

The global corporate food system supplies most of the food eaten in the UK. It produces food as a commodity using energy and chemical intensive methods. The food is generally processed; transported long distances; and heavily promoted through advertising. This system is not sustainable and its social and environmental costs fall most heavily on farmers and communities elsewhere in the world. It benefits from government policies and contributes to food insecurity among low income families.

Community groups have shown that urban farming is one solution to food insecurity and malnutrition in the UK. As elsewhere digital devices and platforms are aiding its development in the form of co-operatives and

community enterprises. Reform of agricultural policy should shift subsidies to small scale producers and agro-ecology.

**Key concepts** Food supply, commodity chains, food miles, food shortage, hunger, malnutrition, obesity, food sovereignty, food justice, human rights, welfare benefits, austerity, food banks, urban farming, agroecology, sustainability, sustainable development, community development, cooperative enterprises, sustainability citizenship, global citizenship.

**Key values** Earth Charter principles and especially principle 7, patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being

**Key skills** Discussion, debate, questioning, discourse analysis, media analysis, values clarification, political literacy

**Learning objectives** Students will evaluate the potential of urban farming to increase food sovereignty, food justice and sustainable development. They will compare urban farming systems to those that are part of the corporate global food system and supply most of their food. They will consider the implications of their learning for their diets, local food production, and their roles as global sustainability citizens.

**Learning activities** Discussion, evaluation of diets and farming systems, case study videos. Other activities suggested by Unesco guidance.

**Assessment task** Completion of a table comparing three urban farms in relation to Earth Charter principle seven.

## Links to Unesco guidance on ESDGC

<b>SDG 2 Zero hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>	Selected learning objectives
Cognitive learning objectives	The learner knows about the amount and distribution of hunger and malnutrition locally, nationally and globally, currently as well as historically. The learner knows the main drivers and root

	<p>causes for hunger at the individual, local, national and global level.</p> <p>The learner knows principles of sustainable agriculture and understands the need for legal rights to have land and property as necessary conditions to promote it.</p> <p>The learner understands the need for sustainable agriculture and malnutrition and knows about other strategies to combat hunger, malnutrition and poor diets.</p>
Behavioural learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to create a vision for a world without hunger and malnutrition.</p> <p>The learner is able to reflect on their values and deal with diverging values, attitudes and strategies in relation to combating hunger and malnutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>The learner is able to feel empathy, responsibility and solidarity for and with people suffering from hunger and malnutrition.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to take on critically their role as an active global citizen in the challenge of combating hunger.</p> <p>The learner is able to change their production and consumption practices in order to contribute to the fight against hunger and the promotion of sustainable agriculture.</p>
<b>CE topic 2 Issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels.</b>	Key themes (12 – 15 yr olds)
Assess the root causes of major local, national and global issues and the interconnections of local, national and global factors.	<p>Shared local, national and global concerns and their underlying causes.</p> <p>Changing global forces and patterns and their effects on people's daily lives.</p> <p>How history, geography, politics, economics, religion, technology, media or other factors influences current global issues.</p> <p>How decisions made globally or in one part of the world can affect current and future well-being of people and the environment elsewhere.</p>

**Suggested topics** for SDG2 include:

Global food – import, export, cash crops, international taxes, subsidies, trading systems, merits, risks and challenges of utilising genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

Institutions and movements related to hunger and sustainable agriculture like the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Foodwatch, Slow Food, community based agriculture, the international movement via Campesina, etc

Concepts and principles of sustainable agriculture, including climate resilient practices, organic farming, permaculture and agro-forestry.

Examples of **learning approaches and methods** for SDG2 include:

Perform role plays with small-scale producers versus big enterprises in a global market that is influenced by taxes, subsidies, tariffs, quotas, etc

Organize excursions and field trips to places where sustainable agriculture is practiced.

Follow food from farm to fork – growing, harvesting and preparing food eg. in urban or school growing projects. Conduct a Life Cycle Analysis of food.

## **Preparation**

Familiarise yourself with [\*\*SDG2 zero hunger\*\*](#) and note the [\*\*WFP's fact\*\*](#) that one in nine of the world's populations still goes to bed hungry.

Read [Lucy Jarosz's chapter](#) on discourses of hunger. It suggests that urban farming systems can contribute to zero hunger by providing food sovereignty and food justice for poor urban residents including young people.

Download the ppt presentation on the [Earth Charter](#). Edit this so that it communicates the principles of the charter in a form appropriate to the interests and abilities of your students. Slides 4 – 8 are the key slides.

Download the FAO report [Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) (2018) and read the key messages on page xii. Note that undernourishment is increasing; that one out of every nine people in the world is undernourished; that more complex, frequent and intense climate extremes are threatening to erode and reverse gains made in ending hunger and malnutrition; and that considerable additional work is needed to ensure we leave no one behind on the road towards

achieving the SDG goals on food security and nutrition. 20% of the population of Africa is undernourished (p. 4).

The current UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016 – 2025) links with the SDGs (p. 14) and a key message on the links between food insecurity and malnutrition is that food insecurity contributes to overweight and obesity as well as undernutrition. High rates of these forms of malnutrition coexist in many countries. The higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction help explain why food-insecure families may have a higher risk of overweight and obesity (p. 26). Figure 13 (p. 28) shows countries affected by multiple forms of malnutrition while figure 14 (p.30) shows pathways from inadequate food access to multiple forms of malnutrition. Part two deals with the impact of climate on food security and malnutrition.

Preview three short videos that explain urban farming and contain case studies of urban farming in Chicago, Nairobi and Bristol: [Why we should be urban farming](#); [Urban Farming in Nairobi](#); and [Grow Bristol, pioneering UK vertical farm](#). Research these urban centres sufficiently to be able to outline their similarities and differences to your students. [Compare cities](#) allows you to compare Nairobi and Chicago.

Read the editorial and two articles in issue 35 of the [Urban Agriculture magazine](#): Youth Corp, Growing food and farming literacy in Chicago pp. 22-23 and Agricultural Coops pp. 40 – 41..

Download the Human Rights Watch report [Nothing Left in the Cupboards: Austerity, Welfare Cuts and the Right to Food in the UK](#). This documents the lives of families in the UK living on the breadline, the work of voluntary organizations stepping in to help, and identifies areas where the UK government is falling short in ensuring people's right to food. Read the summary and recommendations. You might also refer to the [Childrens Future Food Inquiry](#).

[UK food banks faced record demand](#) during the coroavirus lockdown of 2020 and the government launched an [obesity strategy](#) in July as it became clear that obesity was a contributory factor in coronavirus deaths

Read Ethical Consumer's report on the [Heinz-Kraft company](#), part of the corporate global food system.

Familiarise yourself with the [Incredible Edible network](#) in the UK, [agroecology](#) and its role in future agricultural policy.

[Countryside Classroom](#) links teachers to farmers and ideas for growing food locally. [Eco-schools](#) suggests that growing food links to its school grounds and healthy living topics.

## Suggested procedure

Begin by introducing stories (discourses) we are told about food and hunger. How are we encouraged to think about food and its impact on our health, body image, and wellbeing? Who tells us these stories and what are their interests in telling them? Use advertisements and topical news items to explore the influence of the corporate global food system and its resistance to regulation over such issues as the sugar content of food. What other interests tell us stories? The health lobby, the environmental movement, the fashion industry, the charity sector, social media, etc. Consider making a wall display of advertisements and students' artwork / posters.

Now explore students' perceptions and understandings of hunger? How many people in the UK and the world go hungry? How is hunger, malnutrition and obesity defined and distributed? How do the media and charities seek to influence our understanding of hunger? What is the mainstream story (discourse) on hunger (too little food for a rising population, so increase production and food aid) and how is this challenged by critical discourse (enough food for everyone, hunger the result of unfair distribution, hunger the result of economic and social marginalisation and impoverishment). Introduce the concepts of food sovereignty and food justice.

Next explore people's rights to food. Should food be a basic human right guaranteed by governments? Introduce the [UN Charter on Human Rights](#) (article 25) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (article 27). Why do students think that governments fail to deliver these rights to citizens? Who would support / oppose these rights being adopted in domestic law? Mention the main findings of the Human Rights Watch report and the reactions to this report of politicians across the political spectrum.

Turn to the Earth Charter. Use slides to explain what it is, how it was developed and how its principles can be applied to all aspects of our lives as global citizens, including our diets. What do students understand by a 'planet friendly'

diet', food miles, carbon footprints, ethical food consumption, eating as a sustainability citizen, eating as a global citizen? Why is vegetarianism and veganism increasing amongst young people? Explain Earth Charter principle seven and explore students' understanding of what it would mean if applied to food production and consumption. In this and the next procedural step there is continuing scope to use advertising to aid discussion and draw out ideas.

Introduce the corporate global food system as that which supplies most of the food in our supermarkets. It is dominated by private corporations; produces and distributes food on a global scale; is energy and chemicals intensive; and is accused by environmentalists of being unsustainable: degrading the environment (failing to reproduce ecological capital), exploiting its workers, and contributing to hunger (by for example, enclosing land formerly used by poor farmers) It argues that it provides cheap and healthy food and has enabled food supply to keep pace with a rising population. You might illustrate the case against the corporate global food system using the case study of the Heinz-Kraft company from Ethical Consumer.

Now use the key ideas to introduce urban farming as a more sustainable alternative. Locate Chicago, Nairobi and Bristol and inform students of similarities and differences between these three urban centres. Show the three videos over a series of lessons drawing out their key messages in terms of ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability. What are the similarities and differences with regard to urban farming in the three locations? Draw on the articles from Urban Agriculture magazine and stress the value of urban farming in supplying worthwhile activity, employment, training, safe spaces, and resonance (chapter two) for young people. What role does cooperative / community ownership of land and tools play in ensuring the success of urban farms? In summary ask the students to complete Activity Sheet 6.1 to compare urban farming in the three cities. Discuss what they might write in the different boxes before inviting them to individually complete an enlarged copy of this sheet as an assessment exercise.

In conclusion discuss the implications of what students have learnt for their locality and school. What stories should we telling others about food? Should we be changing our diets? Should we be obtaining more of our food from local growers? Is there a local urban farm we might visit? What do we know about the food served in the school canteen? Should our school become an eco-school growing some of the food that students eat?

## Possible extension

The [RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission](#) was set up in 2017 to think afresh about where our food comes from, how we support farming and rural communities and how we invest in the many benefits the countryside provides. It reported in 2019 suggesting that farmers must be enabled to shift from intensive farming to more organic and wildlife-friendly production, raising livestock on grass and growing more nuts and pulses. It also advocated a national nature service with opportunities for young people to work in the countryside.

The report linked cheap food to a public health crisis, suggesting that the next ten years were critical to restoring the health and well-being of both people and the planet. Decades of government policy aimed at making food cheaper had fuelled rising obesity and degraded the environment. The UK had the third cheapest basket of food in the developed world but also had the highest food poverty in Europe in terms of people being able to afford a healthy diet. Agriculture produced more than 10% of UK's climate-heating gases and was the biggest destroyer of wildlife. The abundance of key species has fallen 67% since 1970 and 13% of species are now close to extinction. The commission recommends agroecology practices such as organic farming and agroforestry, and calls for a planetary health diet. The Government must develop a plan to put the countryside and its communities at the centre of the green economy.

Debate over the future of UK agriculture took on increased significance in the wake of Brexit. You might develop a curriculum unit on the future of farming and the countryside by drawing on the Commission's report together with DEFRA's policy proposals in [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit; the 2020 Agriculture Bill](#); and [Agricology's response](#). The unit might also draw on the IPCC's report on land use and the response from the IPPC's critics (see page 266).

## Activity Sheet 6.1

## Comparing urban farming in three locations

	Nairobi	Chicago	Bristol
<b>Main features.</b> What are the main features of the farm? What food does it produce? Who does it employ?			
<b>Human rights.</b> Does the urban farm makes it more likely that people will realise their right to food? How?			
<b>Earth's regenerative capacities..</b> Does the urban farm restore waste land, improve soils, recycle plant nutrients and increase biodiversity. How?			
<b>Community wellbeing.</b> Does the urban farm improves people's physical and mental health and extend the network of friends who are prepared to help them? How?			



## **Chapter Seven**

### **Space**

*Space arises out of the hard and continuous work of building up and maintaining collectives by bringing together things (bodies, animals and plants, manufactured objects, landscapes) into alignment. All kinds of different spaces can and therefore do exist which may or may not relate to one another.* Nigel Thrift (1) p. 105

*Capital has to periodically break out of the constraints imposed by the world it has constructed. It is in mortal danger of becoming sclerotic. The building of a geographical landscape favourable to capital accumulation in one era becomes, in short, a fetter upon accumulation in the next. Capital has therefore to devalue much of the fixed capital in the existing geographical landscape in order to build a wholly new landscape in a different image. This sparks intense and destructive localised crises.* David Harvey (2) p. 155

*Space and power remain vital aspects of thinking critically about the field of international development.* Daniel Hammett (3) p. 17

*Despite its birth in literacy studies, postcolonialism is an inherently geographical mode of thought. It encourages us to consider the ways we think about distant and different elsewhere, the connections familiar from globalisation, immigration or cultural hybridity, and the western and imperial origins of the spaces and places we take for granted. Thinking postcolonially is to critically probe our own geographical imaginations.* Tariq Jazeel (4) p. 6

*The freight-rail link (Yiwu to London) is just one of many new routes that, along with roads and ports, form China's Belt and Road Initiative. Whether the branding is an elaborate PR exercise or a new version of the Silk Road, what is real is that as China globalises, its investment is being gratefully sought across Europe. From ports to power stations, football clubs to financial companies, from the Norwegian city of Kirkenes to the Greek port of Piraeus and the Portuguese national grid, Chinese investment has become indispensable to the European economy.* [Juliet Ferguson](#) (5) p. 11

Understanding who we are is partly about understanding space: where we are in the world, our changing relations with distant places and people and how these relations are represented to us. This chapter begins by outlining the different ways in which geographers understand space and its construction within the global capitalist economy. Having linked such construction to globalisation, it then examines the winners and losers from globalisation before turning to the persistence of poverty and under-development in the world and the ways in which different theories of development have sought to explain this and prompt its eradication,

The history of development education through school geography reflects these changing theories and it is argued that the subject should now pay more attention to postcolonial theory and pedagogy. This would mean acknowledging its roots in imperialism and reforming the curriculum to accommodate post-colonial voices. Andreotti's advocacy of postcolonial pedagogy; her distinction between soft and critical GCE; and her outline of the root narratives of development education are useful lenses through which to view such initiatives as the Global Learning Programme (GLP). The GA's concluding report on its involvement in the GLP suggest that school geography's treatment of inequalities across global space may still encourage soft rather than critical GCE and may be too influenced by liberal humanism with too little attention to critical, post-critical and indigenous narratives.

The associated curriculum unit is inspired by Frankopan's book *The New Silk Roads* (6) and seeks to encourage postcolonial pedagogy. It focuses on the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on the peoples of Xinjiang and East Africa and the ways in which internal colonialism and neo-colonialism affect their human rights. The background article by [Liu, Dunford and Gao](#) (7) argues that the BRI reflects neoliberalism and calls for a more inclusive form of globalisation, while that by [Gonzalez-Vincente](#) (8) draws from Harvey in suggesting that the BRI represents a new spatial fix for Chinese capital. The chapter contains much that is relevant to [SDG 1 No Poverty](#) (9) while the curriculum unit focuses on [SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure](#) (10) and GCE topic 5, the different communities people belong to and how they are connected,

## **Geographers' understanding of space**

Thrift (1) explains how the concept of space as a container within which the processes that shape the world proceed has gradually given way to one in which space is the co-product of these processes. He suggests four different kinds of space that academic geographers write about and are learning to put together:

1. **Empirical construction of space.**.. These depend on standard measures of time and distance that developed with the rise of modern science and allow us to accurately locate things in a four dimensional container. Such constructions of space underpin geographical positioning and information systems and encourage ‘container thinking’ or thinking (teaching) about the world in terms of bounded spaces such as countries, territories and regions. Bounded nation states remain the key units of geo-politics.
2. **Unblocking space.** Thinking about the world dialectically (page 142) means considering connections between things in space and a borderless world of networks, flows and connections rather than a bounded world of territories. Using the term connectography, Khanna (11) maps the global network revolution that requires us to re-imagine how life is organised on planet earth. While 20C human geography was largely concerned with nations and national identity, in the 21C it is focussed on nodes (megacities), networks and global identity. He is optimistic about accelerating connectivity suggesting it reduces the risk of territorial conflict (self restraint and mutual trust among diverse power centres); unlocks human and economic potential; and extends the benefits of globalization to those billions who have yet to receive them. Cox (12) urges geography teachers to address complex connectivity via ethnoscapes; mediascapes; finanscapes; technoscapes and ideoscapes while the maps in Khanna’s text and the sites and tools for mapping that it lists, are key resources for a school geography that seeks to develop global citizenship.
3. **Image space.** Space is represented to us by images and texts of many kinds: maps, pictures, films, newspaper articles, advertisements, computer games, etc. These compete for our attention and their all pervasive nature means we are too often inattentive or even cynical about

the spaces they portray. School students need to be educated in media literacy to recognise how images represent / misrepresent the world and the interests they serve. See, for example, the media literacy clearinghouse (13).

4. **Place space.** Place suggests a small scale, local, intimate, more human space where we have a greater degree of control over what happens. Places are holders of human histories and culture and are associated with the lifeworld (page 259) and the rhythms and interactions of everyday life. Our sense of place comprises what we encounter, do and feel in a place; is tied up with emotions, memory and behaviour; and can be evoked by media of many kinds. Place is the subject of chapter eight.

Thrift reminds us the imagining and re-imagining space are profoundly political acts. This chapter, and its associated curriculum unit, are much concerned with unblocking space or re-describing the world in terms of networks, flows and connections. China's BRI seeks to link-up Eurasia's five billion people and link them to parts of Africa. Does such connectivity extend the benefits of globalisation as Khanna suggests, or is it the latest phase of imperialism?

### **Global capitalism constructs space**

Those who derive their wealth and power from capitalism (a rich elite and their political allies) strive to produce a landscape favourable to sustained profit making and capital accumulation. This is continuously unstable due to ecological, technological, economic, social and political pressures that mean that capitalism both shapes and is shaped by the world in which it operates. It is not the only factor shaping global space, but is the dominant one in the contemporary world.

The local landscapes of past, present and future capital accumulation surround schools and school geography should examine the economic, technical, social and political processes that created them and shape their present economic fortunes. Such study of local economic geography should introduce the roles of capital (entrepreneurs, firms, corporations, banks, credit); the local and national state and European Union (providing infrastructure, laws and regulations, urban and regional planning, educating the workforce, etc); and civil society (trade unions, political parties and other non-governmental organisations including post-capitalist movements). It will reveal the flows of materials, energy, labour,

investment, credit and disease (Covid-19) developing, sustaining or eroding economic activity in the local landscape, reveal inequalities with other localities, and also introduce the contradictions (pages 8 & 142) that eventually render such landscapes unstable (eg. failure to keep up with innovation and/or productivity elsewhere; failure to pay off debts; lack of adequately skilled workforce, etc) and the ability/inability of local landscapes to reinvent themselves as spaces of capital accumulation.

Capital locates so as to minimize the costs of procuring the means of production (land, labour and capital) and getting goods to market. Agglomeration means that enterprises cluster together in space to derive mutual benefit and this produces economic regions, for example the emergent Oxford-Cambridge corridor. Students should recognise that the state plays a key role in developing such regions; that they shape the attitudes, beliefs, cultural values and politics of their citizens; and that they draw investment and jobs away from other regions in a process of combined and uneven development that operates at all scales from the local to the global, shapes spatial and social inequality, and is reflected in such phenomena as the political geography of Brexit (page 12).

Combined and uneven development whereby some regions get richer while others get poorer involves a process of circular and cumulative causation (14). Advanced or core economic regions draw investment and new activity due to such factors as their ease of acquiring the means of production; their strong physical and social infrastructure; their leading edge technologies; their vibrant markets, their connectivity, and their low levels of corporation tax. Other regions are caught in a downward spiral of depression and decay. Eventually core regions are hit by limits or contradictions: they are unable to sell all they can produce at a competitive price (falling productivity, rising cost of wages due to trade union power, competition from emerging core regions, etc) and/or they are unable to reproduce the conditions of production (ecological resources and services, urban and rural space free from pollution and congestion, human health and welfare)..

When core regions are hit by contradictions, capital seeks new opportunities elsewhere, a process that is continually reinforced by its need to absorb or accommodate continually expanding pools of capital and labour. Geographical expansion and spatial reorganisation are recurring features of the global economy, involve colonialism, imperialism, decolonisation, neo-colonialism, racism, globalisation, and urbanisation, and are often debt financed. They are

means by which capital survives: through a series of spatial fixes or restructurings that absorb the capital accumulated in productive and constructive ways. Another is by associated devaluations and destructions of capital that serve as corrective lessons to those who fail to keep up and who fail to pay off their debts. Recurring spatial fixes mean that capital is always doing well somewhere and that it never has to address its systemic failings since it simply leaves them behind and moves on. Such development of capitalism over time and space inevitably involves winners and losers, an inevitable class dimension that the state may seek to ameliorate with varying degrees of success.

## Globalisation

The expansion of capitalism into new territories has a long history that is traced by Liu and his co-authors (7) amongst others. Globalisation refers to a distinct shift in the spatial and temporal dimensions of social life that accompanies efforts to accelerate the circulation of capital (the speed at which goods and services can be produced and profits realised) by [compressing space and time](#) (15). Capital's quest for profit and spatial fixes are the driving forces behind globalisation; technological progress that reduces the cost of distance is the catalyst; and the state acts as a gatekeeper or facilitator either erecting or dismantling barriers to flows of trade, finance, and labour. Globalisation renders unblocking or unbounded space more significant in citizens' lives and challenges long established social and political distinctions: local/global, proximity/distance; domestic/foreign, national/international. The impact of acceleration on mental health and happiness was the subject of chapter three.

Chapter one (key idea 10, page 10) introduced neoliberal globalisation. Harvey regards it as a political project of corporate capitalism designed to restore levels of profitability; reduce the power of organised labour and the state; and alter ways of thinking. As we saw it involves privatisation, marketisation, financialisation and deregulation, and contrary to the message by which it was sold, it has primarily benefitted poor rather than rich countries. It has off shored some UK jobs while automating others (chapter five) and has lifted millions out of poverty, particularly in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and India, it has generally served to increase social and spatial inequalities, spawned recurrent financial crises, made politics more corrupt, put further pressure on ecological resources and services and enabled the [coronavirus pandemic](#) (16) (chapter six). The [You Gov – Cambridge Globalisation Project](#) (17) has a series of publications and videos on public attitudes to globalisation and its role in stimulating populism.

Butt(18) explores the concepts associated with globalisation and acknowledges that the ideas commonly advanced to explain it may have roots in disciplines other than geography. Like Harvey's ideas outlined above; [Wallerstein's world system theory](#) (19) and Castells' formulation of [global network society](#) (20)

<b>Industrial society</b>	<b>Network society</b>
Industrial capitalism based on the production of consumer goods and services. Fordism, mass production and consumption, modernity.	Post-industrial capitalism based on production and application of information and knowledge. Post-Fordism, flexible production and consumption, post-modernity.
A world of relatively autonomous nation states.	A connected world of multiple overlapping networks. Network states such as the EU.
Powered by energy	Powered by information.
A priori time. Events happen sequentially.	Timeless time. Time is compressed. Events happen ephemerally or simultaneously.
The meaningful world of actual geographically specific locales – the space of places.	The ethereal and placeless world of electronic networks – the <a href="#">space of flows</a> . (21)
Hierarchies are the dominant way of organising society and institutions.	Networks become the dominant way of organising society and institutions
Vertical bureaucracies	Horizontal connections
Capability orientated enterprises	Project orientated enterprises
Production based classes and class politics.	Skilled flexible core labour that manages information and a growing precariat. Rise of identity politics and populism.

**Figure 7.1 The transition from industrial to network society as envisaged by Castells**

(Figure 7.1) focus on processes and networks and give much attention to space. The integration of cultures into the world system or a single network inevitably leads to greater interdependence of peoples with globalisation occurring both from above (imposed by transnational corporations (TNCs), international banks, powerful states) and below (as the workers' and citizens' movements of global civil society resist it or seek to shape it to their demands). While the power and fortunes of individuals, groups, nations and regions are linked to their locations

within global divisions of labour and global networks, [glocalism](#) (22) means that the local and global constantly mediate one another as they shape identities and lifestyles.

## Global social movements

[Wallerstein](#) (23) traces the history of anti-systemic movements that struggle against existing power structures and seek a more egalitarian and sustainable world order on behalf of workers (social movements); oppressed peoples (nationalist movements) and concerned citizens (new social movements such as the women's and environmental movements). The contemporary anti-capitalist (24) or global justice movement draws on all three and traces its origins to the [Zapatista revolution in Mexico in 1995](#) (25), the [Seattle protests of 1999](#) (26), and the first meeting of the [World Social Forum](#) (27) in 2001. [Savio](#) reviews the record of the WSF, established as a counter to the World Economic Forum (Davos), and highlights the issues resulting from its [charter or principles](#) (28) that opposes neoliberalism but prevents members from taking collective political action. The WSF has never had a democratically elected leadership; has preferred horizontal to vertical organisation, and became merely a venue for discussion rather than a space for organising.

Savio explains that the vacuum left by the WSF has been filled by the populist right and 'socially responsible' corporations and institutions of global governance. The populist right now opposes globalisation and multilateralism on behalf of the 'left behind'. Green capitalist corporations have captured the language of sustainability and global citizenship as have institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Global protests around climate change and [Black Lives Matter](#) suggest movements seeking radical global democratisation still have potential, but Silvio suggests that they will need to find an holistic framework (sustainable development) co-ordinate their different demands; balance horizontal and vertical organisation; and counter widespread political apathy. Castells (29) puts his faith in the internet and social media to create and sustain contemporary social movements, but [Fuchs](#) (30) argues they are merely enablers and that radical movements should be based on the kind of analysis that Harvey provides (also see [Charfield](#) (31))

## Poverty and international inequality

Despite globalisation having lifted millions out of poverty, 10% of the world's population still lives in extreme poverty and is struggling to meet its basic needs

(32), Lemanski (33) reminds us that such goals as SDG 1 (no poverty) can only be enacted if there is agreement on who is poor, what defines their poverty, and, crucially, how these people can exit poverty. While the SDGs embrace a largely economic interpretation of poverty, voices within the poverty lobby claim that it is also a physical, social, political and psychological condition. Understanding, measuring and analysing poverty is central to the theory and practice of development geography but the causal relationship between poverty and development is tightly connected to the definitions employed.

No single correct definition of poverty exists; different measures of poverty highlight different needs; poverty is experienced differently by different people in different places; and hence debates surrounding poverty are highly politicised as can be seen in the context of austerity in the UK (chapter three). Poverty is generally conceptualised as a deficiency or shortage of some sort, typically in comparison to others living in the same society or to some universal standard. Lemanski outlines five approaches to poverty that have guided international institutions over the past eighty years noting that while economic assessments continue to have significant influence, they are now recognised as incomplete and inadequate. A basic needs approach emerged in the 1970s and by the 1990s the World Bank's [World Development Report](#) (34) was combining this with more social and political poverty indicators after listening to the voices of the poor. In advocating a theory of development as freedom, [Amartya Sen](#) (35) argued that poverty should be measured against the concrete capabilities of citizens to live full and creative lives (geo-capabilities, chapter four). Poverty is then defined as the deprivation of those capabilities (positive freedoms, see page 52) that an individual needs to function: deprivations that are often the result of institutional inadequacies (e.g. racial or gender discrimination, lack of social education). Sen's approach was adopted by the UNDP and translated into the [Multidimensional Poverty Index](#) (36) and influenced the [Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative](#). (37) Lemanski highlights the growth of urban poverty where the density of population and complexity of life mean that tackling poverty requires a multidimensional approach.

In focussing on international inequalities, Barford (38) looks beyond explanations that blame the poor for their poverty and congratulate the rich for their wealth. Using a case study of Kenya, she demonstrates how a focus on the distribution and movement of resources between socio-economic groups (in the space of flows) can enable a holistic understanding of the forces that generate

inequality. Echoing Sayer's text *Why We Can't Afford the Rich* (39) she questions the dominant logic of neoliberal capitalism that involves 'commanding the labour and resources of others at knock down prices' and 'pushing others down in order to keep your country up' (p. 104). [Transparency International](#) (40), the [Jubilee debt campaign](#) (41) and [War on Want](#) (42) are three of many NGOs that link international inequality and global justice to global political economy and expose the limits of development assistance by NGOs and rich world governments. History, trade, debt, corruption, poor governance and the greed of the rich are all factors in the underdevelopment of Africa (43) and should be viewed in the overall context of the imposition of the [Washington consensus](#) (44) (involving production for export, free trade, privatisation of state enterprises, cuts to public services (23)) and related [Structural Adjustment Programmes](#) (45) (see Curriculum Unit One). Dullo and Banerjee (46), the 2019 joint winners of the Nobel prize for economics, urge an approach to poverty that has human dignity as its focus and co-founded the [Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab](#)(47) to ensure that efforts to reduce poverty are informed by scientific evidence.

## **International Development**

Hammett (3) outlines the ways in which power and space frame the field of international development determining who decides what development is and where development happens, who is represented as needing to undergo development and who is positioned as having responsibility and agency for securing development. Power matters in terms of understandings and representations of development (who is depicted, in what ways and with what level of agency); space matters because of where key development organisations are based; where development narratives are produced and consumed; and where development is assumed to be needed and claimed to be delivered. Schools are connected to this matrix of power and space via the theory and practice of development education (48) and the work of agencies such as Unesco, Oxfam, and UK Department for International Development (DfID).

Willis (49) introduces the three main ways in which geographers have approached the concept of development: modernisation, Marxist analysis and post-structuralism (Figure 7.2). Previous chapters have provided an introduction to these and as she suggests they differ in terms of their definitions of

development, their explanatory power and the questions they pose. Definitions, explanations, and policies relating to development are contested and while the concept is generally associated with the global South (less economically developed countries) it is equally relevant to the global North. It can be viewed as a goal or a process: raising the level of such [indicators](#) (50) as GDP/capita and the [Human Development Index](#) (51) or facilitating such processes as urbanisation, industrialisation, or the realisation of human capabilities.

	Broad approach within geography		
	Modernisation	Marxist/ structuralist	Post-structuralist
Time period	1950s to 1970s	1960s to 1980s	1990s onwards
Definition of development	Based on the global North experience  Economic growth and improved standards of living	Based on the global North experience  Economic growth and improved standards of living	Is context specific  Recognises the multiple definitions that are available
Explanations for development inequalities	Countries and regions are at different stages on a development path	The inequalities inherent within the operation of capitalism	The role of capitalism is not ignored, but other aspects (e.g. gender, ethnicity) are also recognised
Scale	National level	National level, plus position of national economies within the global economic system	Focus on local scale, plus analysis of the operation of development discourses and practices within global networks

**Figure 7.2 Three approaches to development within geography (49) p. 63**

Geographical perspectives on development have followed wider trends in the social sciences and have both reflected and shaped development policy. In the 1950s and 1960s development was primarily seen as modernisation (page 49) with geographers using spatial analysis to map patterns of development and the diffusion of modernisation across space. Related models of development, such as that of [Rostow](#) (52) were widely taught, but by the late 1960s such ideas were challenged by Marxists. They argued that the incorporation of societies into the global economy was resulting in their dependency rather than their development and was serving to cement international inequalities. [Marxist analysis](#) (53) of

the construction of spatial and social inequality at all scales and the active underdevelopment of the global South is outlined above.

Since the 1990s these ideas have been supplemented and challenged by post-structuralist approaches that seek to understand how and why particular definitions (discourses) of development become prominent and what this means for how development is implemented by institutions. At the same time, post-structuralism seeks to give voice to the diversity of people and places, how they are framed as ‘in need of development’ by governments and development agencies, and the alternative grassroots definitions of development they offer. Post-colonial theory and pedagogy is an important application of this approach. A [resource produced by the RGS](#) (54) for the Global Learning Programme (see below) summaries six theories of development and associates each with a decade and key theorist: modernisation (1960s Rostow); dependency (1970s Frank); neoliberalism (1980s, Washington consensus); sustainable development (1980s Brundtland); human development (1990, Sen); post-development (2000s, Escobar).

### **Colonialism and post colonialism**

Colonialism is a process whereby territory and resources are occupied and systems of political economy imposed on foreign peoples generally under the pretence of development. Much of the material geographical space in the world has colonial origins as does our subjective geographical knowledge of this space. While much of the world is now post-colonial, colonialism exerts a ‘continuing and troubling presence’ with ongoing effects on social, spatial and political structures that result in uneven geographical interdependences (55) (56). It is associated with a ‘global regime of racial capitalism that sorts the world into those who deserve to move freely and those who may die trying’ (57).

[Post-colonialism](#) (58) is a body of critical theory that seeks to deconstruct our received geographical knowledge in order to reveal inequalities, power and privilege resulting from colonialism, decolonialism, and neo-colonialism. It draws on post-structuralist and post-modern ideas to give voice to those subjugated by these processes who may offer alternative perspectives on development. It also undermines the universal claims of Western modernity and retrieves and rewrites histories and geographies, seeking to reveal how people

and places are represented in ways that reflect imperial ideology, colonial domination, white supremacy, and continuing Western hegemony.

*Postcolonial theory subtly implies a set of ethical practices that render it impossible to turn our back to difficult issues, such as our complicity in systemic harm, the persistence of relations of domination, complexities and paradoxes of crossing borders, the gap between what we say and what we do, or our own sanctioned ignorances.* Andreotti, (59) p. 20

The histories of school geography and colonialism are intimately linked as we saw in chapter four, and post-colonialism prompts a critical pedagogy that facilitates unlearning and the reimagining of the world. Central to this is a recognition that colonial dispossession by European powers was enabled by orientalising the non-West. The East, including the Silk Route, was portrayed as passive, exotic, under-developed, barbaric, alluring, and ripe for western intervention. Alongside orientalism, the West considered its modern culture and forms of development superior. This cultural arrogance of the West is currently challenged by the rise of Asia at the same time as Western notions of development are challenged by [post-development](#) perspectives (60).

Something of the scope of postcolonial theory and pedagogy can be realised by reviewing the concepts listed by [Mambrol](#) (61). Such concepts as subaltern, diaspora, hybridity, history, race, gender, nation and neo-colonialism should all feature in development geography for older secondary students, and it is to such learning that we now turn. More recently the attention of critical educators has turned to [decolonial theory and pedagogical approaches to decolonialisation](#) (62)

## **School geography and development education**

In 2011, Lambert and Morgan (63) drew attention to the unexamined discourse underpinning the teaching of development geography in schools. They argued that there was a danger that students were left with an ahistorical and simplistic understanding of the development process and denied access to a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives. This neglect was concerning at a time when conservative voices were warning that school geography risked being corrupted by a left liberalism that was sceptical of economic growth and could be seen to be promoting such ‘good causes’ as global citizenship and sustainability rather than teaching core geographical knowledge (64). Having traced the history of development education through school geography, that parallels the changing

approaches shown in Figure 7.2, they urged teachers to recognise that teaching about development is ideological and make a greater theoretical effort to reconfigure the teaching of this topic,

Such effort is much helped by the [writing of Andreotti](#) (65) who draws on postcolonial theory to distinguish between soft and critical GCE. She argues that educational approaches that promote concern for others, especially distant others, are either based on a belief in our common humanity and the need for charity (soft approach) or on a belief in social justice and the need for political change (critical approach). The latter requires GCE to develop critical literacy via a postcolonial pedagogy that critically examines the origins and implications of assumptions relating to dominant (hegemonic) forms of development along with those relating to alternatives. This reflects the characteristics of critical pedagogy outlined in chapter five and pays particular attention to voices marginalised by colonialism and neo-colonialism. [Andreotti's publications](#) (66) *Critical Literacy in Global Citizenship Education* (2006) and *Learning to Read the World Through Others' Eyes* (2008) provide practical guidance for teachers.

Critical GGE incorporating postcolonial pedagogy involves recognising three modern collective desires that are key to the inequalities in North-South relations and constantly reproduced in education:

1. *The desire for seamless progress in linear time epitomised in science, technology and middle class metropolitan lifestyles*
2. *The desire for this progress to be achieved through innocent human protagonism (human agency focussing on solutions and forgetting how it is part of the problem), and*
3. *The desire for totalizing forms of knowledge production grounding the process (i.e. knowing the world in order to control it)* Andreotti,(59) p. 20

In North-South encounters, these desires translate into patterns of engagement, flows and representations that are:

- *Hegemonic (justifying superiority and supporting domination)*
- *Ethnocentric (projecting one view, one 'forward' or universal)*
- *Ahistorical (forgetting historical legacies and complicitness)*
- *Depoliticised (disregarding power inequalities and ideological roots of analyses and proposals)*
- *Salvationist (framing help as the burden of the fittest)*

- *Un-complicated (offering easy solutions that do not require systemic change)*
- *Paternalistic (seeking affirmation of superiority through the provision of help)* Andreotti (59) pp. 20 - 21

The first letters of these patterns form the acronym ‘HEADS UP’ and it is the responsibility of geography teachers to confront them as part of the effort to acknowledge ideology that Lambert and Morgan called for. Teachers and students need to recognise the impact of these patterns of engagement in the past and present and how they are individually implicated or complicit in the problems they cause. They need to acknowledge the value of indigenous and post-colonial voices in critiquing modernity, shaping a new Left modernity, and delivering a global green new deal, They should also remain attentive to new social analyses or perspectives that warrant inclusion in critical school geography, Such imperatives were given added significance in 2020 by Black Lives Matter protests, associated calls for a [black curriculum](#) (67) that provides a more realistic coverage of black history, and the related GA [statement and policy](#) (68) on equal opportunities and inclusion (69).

Mapping the discourses, or root narratives, that underpin development education and GCE is an exercise in critical literacy designed to help practitioners clarify their own positions by making evident the assumptions and contradictions within and between different worldviews. Figure 7.3 is a summary of Andreotti’s map and as she points out, all such mapping is subjective (socially, culturally and historically situated), as is my summary, and the map should not be taken as the territory but merely a starting point for a journey of investigation or discussion. Her map establishes distinctions between four root narratives of society, education, development and diversity. The first three (technical instrumentalist, liberal humanist, and critical and postcritical) privilege anthropocentrism (putting ‘mankind’ at the centre); teleology (aiming for a predefined outcome in terms of progress); dialectics (expecting a linear progression towards a synthesis); universal reason (the ideas of one rationality); and the Cartesian subject (who believes that he can know himself and everything else objectively). Andreotti suggests that these should not be seen as all good or all bad but as historically situated and potentially restrictive if universalised as a single story through social, political or educational projects, as they prevent the imagination of other possibilities.

	<b>Technical instrumentalist</b>	<b>Liberal humanism</b>	<b>Critical &amp; postcritical</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Social engineering</b>	Economic rationalisation decided by experts	Human progress decided by national representatives	Fair distribution done by ordinary people rather than experts or representatives	For example the global education principles of the Apu Chupaqpata Education Centre in Peru.
<b>Education</b>	A way of maximising the performance of individuals in global markets – to improve their employability and entrepreneurial capacity.	Enculturation into national and international culture perceived as an encounter between nationally defined groups of individuals, primarily concerned with humanitarian interests	The transformation of society and the creation of a new social order more inclusive of or led by those who have been silenced or exploited by the current dominant political economy.	The priority for life and education is balance – to learn from Pachamama (planet earth) our mother how to balance forces and flows and know that harm done to the planet is harm done to oneself.
<b>Economic growth / progress</b>	Associated with the acquisition and accumulation of universal knowledge	Decided by national representatives in supranational governance institutions like the UN though consensus on universal aims to be delivered by nation states.	Critical humanism focuses critique on economic growth imperatives in nation state agendas and the associated erosion of democracy. Post-critical narratives question modern notions of progress and development – see them as a form of imperialism that eliminates alternatives	Non-anthropocentric, non-teleological, non-dialectical, non-universal and non-Cartesian. The world is changed through love, patience, enthusiasm, respect, courage, humility and living in balance. The world cannot be changed without sacred spiritual connection.
<b>Poverty</b>	An individual's or country's deficit of knowledge, competencies and skills to participate in global economy	A deficit resulting from lack of progress. Eradicated by partnerships between donors and receivers that seek universal access to education, healthcare, democracy and economic development.	Initiatives based on economic and humanist ideals are complicit in the creation and maintenance of poverty and marginalisation. They favour an elite.	The traditional teachings of generosity, of gratitude, and of living in balance that are being lost are very important for our children. It is necessary to recover them.
<b>Rationale for education</b>	Good for business; for lifelong learning and for adaptation to economic change.	To disseminate the international consensus on universal human progress e.g. SDGs	Critical social analyses of unequal power relations, divisions of labour and wealth (critical narratives), and the politics of representation and knowledge production (post-critical narratives)	Education for balance: to balance material consumption, to learn to focus on sacred spiritual relationships, to work together in harmony with our different gifts. To learn, learn and learn again (in many lives) to become better beings.
<b>Global / development education</b>	Often associated with social responsibility to export of expertise from developed to less developed nations	Knowledge of different cultures/nationalities and perspectives enables citizens to work with diverse populations towards common/consensual goals.	The creation of a critical mass of people who can see and imagine beyond the limitations and oppressions of the current system in order to bring a different system into being..	Education to learn to balance the material and non-material dimensions of life and the known and the unknown. Education about the connections between all things.
<b>Engagement with other cultures</b>	In our national interest e.g. national labour markets; expansion of consumer markets, control of immigration.	Knowledge of difference enables citizens to work with diverse populations on common goals.	Critical humanism seeks to give voice to the excluded and marginalised. Post critical ideas focus on relationally complex subjectivities, difficulties of representation, intersectional violence, and <u>agonism</u> in politics.	The answers are in each one of us, but it is difficult to listen when we are not in balance, we hear too many different voices, especially in the cities.

**Figure 7.3 Four root narratives or discourses underpinning development and global citizenship education (59)**

## The Global Learning Programme (GLP)

The above outline of the construction of space and spatial inequalities, together with Andreotti's map (summarised as Figure 7.3), provide powerful lenses through which to view the GA's participation in the GLP. Funded by the Department for International Development, it ran from 2013 to 2018, involved linked programmes in the four UK nations, and focussed on students in key stages 2 and 3 (8 to 14 year olds). Aiming to improve teaching in this area so that students had a thorough knowledge and understanding of global poverty and the ways it can be reduced, the programme offered guidance on definitions of global learning; three key aspects of achievement in geography; five dimensions of progress (Figure 7.4); approaches and methodology; organisation; developing understanding key concepts; global learning in practice; and impact on achievement. The GLP was supported by a series of key concepts articles in *Geography* including those of Butt, Burford, Lemanski and Willis cited above.

The three aspects of achievement in geography	The five dimensions of progress
Building contextual world knowledge of locations, places and geographical features	Demonstrating greater fluency with world knowledge by drawing on increasing breadth and depth of content and contexts
Deepening understanding of the conditions, processes and interactions that explain geographical features, distribution patterns and changes over time and space	Extending from the familiar and concrete to the unfamiliar and abstract  Making greater sense of the world by organising and connecting information and ideas about people, places, processes and environments
Developing competences in geographical enquiry and applying the skills of observing, collecting, analysing, evaluating and communicating geographical information	Working with more complex information about the world, including the relevance of people's attitudes, values and beliefs.  Increasing the range and accuracy of pupils' investigative skills, and advancing their ability to select and apply these to geographical enquiry

**Figure 7.4 Achievement and progress in global learning as outlined by the GLP (70) p. 4**

The GA's national research report on the GLP(70) acknowledges that GCE is 'the most influential approach' to global learning and that it emphasises 'reflective and critical learning about the world and global relationships linked with pupils' own lives, together with a commitment to social justice' (p. 5). The key concepts articles encourage such learning but the review's sections on understanding key concepts, enquiry and critical thinking suggest that liberal humanism may still be the dominant guiding narrative. There is insufficient evidence of ideas from political economy and post-colonialism; a focus on values and attitudes rather than politics and power; and the guidance on enquiry and critical thinking again fails to draw sufficiently on critical pedagogy and critical theory (chapter five). The report is perhaps too ready to suggest that integrated approaches necessarily neglect subject knowledge while emphasising skills, values and personal development, and its recommendations might acknowledge the value of Unesco's guidance on ESDGC. DFID continues to [supply resources on global issues](#) (71). During the time of GLP, it claimed that [globalisation could be made to work for all](#) (72) and was supporting [low cost private schooling](#) in the South (73). In 2020 the government announced it would be [merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) (74).

### **The end of globalisation and the impact of Covid-19**

Before the onset of Covid-19 [Elliott](#) (75) argued that globalisation as we had known it is coming to an end. Like previous waves, the current wave of globalisation that peaked in the early 1990s, had over-reached itself. Trends in politics, technology and the climate pointed to the need for a new world order focused more on local solutions, stronger nation states and a reformed international system. There was a rise in protectionism (US/China trade war); the G7 (US, Canada, Japan and the four biggest economies of Europe) no longer called all the shots at economic summits; the US was unwilling to soak up the world's excess production; Europe's drive for integration had stalled; and political parties of the centre had been hollowed out by populism either because they failed to spot the weaknesses inherent in globalisation or were too timid to act if they did. We will return to these changes when considering international relations and global governance in chapter nine.

Covid-19 revealed both the difficulties of social distancing in a world of global travel and tightly packed urban centres, and levels of transmission that were related to the adequacy of health systems, and the quality of national governance.. Maps and data from the [coronavirus resource center](#) (76) reveal

associated global inequalities and point to the impacts of the pandemic and the [associated recession](#) (77) being most severe in the [global South](#) (78). Here lockdowns, the stockpiling of food, and social distancing are not realistic options for the majority; public health systems are poorly developed; and livelihoods are often already fragile (curriculum unit one). While it has put a further break on globalisation, the pandemic has shown that [there is no future in narrow nationalism](#) (79); that multilateral action is needed to ensure that all countries have access to vaccines, treatments and tests; and that the huge sums spent on stimulating unsustainable growth and defence would be better spent on sustainable development and public services to protect economies and citizens from future outbreaks. Covid-19 promises a re-ordering of international relations; rises in most nations' debts; a possible further rise of [big tech](#) (80); increased risk of [global conflict](#) (81); and opportunities for radical solutions such as universal basic income in both the global North and [South](#) (82).

## The Curriculum Unit

[Frankopan](#) (6) reminds us that for most of human history Asia has been at the centre of the world. He traces Europe's rise via colonialism, explaining how the gold, silver, jewels and slaves of the Americas, obtained by force, provided the foundations for later industrial development. By examining the history and geopolitics of oil in the Middle East he then suggests that Western interventionism has now reached its limits and that isolationism and self interest are returning to the West at a time when China is looking outwards. He warns that Europe will decline as the world's economic centre of gravity shifts to the new silk roads. It will attract growing numbers of Asian tourists and students (a prediction challenged by Covid-19), but will find it hard to adapt to relative decline (especially if China's ability to contain the pandemic proves superior to that of Europe).

The curriculum unit focuses on China's BRI in order to introduce students to postcolonialism and the changing world order. By examining its impacts in Xinjiang (internal colonisation) and East Africa (neo-colonialism) it questions whether it is delivering sustainable development. The background articles were introduced at the start of the chapter and [Harvey's video](#) (83) provides background on the development of China over the past forty years and its current significance in the global economy. [Lui and his co-authors](#) (7) suggest that the BRI is a platform for exploring new international governance mechanisms that could lead to more inclusive forms of globalisation and more

sustainable forms of development. They set out five criteria for such globalisation and examine these in the context of the BRI. [Gonzalez-Vicente](#) (8) examines the partnerships between state and business actors that lie behind the BRI and allow them to export overcapacity and address infrastructural demands in underdeveloped markets. They require accumulation and sovereignty regimes that mirror those in China; produce uneven and combined development; and project an elitist view of development as modernisation that excludes more participatory and labour-centric approaches. He concludes that like public-private partnerships elsewhere in the world, those behind the BRI are designed to mobilize public resources and state power for the expansion of capitalist social relations.

The unit addresses objectives relating to [SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure](#) (10) and GCE topic 5 the different communities people belong to and how they are connected, It involves students considering the economic, political and cultural factors shaping the BRI; its impact on the mainly Muslim peoples of Xinjiang and the tribal peoples of Tanzania; the reasons behind the cancellation of the Bagamoyo port development; and whether or not it delivers sustainable development.

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## Videos for teachers

[Doreen Massey on Space](#) 18 minutes

[RSA Animate on Crises of Capitalism](#) 12 minutes

[World Systems Theory, Dependency Theory and Global Inequality](#) 15 minutes

[Immanuel Wallerstein: The Global Systemic Crisis and the Struggle for a Post-Capitalist World](#) 25 minutes

[Castells and the Network Society](#) 8 minutes

[Network Society – a short film](#) 25 minutes

[Postcolonialism brief overview](#) 5 minutes

[Peter Frankopan The Silk Roads](#) 45 minutes

[Peter Frankopan and Akala How China's rise will change the world](#) 1 hour 25 minutes

[David Harvey The Significance of China in the Global Economy](#) 55 minutes



# Curriculum unit seven

## China's Belt and Road Initiative: its impacts on Xinjiang and East Africa

Figure 2. Regions covered by BRI



Source: Lowy Institute.

Deloitte Insights | [deloitte.com/insights](http://deloitte.com/insights)

### Source of graphic

Students study the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on the peoples of Xinjiang and East Africa. They learn how imperialism, colonialism and post-colonialism create connections between peoples; examine China's role in a changing world order; and use social media to listen to the voices of post-colonial peoples. They debate whether the BRI promotes sustainable development and whether it represents neo-colonialism.

The focus is on SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and GCE topic 5 the different communities people belong to and how they are connected.

## **Curriculum plan**

### **Key ideas**

China's Belt and Road Initiative seeks to expand China's soft and hard power in the world. It provides new opportunities for Chinese capital; represents a new Chinese imperialism; and is re-ordering global politics.

There is much debate on whether the BRI encourages sustainable development. While it brings benefits to host territories it is much criticised for repressing human rights; fostering debt dependency; and building unsustainable infrastructure. Some welcome the modernisation it brings. Others regard it as a form of neo-colonialism.

### **Inquiry questions**

What are the economic, political and cultural processes shaping China's BRI?

Is China's repression of the majority Muslim people in Xinjiang linked to the Belt and Road Initiative and does it represent a form of internal colonialism?

Is China's Belt and Road Initiative in Africa a form of neo-colonialism?

Is the infrastructure that China is building in Africa encouraging sustainable development?

What is the impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on the tribal peoples of Tanzania?

### **Key understandings**

China's authoritarian (one party) state began to embrace markets and capitalism in the late 1970s. It achieved rapid economic growth by becoming a low cost manufacturing centre for the rest of the world; improving infrastructure; educating human capital; exploiting both labour and the environment; and limiting human rights. It adopted a view of development as modernisation via industrialisation, urbanisation and connectivity, believing that the benefits would 'trickle down' to benefit the majority of the population. Between 1980 and 2015 around 800 million citizens were lifted out of poverty.

President Xi Jinping continues to recast China's economy, political system and foreign policy. A technological revolution, [the Made in China 2025 initiative](#), seeks to drive the West out of the Chinese market and allow China to become a

big data dictatorship with a new kind of surveillance state that is being tested in the majority Muslim Xinjiang province. A new foreign policy, centred on the BRI is building pipelines, ports, roads, railways and digital networks abroad that will make China the primary partner for 65 countries and represent a new phase of Chinese imperialism. China believes that the world is going its way, that the US is in long-term decline, and that they should decouple as fast as they can to stop the US putting pressure on them.

China's suppression of the majority Muslim people in Xinjiang of whom the Uyghurs are the largest group, represents a form of internal colonialism that is linked to securing infrastructure corridors constructed under the BRI. While China claims that internment camps are for training and necessary to combat terrorism, human rights groups claim they are for brain washing and designed to destroy the people's culture. Social media (Twitter and Facebook) allow the Uyghur people to give voice to their oppression and campaign for their human rights.

China has long sought influence in Africa. Under the umbrella of the BRI it is now supplying African governments with cheap loans and technical and material assistance to build infrastructure projects. These enable China to exploit Africa's natural resources and cheap labour at a time when resource and labour costs in China are rising. Investment in China by public-private partnerships represents a new spatial fix designed to absorb surplus Chinese capital; sustain the profitability of Chinese capitalism; and buy China influence on the continent. As such China's policy towards Africa can be seen as a form of neo-colonialism and has been criticised for [failing to respect human rights](#).

The BRI employs special economic zones (SEZs) where local state sovereignty is bypassed and legal compromises are reached to satisfy the demands of Chinese investors. Chinese workers on BRI projects may be subject to Chinese, rather than local, labour law. In these ways conditions for profit making outside China are made to resemble those prevailing inside China. In 2019 the Tanzanian government decided not to go ahead with the creation of a new Chinese funded port and SEZ at Bagamoyo.

Sustainable infrastructure development in East Africa can improve people's well-being and quality of life by giving them better access to communications, clean energy and water, sanitation and modern forms of transport. It should be built after appropriate environmental impact assessment in ways that conserve

cultural and biological diversity. Unsustainable infrastructure may degrade ecosystems; lead to a loss of biological and cultural diversity; widen inequalities and operate at an economic loss. The relocation of indigenous people's settlements and the disturbance of their tribal lands should be avoided.

Infrastructure projects linked to BRI can be exploited by corrupt elites who lack development vision and are motivated by personal interests. They may suffer from limited transparency, low accountability, and a lack of participation by civil society. Projects in Africa may result in debt and dependency and so lead to unsustainable development or prove inclusive and resilient and so promote sustainable industrial and social development

### **Key concepts**

Colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism, political economy, public-private partnerships, economic restructuring, debt, dependency, infrastructure, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, environmental impact assessment, soft and hard power, indigenous (tribal) peoples and their cultures, human rights, universal rights,

### **Key values**

Importance of common values (respect, tolerance and understanding, solidarity, empathy, caring, equality, inclusion, human dignity). Learning to co-exist peacefully. Commitment to promoting and protecting difference and diversity (social and environmental). Empathy, solidarity, social justice, sustainability, democracy, human rights.

### **Key skills**

Discussion, media analysis; critical literacy; empathy; values clarification, development and analysis.

### **Learning outcomes**

Students will have greater understanding of China's Belt and Road Initiative and its impact on the peoples of Xinjiang and Tanzania. They will be more aware of the post-colonial voices of these people, their human rights, and the extent to which the BRI is violating those rights. They will be more able to argue whether or not the BRI promotes sustainable development.

## **Learning activities**

Discussion of BRI prompted by a series of video extracts. Values analysis linked to the human rights of the Uyghur people and anti-Chinese racism in Africa linked to migration encouraged by BRI projects. Values clarification linked to the notion of sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Case study of Bagamoyo. Research on Tanzania's tribal peoples and their cosmologies.

## **Assessment tasks**

Groups of students prepare an itinerary and story board relating to a trip by a television reporter to Tanzania to investigate the impact of the BRI on tribal peoples.

## **Links to Unesco guidance on ESDGC**

<b>SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>	<b>A sample of objectives relevant to the unit.</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	<p>The learner understands the concepts of sustainable infrastructure and industrialisation and society's needs for a systemic approach to their development.</p> <p>The learner can define the term resilience in the context of infrastructure and spatial planning, understanding key concepts such as modularity and diversity, and apply it to their local community and nationwide.</p> <p>The learner is aware of new opportunities and markets for sustainable innovation, resilient infrastructure and industrial development.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to argue for sustainable resilient and inclusive infrastructure in their local area.</p> <p>The learner is able to understand that with changing availability (e.g. peak oil, peak everything) and other external shocks and stresses (e.g. natural hazards, conflicts) their own perspective and demands on infrastructure may need to shift radically regarding availability of renewable energy for ICT, transport options, sanitation options, etc.</p>
Behavioural learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to evaluate various forms of industrialization and compare their resilience.</p> <p>The learner is able to access financial services such as loans or microfinance to support their own enterprises.</p>

Topics for SDG 9 include:

The relation of quality infrastructure to the achievement of social, economic and political goals.

Sustainable and resilient infrastructure development

The sustainability of transport infrastructure

Learning approaches and methods for SDG 9 include:

Develop an enquiry based project ‘is all innovation good?’

<b>GCE Topic 5 Different communities people belong to and how they are connected</b>	<b>Sample key themes relevant to unit</b>
Lower secondary objective (12 – 15 yrs) Demonstrate appreciation and respect for difference and diversity, cultivate empathy and solidarity towards other individuals and social groups	Importance of common values (respect, tolerance and understanding, solidarity, empathy, caring, equality, inclusion, human dignity) in learning to co-exist peacefully Commitment to promoting and protecting difference and diversity (social and environmental)
Upper secondary objective (15 – 18 yrs) Critically assess connectedness between different groups, communities, and countries	Rights and responsibilities of citizens, groups and states in the international community Promoting and defending human rights for all

## Preparation

Familiarise yourself with [SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure](#) and GCE topic 5 different communities people belong to and how they are connected

Watch the videos

[What you need to know about China's belt and road initiative](#) 3 minutes

[Why is China investing billions in Africa](#) 7 minutes

[How Africa is becoming China's China](#) 11 minutes

[Bagamoyo Tanzania port](#) 6 minutes

[China Footprint, neo-colonialism? What China has done in Africa](#) 7 minutes

[Is China destroying Africa](#), 12 minutes

[China's BRI and its long term impact on African countries , Dr Alexander Demissie](#), 34 minutes

[China's Belt and Road Initiative, Talk Africa](#) 30 minutes

Read about China's Belt and Road Initiative

[What is China's belt and road initiative](#), Guardian Cities

*The New Silk Roads, the Present and Future of the World*, Peter Frankopan, 2018

Read about the Uyghurs

[Contemporary Colonialism, the Uyghurs versus China](#)

[The Uyghur Human Rights Report – Extracting Cultural Resources, the exploitation and criminalization of Uyghur cultural heritage](#)

[The link between Uyghur repression and the BRI](#)

[Human Rights Watch on the BRI](#)

[Allow No Escapes: leak exposes extent of China's vast prison camp network](#)

You may wish to find your own videos about Xinjiang and the Uyghurs

Read the voices of Uyghurs on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Read about China and the BRI in Africa

[China in Africa: win-win development or a new colonialism](#), Nick Van Mead, The Guardian, July 2018

[Why Magufuli scrapped port deal with Chinese investor](#), June 2019

[Does China Belt and Road Initiative benefit Africa?](#) Gerald Mbanda, People's Daily, April 2019

[The African Model: Asia's path may not work but there is an alternative](#), African Arguments, Jan 2018

The academic articles by geographers cited in the chapter are:

[Make development great again? Accumulation regimes, spaces of sovereign exception and the elite development paradigm of China's Belt and Road Initiative](#), Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente, *Business and Politics*, 2019

[A discursive construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, from neo-liberal to inclusive globalisation](#), Liu, W, Dunford, M. & Gao, B, *Journal of Geographical Sciences*, 28/9, 2018

## Possible procedure

This unit will occupy several lessons and you should review this procedure and decide for yourself how to break it into lesson sized sections.

Start by introducing students to the concepts of imperialism and colonialism using the definitions given by Jazeel (see chapter)

*Colonialism: the establishment and maintenance of rule by a nation or sovereign power over another people or group for a sustained period of time. Colonialism usually has a territorial imperative (i.e. the settling of land, often involves the settlement of colonizing peoples in that land), and is usually driven by some form of economic expansion.*

Remind students that Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa and Hong Kong in China were once colonies of Britain. Since independence Kenya and Tanzania have found it difficult to eliminate poverty and develop their economies. The young people of Hong Kong were protesting against Chinese rule in 2019 and seeking greater democracy and recognition of human rights. In 2020 China imposed a [new security law](#) on Hong Kong citizens.

*Imperialism: a policy and/or process of expanding one state's power and influence globally by a number of means that could include, for example, territorial acquisition, political coercion or expansionism, direct political control, or even consumerist expansionism. Imperialist processes and policies usually work in the service of expanding or sustaining an empire's geographical reach.*

Britain was once the leading imperial power in the world. The USA is now the leading power and its position is challenged by the rise of China. China is seeking to extend its soft and hard power around the world primarily through the

BRI. The internal colonisation of Xinjiang and the repression of the Uyghur people is part of this imperialism, as is the growing impact of China in Africa. The UK is subject to China's imperialism as it buys up UK companies, sells more products in UK markets, and has a growing impact on UK foreign policy. See Frankopan's text and his video (cited at end of chapter 7). In 2020 [Huawei's involvement in Britain's 5G phone network](#) and [Tik Tok plans to locate its HQ in London](#) both caused controversy.

Introduce the BRI using an appropriate video or videos from those listed above. Outline its aims, scope, and strengths and weaknesses as seen by various commentators. Demissie's lecture is a key resource for teachers.

Explore with the students the concept of sustainable infrastructure. Perhaps with reference to HS2, explore what makes a railway, a road, pipeline, digital network, etc a vehicle for sustainable development? What has to happen to make it ecologically, economically and socially sustainable? Should it extend or reduce human rights?

Next introduce Xinjiang as an internal colony of China. Outline its history; the way in which its people differ from the Han Chinese.; and their current repression related to the BRI and Xinjiang's energy reserves (Frankopan, pp. 104 -107).

Allow students to listen to the (post-colonial) voices of the Uyghur people on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). How have social media helped them raise issues of human rights in a global network society? What NGOs are campaigning on their behalf? What should the UK government, the international community, and individual citizens do about their plight? Link discussion to the [UN Declaration of Human Rights](#) and explain that governments may be fearful of criticising China since that may lead to the loss of trade and inward investment.

Now introduce **neo-colonialism**, a concept that refers to the control of less-developed (weak, poor) countries by developed (powerful, rich) countries through indirect means. Is the BRI proving to be an instrument of neo-colonialism in Africa?

Using your selection from the videos you have previewed, introduce explanations of why the Chinese are investing in Africa, the infrastructure projects linked to the BRI, and the reasons some consider it a form of neo-colonialism that may result in debt dependency and unsustainable infrastructure.

Draw on the articles you have read and use the port of Bagamoyo in Tanzania as a case study of infrastructure development.

Focus on the video [Is China Destroying Africa](#). The South African reporter makes a series of claims about the negative influence of China on Africa: it results in corruption; unsustainable resource use; illegal gold mining; abandoned children of Chinese migrants; trade in animal parts; debt traps and neo-colonialism. He has nothing positive to say about China while claiming he is not anti-China and is not trying to stir hatred. He suggests that his African friends are really ‘feeling the crunch’.

How have the Chinese sought to answer the type of criticisms of their involvement in Africa and the impact of the BRI made in the film? How have other commentators suggested the BRI can become more inclusive (sustainable)? See article by Liu et al.

Explain how such concerns as those voiced by the South African reporter can prompt **racism** and how racism is a recurring feature of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Refer to recent migration into Britain and its role in prompting racism and right wing populism, to explore how the causes of real social problems can be falsely attributed to migrants rather than to the social structures and processes that are their true cause. Explore with students how commitment to common values and their embedding in social policy can counter racism. What social policies in Africa might lessen tensions caused by the issues explored in the video Is China Destroying Africa?

Finally turn to the **tribal peoples** of Tanzania. Is the creation of BRI infrastructure leading to a further loss of their culture and traditions and disturbing tribal lands? Travel companies provide introductions to these tribes, for example that from [Gosheni Safaris](#), and students might research these together with [maps of their tribal lands](#) and the routes of BRI infrastructure (covered in Demissie’s lecture). Alert students to the dangers of accepting a tourist company’s view of these tribes and the need to listen to the tribes’ own accounts of themselves. Bill Benenson’s film [The Hadza: Last of the First](#) provides a portrait of the Hazda people of northern Tanzania and the relations of production and cosmologies found in tribal societies are dealt with in chapter 3 of *Environments in a Changing World*, J Huckle & A Martin, 2001.

Ask groups of students to plan a television reporter’s trip to Tanzania. S/he is to investigate the impact of the BRI on the country with a particular focus on tribal

peoples. Where will the television crew go? What will they film? Who do they plan to meet? What questions will they ask? How will they introduce and explore the issue of neo-colonialism? How will they give voice to tribal peoples?

The groups are to produce an itinerary for a five day visit to Tanzania along with an outline story board of the film they propose to make. These should provide answers to the above questions and will be assessed after they have been presented to the whole class.



# Chapter 8

## Place

*A critical urban theory, dedicated to supporting a right to the city, needs to expose the common roots of the deprivation and discontent, and to show the common nature of the demands and the aspirations of the majority of the people. A critical urban theory can develop the principles around which the deprived and alienated can make common cause in pursuit of the Right to the City.* Peter Marcuse (1) p. 195

*As immigration and the transformations it engenders continue to intensify, the relationships between immigration and places are likely to change as well. Some changes may be positive and meaningful and lead to acceptance and better integration of immigrants, while others may be characterized by prejudice, alienation, and insecurity.* David Kaplan & Elizabeth Chacko (2) p. 8

*A critical pedagogy of place aims to (a) identify, recover, and create material spaces and places that teach us how to live well in our total environment (reinhabitation), and (b) identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places (decolonization).* David Greenwood (3) p. 9

*A critical perspective in PBE (place based education) encourages young people to connect local issues to global environmental, financial and social concerns such as climate change, water scarcity, poverty and trade. It invites teachers and students to question the established order, to view how things are from the position of the most disadvantaged, and to work for the common good rather than self-interest.* Peter McInerney, John Smyth & Barry Down (4) p. 11

*Young Muslims need to appreciate that Islam is not the cause of Islamophobia, and they need moral, intellectual and emotional strength to resist and oppose it. Further, even more importantly, they need to join with others to combat, reduce, and remove it. This includes taking pride in their heritage, refusing to see themselves as helpless victims, and refusing to adopt an us vs them view of the world in which all non-Muslims are disrespected. Of course there are analogous educational priorities for non-Muslims as well.* Robin Richardson (5) p. 45

This chapter is wide ranging. It starts by considering how geographers understand place, an understanding that is linked to their understanding of space. Places, or the localities in which we live our everyday lives, are caught up in global (as well as local, national and regional) flows of people, energy, and materials that shape patterns of combined and uneven development. In chapter seven we were concerned with the global capitalism; its division of labour; issues of development and under-development; and global restructuring that results in new spatial fixes such as China's BRI. In this chapter we are again concerned with capital: how it flows in distinct circuits in the urban process to make places and identities; how switching between circuits can enable places to prosper or decline; and how urban social movements seek to claim rights to the city that citizens are denied. The focus here is on Marxism, urban and financial geography, and the insights they provides into urban places, spatial inequality, urban social movements, social mobility and 'left behind' towns in Britain. The focus then shifts to cultural geography's understanding of place, particularly how migrants make places; how they find them variously safe or unsafe; and how the distribution of Islamophobia in London has been studied.

The chapter then turns to a critical pedagogy of place and Greenwood's synthesis of place based education and critical pedagogy. As the quote at the head of this chapter suggests, such pedagogy combines reinhabitation with decolonisation and so draws on the eco-pedagogy and post-colonial pedagogies examined in previous chapters. School students spent much of their time in places enabled by digital technology, so the argument next turns to the impact of this technology on geography and young people's use of media. It argues that the internet is contradictory, both a channel for post-truths, lies and hate speech on such issues as immigration, and a means of connecting with progressive social movements, for example that combating Islamophobia. Social media invite media education to develop critical users and since digital technology involves environmental and social costs, the chapter suggests how a strategy of mitigation and adaptation can optimise its use in school geography.

In conclusion the argument turns to multicultural and antiracist education and the attack on these represented by the 2010 government's guidance on fundamental British values and the associated Prevent Strategy. It suggests that schools and communities should arrive at their own statements of values, guided by such principles as those in the Earth Charter; that they should teach about

migration belonging and empire; and that the optimum approach is via an integrated curriculum in which both history and geography make key contributions. The curriculum unit examines the significance of place in the identity formation of British Muslim women. It focuses on Islamophobia to explore the guidance around SDG 5 [gender equality](#) (6) and GCE topic 4 (different levels of identity) and draws both on [a report on the geography of anti-Muslim hatred](#) and an article by [Botterill, Hopkins and Sanghera](#) (7) that uses feminist geographies of security to explore the strategies that young Scottish Muslims adopt to manage their security in unsafe places.

## The concept of place

We have already met place. In chapter three a person's geographical location was one social classifier used in intersectionality theory to account for people's identity formation and their possible oppression and alienation (page 112). In chapter seven, Thrift's typology of the meanings of space associated place with the small intimate spaces where we live our lives (page 292). [Agnew](#) (8) offers us three ways of thinking about place:

- As a location or site in space, a node in a network, where an activity or object is located and which relates to other locations via flows of people, energy, material or information. Such places are the subject of logistics, spatial analysis, and geographical information systems.
- As a locale or setting (milieu) where everyday life takes place. The place where bio-physical and social processes acting together cause events that are variously experienced in our daily lives (critical realism, chapter four): home, workplace, neighbourhood, shopping mall, country, an internet chat room . . . Such places structure social interaction and help form people's values, behaviours, identities and outlooks. They have long been the subject of regional and cultural geography.
- As somewhere unique that generates a sense of belonging, attachment, identity or 'sense of place'. We identify with valued places that express a moral order, embody community, prompt social solidarity, and may lead to collective action in their defence. Sense of place is a key concept in humanistic and cultural geography.

Agnew reminds us that with the rise of modernity and Newtonian (bounded) space, place became subordinate to space and both space and place became subordinate to time. Place as rootedness in a particular landscape and ecology

came to be seen as nostalgic, regressive and reactionary and progress became associated with mobility and the overcoming of such rootedness. This leads eventually to the claims of freedom that Khanna associates with unblocking space (page 291) and globalisation and the associated loss of security engendered by place as locale or milieu. As space conquers place unique locales are lost to an increasingly homogeneous and alienating sameness that [Relph terms ‘placelessness’](#) (9) The stripping away of a sense of place or community has contributed to the rise of populism and such phenomena as the rise of gang culture among alienated youth.

In everyday language space and place are used somewhat interchangeably. Readers seeking an intellectual challenge might read Susen (10) on [The Place of Space in Social and Cultural Theory](#) and assess how the twenty aspects of his general theory of social space, and the related social realms, are reflected in place. For example, the ideology of social space produces an associated ideological realm:

*Social spaces are ideological realms. Every regulatory authority requires a symbolically constituted representation of spatiality. This insight, though, does not permit us to explore the relative autonomy of the discursive frameworks that emerge in particular spatial realities. While language games arise within spatially constituted life forms, the creative playfulness of the former can challenge the constraining influence of the latter.* (10)

The education system and schools are ideological realms within social space. They are places where ideology is transmitted and where teachers have relative autonomy to develop discursive frameworks, exercise playfulness with the curriculum, and so disrupt that transmission.

It was only after a preoccupation with spatial analysis (place as simply location) in the 1960s that academic geography took radical and cultural turns that led to the rehabilitation of place.

### **Place, political economy and the urban process**

The significance of place in Marxist geography is best understood by considering the process whereby urban places (the built environment, real estate) is continuously made and re-made (see [Harvey](#) (11) and [Aalbers](#) (12)). Capital accumulation and class struggle are twin themes in this process, for

urban development is one means by which the capitalist class seeks to delay or overcome crises of accumulation and moderate or subdue class conflict.

As we saw in chapter seven, capitalism requires an environment or landscape suitable for the production and consumption of goods and services, and the making of profits. Capital circulates through this environment in four circuits, constantly seeking to find the most profitable returns:

- The primary circuit of industry and manufacturing where goods and services are produced by using workers and machines. Here credit often facilitates initial investment and may allow owners to sustain production when it comes up against limits (when markets become saturated and demand and profits fall - crises of overproduction or capital overaccumulation (13)). Profitability can be restored by investing in new technology to raise productivity; investing in new more profitable lines of production; OR switching capital to other circuits (for example investing in real estate, privatised public services, or financial products). The transition from modern to postmodern modes of production and consumption (page 147) has caused places to change their form and function, with some global cities leading this change with [new architecture](#) (14) and urban lifestyles (15).
- The secondary circuit of real estate and infrastructure (housing, transport, retail, and leisure) allows goods and services from the primary circuit to be consumed.
- The tertiary circuit of social infrastructure (the infrastructure of the welfare state) allows the conditions of production (ecological resources and services, land and space free from pollution and congestion, human health and welfare, suitably educated young workers) to be reproduced. State education and the NHS are part of this circuit as is land use planning and some environmental protection. In the last 40 years the state has sold 10% of Britain's public land (16) and [public places continue to be enclosed](#) (17)
- The quaternary circuit that provides finance (money, credit, securities and other financial products) to facilitate markets in other circuits. This circuit acts as an investment channel in its own right; is designed simply to make money; and its rise re-writes and rules of capitalism, generalising risk and acting as a continually evolving source of crisis.

- The switching of capital between circuits is not restricted to national boundaries and places may benefit from overseas investment or lose out as capital moves abroad (some of it into tax havens). Local and national states play key roles in these circuits as do international institutions of governance. States invest in the built environment; regulate the activity of capital; and are the prime actors in the tertiary circuit. Local states (places) seek to [brand themselves](#) (18) in order to attract investment and globalisation results in almost all places being partly shaped by international flows of capital leading [Massey](#) (19) to write about our global sense of place and others to consider the implications of [foreign ownership](#) for British business (20).

In 2020 the development of the [Northern Gateway](#) (21) and the BBC2 documentary series [Manctopia: Billion Pound Property Boom](#) (22), [filmed before coronavirus](#), provided rich resources for teaching the urban process.

### **The right to the city**

[Heri Lefebvre](#) (23) (1901-1991) was a Marxist sociologist and philosopher whose work on ‘the right to the city’ has influenced several disciplines including geography. He regarded urban society as a complex combination of power relations, diverse identities and ways of being, with the city both reflecting and shaping society. Urban spaces (places) are shaped by the state and serve the interests of powerful corporations and capital, with different areas mirroring the class relations contained within the city. Power is wielded by elites, supported by architects, developers and town planners, and modern cities have increasingly become dominated by private places, characterised by increased uniformity and ‘placelessness’, that serve the interests of capital while public places, where people can meet as a community, are neglected or privatised. The dominance of capital leads to alienation and urban problems (crime, poverty, depression, drugs, homelessness, social exclusion) and Lefebvre proposed that citizens should claim their right to the city, transforming social relations and turning it into a vibrant and sustainable place that meets social needs.

Lefebvre’s focus on the right to the city inspired urban theorists such as [Harvey](#) (24), Castells, and [Peter Marcuse](#) (1), and many urban social movements around the world. Two current examples of movements featured in this chapter are the new municipalism, as demonstrated in Preston Lancashire, and Asian women’s

attempts to claim their right to the city by resisting Islamophobia with the help of [TellMAMA's website](#) (25). In an argument that reflects that for the new municipalism, Marcuse suggests that claiming our rights to the city will involve 'bottom up opening up of top-down government structures and procurement processes', combining the vertical power of councils with the horizontal power of local community organisation. It is a three step process of reflection and action (praxis):

- **Expose:** Analysing the roots of the problem, making clear and communicating that analysis to those that need and can use it
- **Propose:** Working within community to develop and implement actual proposals and strategies that address the root causes of problems
- **Politicise:** Communicating the political implications of what was exposed and proposed through both broadcast media and new digital platforms

Reclaiming the right to the city will require social movements to combine, work sector by sector, and remain alert to new threats (for example post-truth and digital surveillance) and the interplay of issues (for example [the impact of Covid-19 on inequality](#) (26) and social justice). They should make their ethical principles visible and constantly demand greater transparency and accountability from governments. Critical pedagogy of place plays an important role in such reclamation.

## **Financialisation and long term stagnation**

In 2011 protestors [occupied the city of London](#) (27), protesting against financialisation, and showing in their meetings and communal form of living that an alternative to capitalism is possible (28). Reference has already been made to [financialisation](#) (29) (page 10) and its role in the 'bubble years' and after the crash (Figure 1.3, page 11). It results in producer and consumer markets (circuits one and two) that are heavily tied to financial markets (circuit four). Following the 2008 crash, [austerity](#) (30) resulted in a reduced tertiary circuit (welfare state or public sector) and quantitative easing served to amplify the quaternary circuit. Rising asset prices (real estate including housing; financial products including equities) masked falling real wages and falling investment, productivity and returns in the real economy (circuit one). Private and corporate debt reached ever higher levels undermining demand and rentiers (page 206) took a larger share of national income. Foreign investment in UK

assets (land, real estate, financial products) inflated the price of sterling and rendered exports more expensive further undermining circuit one. Collusion between finance capital and the state resulted in an unsustainable form of development based on debt or borrowing from the future. As Blakeley (31) explains this has resulted in long term stagnation in which falling wages, austerity, and a rising debt burden have reduced demand, lowered levels of investment in the primary circuit, slowed productivity growth, and left many places ‘behind’.

Older school students should be helped to identify the circuits of capital at work in their own locality and in other places around the world. They can find evidence of new and older investments thriving or coming up against limits. They can realise that places reflect economic power and are composite commodities with innumerable different elements, each produced under different conditions according to different rules (the banking and planning systems play key roles). They can recognise that places are often the result of processes of enclosure and commodification, may prompt alienation (page 15) and may be the focus or scene of protest. Places are variously long/short lived; rich/poor; public/private; inclusive/exclusive; attractive/unattractive; democratic/undemocratic; stable/unstable, ideologically heavy/light. As with curriculum unit four on housing, they can consider what Harvey (32) terms the ‘madness of economic reason’ for what often gets built is not what is needed but what generates a profit. As with nature and space, the priority for critical school geography is to explore how places can be developed more fairly, democratically and sustainably so they better serve people’s needs.

### **Spatial inequality, planning reform and left behind towns**

The [UK2070 Commission](#) (33) compared the UK to 30 other OECD countries across 28 indicators and demonstrated that the UK is one of the most regionally unbalanced countries in the industrialised world (reflected in [health inequity](#) (34) and social mobility considered below). The economic potential of some regions is neglected; imbalances of wealth and opportunity create division; and high performing regions suffer enormous pressures in terms of population growth, the high cost of living and overloaded infrastructure. These divisions, along with inequalities of power, contributed to Brexit; are being reshaped by the coronavirus pandemic; and may well widen once the outcome of trade

negotiations with the EU are known despite the Johnson government's 'levelling-up' agenda.

All students of geography should leave school with a basic understanding of [the planning system](#) (35) and how citizens can engage with it. In 1947 the public acquired the democratic right to influence the building that affects their lives. That right is now being reclaimed by builders, developers and land owners in a process of deregulation and enclosure that [replaces democracy with the power of money](#) (36). Activity Sheet 4..4 (page 183) traces the history of planning in England as it relates to housing and refers to the overhaul of the system proposed in 2020.

The government's proposals followed reports by the [The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission](#) (37) and [Policy Exchange](#) (38). The former asks for beauty ('everything that promotes a healthy and happy life, everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place' p. iv); refuses ugliness; and promotes stewardship. The latter outlines plans for a bonfire of red tape (deregulation); rejects the notion that rules should govern how specific uses are attached to individual private land plots; and suggests 'market conditions should instead determine how urban space is used in the development zone' (38) p. 11. The subsequent white paper proposals seek to zone land (growth with automatic planning permission; renewal with permission subject to basic checks; or protection with status equivalent to the green belt); shred the rule book in the name of 'beauty' and design codes; and move all democratic accountability to the plan-making stage, ruling out objections at the final consent stage. Designed to help developers 'bounce back' from the impact of coronavirus ([property developers gave the Conservatives £11m](#) in the year ending June 2020 (39)), the proposals were [criticised by planning professionals](#) (40) and further undermine citizens' rights to the city.

The Commission's section on regeneration and the 'scandal of left-behind places' reports citizens telling commissioners that they had lost a sense of home, community and place, that their high street was failing and they no longer had anywhere to meet. A majority felt that it could no longer influence what happened and despite the government creating [a £3.6b fund to benefit 100 towns](#) (41) in 2019, regeneration remained too focussed on transport, technology, skills and culture, rather than identity, place, beauty and [liveability](#)

(42). The Commission proposed a Minister for Place; a Chief Place Maker in all local authorities; and that regeneration should be place led and long term. It praised the work of third sector (community) organisations such as [Power to Change](#) (43) (community business); the [Place Alliance](#) (44) (quality of the built environment); [Civic Voice](#) (45) (civic pride), and the [Centre for Towns](#) (research and analysis on towns) (46). Coronavirus resulted in more people working from home and shopping and learning online. These trends, together with the recession it has caused, undermine the economy of city centres and challenge urban planners to [reinvent towns and cities](#) (47). Lockdown has given people a taste for living more locally; seen advocacy of '[15 minute cities](#)' (48); and reinforced the case for sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) with greenery and other measures to aid [climate resilience](#) (49).

The Resolution Foundation's report [Painting the Town Blue](#) (50) audited the demography, economy and living standards in the 50 'red wall' seats that turned blue in 2019 (page 12). It contains a section on people and place, and makes a number of policy proposals. [Harris & Domokos'](#) (51) tours of Britain for *The Guardian* offers insights into 'left behind' places, populism, and Britain's class system, as does McGarvey's book *Poverty Safari* (52). The [Centre for Cities](#) (53) provides data on the UK's largest cities and town, including data on the impact of coronavirus.

### **The Preston model, community wealth building**

Local democracy and [the new localism](#) (54) are themes running through the three reports just considered. Preston is a place that suffered severely from deindustrialisation, inequality and deprivation after 1979. In the early 2000s it sought regeneration based on inward investment but when this failed its Labour council turned to an approach based on local economic democracy and [community wealth building](#) (55). This updates approaches to municipal socialism developed in the 1980s by the GLC, Sheffield city council and others (56) and has become known as the 'Preston model' (57). It seeks to capture local wealth: ensuring capital circulates locally without leaking to other locations. Hence key elements are local procurement strategies; a local co-operative sector; community banking; and cooperation between anchor institutions (eg. Lancashire County Council and the University of Central Lancashire). [How we built community wealth in Preston](#) (58) summarises the

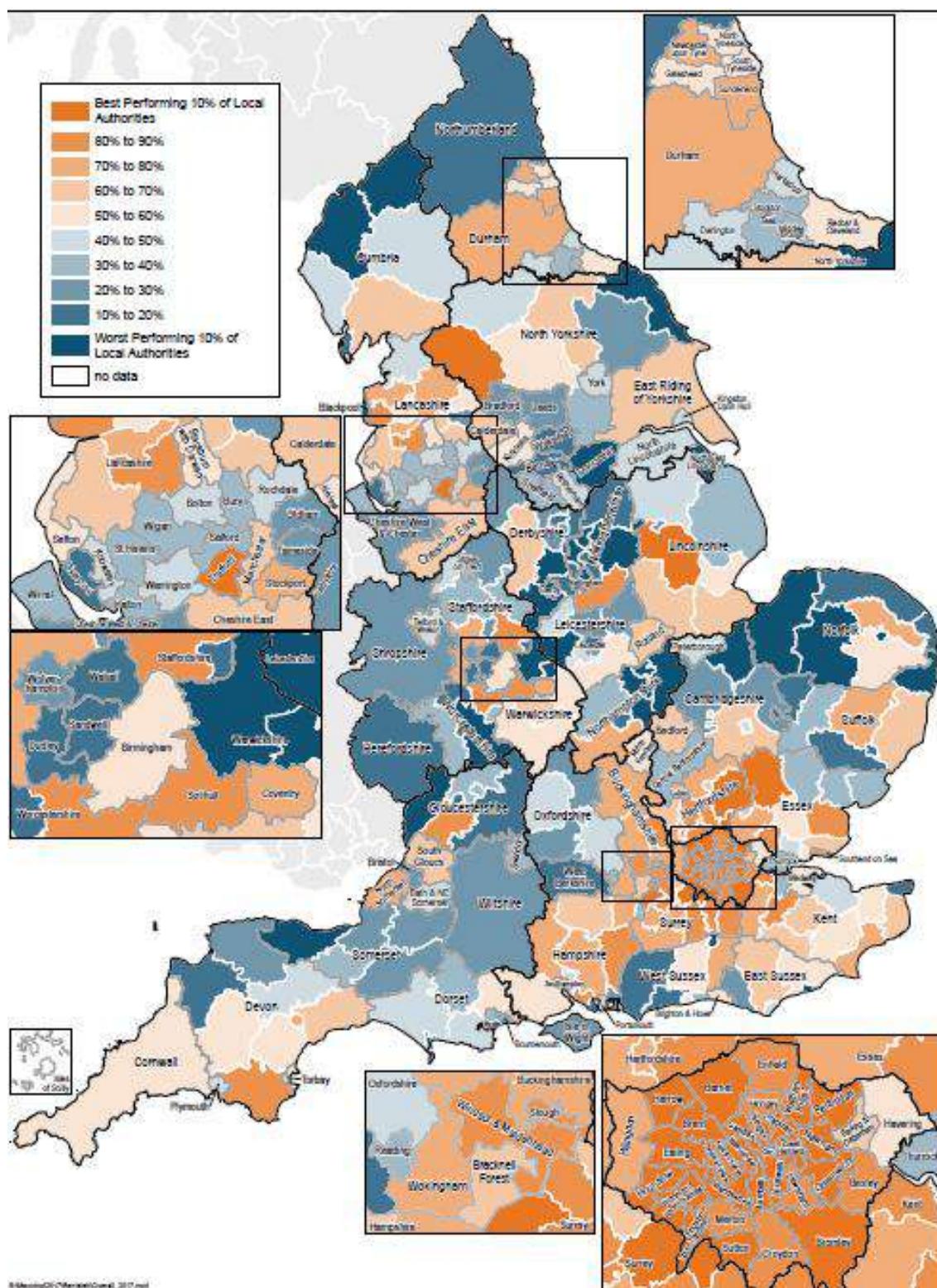
achievements and lessons, and provides a resource for a curriculum unit designed to explore the role of local democracy in place making. [The Cleveland model](#) (59) in the US, the [Mondragon Cooperative Corporation](#) (60) in the Basque region of Spain, and the application of [doughnut economics to Amsterdam](#) (61), are also pointers to postcapitalist futures that might also feature in this unit.

## Social mobility and schooling

As we saw in chapter two, critical educators reject the goal of social mobility through schooling since it [deepens and perpetuates social injustice](#) (62). Nevertheless the fact that the place where you live helps determine your social mobility should be a key topic for critical school geography. A report by the [Social Mobility Commission](#) in 2017 (63) revealed a stark social mobility postcode lottery across Britain. In Figure 8.1 (page 338) the best performing areas are in shades of orange and the worst performing in shades of blue. There is no simple north/south divide. Instead a divide existed between London (and its affluent commuter belt) and the rest of the country. The best performing local authority area was Westminster and the worst was West Somerset. The Midlands was the worst region of the country for social mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds - half the local authority areas in the East Midlands and more than a third in the West Midlands were social mobility coldspots. Coastal and older industrial towns - places like Scarborough, Hastings, Derby and Nottingham - were becoming entrenched coldspots. Outside London, disadvantaged pupils loose out: 51% of London children on free school meals achieved A to C in English and maths GCSE compared with an average of 36% in all other English regions. In some coldspot areas, participation in higher education falls to just 10%. Disadvantaged young people are almost twice as likely as better-off peers to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) a year after GCSEs. Up to a quarter of young people were NEET in South Shields.

Figure 8.2 (page 339) shows the best and worst performing local authorities in terms of school performance measures. Geographical differences for children on free school meals increased in the decade prior to 2017. London broke away from the rest of England. Children who go to school in former manufacturing urban areas such as Kettering and Doncaster had amongst the poorest outcomes. Remote countryside and coastal areas also did badly. School quality was hugely

**Figure 8.1 Performance against all social mobility indicators (63) p. 41**



**Figure 8.2 The best and worst local authorities measured by school performance indicators (63) p.42**

Hotspots			Coldspots		
Rank (best)	Local authority area	Region	Rank (worst)	Local authority area	Region
1	Kensington and Chelsea	London	1	Corby	East Midlands
2	Hackney	London	2	Wellingborough	East Midlands
3	Westminster	London	3	Gosport	South East
4	Newham	London	4	Amber Valley	East Midlands
5	Tower Hamlets	London	5	Isle of Wight	South East
6	Lambeth	London	6	Fenland	East of England
7	Wandsworth	London	7	Crawley	South East
8	Southwark	London	8	Waveney	East of England
9	Redbridge	London	9	Weymouth and Portland	South West
10	Camden	London	10	Scarborough	Yorkshire and The Humber
11	Barnet	London	11	Huntingdonshire	East of England
12	Hammersmith and Fulham	London	12	South Derbyshire	East Midlands
13	Islington	London	13	Allerdale	North West
14	Harrow	London	14	Kettering	East Midlands
15	Rushcliffe	East Midlands	15	Lewes	South East
16	Hounslow	London	16	Doncaster	Yorkshire and The Humber
17	C Sutton	London	17	Hinckley and Bosworth	East Midlands
18	Ealing	London	18	Blackpool	North West
19	Rutland	East Midlands	19	High Peak	East Midlands
20	Waltham Forest	London	20	Hastings	South East
21	Greenwich	London	21	Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber
22	Fareham	South East	22	Reading	South East
23	Harborough	East Midlands	23	East Northamptonshire	East Midlands
24	Kingston upon Thames	London	24	North Warwickshire	West Midlands
25	Uttlesford	East of England	25	Oxford	South East
26	Brent	London	26	Tamworth	West Midlands
27	Haringey	London	27	Knowsley	North West
28	Barking and Dagenham	London	28	Ipswich	East of England
29	South Tyneside	North East	29	Great Yarmouth	East of England
30	East Hertfordshire	East of England	30	Walsall	West Midlands
31	Craven	Yorkshire and The Humber	31	Cannock Chase	West Midlands
32	North Kesteven	East Midlands	32	Northampton	East Midlands

variable: disadvantaged children in Knowsley had no chance of going to a secondary school rated 'good' or 'outstanding', while in Hackney all children on free school meals went to strong schools. Clearly these spatial variations have something to do with variations in funding levels to schools, and the proposed [national funding formula](#) (64) but they also have much to do with school governance as improvements in London illustrate.

### **Place in critical cultural geography**

Places are partly cultural products. They are reservoirs of cultural beliefs and values which shape our identities and are shaped by us. As well as reflecting our cultural and political lives, they also reflect our theories of knowing and being. They can be represented to us in different ways (more or less full of ideology) and can be more or less inclusive of difference (more or less oppressive or alienating). As with the material construction of place, the normative construction (of the standards and behaviours a place embodies or expects) can be more or less socially just, democratic, and sustainable. As Cresswell (65) reminds us places cover a spectrum from the cosmopolitan (progressive, welcoming, inclusive) to the xenophobic (regressive, hostile to 'outsiders', exclusive).

Critical cultural geography is concerned with people's attachment (belonging, bonding) to places. Such attachment may be:

- Personal, especially one's emotional and physical/functional bonds with a particular locale;
- Social, the connections between multiple people in place, social bonding, solidarity, and familiarity with one's neighbours;
- Environmental, how aspects of the bio-physical setting (especially non-human nature) shape place bonds, environmental identity, and connectedness to non-human nature.

Place attachments are formed in our ongoing participation in interacting bio-physical and social processes, are of different intensities and cover multiple, overlapping spatial scales. They contribute to the [liveability of a place](#) (66).

## **Immigration and the making of places**

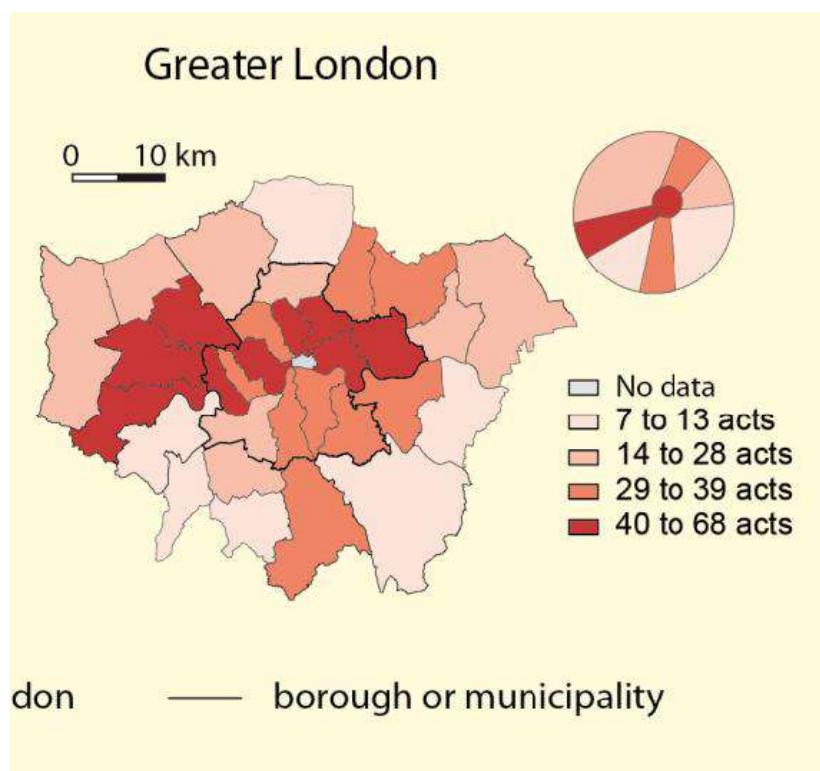
Kaplan and Chacko (2) examine the importance of place in forming immigrant identities; the various ways in which immigrants make places and interact with them; how this process introduces hybrid identities; and how the immigrant experience is shaped by race, class and gender. They explore how place attachment (feeling at ‘home’ in my new ‘home’) is shaped by what the immigrant brings to a place (cultural traits, religion, language, skin colour, socio-economic and legal status) and the social geography of the host nation and community (immigration policy, legal environment, expectations, its own set of racial, ethnic and cultural issues).

Increased movement between places of origin and places of settlement and digital communication, mean that more people now feel at ‘home’ in two or more places. Globalisation permits an overlapping of flexible identities; creates diasporas and hybridism (how immigrants subtly change their culture in a new context, forging a space and place between old and new identities). International divisions of labour channel people of differing genders, race and class to different host communities with the UK’s dependence on foreign doctors and nurses being an example of how the global North under-develops the South. Once in their new ‘home’, race, class and gender continue to shape their fortunes.

Depending on their financial, human and social capital immigrants follow different paths with higher status immigrants generally getting a better reception. The ways in which they insert themselves into a place are related to their group culture and the local context. Some find a tolerant context; are able to make a place their own by imprinting it with their own identity; and select from the host community what they consider useful and worthwhile. Others find the host community hostile; are victimized, find that place stunts their identity; and may wish to return ‘home’. Immigrants may experience acceptance, integration and cosmopolitanism; prejudice, alienation, and insecurity; or generally something in between. Acts of hatred against immigrants are linked to geo-political events such as the Gulf wars, the refugee crisis affecting Europe, the populism feeding anti-European and anti-migrant sentiment, or the onset of coronavirus .

## Islamophobia (anti-Muslim racism) in London

In chapter three young people's geographies were related to three factors: everyday geo-politics; intersectionality; and place (page 112). Hopkins who was cited there worked with Najib to study the [different spaces and types of discrimination against Muslims in London and Paris](#) (67). The study took an intersectional approach (discrimination is gendered, racialised, classed and aged) that involved a quantitative analysis of the number and location of anti-Muslim acts in 2015. It found that in London, the victims were more likely to be young women of south Asian origin wearing a headscarf and the perpetrators were more likely to be men than women. The acts, reported to [Tell MAMA](#) (68), took place mainly in everyday places, particularly public areas and on public transport, along major arterial roads and around mosques. Figure 8.3 shows their distribution.



**Figure 8.3**

**Location of anti-Muslim acts in London 2015** (the circle shows attacks in the suburbs and on transport axes leading into the city)

The anti-Muslim acts consisted mainly of verbal abuse (50%), assault (17%), and vandalism and criminal damage (10%), with hate speech being less frequent

(3%). The message communicated by such acts is that ‘your dress is unacceptable and will not be tolerated’, ‘you should not be here’, ‘you are a threat to urban order and to European culture’. The consequence is that Muslims, particularly young women, are worried about moving around freely as part of their daily lives; and that the British model of multiculturalism (recognition and respect for a plurality of ethnic-religious identities and their expression and visibility in public spaces) is challenged.

In her article on the geographies of veiling Dwyer (69) regrets that women’s dress choice is too often used as a measure of integration and belonging rather than more objective measures that would reveal the need to improve their opportunities in such fields as employment and education.

### Critical place pedagogy

School geography’s role is encouraging learning about and from diverse places is well established. Willis’ (70) editorial in *Geography* introduces a series of articles on place under the themes how places are represented; how places change over time; and the role of place in identity formation, Rawling-Smith’s website [Geoplaces](#) (71) provides insights into current best practice, while the geography pages of the US journal [Places](#) (72) are a source of inspiration albeit largely US focussed.

Critical school geography is informed by critical place pedagogy as developed by those, especially David Greenwood, who have sought to combine critical pedagogy (CP) with place based education (PBE). He reminds us that while the former has a well developed, if diverse, theoretical framework (chapter five), the latter, which UK geography teachers generally label ‘fieldwork’, is more associated with methodology (experiential learning, enquiry, problem solving, constructivism) and context (outdoors, locality, local ecology, citizen science, community, multiculturalism) than with theory. He analyses the two traditions suggesting that their contexts (urban and sociological, and focussed on difference, in the case of CP, and rural and ecological and focussed on relationships, in the case of PBE) overlap. While CP seeks an agenda of transformation (liberation from race, gender, class and other forms of oppression) or cultural decolonisation, PBE seeks an agenda of conservation (the end to environmentally damaging practices) or ecological reinhabitation.

Ecological rehabilitation, or learning to live sustainably in places disrupted and injured by modern development is also a theme of eco-pedagogy (chapter six). It involves identifying, affirming, conserving and creating those forms of cultural behaviour and knowledge that nurture and protect people and ecosystems. Greenwood explains that [ecoliteracy](#) (73) and [eco-justice](#) (74) are central to ecological rehabilitation and environmental education.

Cultural decolonisation is about learning to recognise the causes of the disruption and injury to places and communities. It involves questioning what the dominant culture (neoliberalism) teaches and learning more just and sustainable ways of being in the world. Post-colonial pedagogy has similar aims (chapter seven).

Praxis in critical place pedagogy is guided by such questions as what happened in this place? what will happen in this place? what should happen in this place? what role should I play in constructing this place? [Martin](#) (75) suggests that answering these questions should involve teachers, students and communities in cogenerative dialogue that generates solidarity across difference; challenges the colonising power of the curriculum; and prompts the inclusion of local knowledge. [McInerney, Smyth and Down](#) (4) suggest PBE needs a more critical reading of notions of place, identity and community and give three examples of where it falls short. It is too ready to idealise place, neglecting squalid, unsafe and degraded places fractured by economic, social and racial divides. Its pedagogy is often too locally focussed and too neglectful of unfair structural arrangements; and in promoting local activism it too often ignores connections to the national and global.

For school students the place where they spend much of their time is increasingly one shaped or provided by digital technology.

## Digital geography

[Gleseking](#) (76) reminds us that the digital is everywhere; that everybody, including school students, has become a digitally assisted cyborg; and that the term “digital” embraces the data and algorithms, software and hardware, and the affective, political, economic, social, and physical effects on human bodies, objects, and spaces, as well as the structural oppressions and systems of power that are encoded into these elements. [Ash and his co-writers](#) (77) remind us that

digital technology is transforming both the subject of geography and the objects it studies. Geographies are produced **through** the digital as a means of knowledge production: **by** the digital as it mediates and augments the production of space and spatial relations; and **of** the digital as it creates a new material, spatial and technical realm of communication and interaction.

In an era of rentier capitalism, corporations, governments and academia are fixated on big data, algorithms and their potential in such fields as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Geodata is used to capture and/or predict our identities, mobility, health, purchasing power, sexual preferences and social networks. Geo-based algorithms are used to shape elections and push false news while smart cities promise less congestion and crime. The digital shapes the space and time of everyday life, influencing behaviour patterns, and sorting good consumers and citizens from those who are not compliant with hegemonic ideals. While computing is generally seen as ‘objective’ science that results in truth, algorithms are not neutral as was shown by [Ofqual’s attempt to forecast examination results](#) for students affected by school closures in 2020 (78). They reproduce structural oppressions of many kinds and have the power to alter minds, induce addiction and increase anxiety, depression, and loneliness (79). Morozov (80) warns against cyber utopianism, suggesting that like other technologies, digital technology should be democratically controlled. In 2020 Ofcom was put in charge of [regulating the internet](#) in the UK (81).

### **Digital media, post-truths and immigration**

The digital era is characterised by the potential democratising effects of the internet or the potential for citizens to become informed netizens engaged with progressive social movements in network society (page 295) (82). On the negative side it prompts a decline in deference to experts; rising scorn for the political establishment; the tendency for social media to lock us into echo chambers where ill-founded opinions are confirmed rather than challenged; and the blurring of fact and fiction online. Post-truth (83) (84), or circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief, leads to less attention to facts, more attention to fake science, fake news and alternative facts, and appeals to our non-rational selves. Truth decay feeds populism (page 12), conspiracy theories, hate, fear and anger. the decay of language, and the erosion of a shared sense of reality that binds diverse peoples and places together. It inflames division and erodes

reasoned debate, public discourse, and the shared commitment to verifiable truth and truth telling that underpins democracy (85) (86).

Immigration was a key theme in the Brexit debate and many lies and myths were spread by social media. The [TUC](#) (87) sought to counter these; [Duffy and Frere-Smith](#) wrote a report *Perceptions and Reality: public attitudes to immigration* (88); and in 2017 the [IPPR](#) (89) suggested what factors should determine UK immigration policy. In early 2020 the [UK government](#) (90) proposed a new points-based immigration system.

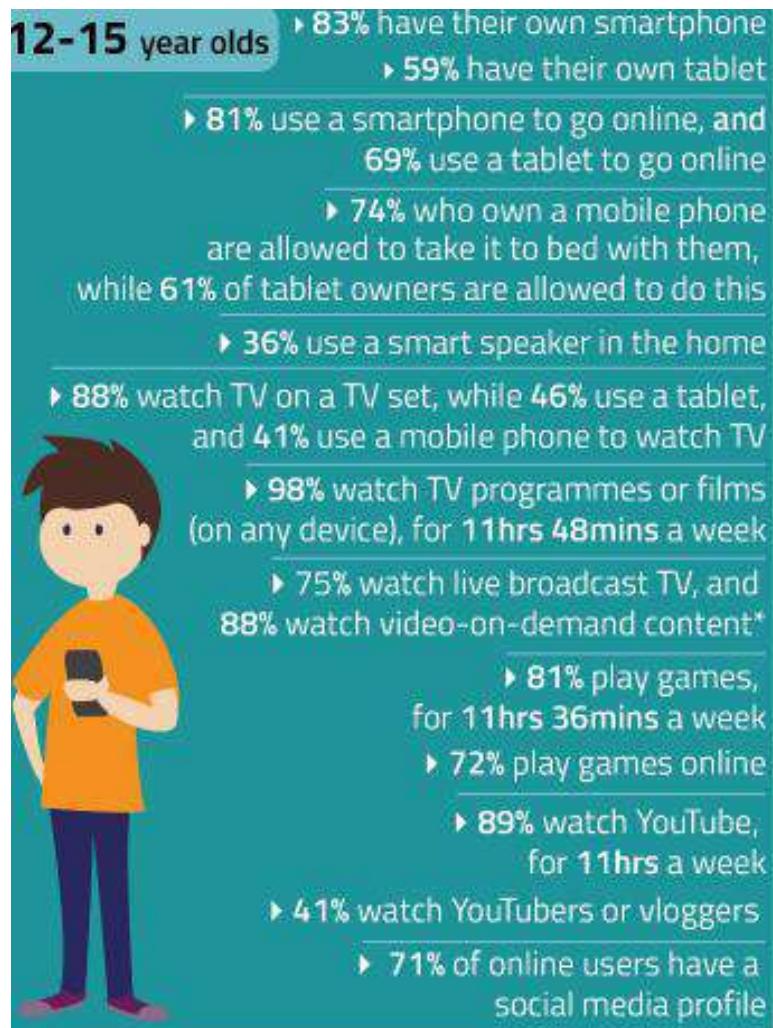
## Young people and digital media

Ofcom publishes an [annual report on children's media literacy research](#) (91). [The 2019 report](#) (92) found that You Tube remains a firm favourite among children 5 – 15; that their social media use is diversifying with Whats App joining Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram as top platforms. Some elements of children's critical understanding had increased, for example awareness of vlogger endorsement and how the BBC is funded, but understanding of search engines and their ability to recognise advertising on these sites remained unchanged. Figure 8.4 summarises the use of digital media by children aged 12 to 15. The lack of access to such media disadvantages students from poor backgrounds and [this issue was highlighted](#) (93) during school closures in 2020 due to the Covid-19 virus, when they were unable to access elearning.

Ofcom defines critical understanding as 'a way of describing the skills and knowledge children need to understand, question and manage their media environment' (92) p. 14. 59% of 12-15s realise that some results from search engines can be trusted and some cannot and this realisation is more common in children from AB households than from DE homes. A quarter of this age group say they do not consider whether the information they see on new sites or apps is true or accurate. TV remains their most used and trusted source of news.

2019 saw an increase in the proportion of 12-15s using social media to support causes and organisations by sharing or commenting on posts (18% cf 12% in 2018). Around 15% report online bullying and half say they have seen something hateful about another group of people online in the last twelve months. 50% chose to ignore such hate, 39% took some action (usually blocking the site or reporting it to the site) and 10% chose to share it with a friend or others thereby giving it greater exposure. More students in Northern

Ireland reported seeing hateful content (62%) than those in other nations: England (52%), Scotland (45%), or Wales (37%). [Frith](#) (94) provides a review of the evidence of the effects of social media on children's mental health.



**Figure 8.4 Digital media use among 12 to 15 year olds (92) p.5**

Ofcom recommends that young people develop media literacy or the ability to understand and create media and communication in a variety of contexts, and the teaching of critical literacy in schools is the subject of [a report from the National Literacy Trust](#) that has launched a children's charter on fake news (95). Critical pedagogy and critical media literacy are closely linked and there are relevant [resources for teachers](#) (96) including [Google backed MediaWise](#) (97). [Stoddart](#) (98) links media literacy to democratic education and the need for school students to be able to recognise and handle fake news and post-truths was probably one factor prompting the *Critical Thinking for Achievement* project (page 200).

## Digital technology and critical place pedagogy

The introduction of digital technology into classrooms poses teachers of geography with a dilemma. This technology and its devices are embedded in and enable webs of connection that serve global capitalism; promote a fast global culture of superficiality over a slow local culture of in-depth knowledge; allow post-truths, false news, and hate speech; foster despair (page 100); and shift the place of learning from the classroom to the screen and internet. At the same time they are firmly established with students and offer opportunities for critical pedagogy that no teacher should ignore (99).

Mitigation
Reduce use – slow pedagogy, going without, voluntary restrictions. EG a lesson without the whiteboard
Critically evaluating digital tools and using them to enhance (not limit or distort) direct unmediated experience. <i>Smartphones and fieldwork</i> , Welsh & France (100)
Otherwise increasing place conscious and place responsive behaviour. <i>Capturing sense of place via fieldwork</i> , Brand (101)
Adaptation
Embracing learner centred pedagogy EG meet learners ‘where they are’ in an online and digitally mediated world. EG allow digital links to schools abroad.
Tracking tails left by digital information on such topics as migration, trade, crime, etc. <i>Worldmapper: rediscovering the world</i> , Hennig (102)
Engaging with place via GIS. <i>An investigation using online GIS</i> , Heath (103)
Participating in environmental monitoring projects EG nature watch, water quality
Developing digital story telling skills, audio and video stories. <i>Using video to explore students’ personal geographies</i> Kitchen (104)
Learning about distant places. See curriculum units one, six, & seven
Taking direct action with digital tools. Initiating or joining digital campaigns at all levels, local to global. EG Working with <a href="#">TellMAMA</a> (25) to campaign against anti- Muslim hate (see curriculum unit seven)

**Figure 8.5 The mitigation and adaptation of digital technologies in school geography** (based on (105))

[Greenwood and Hougham](#) (105) survey literature that suggests digital tools intensify and individualise experiences of the self and others (other peoples, cultures, places and events) as they impose a hidden curriculum of technologically manufactured natures, spaces and places, and immerse the

learner in an assortment of gadgets that merely transfer information while shaping outlook and identity. Using the analogy of global heating, they suggest our response should be one of mitigation and adaptation. Digital technology should be limited to uses that enhance PBE without jeopardising direct sensory experience. At the same time it should be adapted to create new possibilities and applications. Table 8.5 (page 348) shows what this might mean for school geography.

Critical place pedagogy can use digital technology to bridge the field, the web, distant places, and the classroom; raise awareness of connectivity; look for competing stories of places; demonstrate how difficult it is to truly know a place; and further the aims of rehabilitation and decolonialisation outlined above.

### **Multicultural and antiracist education under attack**

Previous chapters have examined geography's role in promoting solidarity across difference (pages 111 – 114) and the role of postcolonial pedagogy in enabling students to come to terms with Britain's colonial past and the postcolonial voices represented, for example, by migrant communities. Development and underdevelopment are not processes that happen only in the global South, they are everywhere and the ideological assumptions of HEADS UP (page 303) and root narratives in Figure 7.3 (page 304) are reflected in the differing ways teachers address rich and poor places in the UK and related social issues, including multiculturalism and antiracism.

Richardson (5) suggests our anxieties about race and migration stem from insecurity: we have lost an empire and failed to find a new role in the world. The resultant mixture and muddle of turbulent anxieties and uncertainties around national identity, coupled with nostalgia for an imagined past, was a key factor in the rise of populism and the Brexit referendum of 2016 (106). The coalition government elected in 2010 recognised that it needed a convincing and inspiring narrative around national identity that would convince the public that it understood their anxieties and could be trusted to deal with them. In 2011 the Home Office adopted the notion of fundamental British values (FBVs) as a way of defining extremists (those who did not support FBVs) and denying support and funding to groups and organisations who it deemed to oppose these values. At the same time it claimed the root cause of terrorism by people of Muslim

heritage is the ideology or narrative known as Islamism, a claim that its critics considered simplistic, insufficient and counter-productive.

Following the [Trojan Horse affair](#) (107) in Birmingham in 2013, Islamophobia was fuelled by a coalition of interests including the popular press, some politicians, and those opposed to multiculturalism and antiracism and their advocates in education. In 2014 guidance on [promoting fundamental British values](#) was introduced for schools, requiring them to promote ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’ (p. 5). It was linked to the [Prevent Strategy](#) (108), requiring schools to report students they suspected of radicalisation and extremism.

Critics of FBVs maintain that schools are already required to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity, and foster good community relations, under the [Equality Act of 2010](#) (109). FBVs risked creating an imagined opposition between British values and Muslim values and so controlling and regulating, rather than empowering, young Muslims. The theories of radicalisation and extremism underpinning Prevent are at best dubious and controversial and at worst ignorant and counterproductive; safeguarding measure prior to Prevent were adequate; and FBVs guidance and Prevent risked closing down spaces for discussion of extreme but non-violent ideas. The NEU has [a guide on Prevent](#) (110).

Richardson suggests that in the wake of these events we need a national conversation on shared values and the common good, on how to develop the language and practices of equality, diversity, community, and identity. It is for schools to conduct conversations with their students and community; unions and subject / professional associations with their members; all guided by the insights that critical theory and pedagogy can provide. [Richardson’s website](#) (111) has a model school statement on the promotion of British values that can also inform such conversations. Earth Charter principles 9 to 12 relate to social and economic justice including gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

### **And the role of school geography**

The GA has a [webpage on British values](#) (112) that can be seen as a response to the 2014 guidance on FBVs. Clearly curriculum units, such as the one accompanying this chapter can facilitate the conversation Richardson promotes

as can [The Black Curriculum](#) (113) and [Teaching Migration, Belonging and Empire in Secondary Schools](#) (114).

*Teaching Migration, Belonging and Empire*, published in 2019, focuses on the work of history and English teachers and contains no mention of geography. Resulting from TIDE, a European Research Council funded project, working with Runnymede, it draws on national curriculum and Department of Education guidance that requires teachers of history to ensure that students know and understand ‘how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world’, ‘the diversity of societies’, ‘their own identity and the challenges of their time’ (p. 2). It suggests that migration, belonging and empire are central to understanding these processes, but that only 4% of students taking GCSE history are taking the ‘Migration to Britain’ option. It found that around three quarters of the teachers it questioned wanted training on teaching these topics and that many avoided them, considering them too controversial. The report notes that the vote to leave the EU has brought our relationships with migration, belonging and empire to the fore; that subsequent policy debates have exposed ‘a chronic misunderstanding among our political leaders of Britain’s relationship, past and present, to its former empire’ and ‘little understanding of Britain’s past relationship with Ireland’ (p. 3). The report recommends [Our Migration Story](#) (115) that provides curriculum resources for the GCSE history module ‘Migration to Britain’.

Both *Teaching Migration, Belonging and Empire* and *The Black Curriculum* can be seen to highlight the need for an integrated humanities or social studies curriculum, it is important at a time when many students are required to study either history or geography for GCSE, that geography teachers realise that migration, belonging and empire are equally relevant topics for them as this and the preceding chapter have sought to show.

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## Videos for teachers

[Right to the City – European Commons Assembly](#) 4 minutes

[David Harvey on the Right to the City](#) 45 minutes

[Remembering Occupy London](#) 15 minutes

[Trailer to film The Street](#) (gentrification) 2 minutes

[David Greenwood on place based education](#) 9 minutes

[David Orr on ecoliteracy and ecological education](#) 8 minutes

[The War on Truth, Matthew D'Ancona](#) One hour

[Social Media and the Teenage Brain](#) 4 minutes

[Teen voices, who are you on social media](#) 5 minutes

[Turkish public broadcaster on British Muslims and identity](#) 2 minutes

[Our Migration Story Runnymede Trust](#) 2 minutes



## Curriculum Unit 8

### Becoming a young British Muslim woman, the significance of place



*Islamophobia constricts the mobility of Muslims in Britain. Anti-Muslim hate has caused victims to be afraid to leave their homes, to avoid public transport, and to fear travelling beyond the neighbourhoods where they feel safe. The city becomes a geography of fear and risk that Muslims must negotiate.* p. 16

*Our analysis of places in which incidents occur demonstrates that anti-Muslim hate crimes and incidents are most likely to occur in public areas, on the transport network and in shopping areas. These are areas that every citizen tends to move through on an everyday daily basis. We find that anti-Muslim hate affects women particularly as they move through the city: walking, commuting and shopping. This limits the security and confidence that Muslims in Britain have when navigating everyday spaces.*

*Photo and quotes from [The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred](#), Tell MAMA, 2016*

In this unit students explore the role of place in shaping the identity of young Muslim women. They learn about British Muslims; the stereotyping of Muslim women and the issues they face including Islamophobia. The geography of Islamophobia is then examined before students learn of strategies that young

Muslim women adopt to keep themselves safe in public places and how digital technology is being used to combat hate crime on the internet.

## **Curriculum plan**

### **Key ideas**

Islamophobia and associated hate crime limits the rights of British Muslims to the city. It affects their freedom, mobility and confidence in public places, on the internet, and when using social media. It particularly affects Muslim women, who may feel unsafe and believe that most Britons do not regard them as equal citizens.

### **Inquiry questions**

What do we know about British Muslims, the issues facing young Muslim women and girls, and the causes and geography of anti-Muslim hatred?

In what ways do young Scottish Muslims negotiate racialised, gendered, and religious places in ways that they consider will increase their security?

In what ways are British Muslims seeking to claim and extent their rights to the city, the internet and social media?

What agencies exist to monitor and tackle violent extremism, hate speech and the radicalisation of young people via the internet.

### **Key understandings**

There is a long history of migration of people of Muslim faith to Britain. This is partly a legacy of British colonialism and imperialism and partly the result of refugees fleeing Muslim lands where there have been armed conflicts.

Gender dominates discussions of Islam in both the media and policy debates. These discussions are shaped by long standing conflicts over multiculturalism, Britishness, integration, community cohesion and more recently radicalization. Such topics as veiling, forced marriage, honour based violence, and patriarchy feature in these discussions.

Too often debates on Muslim women locate the problem of gender inequality solely within Islam rather than in patriarchy and other forms of oppression existing within the wider society. Muslim women suffer from anti-Muslim racism (Islamophobia) and from economic inequalities linked to social class. In

seeking greater gender equality, enlightened Muslim women are uniting with feminists, anti-racists and socialists seeking the common goal of social justice.

Debates about the veil, gender violence, and ‘the war on terror’ contribute to stereotypes of Muslim women as oppressed, passive victims, symbolic of Muslim communities’ alleged failure to integrate. These stereotypes stem from generalizations about Islam as a uniquely patriarchal religion and deny Muslim women agency or the ability to make choices other groups enjoy.

Islamophobia (anti-Muslim racism) takes liberal and far-right forms. Liberal Islamophobia assumes Muslim communities and culture are inherently against certain liberal ('Western') values (such as democracy, human rights, free speech, gender equality). Far-right Islamophobia agrees and also views Muslims as a cause of Britain's decline and social problems. It is a component of far-right populism.

Anti-Muslim hate crime disproportionately targets Muslim women, especially those wearing the hijab. Incidents are most likely to occur in public areas, on the transport network, and in shopping areas. These are areas that every citizen tends to move through on a daily basis.

The perpetrators of anti-Muslim incidents are predominantly white men. They target, abuse, and even assault Muslim women. These women often suffer from intersectional disadvantage by virtue of gender, race, class, religion, age and place.

Muslim young people (especially women) are often the victims of hate crimes, either through peer to peer bullying, that takes place both online and offline, or by other individuals (e.g. adults engaging in hate speech online or in the street). This can have a profound impact on their mental and emotional health.

In response to the risks of hate crime, Muslim young people adopt strategies that they believe will prevent harm and preserve or increase their security. These strategies are of two overlapping kinds: pre-emptive strategies of avoidance and pro-active strategies of engagement. They involve complex negotiations both with the self and with society (psychosocial negotiation) and are fraught with ambivalence and contradiction.

The perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate crime are influenced by online and social media networks that use xenophobic, racist and anti-Muslim rhetoric designed

to appeal to the far-right and some mainstream right-wing populists. They display deep-rooted hatred of Muslims, migrants, and Islam.

These networks treat Muslims as a monolithic bloc and consistently assert that they are ‘scum’, ‘terrorists’, ‘ISIS’, ‘barbaric’ and ‘backward’. They may call for violence against Muslim communities and Islamic institutions.

The amount of Anti-Muslim hate crime is linked to geo-political events such as wars in Muslim countries, terrorist attacks, and the coronavirus pandemic. Young Muslims can be considered to carry the weight of global as well as more local insecurities.

A network of governmental and non-governmental agencies exist to monitor, report and confront extremism and hate crime. Digital technology and artificial intelligence play a key role in their work and some suggest their tracking online extremism is a more cost effective way of combating terrorism than military spending.

The Prevent strategy requires teachers and others to report those who show evidence of being drawn to extremism through their extremist speech or ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’. While this controversial strategy has been targeted at Muslim extremists, it should also be targeted at those who spread anti-Muslim hate.

**Key concepts** place, identity, race, class, gender, patriarchy, feminism, stereotype, Islam, Islamophobia, migration, extremism, terrorism, populism, hate crime, security, self-securitisation,

**Key values** human rights, gender equality, solidarity, social justice

**Key skills** comprehension, debating gender issues, interpreting charts, tables and maps, interpreting and evaluating cartoons, relating interview comments to key concepts

**Learning outcomes** Understanding the issues faced by young British Muslim women and the ways in which they can tackle these by joining with other groups and agencies fighting racism and seeking social justice.

<b>Learning activities</b>	Comprehension of written text about British Muslims, discussion and evaluation of cartoons challenging stereotypes; analysis of chart, tables and map about the geography of anti-Muslim hatred; linking of interview comments to researchers' ideas; debating the application of digital geography to fighting online hate speech and the 'war on terrorism'
<b>Assessment tasks</b>	Students review one or more poems / videos on <a href="#">Suhalymah Manzoor Khan's website</a> . Their review should show evidence of being able to apply key concepts, understandings, and values explored in this unit.

## Links to Unesco guidance

<b>SDG 5 Gender Equality</b>	<b>A selection from the learning objectives</b>
Cognitive objectives learning	<p>The learner understands the concept of gender equality and gender discrimination and knows about all forms of gender discrimination, violence and inequality . . . and understands the current and historical crises of gender inequality.</p> <p>The learner understands the basic rights of women and girls including their rights to freedom from exploitation and violence and their reproduction rights.</p> <p>The learner understands the role of education, enabling technology and legislation in empowering and enabling the full participation of all genders.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to recognize and question traditional perception of gender roles in a critical approach, while respecting cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>The learner is able to identify and speak up against all forms of gender discrimination and debate the benefits of full empowerment of all genders.</p> <p>The learner is able to connect with others who work</p>

	to end gender discrimination and violence, empower those who may still be disempowered and promote respect and full equality on all levels.
Behavioural objectives	<p>The learner is able to take the measure of their surroundings to empower themselves or others who are discriminated against because of their gender.</p> <p>The learner is able to support others in developing empathy across genders and breaking down gender discrimination and violence.</p> <p>The learner is able to observe and identify gender discrimination.</p>
<b>GCE Topic 4 Different levels of identity Learning objectives</b>	<b>A selection from the key themes</b>
Distinguish between personal and collective identity and various social groups and cultivate a sense of belonging to a common humanity (12 – 15 years)	<p>Multiple identities, belonging and relating to different groups</p> <p>Complexity of personal and collective identity, beliefs and perspectives (personal, group, professional, civic)</p> <p>Engagement and cooperation in projects addressing common challenges</p> <p>Cultivating positive relationships with people with various and different backgrounds</p>
Critically examine ways in which different levels of identity interact and live peacefully with different social groups (15 – 18+ years)	<p>Factors that lead to successful civic engagement (personal and collective interests, attitudes, values and skills)</p> <p>Commitment to the promotion and protection of personal and collective well-being.</p>

### Suggested topic for SDG5 include:

Gender as a social and cultural construct

Gender inequality, traditional gender roles and structural discrimination

Gender in community dynamics (decision making, governance, education etc)

The intersectionality of gender with other social categories such as ability, religion and race

**Suggested examples of learning approaches and methods for SDG5 include:**

Invite speakers who have experienced violence based on gender identity or sexual orientation

Perform role play games that explore inclusion and identity based on gender roles

## **Preparation**

Familiarise yourself with [SDG5 gender equality](#) and GCE topic 4 different levels of identity.

This unit is based on three publications:

[The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred](#), Tell MAMA, 2016

[Where does Islamophobia take place and who is involved? Reflections from Paris and London](#), K Najib & P Hopkins, (2018) *Social and Cultural Geography*

[Young people's everyday securities: pre-emptive and pro-active strategies towards ontological security in Scotland](#), K Botterill, P Hopkins & G S Sanghera (2019) *Social and Cultural Geography*, 20/4, pp. 465-484

You should review the satirical cartoons on issues facing Muslim women and girls drawn by Zaufishan on [the website of Shaista Gohir](#).

Further background is provided by:

[How Do We Build Community Cohesion When Hate Crime is On the Rise?](#) All Party Parliamentary Group on Hate Crime, 2019

[Islamophobia Still a Challenge For Us All](#), F Elahi & O Khan (eds.) Runnymede Trust, 2017. Especially chapter 3 British Muslims, an overview, and chapter 11 Gender and Islamophobia

[The Social Mobility Challenge Faced by Young Muslims](#), Social Mobility Commission, 2017

Public Health England's report [Disparities in the risks and outcomes of Covid-19](#) (June, 2020) shows higher incidence amongst the BAME population. The pandemic also increased [the incidence of racist hate crime](#).

The [history of Muslims in the UK](#) from the Association of British Muslims.

The geographies of veiling: Muslim women in Britain, C Dwyer (2008) *Geography*, 93/3, Autumn, pp. 140-147

CBBC Newsround [guide to head coverings worn by Muslim women](#)

[PowerPoint presentations](#) on being a Muslim in Britain

[The Brown Hijab](#) – the website of Suhaiymah Manzoor Khan a writer, poet, speaker and educator invested in unlearning and interrogating narratives around race, gender, Islamophobia, state violence, and colonialism.

Reporting and monitoring anti-Muslim hate crime. In addition to [TellMAMA](#) race hate incidents can be reported to [MEND](#) (Muslim Engagement and Development), the police (101 in England or [Police Scotland](#)) or to [True Vision](#). Victim support is on 0808 168 911 (England & Wales) and 0345 603 9213 in Scotland.

A 2017 presentation by DI John Donovan of the Metropolitan Police on the [Met's online hate crime hub](#). [National hub announced in 2017](#).

[Moonshot](#) uses technology and AI to disrupt violent extremism and far right terrorism by identifying those searching for related material on the internet. It gives detected individuals risk points and uses 'redirection material' designed to get in front of extremist material in web searches. Camouflaged search results are designed to divert searchers for e.g. bomb manuals to specialists in de-radicalisation techniques. Moonshot employs marketers, mental health practitioners, ex-police officers, and IT specialists who have experience in such fields as analytics, marketing and social work. Trained social workers contact detected individuals espousing pro-extremist, pro-terror views. Money spent on targeted, community-focussed preventive work may be more cost-effective in preventing terrorism than that spent on military hardware.

[HateLab](#) is a global repository for data and insight into hate crime. It uses AI to detect hate speech across the internet, most of which goes unreported. Its anti-Muslim heat map of UK shows the places of origin and times of day most associated with anti-Muslim slurs on such platforms as Twitter. For example, those Islamophobic slurs suggesting Muslims are profiteering from coronavirus. HateLab considers hate speech to be the key problem of the internet and director Matthew William's book *The Science of Hate*, should be published in 2020. Unfortunately the Lab's dashboard of hate crime, that can show patterns, target groups, and geographical hotspots is not public access but publications that can be downloaded from its site provide insights into its work. The EU has a similar project [HateMeter](#) focussed on anti-Muslim hate.

The power of the internet to unite women around the world to fight sexual harassment is demonstrated by [HarrassMap](#)

You may wish to consult or join with RE colleagues when planning to teach this unit.

## Possible procedure

The unit is in six sections and will require a number of lessons, perhaps half a term.

### 1 Identity formation and place

Begin with the notion of adolescence being a time of growing up, finding an identity, and emerging as an adult. What is involved in finding an identity or one's place in the world? You might refer to films or tv programmes on this theme.

Key resources for identity formation are one's family or carers; one's community (locally, nationally, regionally, globally); and the issues, events and role models to which one is exposed. Intersectionality theory suggests one's identity is formed at the intersection of such influences as social class, race, gender, place and religion. Cultural geographers also maintain that the places we experience are gendered, racialised and classed

Discuss with students the impact on identity formation of growing up in different places at different times. For example - a rural mono-cultural location versus an urban multi-cultural location. For example - rich suburb versus a poor inner city neighbourhood. For example – Pakistan versus the UK. For example

in times of war or peace. For example under a Left or Right wing government? For example during a global pandemic. What do students see as the main advantages and disadvantages of the place and time in which they are growing up?

Ensure students have grasped the concept of a place being gendered, racialised, classed, aged, etc. Social and cultural structures and processes permeate places meaning that women feel safe in some places and not others; that black people feel valued in some places and discriminated against in others; that working class people feel accepted in some places and rejected in others; etc. Intersectionality theory suggests that places like identities are the products of many processes working together. Invite students to give their own examples of places they consider gendered, racialised, classed . . .

What does it mean to belong to a place? To feel attached to a place? What are the reasons we become attached to a place? Why do some places resonate with us?

Is it possible to have multiple identities? Are we different people at different times in different places?

What has identity to do with citizenship? We are citizens of local and national states / governments. As citizens of nation states we have rights and responsibilities in particular parts of the world. Some people have dual nationality and are citizens of more than one state.

To what extent are we / should we be global citizens with common rights and responsibilities with everyone else in the world? How do such agencies as the United Nations or Oxfam encourage us to be global citizens?

Give students ample opportunity to discuss the issues surrounding identity formation that they have experienced. Their hopes and fears for themselves.

## 2      British Muslims

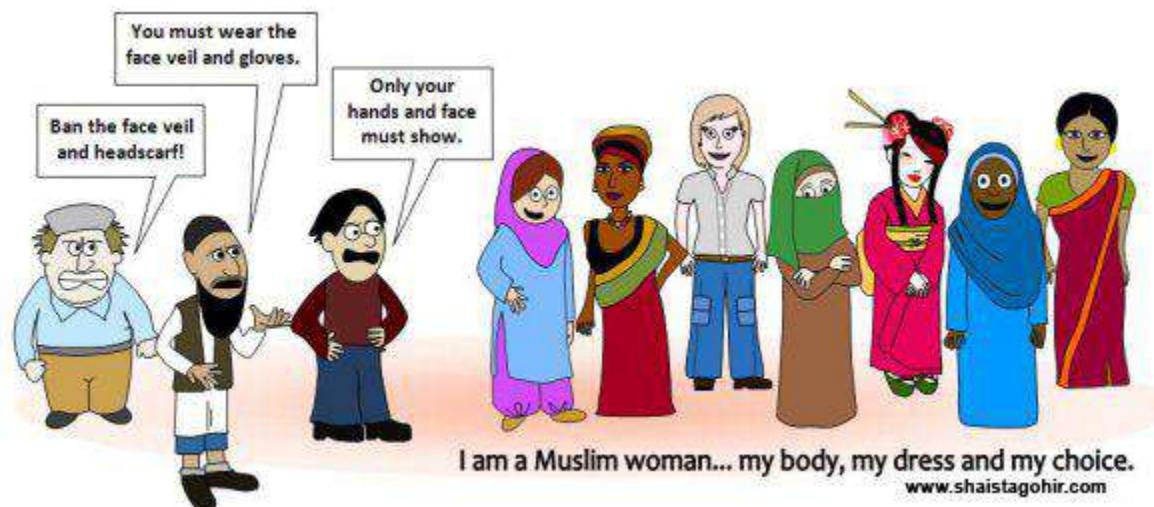
Introduce the topic of British Muslims. Are there British Muslims in the class / school / community? What do we know about how they arrived, the ways they live, their identities, hopes and fears? How are they similar and different to other British citizens?

Either develop a true / false quiz based on Activity Sheet 8.1 or read it through with the students as a comprehension exercise. What new things have we learnt about British Muslims? What did we find surprising? What assumptions and/or stereotypes did the information challenge? Invite any British Muslims in the class to contribute key facts and understandings that they consider the sheet to have overlooked.

Next outline the recent history of Muslim identity politics. Since the publication of Rushdie's Satanic Verses in 1988, there has been debate on how to incorporate Muslim cultural and religious differences into Britain's liberal democracy. Unrest in northern cities in 2001 led to a greater awareness of the dangers of Muslim communities leading self segregated and separate lives and of racist slurs that Muslims were not willing to integrate. Government policies on community cohesion followed but the Iraq wars and the subsequent 'war on terror' led to anti-terrorism measures, notably the Prevent Strategy, that can be seen to unfairly target young Muslim men. Throughout this period British Muslims have been represented by their own civil society organisations, such as the [Muslim Council of Britain](#), and by other organisations such as the Runnymede Trust.

Stress that like all identities, those of British Muslims are formed, understood and negotiated in a changing economic and political climate.

### 3 Issues facing Muslim Women and Girls



Now use [Zaufishan's cartoons](#) to explore students' perceptions of stereotypes of Muslim men and women and the issues facing young Muslim women. Five

cartoons raise issues of patriarchy (Inside Muslim minds), dress choice (My Body, My Dress, My Choice), equality (What is equality?), sex education (Sex Education – Muslim Style), and women's rights (Who Can Abuse Women's Rights the Most). Hadith, Arabic Ḥadīth ("News" or "Story") in the first cartoon is a record of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, revered and received as a major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Qur'ān, the holy book of Islam.

What do students think were Zaufishan's motives in drawing the cartoons?

Draw on the key understandings and Naaz Rashid's chapter 11 of *Islamophobia Still a Challenge For Us All* to explore with students how Muslim women are racialized so that certain generalizations or stereotypes are created about them through media, academic and policy narratives, based on differences in physical appearance or other social distinctions (gender as a social and cultural construct – Unesco guidance).

*Stereotypes of Muslim women and Muslim men are different but mutually constitutive of one another. That is, they are formed in relation to each other. Muslim women are seen as 'oppressed', passive victims and Muslim men are seen as exceptionally misogynistic. Both stereotypes, however, stem from generalizations about Islam as a uniquely patriarchal religion.* Rashid, p. 61

How are stereotypes harmful? How do stereotypes lead to hate crime?

#### 4      **Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism**

You could introduce this section with Suhalymah Manzoor Khan's poem [This is Islamophobia](#).

Now turn to students' understanding of hate crime. Explain that aspects of a person's identity, their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity, are protected in law. A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and bullying, as well as damage to property. Explain that hate crime should be reported and explain how it is monitored.

Do students have personal experience of hate crime? How does the school protect them against hate crime? What school policies are relevant and what voice did / do they have in drafting the policy and monitoring its effectiveness?

Now explore students' understanding of the link between Islamophobia, anti-Muslim racism, and hate crime. Islamophobia is framed by language and discourse that frames Muslims as threatening, impinging, cultural inferior, and violent. Its perpetrators see Muslims as a threat to their identity and security and it draws support both from liberals who see Muslims as failing to integrate and accept 'Western' values and right wing populists who see Muslims as a cause of Britain's problems and seek to divide 'us' from 'them' (key idea 12, page 10). The security and mobility of victims is affected and hate crime affects their mental and emotional health.

Now draw students' attention to TellMAMA and its report *The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred*. In 2015 it documented 801 hate crimes (437 offline and 364 online) and subsequently carried out an analysis of where the offline incidents occurred. Use Activity Sheet 8.2 (or a PowerPoint presentation prepared from these graphics) to question students on the type of incidents; the places these occurred; the characteristics of victims and perpetrators; the clustering of incidents as revealed by the map of East London; and links between spikes of incidents and international events.

What are the implications of this report for the media (how to represent British Muslims and Islamophobia); the police (stronger focus on hate crime, community liaison officers); rail and bus operators and retailers (security guards); and politicians (community cohesion, welfare policies, funding for agencies seeking to combat hate crime).

## 5 Young Muslims' strategies for avoiding and engaging with Islamophobia

Now turn to the ways in which young Muslims negotiate racialised, gendered, classed and religious places. Give out copies of Activity Sheet 8.3 and draw attention to the table and the quotes from young Muslim women living in Scotland.

Research by Botterill, Hopkins and Sanghera examined how young people negotiate racialised, gendered and religious places and found that they employ complex psychosocial strategies of self-securitisation in response to risks such as hate crime. Based on interviews, they divided these strategies into two overlapping types – pre-emptive (avoidance) and pro-active (engagement).

Discuss with students what strategies they adopt when they feel unsafe in public places. Do they recognise what the researchers are focussing upon? Can they add further elements to the table? Are there elements that they would question or want clarifying? You might link this to a mapping exercise in which students put green and red pins on a map of their town / city, marking which places they consider safe and unsafe. You might also link this to a discussion of veiling and the social, religious and personal contexts in which dress choices are made and negotiated (see Dwyer's article in *Geography* and Rashid's chapter).

Divide the students into small groups. Ask them to discuss each quote and look for the evidence that led researchers to assign it to a category. Ask each group to report back and compare results with other groups.

## 6 Combating hate crime on the internet and social media.

Explain how digital media can be used to both spread illegal hate speech and to combat it. Do students have personal experiences of encountering hate speech on the internet or via social media? Explain how such speech can be reported and how it is monitored. You might show them the hate crime reporting page of your local police force.

Using the whiteboard show the students the [Moonshot](#) and [HateLab](#) websites. Explain them as applications of digital geography that have the potential to help create a safer and more sustainable world.

Finally introduce [Suhalymah Manzoor Khan](#), her poems and the assessment task. Outline your expectations and the related assessment criteria.

## **Activity Sheet 8.1      British Muslims**

### **Where do they come from?**

There have been Muslims in Britain for hundreds of years. In the 1960s their numbers increased significantly as Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were Muslim were recruited to take up work in the UK. These male migrants headed to industrial centres like the heavy woollen district of Yorkshire; the textile mills of Lancashire; the metal works of the West Midlands; the brickfields of Bedfordshire; and the ports of South Wales. Their families were allowed to join them and did so until the 1970s.

From the 1970s Muslims from the Middle East came to Britain in larger numbers. Some were professionals and others had money to invest in property and businesses. Others were refugees from ethnic, religious and communal conflicts, famines and natural disasters in Somalia and East Africa, as well as the Middle East. From the 1990s asylum-seeking communities began to arrive in the form of European Muslims from Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as Kurds and Afghans.

Muslims are one of the most diverse faith groups in the UK, reflecting a wide variety of countries of origin and different types of migration. The majority have their origins in South Asia (mainly Pakistan) as a result of British colonialism in the past. 8% of those who identify as Muslim also identify as ‘white’.

### **How many are there?**

The 2011 census recorded 2.7 million Muslims, 4.8% of the total population of England and Wales. Muslims are younger than the population as a whole: 33% of Muslims were aged 15 or under (in 2011) compared with 19% of the total population. Can you explain why the Muslim population is youthful? What is likely to happen to the age profile of the Muslim population in future?

### **Where were Muslims born?**

Almost 50% of Muslims were born in the UK; 28.5% in South Asia; 6.5% in the Middle East; 6% in other European countries; and 10% in Africa. The majority of British Arabs (77%), British Pakistanis (91%) and British Bangladeshis (90%) are Muslims and Pakistanis make up the largest share of British Muslims (38%).

## **Where do they live?**

Muslims are concentrated in urban areas with Birmingham, Bradford and Newham having the largest numbers. In the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham, a third of the population is Muslim. Almost half of all Muslims live in Greater London. In Manchester 60% of Muslims are Pakistanis (15% Bangladeshis, 11% Indian) and in the West Midlands the composition is similar (70% Pakistani, 14% Bangladeshi, 5% Indian). Muslims are now found throughout the UK

## **Are they disadvantaged?**

Muslims are as well qualified as the population in general but find it more difficult to get jobs. Of 16 to 24 year olds, recent statistics showed only 29% of Muslims in employment compared with 51% of all people in that age group. Muslim women in all age brackets are less likely to be in work than women from all other faith groups and they are more likely to be looking after the family and home. 10% of 16-24 year old Muslim women reported this to be the case compared with 5% of all women. 6% of Muslims work in managerial jobs (10% of national population) and 5% in professional jobs (7%). 12% (8%) live in social housing. 42% live in overcrowded housing (12%). Almost half of Muslim households live in the 10% most deprived locations in England, In the pandemic of 2020 Bangladeshi and Pakistani males were 1.8 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than white males.

## **Are they discriminated against?**

In the last twenty years, global and national events (for example the Iraq wars, Twin towers 11/9/2001, London bombings 7/7/2005, Manchester arena bomb May 2017) and the ways these have been represented in the media have affected how people see Muslims and behave towards them, and how Muslims interact with the world. Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, has become common with some researchers suggesting that Muslims are viewed with more hostility than all other groups, by all other groups.

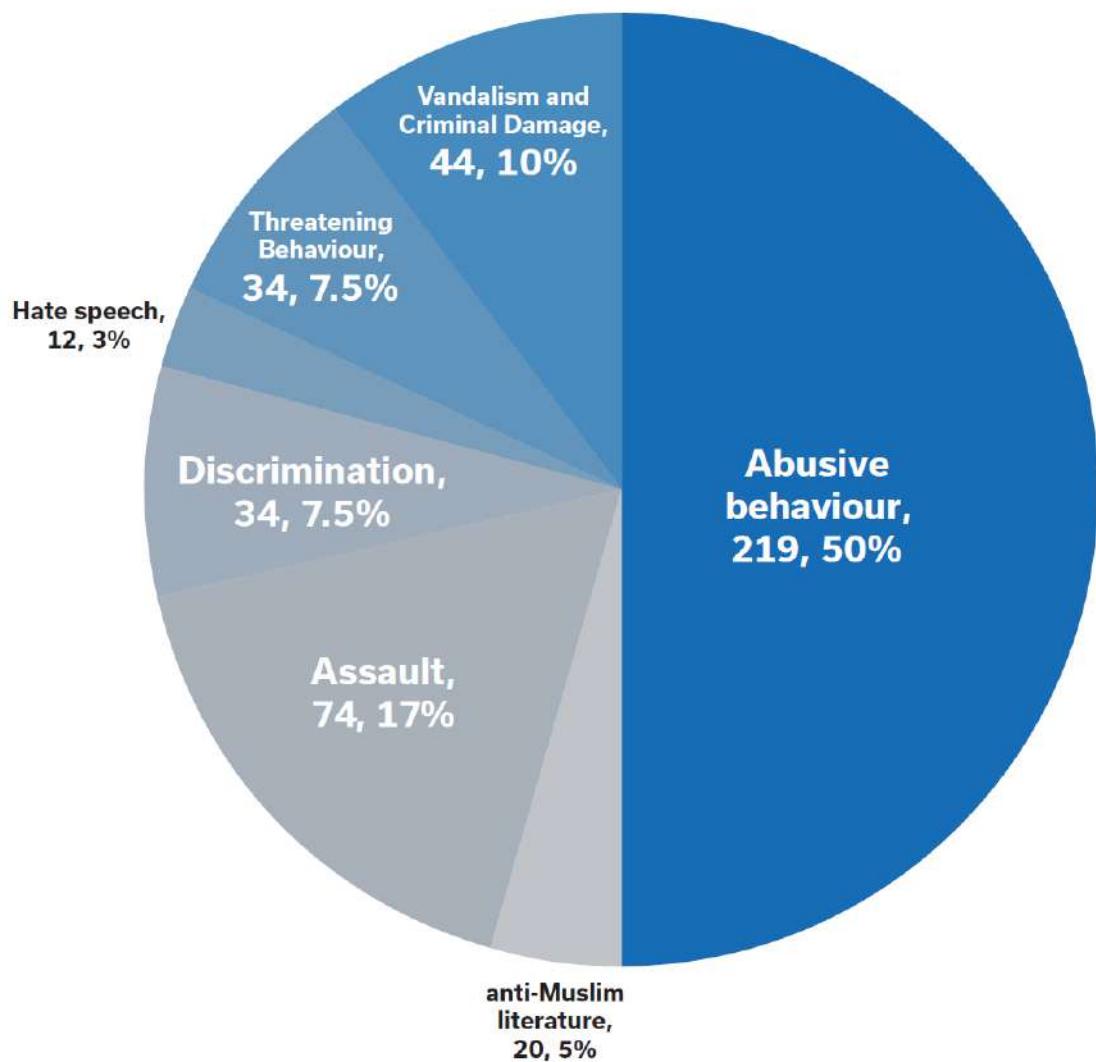
Better access to good jobs is key to Muslims living in better housing and residing in more desirable neighbourhoods. A researcher for the Social Mobility Commission concluded that ‘Muslims are excluded, discriminated against, or failed at all stages of their transition from education to employment’.

Source, *British Muslims, An overview*, Serena Hussain, 2017

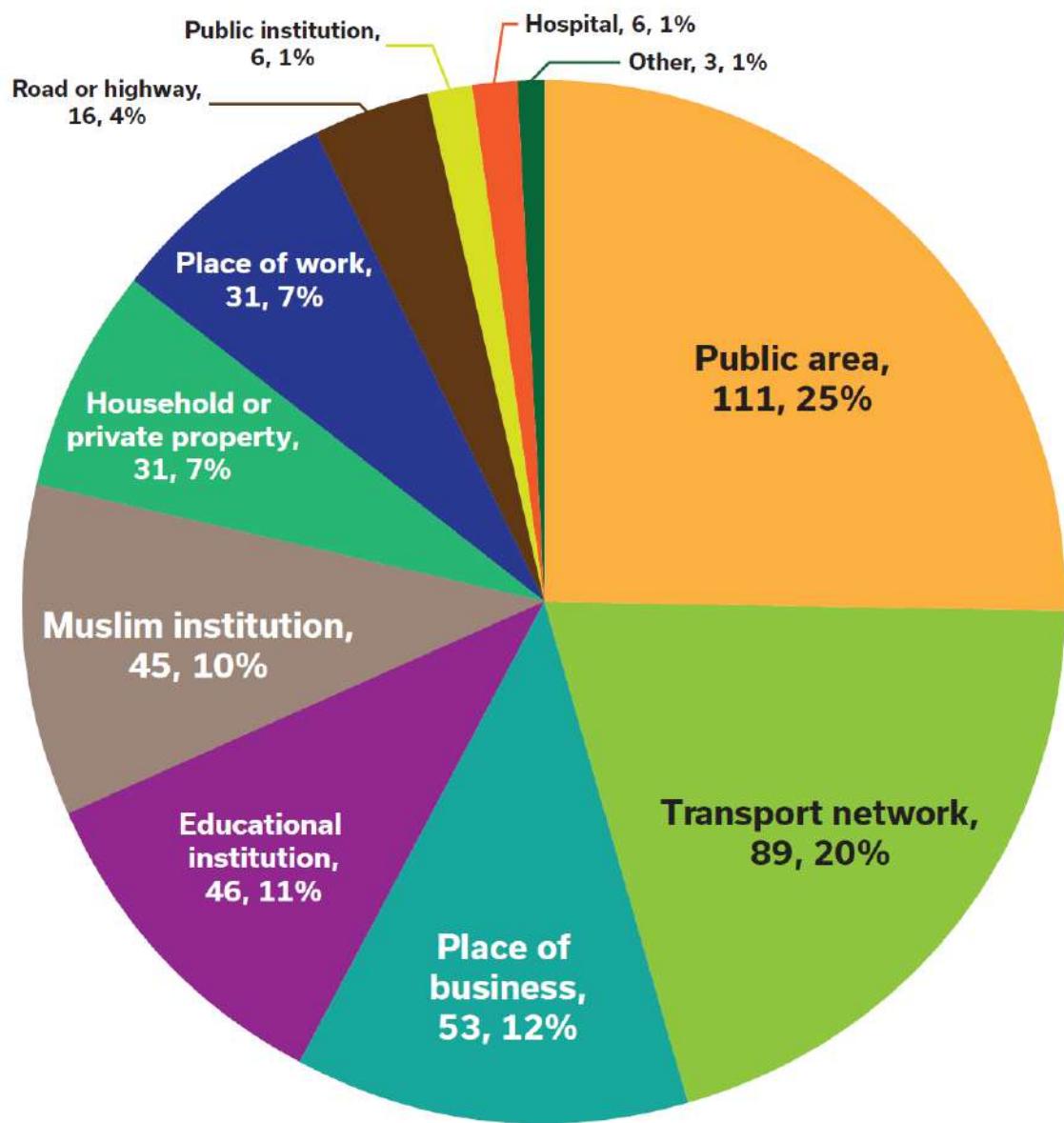
## Activity Sheet 8.2

Charts, tables and map from The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred, Tell MAMA, 2016

**Chart 4.1: anti-Muslim incidents by category**



**Chart 6.1: offline incidents by place of incident**



**Table 5.1: Victims by Islamic visibility**

	Female	Male	Other gender identity	Unknown gender	Total
Visibly Muslim	215	39	5	0	259
Not visibly identifiable as Muslim	32	73	0	6	111
Unknown	40	50	0	8	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>468</b>

**Table 5.3: Victims by place of incident**

Place of incident	Female	% of all female victims	Male	% of all male victims	Other gender identity	Unknown	Total
Public area	81	28.22%	46	28.40%	4	2	133
Transport network	79	27.53%	22	13.58%		3	104
Place of business	49	17.07%	17	10.49%		1	67
Household or private property	25	8.71%	14	8.64%		7	46
Educational institution	18	6.27%	22	13.58%		1	41
Place of work	9	3.14%	23	14.20%			32
Road or highway	10	3.48%	9	5.56%			19
Muslim institution	5	1.74%	6	3.70%			11
Hospital	8	2.79%		0.00%			8
Public institution	2	0.70%	3	1.85%	1		6
Other	1	0.35%		0.00%			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>		<b>162</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>468</b>

**Table 5.4: Victims by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Other gender identity	Unknown	Total
White	25	4	5	0	34
Mixed or multiple ethnicities	4	4	0	0	8
Black	9	12	0	0	21
Asian or South Asian	93	70	0	1	164
Arab or North African	21	13	0	1	35
Turkish	2	3	0	0	5
Other	3	1	0	0	4
Unknown	130	55	0	12	197
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>468</b>

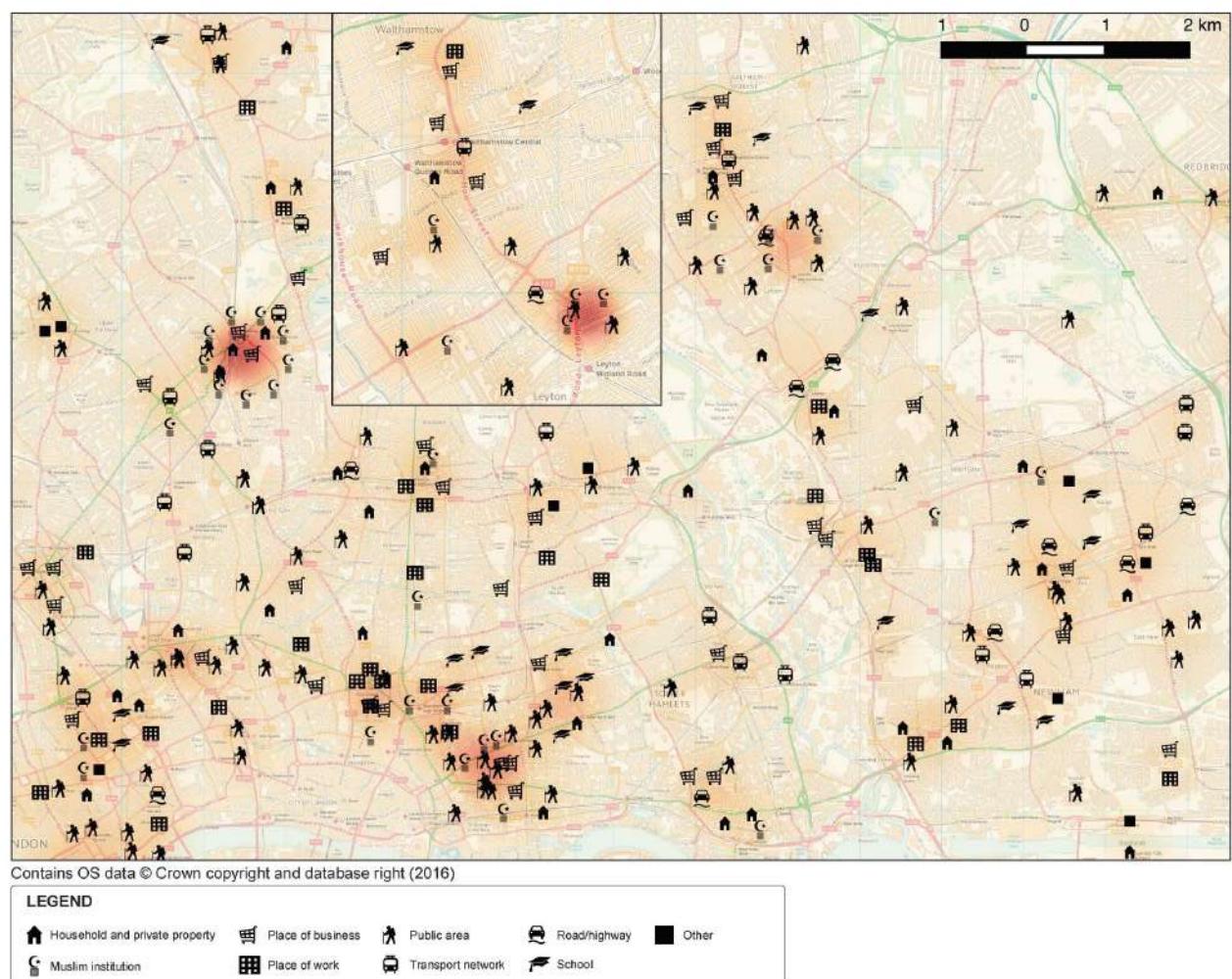
**Table 5.5: Perpetrators by age and gender**

Age range	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
12 or younger	7	8	3	18
13 to 18	15	35	9	59
19 to 25	6	36	0	42
26 to 35	13	41	0	54
36 to 45	14	28	0	42
46 to 55	10	30	0	40
56 to 65	6	12	0	18
65 and older	8	12	0	20
unknown	42	182	109	333
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>626</b>

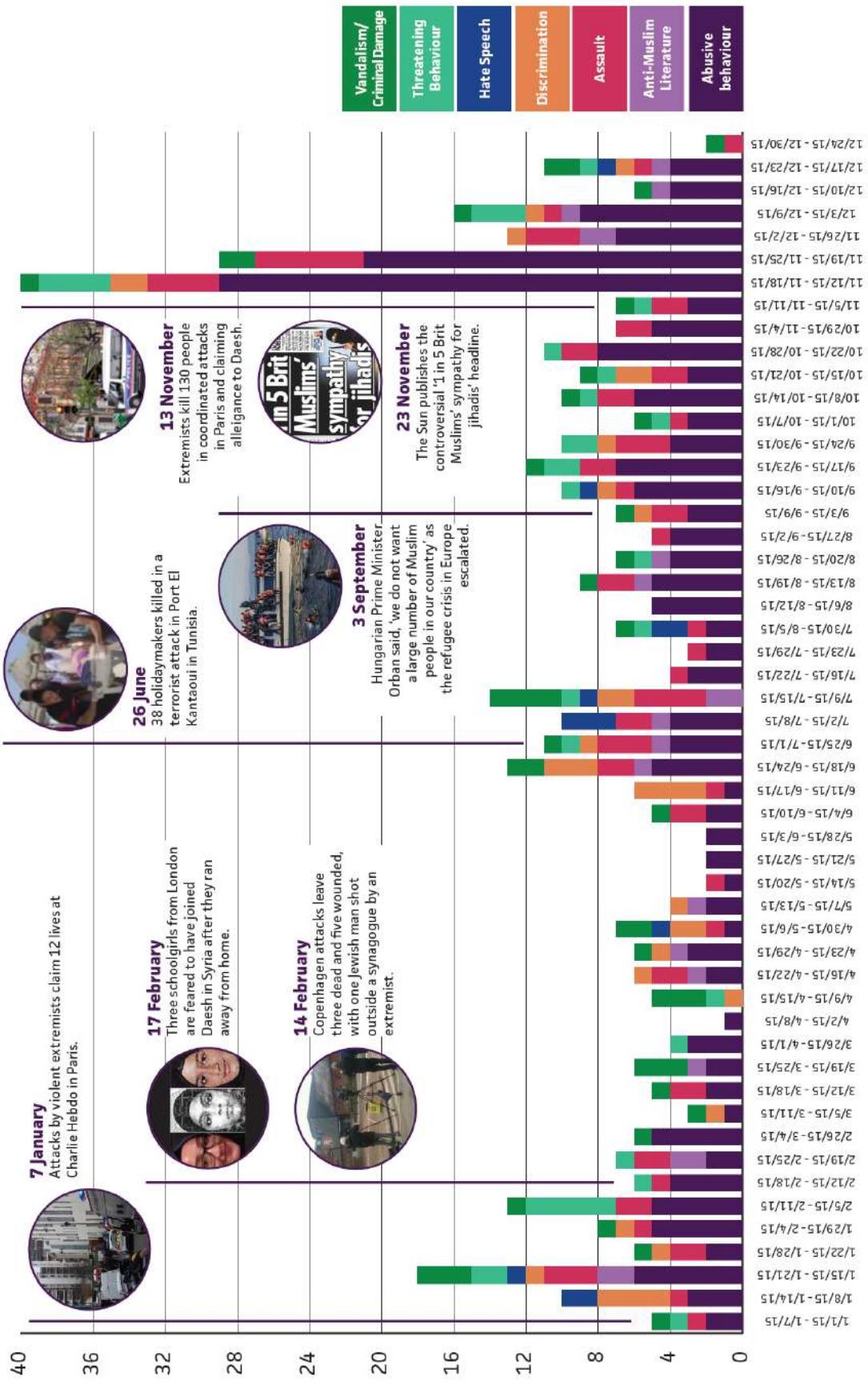
**Table 5.6: Perpetrators by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
White	81	243	2	326
Mixed or multiple ethnicities	1	1	0	2
Black	14	13	1	28
Asian or South Asian	3	5	0	8
Other	1	1	0	2
Unknown	21	121	118	260
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>626</b>

**Map 6.4: East London clusters with detail on Walthamstow and Leyton**



## Chart 3.1: offline incidents by week and international events



### Activity Sheet 8.3

#### Strategies that young Scottish Muslims (12 to 25) adopt to stay secure

#### Words and actions associated with the two overlapping strategies

Strategies of avoidance	Strategies of engagement
Avoiding or ignoring others due to fear of being targeted. Just fitting-in, not seeking attention, Checking one's behaviour, self-silencing. Adopting avoidance routines, Failing to report an incident as nothing will be done. Internalising discomfort. Staying clear of dangerous places. Minimising the self, self surveillance, securitising the self, obstructing potential harm. Minimising difference. Recognising dress is read as a political statement, whether or not to cover up, negotiating the politics of display, the headscarf as a signifier of modesty and religiosity.	Being proud of one's identity as a British Muslim and showing this by one's dress and behaviour. Seeing difference as positive and encouraging others to do the same. Challenging racism and prejudice. Inviting dialogue through talk or gestures (smiles, eye contact). Refusing to be an object of fear or hatred. Projecting one's identity 'I'm not like you think I am'. The headscarf as a signifier of confidence and fashion.

#### STRATEGIES OF AVOIDANCE (Pre-emptive strategies)

I remember in school like all my friends were like Christians, white ... I was very scared about what people would think of me and how that would affect my friendships and like parties I would be invited to. And they would be like 'Oh you don't drink. You shouldn't come.' So, it is easier to ... so I kept a lid on it a lot. And then now it is just really easy to say, Yeah I don't drink. Yeah, I want to go out ...

... I don't think there was that much racism, I think I kind of had it in my head mostly that people would judge me, but yeah they were actually really nice. (Nabila, female, Muslim, Dundee)

it's not that safe ... where I live has loads of like junkies and stuff ... at the start of my street there's like flats and stuff so walking at night alone might not be a good idea, if you're wearing the headscarf ... they can see I'm a Muslim and they might have opinions and views about Islam and stuff and if they watch the news ... it's like you need to watch out for things, you need not to be somebody who's too loud, seek attention of unwanted people. (Bene, female, Ahmadi Muslim refugee, Glasgow)

If a lady is walking down the street in a headscarf and like she's got a full covering on then that's highlighting that she's Muslim. She's got an identity, she's being identified as Muslim which might make her get targeted more ... so, like how people would view you if you'd get treated differently and like your chances of getting a job, or just generally the way that people treat you ... whether you're like a victim of racial abuse. I think that's one o' the key considerations when you're like thinking about putting a headscarf on. (Nadia, female, Muslim, Dundee)

I'm quite scared about like bad judgement especially with all of the things in the media going on about Islam. Like if they see a girl with a hijab on they know that she's Muslim and they jump to conclusions like terrorism and stuff like that. So that's something I wouldn't want to bring to myself. I don't know if like that reason why I'm not wearing it is because I'm trying to kind of blend in or like hide myself from that so ... but then I think that I'm quite, kind of like a coward ... if there is something that I believe in than I should do it, I should show people what is right instead of like hiding away from it. (Tahali, female, Muslim, Dundee)

I was on the bus with my friend, we were just sitting in the very back seats and there were three Scottish teenagers, two girls and one guy and they were all drunk ... first they started name calling ... I kind of ignored it ... but then the girl pulled my scarf off and she's like 'why do you wear this?' You know 'are you trying to hide nits or something' ... then she pulled my hair. (Rani, 19–21, Muslim asylum seeker, Glasgow)

### **STRATEGIES OF ENGAGEMENT (Pro-active strategies)**

I do get the feeling that I always have to be better than who I would normally be. So, I would always go out of my way to do nicer things or be a bit more public about doing it because I am a what a steward or ... the reason is that, ok if he has been good, or if he has done something wrong, then they are going to automatically associate that with everyone the same ... you do get picked out a lot more, and people do keep an eye out just to see, just to kind of feel you out. (Umar, male, Muslim refugee, Glasgow)

I think if you take the first step and smile and say 'hi how are you' or 'how's the weather' and stuff and you know just be normal, be who you are even if I'm wearing scarf or even if I'm a Muslim, it doesn't change me, I'm still a human being. So, I have felt then I find it easier that they find, well people find it easier to talk with me if I'm open and smiling rather than the person who is closed or you know doesn't talk to them regularly. (Az, female, Ahmadi Muslim, asylum seeker, Glasgow)

I was being called everything from 'Paki' to terrorist and to just out of place and all that stuff. But I'll be honest with you everything has just changed. Everyone has grown up everyone's matured they've all kind of understood, understood me as a person. I've become a lot more comfortable with the whole kind of, obviously because you have all these Middle Eastern wars and all that going on and everyone's kind of labelling and like 'Islam's a terrorist' and all that stuff ... But to be honest I mean it doesn't really impact us as, it might impact me on my religion but it's not going to impact me as a person. I would never let my religion come between me and being a human being. That's something I strongly, strongly agree with. I would never do something that I'm not comfortable doing. So, everyone's just, I feel once someone got to know me that they would overlook this ethnic barrier if you will, so. (Aziz, male, Muslim, Highlands)

# **Chapter Nine**

## **Democracy and citizenship**

*For a theoretically adequate understanding of transformation, it is useful to link political ecology with a critical political economy and social theory, especially critical state and hegemony theory.* [Ulrich Brand & Markus Wissen](#) (1) pp. 6-7

*Today, the distribution of planetary wealth and resources is largely uncontested by any political mechanism. . . . Without political intervention, global capital and technology will rule us without any democratic consultation, as naturally and indubitably as the rising oceans.* [Rana Dasgupta](#) (2) p. 10

*In order to prepare students for active participation in the public realm not only as volunteers and single-issue campaigners but as political adversaries, radical democratic citizenship education must recognize and educate political emotions, and foster an understanding of the role of power in the political, as well as of the fundamental differences in the interpretation and implementation of equality and liberty proposed by the political ‘left’ and ‘right’.* [Claudia Ruttenberg](#) (3) p. 9

*Any illusions that we were ever protected from the rank contempt of our rulers by the logic of democracy – because the government embodies the will of the people who elected it – are now gone. Their only concern was for the will that brought them to power. And now, many more protections that we imagined were still in place – from unemployment, from homelessness, from risks to our health in the workplace – will crumble into dust, as our society splits even more decisively into a small group of winners and a large mass of losers.* [Nesrine Malik](#) (4) (following [the Dominic Cummings affair](#) (5), June 2020)

In this final chapter we return to the themes of left populism and radical democracy introduced in chapter one. Drawing on Mouffe’s theory of radical democracy and Ruttenberg’s notion of radical democratic citizenship education, it links the delivery of the SDGs to radical global democratisation and associated forms of ESDGC. Previous chapters and curriculum units have suggested what this involves but this chapter seeks the ‘big picture’ by suggesting that GCE should explore existing undemocratic forms of

international relations and global governance and how they might be democratised. It concludes by linking radical democratic GCE to the existing literature of GCE and its potential to reform school geography in the ways this book has outlined.

The curriculum unit focuses on global tax reform that involves closing down tax havens and taxing digital services. Designed to explore issues of global governance and citizenship, it draws on campaigning by the Tax Justice Network and articles on [the geography of secrecy](#) (6); [the geographies of tax](#) (7); and [London's financial services sector](#) (8). Featuring a 'partnership' on global governance between the G20, OECD, EU, and the UK, it focuses on SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and GCE topic 1 (Local, National and Global Systems).

### **Strategies for social-ecological transformation**

Geographers [Brand and Wissen](#) (9) begin their review of strategies to deal with the social-ecological crisis by pointing out that flagship reports from international agents of global governance from the [Brundtland report](#) of 1987 (10), through Rio+20 and Agenda 21 in 1992, to the advocacy of the SDGs in 2015 fail, like Unesco's guidance on ESDGC, to recognise undemocratic capitalist social and environmental relations as the main cause of unsustainable development. They review five academic approaches to transformation and conclude that an approach based on political ecology linked to critical theory and political economy subsumes the desirable elements of other approaches. As we saw in chapter six, political ecology claims that sustainable development as the greening of socialism (page 251) requires a radical democratic re-shaping of social and environmental (society-nature) relations so that citizens can take control of production, consumption, and social reproduction, and realise sustainability with social justice. [Georges and Maslin](#) (11) also realise that implementing the SDGs means challenging the primacy of economic-growth based paradigms (the greening of capitalism) in development discourse.

Harvey (12) suggests what is involved in democratising the global order. Capital circulates through seven inter-related 'activity spheres' of social-ecological reality in its search of profit (technologies and organisational forms; social relations; institutional and administrative arrangements; production and labour processes; relations to nature; the reproduction of daily life and of the species; and mental conceptions of the world). These evolve in dynamic

interaction with one another, none is dominant, and each is subject to perpetual renewal and transformation (dialectical materialism, page 138). Change starts anywhere. Radical social movements can exploit tensions and contradictions within and between the spheres (at a particular place and time) as they attempt to democratise them but all change is contingent rather than determined (critical realism, page 148). Movements learn through praxis for which Harvey provides a set of ideas linked to the capitalism's contradictions (13)

## **Radical democracy**

Democracy has two core meanings: the free and equal participation of citizens in power (the conditions of popular control and political equality highlighted in Figure 9.1) and the means by which citizens constantly critique and renew political systems (how democracy has been understood has changed and evolved over time). It has no grounds, justifications or guarantees outside of citizens and so free of external ‘gods’, they are able to use democracy as a means of developing the positive freedom (page 52) that allows liberty, equality and sustainability for all. In contemporary liberal democracies these core meanings, together with democracy’s potential for positive freedom, have largely been forgotten and there is a need to [rethink power and agency](#) (14) in the face of corporate and financial power. Radical democracy seeks to revive core meanings so that, as Harvey suggests, they become effective in an increasing number of spheres and scales of social activity, so enabling the concept of global citizenship to take on added meaning.

While the concept of [radical democracy](#) (15) has acquired a number of interpretations within critical theory, I draw on the post-Marxist approach of Chantal Mouffe that links it to hegemonic struggle, radical reformism, agonism, and left populism.

Mouffe (16) maintains that radical democracy is to be achieved in a hegemonic way via an [immanent critique](#) (17) of existing neoliberal society that compares what democracy exists with what democracy should or might be. While recent neoliberal decades have been characterised by [post-democracy](#) (society continues to have all the institutions of democracy but they have become a formal shell (18)), democracy lives on in the popular imagination and its core critical meanings can be reactivated to subvert the existing neoliberal hegemonic order and create a different one. As we have seen in previous chapters, the agents of such renewal are social movements and political parties



## What is Democracy?

**"Like fire, or painting or writing, democracy seems to have been invented more than once, and in more than one place"**

- Robert A. Dahl - On Democracy



Literally meaning 'rule by [the] people', democracy is **a form of government involving collective decision-making**. Political legitimacy comes from the consent and control of the governed - rather than from wealth, divine-right conferred by a deity, or military might.

Democracy has meant different things, to different people, at different times. The nature of democracy - who 'the people' are, and the systems and institutions which make democratic rule realisable - has been **contested throughout its 2,500 year history**.



When we refer to 'democracy', we could be talking about an ideal of how the public ought to govern a state. Or, we could be talking about the particular political system and institutions that are practically needed to bring about the conditions for democracy.

### Key principles of democracy

How democracy has been understood has changed and evolved over time. The *International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance* (International IDEA) defines democracy as having two conditions:

#### 1. Popular Control

Concerns **what powers are being distributed (political control over authoritative political decision-making)**

#### 2. Political Equality

Concerns **how the powers should be distributed (equally) and implemented (impartially)**

According to their State of Democracy framework, the extent to which a system of government is democratic is based on how far it meets the following criteria:



**Representative government** e.g. free political parties



**Fundamental rights** e.g. social rights and equality



**Checks on government** e.g. judicial independence



**Impartial administration** e.g. absence of corruption



**Participatory engagement** e.g. direct democracy

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**Figure 9.1 What is democracy? (19)**

of many kinds that oppose the power of elites and are united by discourses or symbolic signifiers (eco-socialism, anti-globalisation, global democracy, a green new deal, sustainability, black lives matter) that provide a political vocabulary to explain people's subordination and how realising liberty and equality via radical democracy can remove it.

*A hegemonic formation is a configuration of social practices of different natures: economic, cultural, political and juridical, whose articulation is secured around some key symbolic signifiers which shape the 'common sense' and provide the normative framework of a given society.* (16) pp. 43-4

**Hegemonic struggle** involves disarticulating established social practices, transforming them, and introducing new ones. This involves redefining hegemonic signifiers, such as democracy, and their mode of articulation. Whereas neoliberalism articulates democracy with free markets, private property and unfettered individualism, left populism articulates it with equal rights, the social appropriation of the means of production, and popular sovereignty. Similarly the signifier sustainability can be articulated in a reformist or radical mode (page 253). Different articulations give rise to different social practices, forms of development, politics and citizenship.

Mouffe follows Gramsci in recognising the relative autonomy of the state rather than seeing it as an oppressive institution determined by the economy that needs to be abolished (a key feature of her post-Marxism). **Radical reformism** argues that there is no necessary relationship between capitalism and liberal democracy; that it is possible to use the features of liberal democracy (division of powers, universal suffrage, multi-party system, civil rights, the five criteria listed in Figure 9.1) to advance democratic demands; but that liberal democracy itself needs radicalising to incorporate new demands and new ways of doing politics.

Accepting liberal democracy does not mean accepting capitalism (political liberalism can exist without economic liberalism) and radicalising democracy necessarily includes a postcapitalist dimension as many forms of subordination that need to be challenged are the consequences of capitalist power relations. Mouffe does not give the working class an a priori privileged role in anti-capitalist struggle, but echoes intersectionality theory in recognising many overlapping sites of identity formation and subordination from which people struggle on the basis of their concrete situations.

This argument concerning liberal democracy can be extended to the institutions of global governance that should be reformed to produce a [global accountable democracy](#) (20). The treaties underlying their formation should be mutually accepted by nation states and they should follow five basic internal rules:

- *Democratic selection of representatives at local or state level and indirect appointment of members of the global boards and councils*
- *Qualified country representation by rules such as turns or weights*
- *Policy consensus built by expertise and experience*
- *Explicit imperative mandates on policy*
- *And Accountability on the basis of performance and conduct* (20) p. 14=15

Mouffe's concept of **agonism** stems from her conceptions of the political and politics:

- The political refers to *the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations* (21) p. 15 and is *constitutive of society* (22) p.9. It requires recognizing *the hegemonic nature of every kind of social order and the fact that every society is the product of a series of practices attempting to establish order in a context of contingency* (22) p. 17.
- Politics comprises those elements of society affected by this political dimension – *the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organise human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of the political* (21) p. 15.

Conflict, convictions and emotions are central to radical or agonistic democracy and pluralist politics and are to be channelled into political commitments to social designs. We/they antagonisms are part of the human condition, never disappear, but can be treated in a way that turns antagonism into agonism: *the aim of democratic politics is to construct the 'them' in such a way that it is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed but as an 'adversary', that is somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question* (23) pp. 101-2. While antagonism undermines trust in politics, agonism increases it by recognising the potentially positive aspects of certain but not all forms of political conflict.

**Left populism** seeks the construction of a collective will, new historical bloc, or people able to establish a new hegemonic formation with a new articulation between the constitutive political principles of liberal democracy and the socio-economic practices in which they are institutionalised. It enables us to envisage a rupture with neoliberalism via the radicalising of democracy that necessitates another kind of liberal democracy at local, national and global levels. In the current contingency, the new hegemony is most closely associated in Britain with eco-socialism and a green new deal (GND) that offers a green recovery from the recession induced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Supported in different forms by the [Green](#) (24) and [Labour](#) (25) parties and the [TUC](#) (26) it offers to revive and stabilize a socially democratic form of capitalism as a stepping stone on the path to a democratic socialist economy enabled by new digital technologies. A GND would use new energy technologies; create jobs; solve the housing crisis; increase biodiversity; and experiment with new forms of universal basic income and services paid for by old and new forms of taxation. The UN proposed [a global GND](#) (27) in 2009 and Unesco's [next normal campaign](#) (28), launched in 2020, may revive and refocus this initiative in the context of post-Covid recovery and the delivery of the SDGs.

## Citizenship

Mouffe describes citizenship as *political activity involving a struggle for hegemony possible at any site from an engagement with the state, in the economy, or in everyday practices of identity formation* (29) p. 178. This definition widens the scope and location of citizenship suggesting it can be practiced in all social spheres, embraces citizens' public and private lives; and is activated in different ways in different places.

The pioneers of such citizenship are the members of social movements and left political parties that challenge neoliberal hegemony. Their protests and campaigns seek to change people's 'common sense' by offering them new identities and forms of citizenship. The environmental movement and the movement for global justice are the most relevant for geography teachers and as we have seen they offer forms of sustainability and global citizenship that extend the temporal and spatial scope of citizenship and give it both public and private dimensions (pages 256). Citizens are to exercise responsibility for people distant in space and time, for other sentient beings, and for people marginalised by colonialism and neo-colonialism. These forms of citizenship give expressive to Earth Charter principles; extend citizenship into the private

domains of consumption and lifestyle; and are alert to the root narratives that inform their conceptualisation and realisation (Fig. 7.3. p. 251). The struggles to establish them are part of a broader struggle for a new hegemony and are historical and geographical in that they occur at particular spaces/places at particular times (the anti-globalisation politics of 1989-2001; the Arab spring of 2011/12; Occupy in 2011; Black Lives Matter protests in 2020). Gilbert provides a summary of what twenty-first century socialist strategy should involve (30).

### **GCE and deliberative global democratisation**

The dominant approach to citizenship education informed by critical theory draws on the theory and practice of deliberative democracy. As we saw in chapters two and five (pages 195 & 197) when we considered critical education and pedagogy, Dewey, Habermas and others place communicative rationality and public deliberation at the heart of democracy. Decisions that reflect the will of the people should be arrived at through public reasoning and mutually justifiable reasons should legitimate the laws they impose on one another. A deliberative situation is a dialogue in which different voices, perspectives and discourses can be heard and expressed; participants listen and treat each other with respect; and after considering reasons (what is technically possible, culturally acceptable, and morally and politically right) arrive at a mutually agreed decision. [Samuelsson and Boyum](#) (31) review the literature on education for deliberative democracy and find a tension between narrow political and wider pedagogical interpretations.

My previous writing on geography and GCE has drawn on education for deliberative democracy. In 2015, I published [an article](#) (32) that outlined the contested discourses shaping proposals for global democratisation and argued the advantages of Dryzek's model of deliberative global democratisation (33) over Held's cosmopolitan model (34) and the dominant neoconservative (neoliberal) model. Alongside these models, I reviewed discourses of GCE noting two dominant agendas: education to equip students to live and work in global society (a neoliberal agenda) and education to develop commitment to a fairer and more sustainable world (arguably a socially-democratic agenda). The article acknowledged Andreotti's distinction between hard and soft GCE (page 295) and suggested pedagogy might draw on [Englund's](#) components of deliberative classroom communication (35).

## Towards GCE and radical global democratisation

Radical democrats associated with an agonistic perspective hold that the problem with deliberative democracy is that it seeks to eliminate conflict, passions and emotions together with possibilities for agonistic political conflict. Ruttenberg (3) outlines three ways in which deliberative democracy differs from radical democracy:

1. In its liberal emphasis on the individual's reasons and justifications, it underestimates the importance of the individual belonging to a collective and identifying with collective political programmes.
2. Its emphasis on individualism and rationality means it ignores the political emotions and passions mobilized by collective identifications with political programmes.
3. Political adversaries are commonly confused with moral enemies. Deliberation too readily slips into moral debate on matters of right and wrong rather than political debate over how best to organise society (right/left).

The result of eliminating conflict, collectives and emotions, and failing to frame conflicts in political terms, is that critical pedagogy [fails to feel empowering](#) (36). Conflict and emotions should not to be eliminated but harnessed towards agonistic debate over the interpretation and implementation of the core liberal values of liberty and equality and the hegemonic social relations that best give them expression. This is what we see happening within radical global social movements, and arguably within citizens' assemblies.

[Tryggvason](#) (37) argues that attempts to assimilate agonism with deliberation are not compatible with Mouffe' theory, while [Lo](#) (38) explains how agonism can be incorporated into two democratic classroom activities, structured academic controversy and debate. [Todd](#) (39) suggests that agonism provides a theoretical framework for cosmopolitanism in education with reference to debates over the wearing of various forms of Muslim dress in US schools. [Snir](#) (40) provides additional insights into how Laclau and Mouffe's ideas can be applied in schools while Amsler shows why it is important to regard radical democracy as an educational activity (41).

## **GCE and radical global democratisation**

A reformulated critical GCE should educate the emotions; foster understanding of the difference between moral and political disputes and how power constitutes global society; and develop political literacy in a way that raises awareness of the political projects of ‘left’ and ‘right’ (3). Students should understand the difference between private and collective emotions; the ways in which emotions are collaboratively constructed in movements and parties and are associated with views of desirable social relations and hegemonic orders. GCE should explore how movements and parties have developed solidarity across space, time and species and why it is justifiable to feel anger on behalf of those (including other sentient species) who suffer injustice.

To distinguish between moral and political anger students need to understand power and its role in constituting the social order. Moral anger leads to acts of kindness such as charitable giving while political anger leads to attempts to establish a more democratic and just social order. GCE should frame debate not in terms of a competition between moral enemies (with differing interpretations of right and wrong) but as confrontation in the public sphere where political adversaries, with differing views on a desirable global society, engage in agonistic debate (cf soft and hard approaches to GCE, page 295).

Political literacy as defined by Ruttenburg (the ability to *read the social order in terms of political disputes over liberty, equality and the hegemonic relations that should shape them* (3) p. 8) brings us back to Mouffe’s left populism and her notion of radical reformism. As the Programme for Political Education (42) realised, students need propositional and procedural knowledge about politics in a liberal democracy; relevant intellectual, communication and action skills, and a range of attitudes and procedural values. These allow conserving, critical and participative forms of citizenship that embrace the work of political parties, non-governmental organisations and social movements at all levels from the local to the global. It is such political literacy that the curriculum units in this book, and in *What We Consume* (43), seek to develop.

Educating the political emotions; fostering an understanding of power and hegemony; and developing political literacy in a global context should involve students learning about the undemocratic nature of international relations and global governance to which we now turn.

## **International relations**

After the first world war, [Woodrow Wilson](#) (44) called for a comprehensive inter-state democracy (a society of nations governed by the rule of law) designed to ensure global co-operation, justice and peace. A second war and the ensuing cold war buried his dream and the world continues to lack a single authority capable of regulating the global economy and providing the resources to deliver the SDGs. Mazower (45) traces the history of the struggle to bring order to an anarchic and dangerous world while Monbiot (46) offers a manifesto for a new world order that includes a world parliament, an international clearing union to regulate international capital flows, and a fair trade organisation.

Clearly GCE cannot neglect international relations and the need to reform institutions of global governance in ways that render them more democratic. Booth's introductory text on international relations (47) and an article by [Dasgupta](#) (2) would suggest that students need to consider the following key ideas:

- 1. International Relations** Actors at the international level of world politics include states, corporations, institutions of global governance, international NGOs, and others. These actors have varying levels of economic, political and cultural power and the relations between them in the past, present, and into the future largely determine, directly or indirectly, what happens in our lives.
- 2. Anarchy.** International relations are characterised by anarchy as there is no overall political authority in the world and states making up the international system must operate according to the 'self help' principle, looking after their own security and wellbeing. Such anarchy (which does not necessarily imply chaos, disorder and confusion) means that competition and mistrust remain the default settings of nation states preventing progress on many issues of mutual concern.
- 3. The nation state..** There are many possible forms of political identity, association and loyalty and these are historical phenomena that change through time. Today's political organization of global society results from the rise of the modern state and the [Westphalian system](#) (48) that legitimates the sovereignty of nation states as demarcated territorial political units. Sovereignty, or the supreme right to exercise exclusive authority (law making and enforcement) over a territory and people, is the

ordering principle of the modern international system. The entangled, multifaceted and anarchic relations between sovereign states give international relations their character, significance and fascination.

4. **Contemporary challenges to the nation state.** The nation state is currently challenged as a unit of security (unable to defend itself against nuclear attack or pandemics); as a unit of authority (others seek to protect the individual eg. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Criminal Court); as a unit of collective identity (undermined by migration, devolution, globalization, regional bodies such as the European Union, rise of trans-national identities such as radical Islam, spread of global civil society groups committed to global citizenship); as a unit of economic activity (globalization means states lose power and revenues and become less relevant); as a unit of political independence (there is no alternative to interdependence given the rise of cross-border issues, international institutions and global governance eg. UN, intergovernmental institutions, international NGOs ). 'The big picture of world politics today consists of growing tension between the traditional ordering principle of the territorial sovereign state (for security, prosperity and cultural identity), increasingly insistent global threats (notably climate change) and powerful transnational dynamics (such as globalization and global governance)' (47) p. 29
5. A key feature in **the demise of nation states** is their loss of control over capital flows which results in declining tax revenues and falling levels of welfare. Together with rising inequality (resulting from neoliberalism) cuts to welfare result in growing populism. States withdraw into nationalism ('take back control') and take on increasing undemocratic forms: authoritarianism (eg. Russia, Turkey), ethno-religious purification (eg. India, Hungary); the magnification of presidential powers and the abandonment of civil rights and the rule of law (eg. China, Venezuela). In the coming phase of techno-financial capitalism (49), corporations employing big data will take over functions formerly carried out by the state (mapping, surveillance, security, healthcare), act as gatekeepers of social reality (social media); and offer new forms of citizenship that are antagonistic to those based on the nation state.

6. **Global futures.** International relations in the near and distant future will be shaped by numerous factors that will or may include: the interplay of sovereign and non-sovereign authorities; the Sunni/Shi'a divide; the gap between rich and poor; technological innovation and cyberwarfare; [a new cold war between the US and China](#) (50); radical Islam and global terrorism; future wars in for example East Asia; new forms of economics and politics emerging from below; the reform of the UN; the worsening environmental crisis; an economic crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Future global scenarios include: 1) business as usual with states increasingly stressed due to competition over security, prosperity and identity 2) global regionalism with continental sized regions concentrating on economic growth and possibly political development as in Europe, or 3) global government with global governance evolving into a world government backed by law and ultimately by force (Key idea 19, page 14).

## Global governance

[Global governance](#) (51) is the sum of the processes whereby global society and its institutions determine who has power, who makes decisions, how other players make their voices heard and how account is rendered. It brings together diverse mechanisms and actors (international organisations, markets, regimes, treaties, international law, military force, coercive diplomacy, NGOs, private arrangements, regional bodies and nation states, and public spheres) to coordinate collective action at the level of the planet. Its goals are to provide global public goods (peace, security, justice, sustainability); manage risks and the global commons, and mediate between nations in conflict. While essential, it is fragmented, complex and undemocratic. [Open democracy](#) (52) and [Freedom House](#) (53) are perhaps the prime sites for tracking trends in democracy across the world while agents such as [Global Challenges](#) (54) exist to reform global governance and develop alternatives. In addition to seeking to deepen and widen democracy (all spheres of life at all scales from the local to the global), radical democrats also support [subsidiarity](#) (55) or the political principle that social issues should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level that is consistent with their resolution.

The formal political bodies constitute a hierarchical network, from the local to the global, within a wider network and this will now be outlined.

**The United Nations** is the leading institution of global governance with 193 member states making recommendations via the General Assembly that may be vetoed by the Security Council. It works through a range of agencies such as Unesco and the World Health Organisation. [Global Challenges](#) (56) suggests the UN Charter should be revised to give it binding legislative, judicial and enforcement functions to address catastrophic risks, such as global heating, while reserving most functions to states. The General Assembly should be complemented by a second chamber representing global citizens; an Executive Council should replace the Security Council; and international courts should have compulsory jurisdiction. Reliable and enhanced funding mechanisms should be established and legitimacy increased through popular participation.

[Sharei](#) (57) address the issue of UN Charter reform; the [Center for the Development of International Law](#) considers international democracy and UN reform; and [Secretary General Gutterres](#) (58) considers multilateralism in an age of growing populism. The [UNA-UK](#) (59) has teaching resources on the United Nations.

Below the UN are the Bretton Woods institutions: the World Bank and International Monetary Fund that regulate the world economy and credit markets. They are the subject of critique from the [Bretton Woods Project](#) (60) and from such transnational NGOs as [Progressive International](#) (61) and [the tax justice network](#) (62) that see them sustaining an unsustainable global system. Also at this level are supranational bodies such as the [G7](#) (63) and the [G20](#) (64), the [WTO](#) (65) and [the OECD](#) (66) (curriculum units 3 and 9), NATO and the Commonwealth.

Next are the **regional bodies** such as the EU and [ALBA](#) (the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our Americas that features in curriculum unit one) (67) that coordinate the policies of their member states in a specific area. These include security and economic initiatives such as NATO or China's BRI. [Prentoulis](#) (68) explains that while the EU prefigures a supra-national democracy that has the potential to promote liberty, equality, and sustainability, it faces two major problems. In the absence of a common fiscal policy, uneven

and combined development reinforces pre-existing national differences. Thirty years of neoliberalism have brought massive gains for Germany while Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain have seen rising budget deficits, trade imbalances, and borrowing. Events in 2015 when the Troika (ECB, EC & IMF) imposed austerity on Greece (structural adjustment imposed on a Northern rather than Southern nation) revealed the authoritarian nature of the EU's neoliberalism, while the continuing refugee crisis reveals the second problem, a lack of political will to find collective solutions to difficult questions. Growing support for right wing populism and nationalism reflects citizens' growing disenchantment with the EU and the extent to which it has moved away from Delors' 1985 vision of a social Europe able to balance social justice and economic competitiveness.

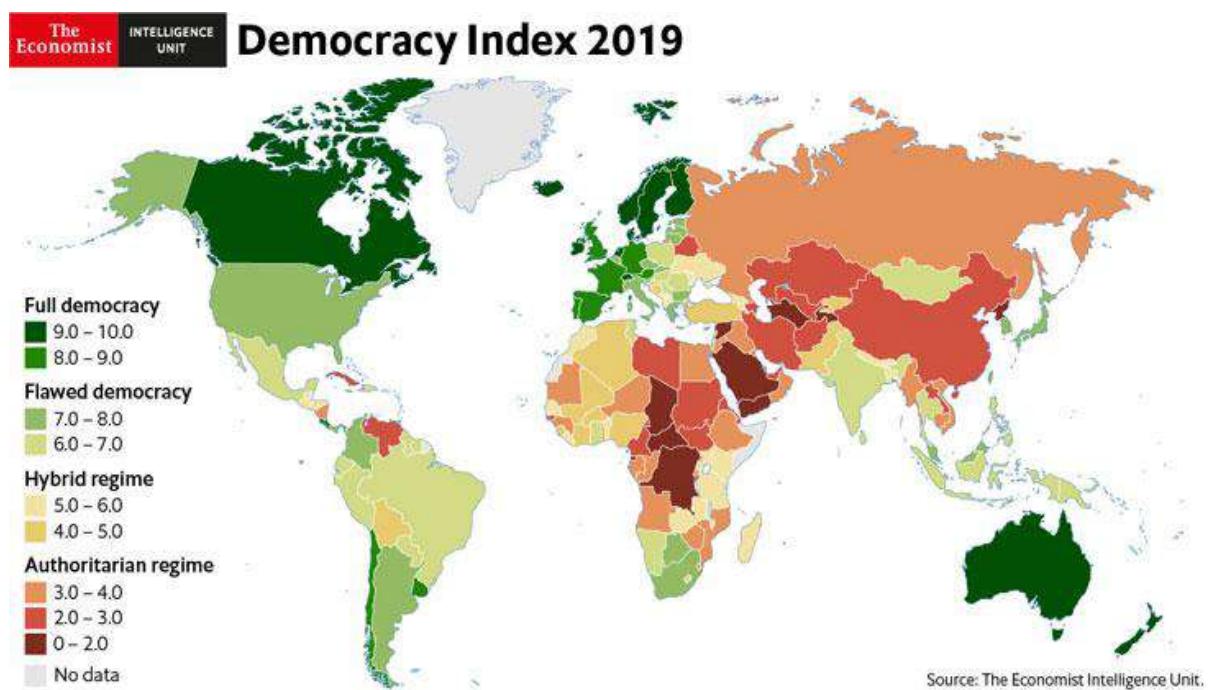
Prentoulis further explains that EU institutions are unrepresentative and unaccountable; that a post-democratic logic subordinates politics to technocratic expertise promoting neoliberalism; that austerity is justified in terms of 'household economics' (the need to pay one's debts); and that Europe risks break-up into a fiscally and politically integrated core and a neo-colonial periphery. She sees left populism as a solution for Europe and was encouraged by the rise of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. In 2016 Yanis Varoufakis founded [DiEM25](#), as a populist left movement in Europe promoting radical democracy and a green new deal (Figure 9.2).



**Figure 9.2 Graphic promoting DiEM 25 (70)**

[Moffit and his co-authors](#) (69) examine how it constructed its 2019 EU election campaign; the discourse it employed (European people the underdogs, super-national elite the enemy, cosmopolitan and pro refugees); its attempt to bridge national and transnational dimensions of European citizenship; and its dismissal (nowhere did affiliated parties receive more than 4% of the votes) as citizens continued to look to nationalist parties to meet their demands, defend their rights, and express their identities.

Underwood and Pinder (71) provide an introduction to the EU; Rogers (72) outlines nine lessons in Brexit; and [Garton Ash](#) (73) argues that the European project is worth defending. [Catterall](#) (74) and [Rankin](#) (75) have written on EU democracy, the Carnegie Europe website has [six ideas for democratising Europe](#) (76), and in 2019 [Now the Citizens](#) (77) was campaigning for a more democratic Europe. The EU has extensive [resources for teachers](#) (78).



**Figure 9.3 The democracy index 2019** (79)

At the level of **nation states**, the Economist Intelligence Unit's [democracy index](#) (80) ranks countries according the weighted average of their scores on 60 indicators measuring election procedures and pluralism; civil liberties; functioning of government and political parties; and political culture. The results are then used to group countries into four regime types (Figure 9.3) full

democracies; flawed democracies, hybrid regimes; and authoritarian regimes. In 2019, Norway, Iceland and Sweden occupied the top rankings, the UK came 14<sup>th</sup>, Venezuela 140<sup>th</sup>, and China 153<sup>rd</sup>. Freedom House has [an alternative ranking of countries](#) (81) based on citizens' access to political rights and civil liberties and reports that in 2020 many nations in Europe and Eurasia were [dropping their 'democratic facade'](#) (82). As we saw on page 115, social capital data provided by the OECD Better Life Index also gives an indication of the quality of governance within nation states.

[Human Rights Watch](#) reports on the state of human rights in the world's states and introduced its 2019 report (83) with an article explaining that the world's autocrats face growing resistance. [Transparency International](#) (84) produces a corruption perception index and associated global map. [Xindex](#) (85) measures media freedom around the world and in 2019 produced [an interactive map](#) (86) showing media freedom during the coronavirus crisis. These initiatives provide geography teachers with ways of introducing students to the state of democracy across the world.

As regards **the UK**, [Democracy Audit](#) reports on the state of democracy. Its 2018 report states that assessing liberal democratic trends across the UK has never been so important as the UK government cuts loose from the convergence on a 'European' template for liberal democracy; its famously 'uncodified' (or messy) constitution faces another period of dramatic upheaval; and new loads will be placed on central government by 'taking back control' of trade policy and immigration. It notes that the background international context for liberal democracies has worsened dramatically and that recent experience demonstrates that having a few big 'building blocks' of democracy in place, such as majority voting system and a popularly elected legislature, is not enough to prevent democratic decay or backsliding.

Causes for concern in 2018 included the chaotic condition of party politics; the state of internal party democracy across the parties; the cumulative effects of austerity and non-growth policies (2010-2018) on civil service efficiency; the quality of public services and the hollowing out of local government; and the malfunctioning central government apparatus around the Prime Minister and Cabinet that led to policy disasters in both foreign and domestic affairs (eg. Libya, Brexit, NHS reorganisation, Universal Credit, Grenfell Tower disaster). UK democracy was still limited by an unelected second chamber of the

legislature; an extensive ‘dark state apparatus’ subject to no or only partial oversight; an unclear residue of ‘crown prerogative’ powers that allow government to take major executive actions alone without parliamentary scrutiny; and an electoral system that assigns parties seats in no fixed relation to their share of the vote. Laws and regulations failed to control overspending by the Leave campaign in 2016; prevent Russian bots influencing voters in 2016 and 2017; or curb manipulative messaging and targeting of voters using false information. In 2020 the government’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic [raised questions](#) (87) that exposed the [institutional failings of governance](#) (88) and an associated failure to protect citizens (see Malik (4) at the head of the chapter).

Democratic audit finds grounds for optimism related to the workings of the hung parliament (2015 – 2017) that increased the role of back benchers and select committees in making policy and overseeing its implementation. The membership of Labour and the SNP grew diversifying their finances, while devolution proved increasingly successful. Positive and responsible uses of social media by most citizens greatly extended the scope and quality of public surveillance over governing elites. Ordinary people, including school students, can now make their views heard on more issues more quickly and effectively – increasing the responsiveness of officials and public services. More recently there has been increased advocacy and use of citizens’ assemblies and juries.

[The Democracy Commission](#) (89) is an IPPR report that recommends the reform of UK democracy to combat political inequality. It documents sharp inequalities in voice and political influence by age, class and region; reveals differences in how different social groups perceive the fairness and effectiveness of democratic institutions; suggests that these are not fit for a post-industrial digital age; and that there is post-democratic drift in our political culture as politics becomes professionalised, class identities weaken, and parties drift away from their anchors in civil society. Our divided democracy is inevitably a partial democracy and the reforms the authors offer for consideration include [reviewing constituency boundaries](#) (90); introducing a system of [single transferrable votes](#) (91); automatic registration of voters and compulsory voting; and establishing a democracy commission to facilitate citizen participation.

Others are more critical. Here is [Monbiot](#) (92) (93) writing about the Johnson government in September 2020

*Our system allows the victorious government a mandate to do what it likes between elections without further reference to the people. As we have seen this can include breaching international law, suspending parliament, curtailing the judiciary, politicising the civil service, attacking the Electoral Commission and invoking royal prerogative powers to make policy without anyone's consent. This is not a democracy but a parody of democracy.* (92) p. 3

He points to the imbalance of power between capital and citizens; a political system that invites autocratic behaviour; the inadequacy of Labour's opposition; and the example set by Extinction Rebellion as both an environmental and democracy movement advocating participatory politics.

Beneath nation states are local states and other institutions of governance: devolved administrations in the case of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; metropolitan and regional authorities; county councils, boroughs, local authorities, and parishes. These anchor politics in places and have the power to foster mutual aid, political literacy and a sense of community, through such activities as constitutional conventions; citizens' assemblies; [participatory budgeting](#) (94) and planning; and the [new municipalism](#) (95) as developed in Preston (page 267) and [Barcelona](#) (96). Collier (97) and Kay explain how the devolution of power to regions and localities, together with a new balance between representative and participative democracy, can counter destructive individualism (98).

Meanwhile representative democracy in Britain shows little real evidence that citizens wish to 'take back control'. As many as 8 million citizens could be missing from the register; only around 2 of every 3 registered voters vote in general elections; only 2 out of every 5 voted in the referendum on fairer voting in 2011; and 'all too many never discuss government or politics, or wish to be involved' (99) p. 42.

## **Global citizenship education**

So where does a critical school geography based on the concept of radical democracy that promotes sustainability and global citizenship fit within the literature of GCE? Lynch (100) argued for a new approach to CE that can develop *concerned and active participants in local, national and international life, who can critically appraise and judge the merits of domestic, national and international policies against a clarified and reflective system of values, grounded in human rights and social responsibilities. It aims to show how an essentially emancipatory concept of citizenship education, which can address issues of power and hegemony, human rights and social responsibility at local, national and international levels, can be disseminated and developed through the formal school system.* p. 2

Along with the three levels of citizenship, he recognises four domains (social, cultural, environmental and economic) stating that each level and domain is symbiotic with others. His rationale draws on [Rawl's concept of equal justice](#) (101) to suggest GCE should promote a just world society and regards sustainable development as *a matter of not just trade-offs between economic development and ecological sustainability, but also of human rights and social responsibilities in the relationship between North and South* p. 3. The rationale leads to learning outcomes for students that can be realised in distinctive ways by critical school geography. For example:

### ***Understandings (3 from a total of 5)***

- *of economic and environmental interdependence at local, national and international levels;*
- *of major human rights and responsibilities at the three levels in the four domains;*
- *of the various ways in which pluralist democracies work;*

### ***Values and attitudes (2 from 7)***

- *a strong commitment to gender and racial equality and a willingness to fight socially and politically for them;*
- *a commitment to persuasion and dialogue as the major means to achieve social justice and change;*

### ***Skills and behaviours (3 from 11)***

- *autonomous but socially responsible moral judgement and integrity, based on reflective and clarified values;*
- *ability to evaluate the economic, social, political and environmental decisions of others objectively;*
- *political literacy including the capacity for creative dissent, problem-solving, advocacy and creative conflict resolution.* (100) pp. 42-3.

Hopefully readers will recognise Lynch's influence on the content and curriculum units in this book. His ideas and guidance can be interpreted in ways that draw on critical theory and pedagogy and foster consideration of radical democracy.

A more recent comprehensive overview of GCE is provided by Gaudelli (102). He draws on Oxley and Morris (103) who recognise eight conceptions of GCE: four cosmopolitan positions based on universal ethics (political, moral, economic and cultural) and four advocacy positions (social, critical, environmental and spiritual) that are more communitarian in organisation while also showing some overlap with cosmopolitan positions. GCE based on radical global democratisation draws mainly on the social, critical and environmental advocacy positions outlined below, with some attention to all four cosmopolitan positions.

- *Social global citizenship, which manifests itself mainly through civil society organisations working toward global community and focuses on interconnections and interdependencies;*
- *Critical global citizenship rooted in critical, post-colonial and post-development theories and promoting deconstruction and critique of social norms, institutions and structures reproducing inequalities and oppression. The proponents of this model advocate action to improve the lives of those who have been marginalised, to make us listen to them and to be responsible toward them – not for them (Andreotti, 2006).* (page 249)
- *Environmental global citizenship, which focuses on environmental issues, both from ecocentric and, more often, anthropocentric positions with the main concept of sustainable development. It advocates changes in human actions in relation to the environment.* (As outlined by [Kuleta-Hulborg](#) (104))

Others alert us to the potential of GCE to act as ideology once captured by corporate cosmopolitan capital with [Marshall](#) (105) urging us to recognise the political, economical, geographical and historical situatedness of all such educational initiatives and [Mitchell](#) (106) explaining that neoliberalism resulted in a shift of focus from the multi-cultural self to the strategic cosmopolitan. In a critique that is equally relevant to schools, [Pais and Costa](#) (107) note that the discourses of critical democracy and neoliberalism exist side by side in universities. GCE can then act as an apologetic narrative used by those who work in them, notwithstanding their continued commodification. In conversation with [Bosio and Torres](#) imagine a '*yet to come*' post-colonial, critical-transformative, and value-creating GCE curriculum beyond a Westernised, market-orientated and apolitical practices toward a more sustainable paradigm based on principles of mutuality and reciprocity . . . a concept that portrays a way of acting in society that is community-centric, ecologically balanced and culturally sensitive, in the ongoing construction of a more just and peaceful world (108).

[Hatley](#) (109) argues that universal values are counterproductive to GCE, suggesting emancipative values, such as choice, voice, equality and autonomy, would better enable it to guide (agonistic?) debate on how social ideas such as sustainability can be interpreted in the light of individual and local contexts. [Starkey](#) (110) considers the nationalist agenda of fundamental British values (page 280) an impediment to global perspectives in CE.

## Guidance on GCE

Gaudelli reviews guidance from [Oxfam](#) (111), the [Maastricht Global Education Declaration](#) (112), and Unesco (page 20). While he finds strengths in these (for example their broad and inclusive conception of GCE; their attention to key values and topics such as human rights, diversity, and democracy; and their advocacy of social action) he notes that these various conceptions *vacillate around the deeply problematic North-South gap within GCE, particularly resonant as school systems grow more focussed on economic growth at the direction of governments and policy bodies* (102) p. 49. This is another way of saying that like Unesco's advocacy of SDGs, advocacy of GCE fails to acknowledge global political economy, the undemocratic nature of global governance and international relations, and the need for radical global

democratisation if the SDGs are to be met and the guidance on GCE realised in a realistic rather than idealistic manner.

## School Geography and GCE

Yarwood's text on citizenship in the key ideas in geography series (113), has a section on citizenship in education policy (pp. 133 -142). He reminds us that school geography has long been associated with the teaching of 'good' citizenship but that such aims have periodically met with cynicism and criticism (114). A long series of quotes traces the changing justifications for linking geography and citizenship education that include supporting British imperialism; encouraging internationalism; fostering national identity; seeing off competitors like social studies; and responding to the introduction of citizenship in the national curriculum. He draws on [Pykett](#) (115) who suggests that citizenship as outlined in the 2002 NC guidance lacks critical depth (*community involvement which fails to question the boundaries of community and the importance of belonging and identity; political literacy which fails to problematise the legitimacy of the nation-state and its political institutions* p. 311) and reminds us that citizenship is far from 'given' or neutral but in addition to guidance, is shaped by the location of the school, the technologies (pedagogies) of education, the agents, teachers and others, who deliver it, and the influence of students' peers.

Following the publication of Lambert and Machon's edited text (116) the GA's citizenship working group reached conclusions that allow the reader to assess whether the theory and practice of critical school geography, as outlined in this text, accords with its thinking. Extracts from the group's article in *Geography* (117), published in 2008, are quoted without the accompanying references.

On the meaning of citizenship. *In summary, citizenship is about relations between people, the ways in which we are governed and govern others, and the values and dispositions that bring us together and stand 'us' apart.* p. 34

On how geographers approach citizenship. *However in general geographers approach 'citizenship' as constructed, embodied, experienced, performed and understood in certain spaces and contexts, and at certain scales. Geographers*

*study the making of citizens across multiple locales, political units and scales of governance.* p. 35

*On the need for an alternative geographical imagination that elucidates a notion of citizenship as relationally and globally formed. It recognises the open-ended nature of relations in geographical space. But this is quite different from the narrow absolutist notion of citizenship based on national-state territories practised in political relations and in the national curriculum for geography and citizenship.* p. 39

*On the growing significance of global citizenship. State-organised citizenship has become 'denationalised' as more decisions about these big issues now have to be made collectively via 'communities of states' like the EU, WTO, NATO and the World Bank. Citizenship is also enacted at these scales via the rapidly growing NGO sector . . . . that increasingly organises political participation in global issues.* p. 36

*On an appropriate pedagogy. It requires classrooms to be characterised by a 'culture of argument' or 'education for conversation' in which students are encouraged to ask questions, feel comfortable with scepticism, adopt a cautious approach to complexity but feel enabled to make judgements of merit. This has been called a 'confident uncertainty', and geography can develop pupils' skills for understanding and dealing with an uncertain world.* p. 37-8

*On geography's contribution to making citizens. Geography as a discipline, then, cannot make citizens, but it can create the language and intellectual space for explorations of the meaning, spatiality and contextualisation of what citizenship is, where it plays a role and what future citizenship rights might or might not entail.* p. 39

There has been surprising little attention to global citizenship in *Geography* and *Teaching Geography* since 2008. Standish (118) (119) argued that the embedding issues of sustainable development and global citizenship in school geography corrupts and politicises the subject, devalues core subject knowledge, and privileges extrinsic aims over intrinsic ones. [Lambert and Morgan](#) (120)(121) refuted his argument reminding him that no curriculum can be politically neutral and that he needed to be more reflective about curriculum

history and politics. Yarwood returned to the theme of political geography and the politics of geography in an editorial in *Geography* in 2019 (122). [Geographical Education for International Understanding](#) (123) offers perspectives from geographical educators based in many countries including the UK.

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## Videos for teachers

[Rethinking global governance](#) Ian Goldin, 6 minutes

[What's going on with UN reform](#) 6 minutes

[How democratic is the EU?](#) 4 minutes

[David Held on the challenges of global governance](#) 8 minutes

[Chantel Mouffe Radical democracy and left populism](#) 30 minutes

[Noam Chomsky Democracy is a threat to any power system](#) 1hr 25

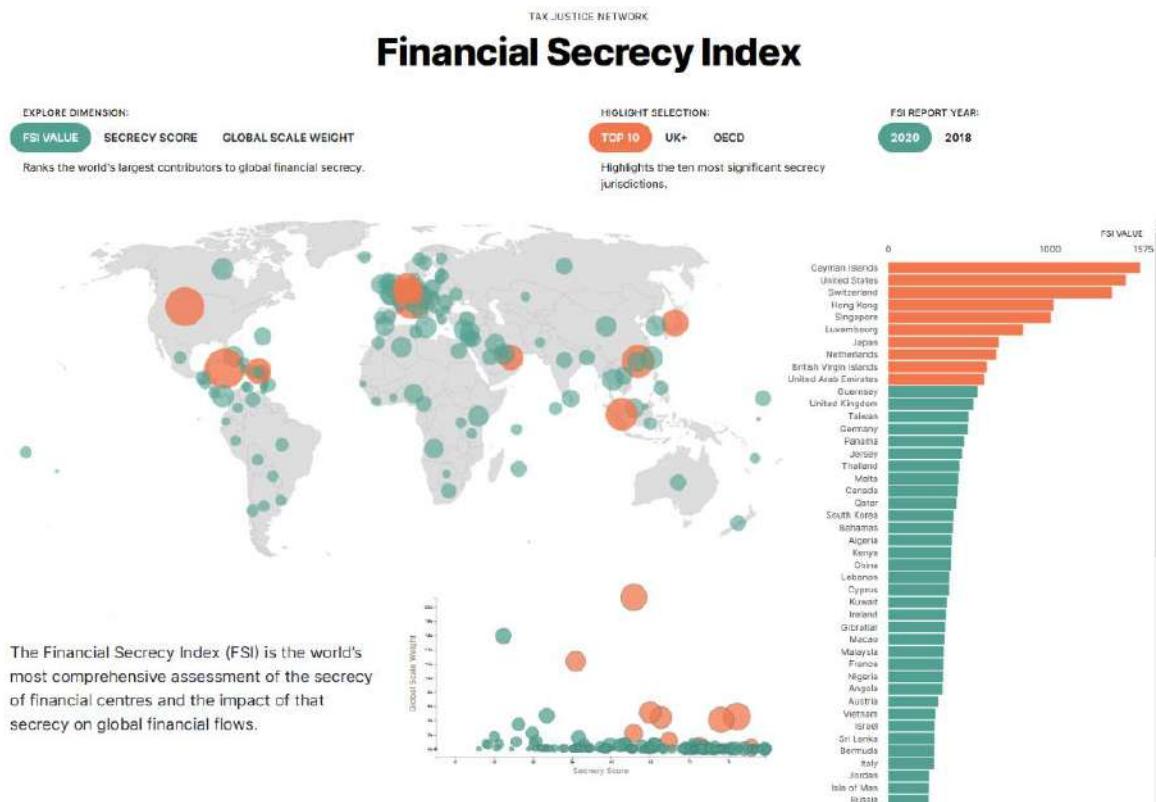
[Thomas Piketty on global wealth tax](#) 20 minutes

[George Monbiot – Its time to overthrow the oligarchs and restore democracy](#) 5 minutes



# Curriculum Unit Nine

## Paying for the transition to sustainable development, the role of international tax reform



This unit is based on the work of the Tax Justice Network that highlights issues of tax avoidance and evasion by means of indices on tax havens and financial secrecy. It allows students to explore issues of global governance linked to international tax reform that can be considered a partnership between the G20, OECD, EU and UK government influenced by international and national NGOs. By focussing on the UK financial services industry and tax havens, it also raises questions about their future after Brexit.

The unit focuses on SDG 17 partnerships for the goals and GCE topic one, local, national and global systems.

## **Unit plan**

### **Key idea**

International tax reform requires a partnership between international agencies and regional and national governments. It can provide governments with increased taxes that they can spend on sustainable development.

### **Inquiry questions**

Why are increased tax revenues needed to tackle the UK's debt and pay for the transition to more sustainable forms of development both in the UK and in the wider world (a post-pandemic recovery in the form of a national and international green new deal)?

What amount of tax should citizens and corporations pay?

Who and what suffers when corporations and rich people evade and avoid paying tax?

Why should governments take action to close down tax havens, end secrecy on tax matters, and impose a digital services tax?

What role does the financial sector play in Britain's economy and how is it threatened by Brexit?

Where does the UK rank on the corporate tax haven index and the financial secrecy index? What explains these rankings?

What explains the attitudes that politicians adopt in debates on international tax reform in the EU and UK parliaments?

### **Key understandings**

Tax havens and financial secrecy allow corporations and rich individuals to avoid paying tax.

Tax avoidance (legal) and evasion (illegal) undermine democracy; generate economic and political inequalities; disrupt markets; damage innovation; worsen financial instability; create recessions and reduce economic growth.

The City of London is at the centre of a network of tax havens situated in jurisdictions that are a legacy of empire. They allow corporations and individuals to avoid paying tax on their profits and wealth.

The corporate tax havens index ranks the world's jurisdictions according to the extent to which they contribute to the world's multinational corporations escaping from paying tax and eroding the tax revenue of other countries. The financial secrecy index ranks jurisdictions according to the secrecy and scale of their offshore financial activities.

Since 2009 the OECD, on behalf of the G20, has been seeking to end tax evasion (illegal) and avoidance (legal), bank secrecy, and tax havens. It has established measures to prevent corporations eroding national tax rates and shifting profits to low tax jurisdictions. It has created a global forum to exchange information, tackle non-compliance on tax matters, and tackle offshore tax evasion. It has also introduced a global digital services tax on technology companies such as Google, Facebook and Amazon.

The future of the UK financial services industry has been a key topic in debates over Brexit. A 'hard' or no deal Brexit is likely to damage the industry as rights to trade in EU states under the supervision of UK regulators will be lost.

Debates in the European and UK parliaments over international tax reform reveal a left/right split on taxation (high/low) and international regulation (welcome/unwelcome).

**Key concepts** interconnectedness, interdependence, taxation, welfare, government revenue and expenditure, financial services, global capital flows, tax havens, financial secrecy, rentier capitalism, multinational corporations, profit shifting, global governance, laws and regulations, international agencies, multilateral partnerships, international NGOs, power, politics, decision making, radical democracy, global citizenship.

**Key values** social justice, democracy, solidarity, transparency, procedural values associated with political literacy

**Key skills** interpreting graphics on government revenue and expenditure; using interactive websites on tax haven and financial secrecy indices; debating measures proposed by OECD and tax justice network; skills associated with political literacy when interpreting debates in the European and UK parliaments.

<b>Learning outcomes</b>	Students will develop understanding of the role of the financial services sector in the UK economy and its future after Brexit. They will consider what policy position a global citizen should adopt to international tax reform and compare this position to those adopted by a range of politicians speaking in debates in the European and UK parliaments. By preparing for and participating in a mock parliamentary debate they will develop their political literacy.
<b>Learning activities</b>	<p>Interpreting graphics on UK government revenue, expenditure and debt. Comprehending an edited version of a briefing sheet on corporate tax havens published by the tax justice network. Discussing the appearance of Starbucks, Amazon and Google before the public accounts select committee in 2015.</p> <p>Holding a mock parliamentary debate on international tax reform after studying edited videos of a debate in the EU council of ministers; a meeting to brief green MEPs in the European parliament; and a speech by an SNP MP on tax evasion in the UK parliament.</p>
<b>Assessment task</b>	Students write an essay on global tax reform to a format based on Ruttenberg's objectives of radical democratic global citizenship education (page 383).

## Links to Unesco guidance

<b>SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals. Strengthen the implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.</b>	<b>A selection from the related objectives</b>
Cognitive learning objectives	The learner understands global issues, including issues of financing for development, taxation, debt and trade policies, and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.

	<p>The learner understands the importance of global multi-stakeholder partnerships and the shared accountability for sustainable development and knows examples of networks, institutions, campaigns of global partnerships.</p> <p>The learner knows the concepts of global governance and global citizenship.</p>
Socio-emotional learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to raise awareness about the importance of global partnerships for sustainable development.</p> <p>The learner is able to experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights.</p>
Behavioural learning objectives	<p>The learner is able to become a change agent to realise the SDGs and to take on their role as active, critical and global sustainability citizen.</p> <p>The learner is able to contribute to facilitating and implementing local, national and global partnerships for sustainable development.</p>
<b>GCE topic 1 Local, national and global systems Learning objectives</b>	<b>A selection from the key themes</b>
<p>Lower secondary (12 – 15 years)</p> <p>Discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures and explore global citizenship.</p>	<p>National context and its history, relationship, connection and interdependence with other nations, global organisations and the wider global context (cultural, economic, environmental, political).</p> <p>Global governance structures and processes (rules and laws, justice systems and their interconnections with national and local governance systems).</p> <p>How global decisions affect individuals, communities and countries.</p> <p>Rights and responsibilities of citizenship in relation to global frameworks and how these are applied.</p>
<p>Upper secondary (15 – 18 years)</p> <p>Critically analyse global governance systems, structures and processes and assess implications for</p>	<p>Global governance systems, structures and processes and the way that regulations, politics (policies?) and decisions are made and applied at different levels</p> <p>How individuals, groups, including the public and private sectors, engage in global governance</p>

global citizenship	structures and processes Critical reflection on what it means to be a member of the global community and how to respond to common problems and issues (roles, global connections, interconnectedness, solidarity and implications in everyday life).
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Suggested learning approaches for SDG 17 include analyse the development and implementation of global policies on climate change, biodiversity etc (taxation)

## Preparation

Familiarise yourself with [SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals](#), and GCE topic 1 Local, national and global systems.

Using the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR's) [brief guide to UK public finances](#) prepare PowerPoint slides on how Britain raises and spends tax revenues and the extent of its budget deficit. The [Institute of Fiscal Studies](#) also provides information of Britain's tax revenues and the [House of Commons](#) Library has a briefing on public finances in different countries and regions of the UK.. [Information is Beautiful](#) has a useful graphic on the government's income and expenditure.

Read three articles from the New Statesman:

[How Britain's tax havens imperilled the welfare state](#), K Koram, 9.12.2019

[How a no-deal Brexit would harm the UK public finances for decades](#), I Stockton, 14.10.2019

[Brexit isn't done: what next for financial services](#), G Eaton, 5.02.2020

Watch four short You Tube videos:

[Starbucks, Google and Amazon grilled over UK tax avoidance](#) 2015

[Tax havens explained](#) 2018

[Will Britain become a tax haven after Brexit?](#) 2018

[How tech companies avoid paying tax explained with magic](#) 2015

The longer documentary film [The Spiders Web](#) provides much more information on Britain's 'second empire' of offshore tax havens. The 2019 feature film [The Laundromat](#), based on the [Panama papers](#), focuses on tax havens.

The report [Tax avoidance and tax evasion](#) from the House of Commons library (April 2020) estimates that the tax gap (difference between tax due and tax collected) was £35B in 2017/18, Of this £1.8B was avoidance and £5.3B evasion. The report notes concern about mass marketed tax evasion schemes and outlines three major initiatives by UK governments to undermine the market. [Patrick Cannon](#) offers analysis of Britain's tax gap. Note (Activity Sheet 9.1) the Tax Justice Network estimates that globally governments lose \$500B (£400B) in tax due to corporate tax havens.

Visit the [OECD webpage on international taxation](#) and watch the video on tackling tax avoidance and evasion. Also watch [the video on the Global Forum on transparency and exchange of tax information](#).

Ensure you have a basic understanding of the [G20](#) and [OECD](#) and their roles in global governance. Review the sources on the EU and democracy cited in the chapter. Watch the short video [How democratic is the EU?](#)

Visit the [tax justice network](#) and its webpages on the [corporate tax haven index](#) and the [financial secrecy index](#). Familiarise yourself with these two indices and the information the web pages provide.

Finally if you need convincing all this is of interest to geographers read these articles

[Financial Geography 1: Geographies of Tax](#), M. Aalbers, Progress in Human Geography, 2017

[The Financial Secrecy Index: shedding new light on the geography of secrecy](#), A Cobham, P Jansky & M Meinzer, Center for Global Development, 2015

[Britain's epicentre: London's financial services sector and its place in the UK economy](#), S Hall, (LSE blog)

## Possible procedure

The unit is in three parts: UK public sector finance; tax havens and international tax reform; and associated proceedings in the European and UK parliaments. Each part is likely to require several lessons.

At the start of the unit, tell the students they will be assessed on their contribution to a mock UK parliamentary debate on tax avoidance and evasion. They will be assigned the role of an MP, will prepare a speech on the early day motion selected for debate, and if fortunate will be called by the speaker to take part in the debate. All will be assessed on their prepared written speech.

### 1 UK public sector finance

Introduce the topic of taxation. Discuss student's existing ideas on how the government raises and spends money. What percentage of government revenue is raised from income tax, corporation tax, VAT, fuel duty, etc? What percentage of government spending goes on health, education, pensions, defence, overseas aid etc? What is the difference between revenue and expenditure in the countries and regions of the UK? Use the slides you have prepared from the OBR publication to answer these questions. Note that London, the South East, and East of England are the only regions of fiscal surplus.

Explain that in 2020 the covid pandemic had resulting in falling government revenues and rising spending as the UK entered the [worst recession for 300 years](#). In May the [UK's debt exceeded 100% GDP](#) for the first time since 1963. At the same time British households held wealth worth more than seven times the nation's GDP (in the 1970s it was only around three times).

Discuss with students the causes of extra spending and falling revenues and the associated problems for local authorities that were being forced to make budget cuts. Explain that uncertainty over Brexit also raised questions about government revenues in the future with supporters and opponents of Brexit offering different opinions (see Stockton's NS article).

Emerging from the pandemic and recession with a more sustainable economy via a green new deal was widely discussed in 2020 and was supported by the TUC and Labour and Green parties (see chapter). How should such a recovery be financed? What is the role of increased government borrowing (possible in

2020 at record low interest rates) and increased taxation. [Richard Murphy](#) of tax research UK argues that it will require wealth taxes (a more progressive income tax; higher inheritance tax; an annual wealth tax; perhaps a [global wealth tax](#) as proposed by Thomas Picketty who estimated that half of all UK private wealth is inherited rather than earned). Discuss with students the desirability of national and international green new deals (more sustainable forms of development) and how they should be financed

## 2 Tax havens and international tax reform

Show the video [Tax havens explained](#). This is fast moving and you will probably need to pause it several times to explain terms and ideas.

Now explain that there are NGOs seeking tax reform, one of which is the tax justice network. Activity sheet 9.1 is largely based on its briefing notes on tax havens. Read through the activity sheet with the students explaining ideas, answering questions and ensuring comprehension. There are [cartoons](#) that may help students to grasp the main ideas. Use the Wired video [How tech companies avoid paying tax explained by magic](#) to explain [shell companies](#) based in tax havens. Again you will need to pause and explain as it is fast paced.

The UK government estimates tax avoidance and evasion at around £7 Billion for 2017/18. This is around one percent of total government spending.

Introduce students to the corporate tax haven index and the financial secrecy index. The [Corporate Tax Haven Index](#) ranks the world's most important tax havens for multinational corporations, according to how aggressively and how extensively each jurisdiction contributes to helping the world's multinational enterprises escape paying tax, and erodes the tax revenues of other countries around the world. It also indicates how much each place contributes to a global "race to the bottom" on corporate taxes. In 2019 the UK ranked 13<sup>th</sup> on this index.

The [Financial Secrecy Index](#) ranks jurisdictions according to their secrecy and the scale of their offshore financial activities. A politically neutral ranking, it is a tool for understanding global financial secrecy, tax havens or secrecy jurisdictions, and illicit financial flows or capital flight. In 2020, the UK ranked 12<sup>th</sup> on this index.

Explore these indices via their web pages with the students. Does it surprise students that the UK ranks so highly on these indices? The UK is a large supplier of financial services much of it linked to flows of capital into offshore tax havens that are a legacy of empire (Koram NS article and The Spiders Web documentary). The financial services industry is centred on the [City of London](#), provided 6.5% of UK economic output in 2017, and is threatened by a hard Brexit. How do the students feel about corporations and rich individuals avoiding tax through the use of tax havens? How do they feel about the City of London's role in this?

Now show the OECD video on tackling tax avoidance and evasion. Explain that directed by the G20, the OECD is seeking reforms of the international tax system that will need to be implemented by the EU and UK government introducing new laws. The OECD seeks to tackle:

- [Base erosion and profit shifting](#) whereby corporations seek to erode or lessen the profits they declare to be taxed and/or shift them to a jurisdiction where taxes are lower;
- The challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy by introducing a [global digital tax](#)
- Secrecy by creating a [global forum](#) on transparency and the exchange of information for tax purposes that will fight offshore tax avoidance. This forum benefits poor countries that are now able to collect more tax.

Do students consider this work by the OECD worthwhile? Who is likely to support/oppose such reforms? Is the OECD democratic? What is [the UK delegation to the OECD](#) and how are its staff appointed?

### **3 Related events in the EU and UK parliaments**

In the final part of this unit students should further develop their political literacy by considering how OECD reforms have been received and processed by the EU and UK government before holding a mock parliamentary debate. There are numerous reports of proceedings within the EU and UK parliaments that could provide resources for classroom activities. The video listed below provide direct insights into the workings of the EU and UK government and with careful editing and explanation should enable teachers to complete coverage of global governance in the context of global tax reform.

[Council of the European Union debate on fair taxation 6.11.2018](#). The Council consists of relevant ministers drawn from each country. Ministers discussed the establishment of a digital services tax. The UK finance minister at that time was the chancellor Philip Hammond.

John Christensen from the Tax Justice Network speaks at [an event at the European Parliament](#) organised by the European Free Alliance of the Greens on Brexit and the future of tax havens (22.01.2019). His talk covered the impact of Brexit on tax evasion and money laundering and offered recommendations on how the EU should move forward in its treatment of the UK, its satellite havens and the City of London. [A summary of his talk and the slides he used](#). Worstall makes the case for the ‘Singapore on Thames’ model of Britain’s future and it is critiqued in [Ethical Consumer](#). Also see the video [Will Britain become a tax haven after Brexit?](#)

In June 2015 Starbucks, Google and Amazon appeared before [the public accounts \(select\) committee](#) of the House of Commons. What is a select commitree? What do they do? How are the members seeking to hold these corporations to account?

[Chris Stephens MP](#) (SNP Glasgow South West) speaking in the debate on tax evasion in the House of Commons 25.02.2020. The full debate is recorded in [Hansard](#). It is important for students to reflect on how politicians of the left, right and centre view tax justice.

Now introduce the mock parliamentary debate activity. First divide the class into MPs reflecting the current composition of the House of Commons. Next ask each MP to submit an [early day motion](#) on tax avoidance and evasion for debate. Put all the motions in ‘a hat’ and draw one for debate. Ask the proposer to appoint a seconder as their main supporter. Ask other parties to appoint a principal opposer and seconder. Appoint a speaker to chair the debate and give students time to prepared and write their speeches of maximum two minutes duration. Allow cooperation organised by party whips (chosen by the party’s MPs) on lines of argument but not on the detailed content of speeches. Hold a time limited mock debate, hold a vote on the motion, and discuss the result drawing comparisons with proceedings in the House of Commons.

Conclude by linking the three parts of the unit to global citizenship. Do students feel that in future they will be able to exercise their voice and play a part in such debates as that over global tax reform? What do they see enabling/hindering

their participation? Would they join/support the tax justice network? What roles do emotions, an understanding of power, and political literacy play in global citizenship? What do they consider they still have to learn if they are to become truly global citizens?

You can use Activity Sheet 9.2 to introduce the assessment task or introduce it in your own way having adapted it to the interests and abilities of your students.

## Possible extension

Chapter one began with a quote from Yanis Varoufakis writing to his daughter about the future. In 2020 he published *Another Now*, suggesting what should be the key features of a postcapitalist economy. These are outlined on Activity Sheet 9.3.

You might explore these features with your students:

How would the necessary work and associated jobs be distributed?

Corporations / firms are to be run by their workers. Is this realistic?

Why do you think he is proposing free bank accounts and a trust fund for all newborns?

Who would welcome the proposals on income and the abolition of income tax?

Who would oppose the proposals on taxation? How would these proposals encourage sustainable development?

How do the proposals relating to the global financial system serve to direct green investments to the global south?

What has to happen to make such an economy become a reality?

## **Activity Sheet 9.1**

### **The Tax Justice Network explains tax havens**

#### **The Problem**

Multinational companies produce and sell goods and services in more than one country. They rely on a wide range of public services to support their activities (roads, health, education, police and courts). All these things need to be paid for – largely through raising tax. When multinationals use corporate tax havens to escape paying their contribution to these public services, they are free-riding off the taxes paid by other people.

In 2017 [Amazon](#) paid £4.5 million in tax on UK pre-tax profits of £72 million (6.25%). In 2018 [Google](#) paid £49.3 million in tax on declared UK profits of £202.4 million (24%) but its sales in the UK were estimated to be £5.7 billion.

#### **Cheating on tax causes great harm:**

1. It undermines support for democracy and for markets as it creates a sense that there is one set of low-tax rules for large and powerful corporations and wealthy individuals and another set of rules for everyone else.
2. It generates large economic and political inequalities by shifting the burden of taxation away from the wealthy shareholders of corporations and onto the backs of ordinary people who must either pay higher taxes or have reduced public services.
3. By helping large corporations to out-compete their smaller and more locally based rivals, cheating on tax distorts markets and contributes to the rise of monopoly power.
4. It damages innovation by rewarding corporate managers for turning their attention away from building better products and services and towards tax minimisation and financial engineering.
5. It worsens financial instability by boosting too-big-to-fail banks and disproportionately rewarding highly profitable risk-taking at taxpayers' expense over mundane industrial and other wealth creating activities.

6. It creates recessions and reduces economic growth.

## What is a tax haven?

A tax haven is a jurisdiction that provides facilities to help multinational corporations escape or undermine the tax laws, rules and regulations of other jurisdictions so reducing their tax payments in these jurisdictions.

Multinationals can reduce the tax they pay by producing goods and services in one country and declaring the profits made when selling these goods and services in another, low tax country or offshore tax haven. They can also prompt jurisdictions to lower their tax rates to attract inward investment by corporations. This may result in a ‘race to the bottom’ on corporate taxation.

There is a global network of offshore tax havens as revealed by the tax havens index. Different jurisdictions offer different mixes of facilities to mobile forms of financial capital that multinationals and wealthy individuals have to invest. Corporate tax havens are the main players but there are also ‘secrecy jurisdictions’ (revealed by the financial secrecy index) which attract illicit capital flows by providing laws and other facilities to hide that capital and ownership from public scrutiny and the forces of law and order. The City of London is at the centre of a network of tax havens: crown dependencies and overseas territories like Jersey and the Cayman Islands; former colonies like Hong Kong.

**The corporate tax havens index** ranks jurisdictions according to how corrosive their corporate tax policies are to the global economy. In 2019 the five top ranking corrosive jurisdictions were the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Netherlands and Switzerland. The UK ranked 14<sup>th</sup>.

**The Financial Secrecy Index** ranks jurisdictions according to their secrecy and the scale of their offshore financial activities. A politically neutral ranking, it is a tool for understanding global financial secrecy, tax havens or secrecy jurisdictions, and illicit financial flows or capital flight. In 2019 the five top ranking jurisdictions were the Caymen Islands, USA, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The UK ranked 12<sup>th</sup>.

## Race to the bottom

Corporate tax havens also foster a worldwide **race to the bottom**. As one jurisdiction introduces a new tax loophole or incentive or tax cut to attract mobile capital, others will try to put in place an even more attractive offering, triggering others in turn to join in, resulting in an unseemly race to the bottom that steadily shifts the tax burden away from wealthy shareholders of multinational corporations, who are mostly wealthy people, and towards lower-income groups. That is why, in many countries, corporate taxes are falling while corporate profits are rising.

All these factors feed a rise in populism, political extremism and even authoritarianism in many countries as inequalities rise and public services decline. Tackling corporate tax havens is one of the great political and economic challenges of our age.

## How big is the problem?

Current research suggests that governments around the world lose over US\$ 500 billion — half a trillion dollars — in tax each year due to corporate tax havens. The IMF, for instance, recently found that rich countries lose some \$450 billion annually to tax-haven related corporate tax dodging, while lower-income countries lose \$200 billion (which represents a bigger share relative to their smaller economies). But remember: tax losses are just one dimension of the damage. The harm that corporate tax havens inflict on democracy, on society, and on our trust in politics and markets, is incalculable.

## How is system rigged?

Multinationals are taxed under an international architecture of tax that was set up a century ago, and which has utterly failed to keep pace with technology, secret banking, and the high-speed modern world.

Every multinational has many subsidiaries and affiliates festooned across tax havens and other countries around the world. These affiliates trade with each other, and over a third of all world trade is reckoned to happen inside multinationals like this. But the core problem with this system is that it encourages multinationals to shift large profits into low-tax or zero-tax havens,

where they pay little tax and to shift their costs into high-tax countries to deduct against their tax bills there.

How do they do this? The most common technique is “transfer pricing,” where a multinational adjusts the internal prices at which its affiliates trade with each other across borders, to minimise profits that the accountants recognise in the high-tax countries, and to maximise profits recognised in corporate tax havens. The CTHI points to where these profits are going, and which havens are most aggressively facilitating these practices.

## **Activity Sheet 9.2**

## **An essay on global tax reform**

In this geography unit you have studied efforts by the Tax Justice Network and others to bring about reforms to the international tax system. You have learnt about the roles of the G20, the OECD, the EU and the UK government and have held a mock parliamentary debate on a related motion.

Now you are going to write an essay about how you are feeling and thinking at the end of the unit. You will write your essay under four headings. Try to write about 100 to 150 words on each.

First your **EMOTIONS**.

How do you feel about corporations and rich individuals avoiding tax?

How do you feel about the UK's positions on the corporate tax havens and financial secrecy indices?

Next your **UNDERSTANDING**

Why is tax avoidance and evasion a political issue?

What has tax avoidance and evasion to do with global governance?

And then about **POWER**

What do you understand by economic or financial power?

What do you understand by political power?

What has the unit taught you about the distribution of power in the world?

And finally **POLITICAL LITERACY** (your ability to think about and act on the politics of global tax reform)

What kind of politicians support global tax reform? What kind oppose it?

Why do we need institutions like the OECD?

What actions should a global citizen take in relation to global tax reform?

### **Activity Sheet 9.3**

### **The main features of the postcapitalist economy outlined by Yanis Varoufakis**

- Markets for goods and services because Soviet style planning and allocation systems foster arbitrary power and are too bureaucratic and dreary;
- No market in labour because once labour has a rental price, the market mechanism inexorably pushes it down while commodifying every aspect of work (and in the age of Facebook, our leisure too);
- One-employee-one-share-one-vote in corporations / firms that are run by their workers. Corporate law is amended to turn every employee into an equal (though not equally remunerated) partner with voting rights in the corporation's / firm's general meeting;
- Central banks provide every adult with a free bank account into which a fixed stipend (universal basic dividend) is credited monthly. Additionally the central bank grants all newborns a trust fund to be used when they grow up;
- People receive two kinds of income: the dividends credited into their central bank account and earnings from work in a corporation / firm run by its workers. Neither is taxed and there are no income or sales taxes;
- Two types of taxes fund the government: a 5% tax on the raw resources used by corporations / firms; and the proceeds from leasing land (which belongs in its entirety to the community) for private, time-limited use;
- The global financial system continually transfers wealth to the global south while also preventing imbalances from causing strife and crises. All trade and all money movements are denominated in a new digital accounting unit – the Kosmos. Levies are charged to balance a country's imports and exports and discourage speculative money movements, and these levies end up as direct green investments in the global south.

As suggested by Yanis Varoufakis in [Another Now](#)



**Critical School Geography** explores how school geography guided by critical social theory can help to deliver the UN's sustainable development goals. It draws on critical geography and education to explain that radical democracy is the key to constructing nature, space and place in more sustainable ways and to argue for a re-orientation of the school subject towards the goal of developing global citizens committed to radical global democratisation. The book focuses on the issues that pre-occupy older school students and provides ideas and activities that allow them to explore how democratising all spheres of life at all levels from the local to the global, is key to resolving these issues and fostering hope for the future.

**Critical School Geography** combines theory and practice as each chapter is associated with a curriculum unit. These show how ideas from critical geography and education can be adapted for the classroom and how UNESCO's guidance on education for sustainable development and global citizenship can be embedded in school geography.

## Key features

- Introduces critical social theory and its applications in the fields of geography and education
- Advocates democratic green socialism and democratic socialist education
- Associates powerful geographical knowledge and critical thinking with critical theory, particularly critical realism
- Focuses on students' and teachers' unhappiness (alienation) and the potential of radical democracy and post-capitalism to offer them hope
- Provides sample curriculum units that address students' concerns (schooling, happiness, housing, the future of work, sustainable food, etc)
- Contains chapters on nature, space, place and global citizenship following introductory chapters on critical geography and education, knowledge, and critical pedagogy
- Promotes UNESCO guidance on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education and an internationalist approach to geographical education
- Includes numerous links to websites videos and open source publications