

Keeping *Critical School Geography* up to date poses a challenge for those teachers who are sympathetic to its arguments and seek to adopt elements of the theory and pedagogy it outlines. What follows is a selection of sources published in 2021 that can assist them but I would emphasise that it is necessarily partial and heavily influenced by my reading of *The Guardian* and *New Statesman*. A few sources overlooked in the 2020 ebook are included and while the alternative media sources mentioned in the preface are somewhat neglected, a few videos from [DoubleDownNews](#) are included.

I suspect this may be the first and last update. It indicates what is necessary to keep the key ideas and their application alive and to ensure that the curriculum units continue to address students' concerns in ways that reference contemporary events. I will be influenced by the number of times it is downloaded and any feedback I receive. Meanwhile I hope you find it useful.

John Huckle

Bedford, December 2021

## Chapter one Introduction

[Progressive International](#) sets out a vision of a world transformed and its articles suggest a [blueprint](#) for such a world with several referring to eco-socialism and decolonialism.

[The Radical Ecological Democracy \(RED\) website](#) is an initiative of the India based Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, which has been in the forefront of the struggle for environmental sanity and sustainability in India for the last four decades. Its analysis pages contain much of relevance, see for example [Sajal Jose's](#) article 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Great Reset and the global resistance to come.'

In 2021, after three decades of trade and financial globalization, **global inequalities** remain extremely pronounced: they are about as great today as they were at the peak of Western imperialism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the **Covid pandemic** has exacerbated even more global inequalities. Global inequalities data shows that the top 1% took 38% of all additional wealth accumulated since the mid-1990s, with an acceleration since 2020. More generally speaking, wealth inequality remains at extreme levels in all regions.

*"The COVID crisis has exacerbated inequalities between the very wealthy and the rest of the population. Yet, in rich countries, government intervention prevented a massive rise in poverty, this was not the case in poor countries. This shows the importance of social states in the fight against poverty."*, explains **Lucas Chancel**, lead author of [the global inequalities report](#).

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global economy is presented in a series of facts and figures by [Statista](#). The forecast change in global GDP in 2021 is 5.7%. [The Covid World data explorer](#).

[Larry Elliott](#) is among those who continue to make the case for a post-Covid new deal to ‘build back better’. He suggests a shift in power from finance to labour; increased taxes on wealth; and capital controls to prevent the rich shifting capital offshore.

Joe Biden invited world leaders to a [summit for democracy](#) sounding the alarm about a rising tide of authoritarianism and surveys that suggest a quarter of the world’s population lives in countries where democracy is in decline.

The Omicron variant poses a major threat to UK citizens, the health service and the economy. The [closing of schools in January 2022](#) is a possibility.

Britain’s early handling of the pandemic has been labelled ‘[one of the worst ever public health failures](#)’. [The Health Foundation](#) has considered what inequalities in Covid-19 mortality rates and health tell us about levelling up

The [OECD offers a December 2021 snapshot](#) of the UK economy and its prospects. It continues to be affected by Covid; supply side problems; slow growth; and rising energy and tax bills that result in [falling living standards](#).

[Will Hutton](#) continues to highlight the costs of Brexit to the UK economy and is a member of [an independent commission on UK/EU relations](#). It is estimated that Brexit [will reduce the UK’s long-run GDP by 4%](#). [Toby Helm](#) examines how Brexit is going one year on.

Covid has caused governments of left, right and centre to intervene in their economies in ways that would have been unthinkable two years ago (keeping workers employed, businesses afloat, etc), Fiscal policy (tax and spending) has taken centre stage and the building blocks of a new variant of capitalism are already in place – more tax and spend, more regulation, selective use of nationalisation, borrowing to invest – using the power of the state with the private sector to save capitalism from itself. [Elliott](#) considers this to be evolution rather than revolution and it remains to be seen to what extent it amounts to the ‘next normal’ or ushers in a green new deal.

[Adam Tooze’s long read](#) describes how covid nearly brought down the global economy and how meltdown was averted – for now. His book *Shutdown* is reviewed by [Oliver Bullough](#).

[The Economy 2030 Inquiry's](#) subject matter is the nature, scale, and context for the **economic change facing the UK** during the 2020s. Its goal is not just to describe the change that Covid-19, Brexit, technology and the Net Zero transition will bring, but to help the country and its policy makers better understand and navigate it against a backdrop of low productivity and high inequality. To achieve these aims the Inquiry will lead a two-year national conversation on the future of the UK economy, bridging rigorous research, public involvement and concrete proposals for change. The first phase of the Inquiry will focus on the state of the UK economy and the changes facing it.

[Julian Coman](#) considers Boris Johnson’s attempts to redefine **modern conservatism**. He notes the fissure within post Brexit British conservatism between a free-market, small-state, libertarian and neoliberal vision, and a ‘one nation’ emphasis on the role of government, civic

bonds and affiliation to community and nation. [In a subsequent article](#), he suggests that the two main parties are reverting to type after a period that saw the rise of populism on the left (Corbynism) and right (Brexit). Small-state conservatives continue to oppose Johnson's turn to social democracy and high spending and Labour has moved to the centre left in the hope that 'an impression of competence, probity and fiscal caution can see it over the line at the next election as it did in the past'. Corman concludes that 'dramatic as the political eruptions of the post-crash decade were, the old order may be gradually "taking back control"'.

Elsewhere Corman offers a review of [Sebastian Payne's book Broken Heartlands](#), an analysis of the seismic shift in British politics that saw Labour lose 'red wall' seats. [John Harris](#) provides a review of Gabriel Pogrund and Patrick Maguire's inside story of Labour under Corbyn, *Left Out*.

[Alex Forsyth](#) suggests that the North Shropshire by-election defeat in December means that Boris Johnson may have lost his winning touch.

In the New Statesman, [George Eaton](#) explains how the return of the state has ended the rule of neoliberalism, while [Johnathan Rutherford](#) considers whether Boris Johnson's government is really Blue Labour. [Phillip Collins](#) explains how the Conservatives are adapting to the insecurities of Britain today. [Harry Lambert](#) traces 'the strange death of Labour Britain' from 2001 to 2021.

UCL Press has published a free ebook [The Neoliberal Age? Britain since the 1970s](#).

[Authors who include Thomas Piketty](#) explain that politics in western democracies has become dominated by **two kinds of elite**: people with high incomes continue to vote for the right while people with high levels of education (such as those with university degrees) have shifted to the left. This separation is visible in nearly all western democracies and is explained by the rise of identity politics; educational expansion from the 1950s onwards; and the rise of neoliberal ideology. Elite politics excludes those of low incomes and the less well educated leading to a populist backlash, mainly on the right.

See [Constantinos Alexiou's article](#) in *Human Geography*, Covid-19, capitalism and political elites: The real threat to humanity.

[Benedikt Schmid and Thomas Smith](#) explore postcapitalism and the barriers and facilitators of transformative geographies.

[Adam Anthony](#) considers everything you wanted to know about **culture wars** and were afraid to ask.

James Plunkett's book [End State: 9 ways society is broken and how we can fix it](#) offers ideas for fostering optimism to complement those offered by Paul Mason in *Clear Bright Future*. [Plunkett video](#).

[Our Shared World](#) is a coalition of almost 200 organisations supporting the implementation of SDG4.7 in England.

See [Ece Temelkuran's](#) seven minute video Capitalism vs the World, Surviving in a World without Hope.

## **Curriculum Unit One      Venezeula's Bolivarian revolution and its impact on healthcare**

[Jeremy Cliffe](#) examines how Covid-19 has intensified inequality, social unrest and political instability in Latin America.

[World Vision](#) reports on the health and refugee crisis in Venezeula. [Regional elections](#) in 2021 saw Maduro's allies win 20 of 23 governor's posts.

[Laurence Blair](#) considers what Gabriel Boric's victory in Chile means for Latin American socialism.

## **Chapter two      Critical geography, critical education**

In her article [An Other Geography](#), Natalie Oswin notes the *marginalization, sidelining, erasure and dismissal of 'othered' people and epistemologies persist within the discipline of geography today*. She discusses *this fact as a source of harm for many individuals, a result of centuries of white supremacist heteropatriarchal grounding and a failure of the collective critical geographical imagination. A new turn is underway, however, one that turns away from the mainstream of the discipline and toward each 'other'*. *Solidarities across modes of difference are building in scholarship that inhabits an epistemological elsewhere, and these can and must be harnessed in this time of serious threats to academic freedom and social justice.*(abstract)

[Ian Duckett](#) writes on the curriculum and social class in England and Wales. The book he co-edited with Louise Regan for the SEA [Reimagining Education](#) (2020) is available as a free download.

Warwick Marshall's [Education Uncovered](#) provides coverage of the 'undergrowth' of school reform in England.

See [Akala's five minute video](#) on education.

[Terry Wrigley's 2014 policy paper](#) on the politics of the curriculum in schools was overlooked in CSG.

See Aidan Hesslewood's article 'Raising issues; where is critical geography in the school curriculum', *Teaching Geography*, 46/3, pp. 109-111, 2021.

## **Curriculum Unit      Spatial divisions of schooling**

Through the [Social Mobility Pledge](#), a coalition of businesses, NHS Trusts, Councils and universities committed to driving levelling up on the ground, and with civil society and cross

party MPs has produced the [Levelling Up Goals](#). The fourteen goals include successful school years (goal two).

[Katherine Birbalsingh](#) became the government's new social mobility tsar.

[Headteachers call for the reform of school admissions](#) to address the attainment gap.

[School Places: A Fair Choice?](#) - looks at the options for reforming school admissions in England.

### **Chapter three                      Students, teachers and the geography of happiness**

[Gen Z Explained: the art of living in a digital age](#) paints an optimistic portrait of people born between the mid 1990s and 2010

The NEU's [State of Education Survey 2021](#) examines the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of students and teachers.

[Budget 2021](#) will restore school funding to 2010 levels over the next three years.

[Catch up funding](#) in the UK compared unfavourably to that in other European countries.

[Common Wealth](#) examined the private-state school funding gap.

Local authorities continued to [need more money](#) and this posed a challenge [to levelling up](#).

There remained marked regional inequalities in [youth services](#).

The Government announced [reforms to teacher development](#) in England

The Moral Maze on BBC Radio 4 **considered** [the issue of happiness](#).

### **Curriculum Unit            Happiness and Equality: UK and Finland compared**

[Finland's new prime minister](#) seeks to keep Finland the world's happiest nation.

### **Chapter four                      Knowledge**

The digitised archive of *Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education* is [here](#).

John Morgan and David Lambert's blog [Impolite Geography](#) covered a number of topics in 2021 including [Stuart Jeffries' book on postmodernism](#) and [Ofsted's review of research in geographical education](#). The latter reflected a conservative view of school geography and overlooked the need for it to deliver ESDGC.

[Esther Vernon](#) argued the importance of abstract systematised knowledge within horizontal knowledge domains such as geography and drew on critical realism to give more insight into

the nature of geography as a horizontal knowledge structure. Pedagogy should attend to the vertical movement of knowledge within this horizontal domain. In [another article](#) she examined the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogy using Maton's legitimation code theory.

[Routes](#) is a journal for student geographers. Issue 2 contained an [article on intersctionality](#).

### **Curriculum Unit      Homelessness, causes and solutions**

[A Guardian editorial](#) recognises that putting rough sleepers in hotels during the pandemic made a difference but suggests that in December 2021 many remained precariously insecure.

[Housing First England](#) has shown some success in tackling homelessness in areas such as the West Midlands and North West. [Simon Hattenstone and Daniel Lavelle](#) argue that the approach should be applied nationwide.

First time buyers found homes becoming [less affordable](#) and there was a boom in [microflats](#).

[Michael Gove](#) was appointed to head up the new Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. [Conservative planning reforms were under review](#) after the Chesham and Amersham by-election result in June.

The Government's annual target of 300,000 new homes was seriously hit [by labour and materials shortages](#).

### **Chapter five              Pedagogy**

[Maria Nikolakaki](#) outlines 'The Hope of Critical Pedagogy in the New Dark Ages of Globalization and Imperialism'.

### **Curriculum Unit      The Future of Work**

Reith lecturer [Stuart Russell](#) considers the impact of AI on the UK economy and the future of work.

[Tony Burke](#) suggests the UK Government could learn from Europe when it comes to protecting those in low-paid work and the gig economy.

See Paul Grffin's article 'Contemporary labour geographies within changing places' *Geography*, 106/1, pp. 25-31, 2021.

### **Chapter six              Nature**

On critical theory, nature and political ecology see [Omar Dahbour's](#) article 'From Political Ecology to Critical Theory, and back again'.

A new [IPPC report](#) and Cop26 in Glasgow focussed attention on climate change and climate change education. The [Climate Change Committee](#) reviewed the outcomes of cop26 and the next steps for the UK.

[The IPSOS MORI Issues Index](#) provides insights into where climate change stands in UK citizens' concerns. [Marks and Hickman](#) consider 'Young People's Voices on Climate Anxiety, Government Betrayal and Moral Injury: a Global Phenomenon'. Young people's fear of environmental doom is discussed by [Andrew Gregory](#).

[Rowena Mason](#) outlines the political factions in the climate change debate. [Ian Scoones](#) discusses the politics of sustainability and development while [Jack Shenker](#) shows how climate change has become entangled in the culture wars.

[A study](#) showed that Britain has lost half of its natural biodiversity since the industrial revolution and the [National Trust](#) published its annual weather and wildlife review. [Restor](#) provides a global network and mapping system focussed on rewilding.

The possibility of [green growth](#) continued to be debated by economists with Tim Jackson publishing a new book [Post Growth](#). [Jamie Waters](#) considered whether consumption was a spent force and [Gaia Vince](#) argued that love, not simply technology, is the foundation for resilient and sustainable societies.

Among the sites offering climate change resources for teachers are those of the [NEU](#); [Transform Our World](#); [Teach the Future](#); and [Lets Go Zero](#). Readers of CSG will wish to consider whether a focus on climate change detracts from other SD goals and whether such resources consider the political economy and politics of global heating. See [George Monbiot, September 15<sup>th</sup>](#).

Radical geographer Paul Turner was among those who launched the [Ministry of Eco-Education](#) with a focus is on primary education.

[Ted Trainer](#) outlines the eco-anarchist path to a just and sustainable society. He summarises his perspective [here](#).

[A BERA research commission](#) launched a manifesto on Education for Environmental Sustainability. Young people and teachers identified barriers to such education in schools and these are worth noting since they accord with arguments in CSG.

- **SYSTEMIC:** Undervaluing of environmental sustainability in government policy, budgetary constraints for schools, the nature of the curriculum and assessment.
- **SCHOOL LEVEL:** Prioritising economic considerations in decision-making, teacher workload, exam pressures and constraints, and insufficient confidence, knowledge and agency for all members of the school community.

It will be interesting to see how the members of the commission work to overcome these barriers and deliver the implications for classrooms, schools and communities that they identify. Meanwhile the Department for Education has published [Sustainability and Climate](#)

[Change, a draft strategy for the education and children's services systems](#). [Schools Week](#) reviewed the draft strategy noting that climate change will be a topic within science, but not geography, CPD.

[Alyson Jenkins](#) offers a reframing of ecological global citizenship education and [Greg Misiaszek's](#) book *Educating the Global Environmental Citizen* considers the (dis)connection between critical global citizenship education models and ecopedagogy which is grounded in Paulo Freire's pedagogy.

### **Curriculum Unit      Urban farming in Chicago, Nairobi and Bristol**

[Dan Saladino](#) asks whether we are eating ourselves to extinction while [Bee Wilson](#) considers what is necessary to fix Britain's failing food system.

The Government outlined [its Future Farming programme](#) while the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission published [Farming for Change](#).

### **Chapter seven                      Space**

[Andrew Gamble](#) considers global Britain in relation to the Anglosphere. While it offers closer links in the security sphere, as seen in [the Aukus pact](#), he argues that it cannot begin to match what the UK will lose from reduced economic ties to the EU.

[Jeremy Cliffe](#) examines the return of the west in the context of China's rise and suggests that the rise of authoritarian leaders means that across the world [democracy is being tested to its limits](#).

See Daniel Hammett & Lucy Jackson's article 'The new age of the nation state?', *Geography*, 106/2, pp. 76-84, 2021.

[Simon Jenkins](#) suggests that the West's fantasy of nation building is to blame for the chaotic withdrawal of US and British troops from Afghanistan. [Tim Marshall](#) considers Afghanistan as a geopolitical hotspot and the humanitarian crisis in the country led to the [DEC's crisis appeal](#).

The [BMJ](#) argues that unequal global vaccine coverage is at the heart of the current Covid-19 crisis. [The UN university](#) outlines five ways in which coronavirus is deepening global inequality.

[Kwame Appiah](#) considers the true cost of Covid in the global south.

CSG could be said to be strong on postcolonialism and weak on decolonialism. See [Jim Butler's](#) article 'Should We Decolonise Geography?' and Sam Orndorff's reply. Also see this [SOAS page](#) on decolonising the curriculum.

See [Marcin Stanek's 2017 article](#) on decolonial education and geography. Also Steve Puttick & Amber Murrey's article 'Confronting the deafening silence on race in geography education



in England: learning from anti-racist, decolonial and Black geographies’, *Geography*, 105/3, pp. 126-134, 2021. And Gerry Kearne’s two articles ‘Topple the racists 1 & 2’ *Geography*, 105/3, pp. 4-15, 2021 & 106/1, pp. 4-15, 2021.

*Pluriverse*, a post-development dictionary contains over 100 essays on transformative initiatives and alternatives to the currently dominant processes of globalized development, including its structural roots in modernity, capitalism, state domination, and masculinist values. It offers critical essays on mainstream solutions that ‘greenwash’ development, and presents radically different worldviews and practices from around the world that point to an ecologically wise and socially just world. It is free to download [here](#).

### **Curriculum Unit                      China’s Belt and Road Initiative and its impact on Xinjiang and East Africa**

An [unofficial UK tribunal](#) finds the Chinese government guilty of Uighur genocide in Xinjiang

In one of his anti-capitalist chronicles [David Harvey](#) addresses Whither China? [Adam Tooze](#) argues that there is no solution to our age of crisis without China.

The [Xinhua news agency](#) argues that the Belt and Road Initiative is transforming Kenya’s development space. [The Silk Road Briefing](#) reviews progress in Africa linked to the BRI.

### **Chapter Eight                              Place**

[Phillip Inman](#) considers the challenge of increasing investment and productivity in the less developed parts of the UK. [John Harris](#) argues that levelling up means nothing unless places are given the power and money they need. The [levelling up white paper](#) is delayed until 2022.

The [Local Government Association](#) offers councils a toolkit for revitalizing town centres.

[Sophie McBain](#) notes girls’ claims that a sexual assault epidemic is gripping British schools and asks what can be done to make schools safe places for them.

[Sarah Dawood](#) considers what the Online Safety Bill means for the future of social media.

### **Curriculum Unit              Becoming a young British Muslim woman: the significance of place**

[Reza Shaker and her co-researchers](#) explore how individual young Muslims in Amsterdam embody their agency in the forms of micro-practices and socio-spatial relations. By highlighting the spatio-corporeal aspects of Muslims’ presence within urban space, their ethnography foregrounds how young Muslims negotiate identities and belonging within everyday urban spaces of encounter. Dealing with the everyday panoptical white Othering gaze, we describe a range of “unremarkable” ordinary practices and everyday small agencies

that young Muslims in Amsterdam adopt including invisibility, challenging whiteness, and accumulating whiteness..

[Laura Kapinga and Bettina van Hoven](#) demonstrate how young people make sense of religion through local places in the urban context of Vancouver while moving from youth to young adulthood.

## **Chapter nine Democracy and citizenship**

[Johnathan Freedland](#) explains how Boris Johnson rigged the political system in his attempt to stay in power. [George Monbiot](#) supports his argument with reference to the police, crimes, sentencing and courts bill. [Clive Lewis and Marzena Zukowska](#) discuss growing authoritarianism and sources of hope for the future.

See [Peter Jukes](#) eight minute video on the media cartel controlling Boris Johnson.

A report from the [Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee](#) suggests that the UK government should press ahead with the devolution agenda.

[Margaret MacMillan](#) asks ‘Is world government possible?’

[David Runciman](#) makes the case for votes for children.

A 2018 report from the House of Lords Select Committee on citizenship and civic engagement, [The Ties That Bind](#), considers citizenship education in [chapter three](#).

## **Curriculum Unit Paying for the transition to sustainable development: the role of international tax reform**

See [Grace Blakely's](#) five minute video on financialisation.

An October [Guardian editorial](#) on tax havens written after [the Pandora papers](#) had exposed an alternative financial world where the rich hide their assets.

[OECD deal](#) imposes 15% minimum global corporation tax.

[Phillipa Nuttall](#) used Cop26 to focus on the question ‘who will pay to save humanity?’