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 on the curriculum; citizenship and PSHE (personal, social and health education) occupy marginal positions; 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; the consideration of democratising all spheres of social life at all levels from the local to the global; the evaluation of green socialism as an alternative to neoliberal capitalism; and the embedding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship education within a critical school geography.

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 new or ‘next normal’ (5) in the context of a just and sustainable transition from the coronavirus pandemic has given the goals increased relevance.

Critical social theorists relate failure to realize 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 or 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). Ecological resources and services continue to be degraded. We face a climate emergency (9) and a mass extinction of species (10),
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 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. 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. At the same time politics is held in low regard, false news and anti-intellectual rhetoric flourishes, and institutions that defend the public realm are weakened. World leaders have targeted the 2020s as a ‘decade of delivery’ for the goals but other challenges, including the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, may continue to distract them.

As Xenia was told there is another agenda. The age of neoliberal industrial 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 and services 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 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. Their anxieties stem from such issues 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 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, 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 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 neoliberal capitalism, the form of society in which they are growing up and which shapes both their concerns, identities, outlooks and prospects, and the places, spaces and forms of nature that surround them. The chapter then introduces postcapitalist alternatives and debates on the Left that are relevant to how teachers present democratic socialism and left populism alongside neoliberal capitalism and right populism in the classroom.

The related curriculum unit focuses on the Chavez revolution in Venezuela and its record in delivering radical democracy and social welfare, with a focus on health care (SDG 3 Good Health and Well Being (21)). It introduces left populism, 21st century socialism in Latin America, and the factors leading to Venezuela’s current crisis. Some background is provided in the chapter including a reference to the work of academic geographers on this topic.

The chapter then introduces Unesco guidance on ESDGC and concludes by considering the extent to which national curricula encourage ESDGC in the nations of the UK.

**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. (22)

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 (23) (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) (24) (25). 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 (26).

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, but 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. They require constant updating and revision after debate amongst critical geographical educators.

1. Like most societies in the world, the UK is a capitalist society. Capitalism is a way of organising society in which rich and powerful individuals, corporations, and banks own most of the raw materials (non human nature); technology (machines) and land (space). Raw materials, technology and land are traded in markets as commodities and workers (human nature) are employed to use them in making further commodities (goods and services) that
capitalists hope to sell for a profit. By doing this they accumulate wealth or capital. Much production and consumption in capitalist societies is enabled by debt.

2. Capitalism is associated with a division of labour (different people do different kinds of work) and an associated reward system that underpins the division of society into social classes. Different classes of people have differing amounts of economic, political and cultural power and class conflict is an important way of understanding politics as an arena where people can realise greater freedom, equality and sustainability through active citizenship that seeks to extend democracy. Citizens’ interests and identities are also shaped by such factors as race, gender, and place, and these find expression in cultural or identity politics (27) that interacts with class politics. (An illustration of the current class structure of Britain accompanies an article by O’Brien (25)).

3. Radical social movements focus on citizens’ struggles against various forms of oppression; draw on critical social theory; give expression to both identity and class politics; and seek to influence the policies of political parties. Examples include the women’s movement, the anti-racist movement, the environmental movement, the movements for fair trade and against the arms trade. Their members believe that power is located everywhere and can be challenged everywhere; that such challenges develop citizenship by linking together identities, everyday actions, and political communities; and that their actions lead to a more radical understanding and practice of democracy. Radical politics then becomes much about identity formation and the ways in which this is shaped by different representations of the world.

4. School geography represents the world. It shapes the ways in which students understand how the world works (bio-physical and social structures and processes); how nature, space and place are constructed and represented; and how they might be constructed and represented more sustainably. It draws on both mainstream and critical forms of theory and pedagogy, but only when it includes the latter, along with consideration of radical politics and citizenship, can it claim to be truly democratic.
5. Like many other countries the United Kingdom is a liberal democracy (28). It has a government, parliament, political parties and pressure groups, social movements, regular elections, and media that express a variety of views. There is currently a lack of trust in politicians and liberal democracy partly due to the rise of populist attacks on liberal democratic institutions. Many citizens feel that politics offers no real choices (‘they’re all the same’); that it works against them; fails to reflect their interests; and offers few opportunities for engagement. A third of eligible voters do not bother to vote. There is a need to challenge the power that rich corporations media owners and individuals exert over politicians and introduce constitutional and electoral reform. Such measures to reform liberal democracy are advocated by those who support a more radical democracy (29).

6. Capitalism engages the world’s peoples and places in a system of uneven and combined development (30). The economies (capitalisms) of individual countries (nation states) are linked to one another in many ways including trade, overseas investments, and migration. Money, people, energy, goods and services, technology, and information flow around the world shaping the social use of space and nature and creating distinctive places. They produce a single global economy, with a corresponding international political order. Within this economy there is a global division of labour that has been established over time largely as a result of colonialism and imperialism (31). Different countries do different parts of the world’s work and the wealthiest states exert economic, political, military and cultural power over weaker states. In the late 19C and early 20C the UK was the world’s dominant economic power. That role has now passed to the USA but its position is challenged by the rise of China.

7. Capitalism develops unevenly over time and space. It shows periods of high economic growth linked to new technologies, products and markets, and periods of low or negative growth (recessions) when all it produces cannot be sold and debts cannot be repaid. In western economies (USA and Europe) capitalism suffered major crises (32) in the 1870s, 1930s, 1970s and the early 2000s when profits fell, workers were laid off and living standards fell. The global coronavirus pandemic (33) of 2020 resulted in a further crisis (34).
8. These crises are a result of capitalism’s inherent contradictions (35). It exploits workers and fosters their resistance (periodic labour unrest); it is unplanned and therefore develops to a stage where it cannot sell all it produces and productive capital has to be scrapped and workers laid off (crises of capital over accumulation); and it fails to sustain the conditions of production (ecological resources and services such as fertile soil and pollinating insects; urban and rural space free from pollution and congestion; and human health and welfare such as suitably educated young workers and citizens).

![Modern economies fluctuate in a cycle of 40–50 years](image)

Figure 1.2 Waves of capitalist development linked to technological innovation (36)

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 1930 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 (37). Inequality between the rich and the poor
decreased but a crisis of capital over accumulation, linked to rising oil prices, inflation and falling profits, led to a crisis in the 1970s.

10. **Neoliberalism** (38) a new model of 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. Politicians passed laws making it easier for money, trade and business to move across national borders and for the value of national currencies to move up and down. They abandoned the goal of full employment and brought in new rules for controlling inflation and public spending and for making it easier to hire and fire workers.

11. Neoliberalism is associated with the rise of information and digital technologies (6th wave, Figure 1.2); new products and services, new ways of working and consuming; new divisions of labour; new geographies, and new ways of thinking about oneself and the world. Social life accelerated as technological change quickened and money circulated more quickly in the global economy. The impacts are spatially uneven and cause many people stress with more suffering from mental ill health.

12. Neoliberalism repurposed the state to create “free” markets and trade deals that favoured more powerful states (39). Neoliberal states pursued policies of privatisation, marketisation, financialisation, and deregulation. Financialisation (40) (41) further shifted the focus of the UK economy from manufacturing towards financial services and thereby reduced growth, lowered productivity, boosted inequality, and drained other sectors of talent. Neoliberalism accelerated globalisation, (42) the process whereby flows of trade and investment, goods and services, and technology and information around the world mean that the lives and fortunes of citizens in one locality are linked with those in distant localities elsewhere in the world.

13. Different countries adapted differently to neoliberalism and its effects 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). The link between rising GDP and rising wages was
broken and following the **financial crisis of the 2008**, caused by the deregulation of the banking sector, the 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** (44) (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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ‘bubble years’ 1990 to 2007</th>
<th>After the crash 2007 to 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief that rising profit share would lead to higher investment, faster productivity growth, more well paid jobs. Did not happen.</td>
<td>Collapse of finance led growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deregulated banks issue huge amounts of cheap credit leading to finance led growth.</td>
<td>Stagnant wages, falling investment, rising consumer debt, increased social and spatial inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financialisation favours mergers, acquisitions, dividends and share buybacks over productive investment. Rich use increased profit share to buy assets.</td>
<td>Quantitative easing further inflates asset prices and inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheap credit, cheap consumer goods (due to globalisation) and rising house prices mask growing inequality</td>
<td>Austerity and right populism (Brexit = ‘take back control’)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decline of unions and collective bargaining - workers share of output falls</td>
<td>Millennials face falling living standards/expectations – ‘generation rent’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity politics more important than class politics</td>
<td>Rise of millennial socialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial logic enters public sector – private financing, public/private partnerships</td>
<td>Return to class politics – advocacy of state, worker and community ownership = Corbynism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy of sustainability led development as in Green New Deal (a key element of left populism?)</td>
<td>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’</td>
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**Figure 1.4** The main feature of UK political economy in the bubble years and those following the crash of 2007 (based on Blakely (45) (46)
14. Neoliberalism increased social and spatial inequalities and many 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 (47) and populist parties (48) 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 (49) 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 (50) attacked a global elite that benefitted from neoliberal globalisation and governments that imposed austerity.

15. The rise of populism was largely 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 an alternative. By then rightwing populism had determined the results of the European referendum of 2016 (Mapping the Brexit vote (51)) when a majority voted to leave the EU.

16. Labour set out a more sustainable development path in its 2019 manifesto based on a return to social democracy and a green new deal. It proposed to end austerity, renew public services such as health and education; nationalise the railways and utilities; build more council homes, invest in green technology, and promote worker share ownership, This was heavily defeated as many previously loyal supporters in ‘left behind’ areas turned to the Conservatives who promised to ‘get Brexit done’ (see BBC analysis of results (52)). 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.
17. The coronavirus pandemic presented new opportunities for Labour and left populism (53). While the Conservatives abandoned austerity and borrowed to preserve the existing economy and jobs (‘the old normal’) and ‘level up’ the country, Labour was challenged to adopt a policy agenda focused on a just transition towards a green economy (the ‘new or next normal’ (54)). This would tackle long standing issues (poverty, rising inequality, low productivity and investment, declining social mobility, failing public services, etc) along with the disruptions of Brexit and 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 would be invested in the low carbon economy; state aid would only be provided to companies after social and environmental impact assessments; state aid would 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 would be reformed to provide a robust safety net during the downturn and transition.

18. The financial crisis of 2008 resulted in a retreat from globalisation and a world gripped by economic nationalism, great power politics and xenophobia. The policies of right populists (Trump, Johnson, Bolsonaro, Modi, etc) threatened the imperfect rule-based global order on trade, human rights and climate change, and heralded a world of trade and tech wars, the re-emergence of great power-style geopolitics, Given this retreat from multilateralism (55), it is important that the UK retains close links with a reformed European Union (56). Europe’s top-down, opaque decision-making processes should be transformed to enable European citizens to exercise real control over issues of mutual concern. Hopefully its example would then inspire wider progress on global democracy, citizenship and governance, enabling a new international economic and political order (57) and an associated international left populism, capable of delivering a global green new deal (58) and dealing with existing and emerging conflicts in east Asia; eastern Europe; and the Islamic World (39). In 2020 the erosion of multilateralism weakened the global response to the coronavirus pandemic (59) (60).

19. 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. Radical global citizens’ movements will play a key role in shaping radical global democratisation and the future of global governance.

20. Neoliberalism encourages individualism and competition rather than cooperation and sharing. Consumerism, the mass media, and popular social media engineer consent to the prevailing capitalist order to the extent that they persuade citizens that no other system of social organisation and development is possible or desirable. They support right populism but are challenged by left populist movements and parties that seek alternatives based on liberty, equality and sustainability. They advocate more radical and far reaching forms of democracy, radical global democratisation, and association forms of global citizenship education.

21. Schooling in capitalist society serves to produce workers and citizens with appropriate knowledge, skills and values and is a **contested process of economic and cultural reproduction**. The move from social democracy to neoliberalism resulted in a **shift in educational policy and the re-organisation of schooling**. Socially democratic governments had adopted national and local forms of educational governance and used schools to engineer social justice (comprehensive schools) and create democratic citizens of a diverse national community (multiculturalism). Neoliberal governments experimented with new forms of educational governance, with a greater role for the private sector, and sought create entrepreneurial, globally orientated workers, consumers and citizens. The focus shifted from social justice to social mobility as students and parents were made responsible for their own educational choices and there were increased pressures on students and teachers to perform to externally imposed performance targets. Teachers’ were given more guidance on what to teach and how to teach and their work became more stressful and less secure. New technology provided geography teachers with a greater range of resources and classroom activities and encouraged students, who now lived with the internet and social media, to make more demands of them. Social education under such labels as citizenship and PSHE, became of little importance within school performance measures.
Having suggested that a realistic and relevant school geography should introduce students to the forms of political economy that have shaped past and present geographies and resulted in unsustainable development (principally social democracy and neoliberal capitalism), it is now necessary to examine the democratic socialist alternative in more detail. This we will do in the context of debates over postcapitalism.

**Postcapitalism** (61) refers to the diverse ways that subjects, economies and communities 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 (62), 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 (63) (64) (65) (66) and they campaign on three ‘terrains of transformation’ as outlined in Figure 1.4.

Wright (67) 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 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitalism</th>
<th>Postcapitalism</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enclosure</strong> 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.</td>
<td><strong>Commons</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>Commodification</strong> 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).</td>
<td><strong>Social production and reproduction</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>Alienation</strong> Capitalist society requires people to engage in unsatisfying work stifles their full development; erodes community; and fails to develop people’s 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.</td>
<td><strong>Useful doing</strong> 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.</td>
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**Figure 1.4 Three terrains of social transformation** (Based on (68))

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 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. An active industrial policy would encourage the transition to a post-carbon society through a ‘Green New Deal’ while spending on healthcare, childcare and education, would sustain a robust system of social provision. Sunkara reminds us that while social democracy is dependent on the success and goodwill of capitalists, it opens avenues for further class-based struggle and redistribution. 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 Wright’s proposals and those of Left accelerationists.

Left accelerationists seek technological evolution beyond that currently facilitated by capitalism and advocate the repurposing technology for socially useful and emancipator ends. Mason 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; and the rise of the sharing economy with its new forms of ownership, contracts, and collaborative production. Srnicek and Williams 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 chapter two). 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 sees in the
digital revolution the prospect of abundant goods, information, and 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 (83), 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 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 (84) (85). See Team Populism’s research (86).

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 (87) (88). 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 15) is the key to 21C socialism, a project for collaborating citizens as much as political parties and governments (89).

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 (90) attributed defeat to a number of factors including Corbyn’s unpopularity; an unrealistic manifesto; ambiguity on Brexit; inability to speak to voters in ‘red wall’ seats in the north and midlands; and an
election strategy that spread resources too widely. A leaked dossier (91) showed Corbyn to have been undermined by party officials and 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 (92)) who identified with the Corbyn project and the issues of practical morality it raised. Rutherford (93) 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, (94) (95) that rejects the economic and social liberalism of the last forty years, he is among those on the right and left (Bright Blue (96) (97) (liberal conservatives) and Blue Labour (98) (radical and conservative socialists)) who realise 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 (99), 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 21st century socialism in Latin America (curriculum unit). 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 (100) and Ruttenberg’s (101) 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 (102) suggest that a contradiction between utilitarian and transformative discourses on education pervades the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2) while Huckle and Wals (103) 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.* ((104), 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.* ((104), 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) (105); the *Roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme for ESD* (RM) (106); *Global citizenship education, topics and learning objectives* (GCTLO) (104); *Education for Sustainable Development Goals, Learning Objectives* (ESDGLO) (107); and *Textbooks for Sustainable Development, A Guide to Embedding* (TFSD) (108).

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 (109): 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 (110)(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 1.5 & 1.6), and nine topics with learning objectives at four different age related stages (Figure 1.7). Particularly significant in terms of **geocapabilities** (111) (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
Figure 1.5  Key learning outcomes of global citizenship education (47, p.22)

**Cognitive**
- Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations
- Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis

**Socio-Emotional**
- Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights
- Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity

**Behavioural**
- Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world
- Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions

**Informed and critically literate**

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.

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.

Figure 1.6  Key learner attributes, cognitive domain (47, p. 23)
Figure 1.7 Learning objectives for one topic for 12 to 15 year olds - (47, p, 34)

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 1.9 suggests the objectives 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)

- 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* (112) 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 (113) based on four purposes including ‘Ethical informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world’ The new curriculum as 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 (114) introduced in 2010 aims ‘to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st 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 (115) 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) (116) provides opportunities for GCE. Eco-schools (117) continues to encourage ESD as do SEEd (118) and the Sustainable Schools Alliance (119). 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 (120) and the journals Policy & Practice (121), Environmental Education Research (122) and the International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning (123).

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 (124) 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, 21st century socialism.

The Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela and its impact on healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-socialization</td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Regulation of big business</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Domestic market stimulation and the regulation of capital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building a solidarity economy (co-operatives, associations, community organizations)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengthened labour relations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decommobilization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-establishing common property rights (territorial and collective governance)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participatory budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Re-)Socialization of the market economy</td>
<td>Spaces of consensus building (place-based; issue- or resource-based; identity-based), which may challenge dominant, hierarchical scales of decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutionalization of participatory decision-making mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pluri-nationalism and pluri-culturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social mobilization as ‘politics-as-usual’ (incorporation of movements into referendum politics for stability; national identity as hegemonic struggle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepened democracy</td>
<td>Regional co-operation (economic trade; knowledge exchange)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-politicization of civil society (autogestión)</td>
<td>Financial autonomy (from international financial institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Regional) Political autonomy (anti-imperialism)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.8 Principles and practices associated with post-neoliberalism in Latin America (125) p. 10
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 21st century socialism (126) 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.

Geographers Yates and Bakker (125) 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 1.8 and Hawkins (127) 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 21st 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, beyond gender 16 minutes

Aaron Bastani on fully automated luxury communism, 15 minutes

Michael Lebowitz on 21st Century Socialism in Venezuela 1 hour, 50 minutes

Don’t blame socialism for Venezuela’s current woes, Al Jazeera, 2017, 3 minutes

Unesco Global Citizenship Education, 2 minutes

Global Citizenship and the spirit of Unesco, Irina Bokova, 50 minutes

Mapping the Future of ESD, Bangkok 2018, 4 minutes