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DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

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The theme of this issue (36) of *Policy and Practice*, 'Development Education and Democracy', can be viewed as part of a continuum with the previous issue (35) on the 'economic paradigm' and 'Frontlines of Activism', the topic to be explored in Issue 37 (Autumn 2023). Most of the Focus article contributions to this issue are framed in the context of neoliberalism's erosion of democratic spaces and institutions. As Marta da Costa suggests: 'neoliberalism has carried the logic of the market into all spheres of public life, disavowing basic human rights, and corrupting collective democratic spaces'. The contributions from: Prachy Hooda on the Farmers' Movement in India in 2020-21; Alireza Farahani and Behnam Zoghi Roudsari on community-based learning toward democratisation in Iran; and Gareth Robinson, Fionntán Hargey and Kathryn Higgins on a marginalised community in south Belfast struggling for 'spatial justice', speak to the importance of activism on the frontlines of neoliberalism. The three topics – democracy, neoliberalism and activism – intersect at different levels and in varying contexts in Issue 36 from: the need to re-claim democracy from the jaws of fascism; to critically interrogate the concept of democracy as an enabler of Eurocentrism and 'colonial/modern forms of oppression' (da Costa); and to re-calibrate democracy as an agent of grassroots, community activism essential to resisting top-down 'development' perpetuating 'the unequal and unjust distribution of resources and opportunities' (Robinson, Hargey and Higgins).

Fifty years of neoliberalism
The prevalence of neoliberalism in many of the contributions to Issue 36 is a reminder that 2023 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the brutal overthrow of Chile's socialist president, Salvador Allende, in a Washington-backed military coup in 1973 led by General Augusto Pinochet. Chile subsequently became

the laboratory of neoliberalism schooled in the 'holy trinity' of laissez-faire economics – privatisation, deregulation and spending cuts – by the Chicago Boys, United States' (US) economists trained under the tutelage of free market guru, Milton Friedman (Klein, 2007: 77).   Chile's experiment in 'shock therapy' was a disaster; unemployment rocketed to thirty per cent, the economy was hit by hyperinflation and 'debt exploded' (Ibid: 85). But under its firm adherents, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and United States (US) president, Ronald Reagan, neoliberalism became a global contagion, informing the multi-lateral 'development' programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank and imposed on low-income countries through Structural Adjustment Programmes; a case of neoliberalism by stealth (McCloskey, 2022).

By the end of the five decades that followed the implementation of neoliberal 'reforms' across much of the world, the richest ten per cent of the global population controlled fifty-two per cent of global income and the poorest half just 8.5 per cent (The World Inequality Report, 2022). The inequality gap is even higher in terms of wealth with the richest ten per cent of the global population owning seventy-six per cent of all wealth, and the bottom half just two per cent (Ibid). By 2016, an article by IMF economists had to accept that 'The evidence of the economic damage from inequality suggests that policymakers should be more open to redistribution than they are' (Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri, 2016: 41). That evidence included between 1980 and 2014: '150 episodes of surges in capital inflows in more than 50 emerging market economies' with about twenty per cent of these 'episodes' resulting in economic crisis (Ibid: 39). In short, neoliberalism is unstable and prone to boom and bust economics often resulting in social unrest and upheaval. It is also a direct and immediate threat to democracy.

Democracy under siege
In Issue 35 of *Policy and Practice*, Henry A Giroux observed: 'Under neoliberalism, everything is for sale and the only obligation of citizenship is consumerism' (2022: 112). He added that many of the key democratic institutions 'such as the independent media, schools, the legal system, certain

financial institutions and higher education are under siege' (Ibid: 111). Many of the key tenets of development education are vulnerable to what Bryan and Mochizuki (in Issue 36) see as the growing corporate takeover of education. Their article recalls that Freire conceived of education as a means toward called critical consciousness (*conscientizaçao*) that supported 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions' and 'take action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Freire, 2005: 17). By contrast, education under neoliberal capitalism 'trades in civic illiteracy, historical amnesia, and depoliticization' (Giroux, 2023).

If democracy and citizenship are to amount to more than consumerism or casting a vote every four or five years in elections, then learners require a liberating education that enables them to demystify the world. As Freire put it: 'to surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes' (2005: 29). He warned of a 'world of deceit' presented as a fixed entity beyond interrogation or transformation (Ibid: 120). This is the world of populism, a political ideology that has coat-trailed neoliberalism and assails democracy to create sectarian divisions; we think of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Narendra Modi in India, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Donald Trump in the United States and Britain's Boris Johnson. The populist leader, warns Freire (Ibid: 131) is 'an ambiguous being, an "amphibian" who lives in two elements. Shuttling back and forth between the people and the dominant oligarchies, he bears the mark of both groups'. Henry A Giroux (2023) finds such a leader in Florida Governor (and possible presidential candidate) Ron DeSantis 'whose attack on public and higher education aims at producing modes of civic illiteracy, modeled on a flight from critical thinking, self-reflection, and meaningful forms of solidarity'.

Participative democracy is, therefore, urgently needed to facilitate the right to protest, to debate, to dissent and express opinion in a range of fora from street protests to social media. As the journalist and activist, George Monbiot (2022), argues: 'Protest is not … a political luxury. It is the bedrock of democracy. Without it, few of the democratic rights we enjoy would exist'. He warns of policing legislation making its way through the British parliament

that Amnesty International claims will impose 'profound and significant restrictions on the basic right to peacefully protest and will have a severely detrimental impact on the ability of ordinary people to make their concerns heard' (Deshmukh, 2022). In India, prime minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has escalated violence against Muslims by bulldozing homes and businesses. The Indian author and activist, Arundhati Roy (2022), believes that 'a deeply flawed, fragile democracy has transitioned – openly and brazenly – into a criminal, Hindu-fascist enterprise with tremendous popular support'.

In the United States, still feeling the after-shocks of the Trump presidency, the Supreme Court's decision to expand gun rights and remove the right to abortion by overturning 'Roe versus Wade' is undermining fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms (Greskco, 2022; Demant, 2022). 'Populism, nativism, white supremacy and other forms of racism and extremism are poisoning social cohesion', argues United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres (2021), adding that 'polarization is undermining democratic institutions'. The COVID-19 pandemic, too, has added greater stresses to democracy, with Oxfam (2021: 2) finding that the virus has 'has exposed, fed off and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race'. Corporate state capture is another consequence of neoliberalism as it subverts democratic institutions to assert the interests of private capital above the social needs of citizens. When powerful elites and corporations, 'exercise undue influence so as to capture public policies in their favor, this undermines the basis of every individual vote in a democracy', argues Oxfam (2022: 22). A question germane to this issue of *Policy and Practice* is to what extent democracy has been an enabler of oppression, violence and human rights abuses or a victim of the marketisation of democratic institutions and downsizing of the state by the forces of neoliberalism?

Problematising democracy
Issue 36 is characterised by engaging and distinctive contributions from authors in the global North and South who have critically situated and interrogated the concept of democracy in development education (DE)

practice. In a bracing and critically reflective piece that challenges the assumption that democracy is a 'universally desirable answer for development education', Marta da Costa's starting position is that democracy is part of and enabling many of the social and economic problems we are currently facing. By applying Anker's (2022) study of ugly freedoms as a framework from which to approach the complex issue of democracy, da Costa considers 'democracy as *ugly*: a problem, rather than the answer' to our problems. Far from viewing 'the current violence and oppression we are witnessing globally' as an attack on democracy, da Costa suggests that it has been enabled by it.

This problematising of democracy struck a chord when witnessing former and current political leaders from Europe and North America attend a three-day conference in Belfast from 17-19 April 2023 organised by Queen's University Belfast (2023) to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (BGFA). The high-ranking participants included former British prime-minister, Tony Blair, one of the architects of the BGFA, who with the US led Britain into a disastrous and illegal war against Iraq in March 2003 (Aljazeera, 2023). The war was launched against Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq, on the false premise that he was 'stockpiling weapons of mass destruction' and supporting 'terrorist groups'. It resulted in an estimated 275,000 Iraqi deaths, destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and escalated sectarian conflict from which the country has yet to recover twenty years on (Ibid). Writing about the Iraq War on its twentieth anniversary, George Monbiot (2023) observed: 'There has been no reckoning and nor will there be. This greatest of crimes has been so thoroughly airbrushed that its perpetrators can anoint themselves the avenging angels of other people's atrocities'. Another conference participant was Alistair Campbell, Blair's former Director of Communications and Strategy, who drew up the discredited dossier on Iraq's weapons programme that was used 'to make the case for war' (Norton-Taylor, 2011). Campbell, like Blair, has been re-habilitated in plain sight.

A week before the conference, current US president Joe Biden also visited Belfast to 'keep the peace' and reiterate US support for the BGFA

(Glynn, McKee and McDowell, 2023). The media coverage of President Biden's visit to Ireland largely championed his peace-keeping role and excised his administration's foreign policies that are undermining peace and causing conflict in the global South. They include: annual US military funding of $3.3 billion to Israel that is fuelling conflict in the Middle-East (US Department of State, 2023a); the US blockade of Cuba - condemned in no fewer than thirty annual votes in the United Nations General Assembly - which President Biden has exacerbated by keeping Cuba on the US 'State Sponsors of Terrorism' list (UNGA, 2022; US Department of State, 2023b); US support of Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen which has cost the lives of 370,000 people (Widakuswara, 2022); and the US's catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 which saw the collapse of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces' (ANDSF) allowing the Taliban to take control of the country (SIGAR, 2022).

The dissonance between Biden's perceived role as a protector of peace and enabler of democracy in the north of Ireland and his administration's role in undermining democracy elsewhere was rarely examined by the media during his visit to Ireland. In an editorial, *The Irish Times* (2023) said that Biden's visit cemented a 'special relationship'; 'it should be remembered behind the speeches and potential shamrockery surrounding the visit, is a relationship that really matters'. Liam Kennedy (2023), director of the Clinton Institute for American Studies at University College Dublin suggested that 'over the years President Biden has come to personify a liberal politics of empathy in which his Irish ancestry and Catholicism function as moral touchstones'. It was left to Michael Murphy (2023), a letter writer to *The Irish Times*, to call out the Irish media corps for its excising from their coverage of Mr Biden's visit his record in office: 'Mr Biden and his entourage waltzed around the country without a single challenge from journalists to US foreign policy or the president's record'.

Was this lack of journalistic criticism a case of studied omission to shore up US support for the Irish economy and BGFA? What then does our silence on conflicts elsewhere say about our concept and practice of democracy and citizenship? If Ireland does indeed enjoy a 'special relationship' with the

US, then why not use this privileged position to speak up on behalf of those on the receiving end of US foreign policies that impose pain and suffering on people in the global South? By failing to bring critical perspectives to such policies, we can hardly be surprised to see them repeated.

Grassroots democracy
Drawing upon Freire's concept of situationality – the temporal-spatial conditions that 'mark us' - Gareth Robinson, Fionntán Hargey and Kathryn Higgins provide an inspiring case study of an urban community in Belfast that has campaigned effectively for 'urban renewal'. Using a rights-based framework for community renewal called *We Will Dissent*, a working-class community in Belfast called The Market has used an array of education and campaigning tools to challenge planning decisions that exclude 'local problem owners from the development of solutions'. The Market Development Association (MDA) was established in 1995 'to promote the well-being of all citizens' in the community and advocate on socio-economic issues using 'a community development approach'. The tools used by the community to create awareness of these issues include 'media campaigns, street actions, resident mobilisations, and protests, based on participative research'. The MDA also established a 'unique Higher Education Partnership' with academics from Queen's Communities and Place (an initiative of Queen's University Belfast) to provide research that supported working groups on issues such as health and education. Robinson, Hargey and Higgins have written an article that will inspire debate and praxis in other communities in struggle against marginalisation and gentrification.

Another grassroots movement in dissent has been captured in Prachy Hooda's article on the farmers' movement of 2020 – 2021 established to campaign against three contentious neoliberal farm laws and the corporatisation of Indian agriculture. The farmers' movement was one of the largest in the history of post-independence India and, like the MDA in Belfast, used a range of community tools and services for self-education and campaigning activities including: a bi-weekly newspaper; establishing a library; and opening a school to educate the children of protesting farmers.

Over forty Indian farmers' unions mobilised to protest against the farm laws. They also drew upon Freire's concept of *conscientização* to educate protesting farmers on 'the structural social and economic inequalities that define their lived experiences and affect their community as a whole'.

Community-based learning is also central to the article by Alireza Farahani and Behnam Zoghi Roudsari, a very welcome contribution to *Policy and Practice* from Iran. They argue that supporting and sustaining community-based learning initiatives can contribute to a broader strategy of 'democratisation'. The authors bring a first-hand perspective of locally based community education in the context of an emerging pro-democracy movement in Iran and the brutal reaction of the state to this dissent. Farahani and Zoghi Roudsari utilise Freirean critical pedagogical approaches in their community empowerment programmes with a view to 'strengthening the foundations of democratic institutions at the local level'. They argue that nurturing 'the political participation of ever more sectors of society' can help create 'more effective, stable, and sustainable, pro-democracy forces' in Iran.

The de-radicalisation of development education
Audrey Bryan and Yoko Mochizuki provide an urgent, timely and topical warning about the use of crisis rhetoric 'to consolidate the corporate takeover of education from a democratically controlled system to one designed and run by private actors in the service of the global economy'. Using a critical discourse analysis, they show how policy problems and their solutions are manufactured in particular discursive structures through key United Nations' policy documents and events. The authors specifically focus on the 2022 United Nations' Transforming Education Summit (TES) as an example of global education governance that is designed to elevate the interests of global corporations, particularly large philanthropic foundations that influence education policy. This article recalls Naomi Klein's ground-breaking and revelatory *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) which showed how the disorientation created by disasters and emergencies are often used by governments and the private sector to implement neoliberal 'reforms'. Bryan and Mochizuki argue that the de-radicalisation of education intended by crisis transformationalism

has been accelerated by the 'contradictory and fundamentally incompatible' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda. They find evidence of this de-radicalisation in the shift from the more politicised and Freirean-based 'development education' to the more recent and increasingly common use in the sector of 'global citizenship'. 'The learner at the heart of this new transformative education agenda', argue Bryan and Mochizuki, 'is an (economic) *global citizen with benefits*'. This is a citizen equipped with 'neurologically-inflected social-emotional skills' rather 'than an understanding of power, politics, and their role in local and global transformation'. This powerful article is a reminder that the development education sector in Ireland has almost uniformly adopted the term 'global citizenship education' in recent years without pause, discussion or a consideration of its implications.

Brighid Golden's article is a reflection on a self-study action research project which aimed to strengthen critical thinking in her teaching and the practice of her students. It highlights the importance of providing opportunities for student teachers to experience Freirean pedagogical approaches in their initial teacher education to ensure that radical, participative learning is central to their classroom practice. The findings of Golden's research suggest that its possible for 'students to develop critical thinking skills within the context of global education'. She also found that 'dialogical approaches had a significant impact on their acquisition and demonstration of those skills'. The article suggests that the 'incorporation of active, engaged opportunities to share ideas and work collaboratively supported students to develop core critical thinking skills' which are necessary for instilling democratic values and participation.

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Focus

Ugly Democracy: Towards Epistemic Disobedience in Development Education

Marta da Costa

Abstract: In the current context of global threats to democratic life, through a rise in fascism, populism and right-wing governments, the thirty-sixth issue of *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review* calls and opens a space for reflecting on 'development education's distinctive and rounded view of democracy'. This article answers the call by engaging with this current problem-space and the answers development education in Europe have historically mobilised in response to it (Scott, 2004). Rather than starting from the position that the current forms of violence we are witnessing are not democratic or 'real' representations of freedom, the article addresses democracy – a modern construct – in its entirety, examining the entanglements between democracy, development education, and modern/colonial systems of oppression. Drawing on political perspectives from contexts where democracy is assumed and contexts where it was imposed, the article aims to dislodge the self-evident position of democracy as the universally desirable answer for development education, and consider the possibilities opened by starting from a position where democracy is part of the problem as well.

Building on, and contributing to, decolonial scholarship in the field, the article draws on Elizabeth R. Anker's (2022) study of ugly freedoms as a framework from which to complexify discussions about democracy and consider possibilities for thinking about development education differently – through more compromised, understated engagements with global issues that resist investments in purity, 'doing' and certainties, opening different possibilities for thinking and experiencing freedom. The article ends by

suggesting a set of reflexive questions that might support interrogations of democracy in development education practice.

Key words: Development Education; Decolonial Critique; Critical Global Citizenship Education; Epistemic disobedience; Democratic Education.

Introduction

In the context of recent attacks on democracy by a rise in fascism, authoritative governments (Giroux, 2022b) and necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019), this issue of *Policy and Practice* calls on scholarship to consider the role of democracy in helping to (re)politicise development education and promoting critical consciousness and freedom from domination. By focusing on developing a 'distinctive and rounded view of democracy' in the field, Issue 36 offers a space where we can bring to the fore a concept that is perhaps referred to a lot in development education but sits mostly in the background. Democracy is a notoriously contested concept (e.g., Sant, 2021), but we can broadly take its meaning from the call for contributors, and elsewhere in the journal (e.g. Giroux, 2022a), as bottom-up collective action rooted in dialogue and participation, leading to liberation. Despite the controversy around its meaning, democracy tends to assume a universal desirability and be presented as the antidote to its own, and other, global crises (Zembylas, 2022). Because of this self-evidence, democracy is easily positioned as the answer to our questions.

This article raises the question of what other answers might become available when democracy is positioned as also part of the problem and considers how centering democracy in development education might open/foreclose possibilities for thinking about practice otherwise. It responds to the call for contributors by critically engaging with the *problem-space* (Scott, 2004) informing it, particularly focusing on interrogating and historicising the concept of democracy and positioning it as part of/enabling the problems we are currently facing. In its critical reflection, the article finds parallels between democracy and development as two *North Atlantic*

Universals (Trouillot, 2009), and raises implications for thinking about these concepts differently in development education in European contexts.

The problem of democracy for development education

Development education is strongly influenced by a critical pedagogy tradition (Stein, 2018), and the call for contributors for this issue is largely set up as a response to Henry Giroux's construction of our current democratic crisis as partly enabled by education. In a couple of recent articles, Giroux (2022a; 2022b) provides a prolific overview of the consequences of right-wing politics and neoliberalism for democracy and education, and outlines how education is to respond to it. Giroux (2022a) explains how right-wing governments' return to fascism has made visible and legitimised the mechanisms of white supremacy (i.e. racism, violence, systemic inequality, environmental destruction), *ethicide* (the erasure of ethical questions and referents from politics), and necropolitics (the power to decide who gets to live and who can die) (drawing on Mbembe, 2019). Moreover, in the era of 'fake news', governments and social media have waged an attack on the truth, critical thinking and questioning, which Giroux argues are key for an informed citizenship. Coupled with right-wing politics, neoliberalism has carried the logic of the market into all spheres of public life, disavowing basic human rights, and corrupting collective democratic spaces. Although Giroux is speaking from a United States (US) context, we can see similar developments in the United Kingdom (UK). The cost-of-living crisis, the dehumanising treatment of refugees and asylum seekers as well as the promised 'tougher' rules on collective union action are just some examples.

In Giroux's framing of our democratic crises, we can identify a clear distinction between democracy and the violence, oppression, and marginalisation enacted by governments and other global institutions. In this context, Giroux argues that education has become a tool for authoritarian control and reclaims education's obligations to democracy, social justice and freedom. His response is abundant with principles that can help education address the siege on democracy. We might summarise these as largely based on targeting knowledge production in the classroom, since Giroux maintains

the continuous moves toward authoritarianism are a consequence of ignorance, misinformation and historical amnesia (Giroux, 2022a; 2022b). Consequently, he argues the development of critical literacy is key to uncover the truth and save democracy, since 'democracy cannot exist or be defended without critically literate and engaged individuals' (Giroux, 2022b: 115). Teachers' responsibility is to assume the role of citizen-educators, and support students' critical reading of the world, in ways that promote an educated hope, so that they feel empowered to act. In Giroux's response to his framing of our current *problem-space*, there is a clear journey through a critical pedagogy education that leads to the acquisition of the knowledge needed to develop a sense of agency and empowerment, which will then lead to freedom. Through critical pedagogy, education can 'win the war' with fascism (Giroux, 2022b).

Stein (2018) has recently made a case for the need to engage from a range of critical perspectives with the concepts we have inherited from modernity and consider the ways in which they constrain/enable our thinking about, and responding to, our present problems in development education. Hence, this article engages with the concept at the centre of this issue on democracy and considers the answers we might mobilise/assume from within a Eurocentric imaginary. The next section engages with decolonial scholarship in international development and education to discuss democracy as a constitutive concept of Eurocentric epistemology and, as such, delimiting possibilities for thinking and making sense of our global problems. Next, the article makes a case for re-framing our problem-space, by arguing that the current violence and oppression we are witnessing globally are not only an attack on democracy but have also been enabled by it. The aim is to target the Eurocentric imaginary, via one of its constitutive concepts (democracy) (Mignolo, 2018) and to make visible other ways for thinking about our current problem (democratic crisis), via other points of entry to the conversation. Through this exercise, we might be able to re-frame the problem of democracy and also think differently about freedom in development education. These two steps are important, because as Stein (2018: 3), drawing on Scott (2004), argues 'it is not only concepts that might need to be rethought, but also our modes of critical engagement, knowledge production, and theories of change'.

In line with Stein, this article does not aim to offer a final perspective on the problem of democracy but to contribute to our current thinking about approaches to development education, by interrogating our assumptions and bringing into conversation different critical perspectives.

Dislodging democracy as self-evident in development education: key contributions from decolonial engagements

Decolonial scholars in the field of international development (e.g. Santos, 2016; Mignolo, 2018) argue that we cannot continue to look for modern answers to the problems caused by modernity. Yet, research and practice in development education in Europe suggest we continue to struggle to question/move beyond modernity's concepts in our attempts to address global issues (Pashby and Sund, 2020). This investment in modernity and its promises maintains a circularity within conversations in development education (see Pashby et al., 2020) and limits possibilities for thinking about alternatives. So, how can democracy offer a conceptual tool to develop, as Santos (2016: 133) suggests, 'alternative thinking of alternatives' in development education? Addressing this question requires perhaps what Mignolo (2018) has called *epistemic disobedience*, by which he means recognising and denaturalising modernity's concepts. Hence, a starting point might be to dislodge the place democracy holds in our modern imaginary, as inherently good and the only solution to our current problems (e.g. Rockhill, 2017; Zembylas, 2022). We can build off a long history of questioning, contesting and reframing, democracy that reaches back to its emergence in Greek philosophy and has led to a plurality of critical engagements with the concept (see e.g. Held, 2006), which have been translated into a wide range of approaches to democratic education (see e.g. Sant, 2021). Among these critical engagements, some scholars have, in line with decolonial critiques, pointed to the constraints imposed by the modern principles on which the idea of democracy is built, i.e. individualism, logical reasoning and linear thinking (Sant, 2021). Nevertheless, although this scholarship interrogates democracy, it tends to remain framed by it, albeit through more sophisticated/ radical definitions (Rockhill, 2017).

With democracy positioned as *the* reference for thinking about political engagement (Rockhill, 2017), we might think of it as a constitutive concept of modern epistemology, and as functioning as a final boundary for critical thought. In this way, critical theory might problematise democracy, but not *delink* from it (Mignolo, 2018). This is arguably a challenge that comes with thinking about alternatives from within Eurocentrism – the regionally located, but universally imposed imaginary that marginalised other ways of knowing and making sense of the world (Santos, 2016 Mignolo, 2018). 'Eurocentric critiques of Eurocentrism' (Walsh and Mignolo, 2018: 3) mostly readjust the content, but do not 'change the terms of the conversation' (Mignolo, 2018: 149). This limitation is felt markedly in the context of international development and the complex global crises we are facing, because it vastly restricts the perspectives available to think with (Santos, 2016).

Recently in education, Zembylas (2022) has targeted the self-evidence of democracy, by drawing on decolonial scholarship. He argues that democracy has been taken for granted as the 'only possible cure for racism, sexism, economic injustice (…) and all other ills in societies' (Zembylas, 2022: 160), without an understanding that these issues have also been enabled by, or are a consequence of, democracy. Consequently, he calls on democratic education scholars to take up the relations between democracy, modernity, capitalism and colonialism. Zembylas argues that, without this examination, democratic education will remain limited in its ability to provide alternative responses to our present social issues. He concludes by calling for a decolonial ethics in radical democratic education, based on a politics of 'refusal' of liberal democratic norms and values, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges, traditions, and practices in education. According to Zembylas (2022: 161), drawing on Brooks et al. (2020), this approach supports a disinvestment from Eurocentrism through 'the production of Indigenous knowledge systems that are distinct from the coloniser's influence'.

Despite the decolonising approach of Zembylas's (2022) critique of democracy, the response seems largely based on another effort to pluralise

knowledges in education, so as to reach a more (radically) democratic approach. In this way, although democracy is positioned as part of the problem, it remains largely the solution. As such, Zembylas's critique retains a teleological commitment to democracy as something we arrive at (if we play our cards right), and raises questions for thinking about democracy in development education: is there a possibility for a different kind of critique? And what theoretical tools can help target and challenge modern epistemological dominance in conceptualisations of democracy and freedom? Is it possible to start with, but not end in, a new (decolonial) approach to democracy? Understanding democracy as an inheritance from a Eurocentric imaginary makes it an important starting point for conversations; as a concept we can (un)learn from, so that we might think about development education differently. However, it is important this starting point remains opened, and does not fall back on the normative frame we are imposed when democracy is put into question (Zembylas, 2022), so that we might draw on democracy when its useful, but not have it be the only possibility available (Mignolo, 2021). The following section starts by answering Zembylas's (2022) call to address the entanglements between democracy, violence and freedom. In this effort, the article arrives at a more complex (and compromised) starting point for democracy, which is enabled by an engagement with counter-histories (Rockhill, 2017) and Anker's (2022) conception of *ugly* freedoms.

Democracy, development and *ugly freedoms*

Democracy and development are both modern concepts that have long informed and framed discussions about global issues. Democracy is inscribed in our Eurocentric imaginary in such a way that it is 'extremely difficult to speak of democracy without presupposing its intrinsic value' (Rockhill, 2017: 52). Similarly, development has long been taken for granted as not only desirable, but essential, and as the only frame for thinking about, and addressing, global inequalities (e.g. Escobar, 1999). Both democracy and development are what Trouillot (2009) called North Atlantic Universals – words specific to a local region that have been projected universally, both describing and prescribing the global standard. This projection was enabled through the systems of oppression ignited with colonialism (Trouillot, 2009;

Mignolo, 2021), placing democracy, development and coloniality in an intimate relation that requires that their history is told in conjunction (Zembylas, 2022). Through this process, we are more likely to shed light on the double violence played by European democracy: first, as the enabler of colonialism, and then as the promoter of 'freedom'.

European political thought, placing its origins in Greek philosophy (Rockhill, 2017; Mignolo, 2021), often fails to recognise that from its very beginning, democracy was thought and practiced in an intimate relation to violence (Mbembe, 2019). Describing modern democracy as 'pro-slavery', Mbembe (2019: 20) argues colonialism is the sediment on which democracy has been built, arguing the plantations in the Caribbean and Americas, the European colonies and democracy share a constitutive relationship of 'repressed proximity and intimacy'; a matrix that is key for understanding the current global forms of violence that Giroux (2022a; 2022b) highlights in his diagnosis of our democratic crises (i.e. white supremacy, necropolitics). Even though democracy was built on forms of exclusion and oppression, it became a synonym for civilisation, and therefore essential to all nations, which legitimised the expropriation of land and destruction of livelihoods around the globe, during and beyond European colonialism (Mbembe, 2019). In turn, democracy was also deployed as a way to support decolonisation processes, which Bonilla (2015) and Mbembe (2021) argue included imposing a locus of sovereignty (the nation-state) and supporting members of the international elite to get to power, which ensured the continuation of colonial relations, albeit at a distance. International development initiatives have often been implicated in such transitions, ensuring the creation of hierarchies between former colonisers and colonies, based on discursive formations that constructed 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' nations, sustaining the economic dependency between them (e.g. Escobar, 1999; Rodney, 2018). In this context, education has at times been thought of as a tool for helping 'developing' countries become more democratic, through democratic education (see e.g. Harber and Mncube, 2012).

Shedding light on the circularity of the violence performed by democracy is helpful in challenging the Western teleological story of progress through democracy and / for development. Conceptualising democracy and violence as intimately entangled supports conversations that go beyond a dichotomy between democracy/violence or freedom/domination, which tend to lead to a negation of democracy or freedom when in the presence of violence or domination. An easy way to dismiss these entanglements would be to argue the history discussed above refers to a narrow, even erroneous, understanding of democracy, and that we need to think of democracy as 'x' (*insert preferred definition*). For example, Giroux (2022a) distinguishes 'democratic values' from racial injustices and loss of human rights. This distinction creates a distance between the lofty place of democracy and the systems of oppression ignited with colonialism, which we tend to position as a contradiction. Other scholars attempt similar distinctions by reframing the meaning of democracy or how/when it is expressed. For example, by making distinctions between thin (actions restricted to disaggregated practices such as voting) and strong democracy (actions based on a fuller range of participative action and dialogue) (Barber, 2004). Rockhill (2017: 77-78) summarises the extent of these attempts well, when he describes the numerous changes in understandings of democracy, ranging as:

> "an interruption rather than a state of affairs, by way of a theoretical shift from being to event, from substance to act, from substantive to verb, from the state to political action, and more generally from a positive dialectic of synthesis to a negative dialectic of contradiction without end".

But what possibilities are offered to development education when we take up democracy at face value, as a world-making idea and practice, that is both oppressive and liberating, rather than searching for its 'best version'? Anker's (2022) study of *ugly* freedoms is helpful for this endeavour.

Anker (2022) takes up the modern idea of freedom to mean a wide range of conceptualisations and expressions, by describing them as *ugly*. This

aesthetic category is used because it elicits an affective response, of judgement and dissonance, that challenges assumptions of universal desirability. Without falling into the more common separations between freedom versus violence or domination, Anker (2022: 5) understands freedom as 'both nondomination and domination, both worldmaking and world destruction', because it would be 'too reassuring to claim that these systems are only falsely justified as freedom'. In her study of *ugly* freedoms, Anker (2022: 38) traces the commodity of sugar to its colonial roots, linking 'individual freedom to plantation mastery, self-rule to enslavement, and independence to environmental destruction'. By describing freedom(s) as ugly, Anker aims to bring to the fore the dissonance that emerges from a conceptualisation of uncoerced action that is often practiced as/through violence and subjugation, disrupting modern idealisations of freedom as inherently good and universally desirable. As Anker argues, the issue is not that normative versions are wrong, but that they miss the forms of domination present in freedoms' wide range of expressions. Anker's work offers an alternative reading that sees a more complex picture of freedom as attached to domination, rather than needing to be liberated from it, and supports a critical engagement with freedom that unsettles its assumed meaning.

I read the self-evidence of democracy as inherently good, desirable, and the only means for liberation, in line with Anker's engagement with modern freedoms. Although Anker is speaking from a United States context, with a specific history and form of liberal democracy, we can arguably find this common assumption about democracy as the holy grail of modern societies across Euro-western contexts. These visions of democracy seem to step over the violent systems of oppression on which democracy has been built and (because of that) tends to reproduce. In this way, we might not see the multiple expressions of violence, inequality and marginalisation as un-democratic, or as being 'far removed from democratic values' (Giroux, 2022a: 96), but in an intimate relationship with democracy. It is essential, then, that we also see democracy as *ugly*, and bring it into development education, not as the answer, but as a problem that we must grapple with, if we mean to develop more productive engagements with global issues. What kind of development

education can find not only a 'new language for equating freedom and democracy' (Giroux, 2022a: 103), but also interrogate the self-evidence of freedom and democracy, and engage with alternative histories and perspectives, so that it can think and experience them differently?

In describing freedom(s) as ugly, Anker (2022) performs a second conceptual move that is helpful for thinking about development education differently. In the second use of the term, she engages with practices that would be dismissed or rejected for being too ambivalent, compromised, or inconsequential. As Anker explains, 'ugly freedom in this second valence does not require a virtuous actor, an upstanding citizen, or an ideal political subject explicitly yearning for liberty' (2022: 14). These ugly freedoms are not righteous, celebrated actions, but instead emerge from ambivalent or trivial situations, and tend to take the 'low road' (Ibid: 17). They are also necessarily contextual and specific to the people enacting them, depending on the possibilities offered by a given moment. Anker draws on the television series *The Wire* (HBO, 2002) to identify some of these more subversive, morally compromised, forms of freedom that are carved within neoliberal dominance.

In her analysis of the series, Anker comes across practices of freedom that involve, for example, destroying public property and using low-level technology (as opposed to more developed forms) to flee police surveillance. Such practices challenge neoliberal discourse around technological development as essential in our lives and social relations. She also reads eye-rolling and collective boredom as performative acts, which, in the series, lead a group of teachers to stage a collective refusal of neoliberalism. In the scene analysed by Anker, teachers refuse to engage with a seminar where they are being 'taught' how to become better teachers, without any consideration of the cuts and community issues they are dealing with. The school in the series is also shown tinkering with statistical data, and this is also understood by Anker as an enactment of freedom, where teachers disinvest from externally imposed measures of neoliberal accountability and reinstate confidence in their professionalism and competence. In the context of international development and politics, we can also find examples of ugly freedoms that challenge modern

understandings of democracy. Scholars in the field have put forward concepts such as post-development (e.g. Escobar, 2010) and degrowth (e.g. Abazeri, 2022), which challenge modern ideas of development and progress. The Zapatistas movement in Chiapas, enact alternative possibilities for expressing communal ways of being within, although incommensurable with, the nation-state (Mignolo, 2021). Although compelled to refer to democracy to explain their praxis, the Zapatistas movement is not built on European philosophical principles, drawing instead on Mayan cosmology (Mignolo, 2021). Similarly, Bonilla (2015) describes social movements that are often seen as 'disappointing', in Guadeloupe. These actions have sought a restructuring of the social, without calling for freedom from the French government. Describing them as *non-sovereign*, Bonilla (Ibid) argues these movements are a direct challenge to the normative Eurocentric idea that sovereignty defines a society's level of development.   These are examples of possibilities for challenging and contesting, whilst working within, dominant structures. They identify 'delicate shifts in the ways and forms of everyday life that challenge, even as they are unable to fully escape, the political and economic binds of modern life' (Bonilla, 2015: 172-173).

This second understanding of freedom does not necessarily fit our modern conceptualisation, which tends to understand it as a consequence of just, pure, heroic acts that call for emancipation from domination (Anker, 2022). In this way, they can help us consider other possibilities for what development education might look like in practice, and challenge mainstream approaches, which might equate action with 'doing' (Pashby and Sund, 2020) and the lack of 'doing' with political apathy. This reductive set of possibilities for recognising 'action' in development education reinscribes the modern imaginary in the classroom and has been shown to foreclose ethical engagements with global issues (Pashby and Sund, 2020). It is important, then, that we hold different possibilities for what action might look like in development education, acknowledging that some expressions might not be visible, because of where we stand (i.e. in positions that are deeply rooted in Western modern ways of knowing and being in the world), but they warrant appreciation due to the opportunities they offer for *delinking* from Eurocentric

ways of knowing, framed by teleological progress and invested in the need for certainties (e.g. Andreotti et al., 2015). For example, Pashby and Sund (2020) argue reflexivity is an important 'action' in and of itself, and an essential one for helping teachers and students stay within the morally ambiguous space we often find ourselves in, when (un)learning about global issues.

Democracy as a starting point for development education
Democracy has long been a taken for granted concept in modern conversations about education. These conversations tend to assume that a) democracy is inherently good and universally desirable; b) democracy is under attack; c) democratic education will support more developed and democratic societies. Starting with these premises will likely put us on a long travelled path of ever expanding conceptions of democracy and democratic/development education. But it will not allow us to notice how the path has been built on centuries of violent and oppressive practices that were legitimised and continue to be sustained by democracy. It is therefore necessary that we understand democracy as *ugly*: a problem, rather than the answer, for development education. Taken as a problem, democracy is a helpful tool with which to target the modern imaginary framing, prescribing, and thus limiting, education in general and development education in particular. Learning from enunciative positions inside/outside Eurocentric spaces, from places where democracy has been assumed and places where it has been imposed, is an important exercise in our efforts to dislodge democracy's self-evidence and *delink* from the Eurocentric imaginary that bounds our ways of knowing and being. This article has drawn on Anker's two-fold concept of *ugly freedoms* as a framework to support this effort, and complexify mainstream understandings of democracy.

Development education's response to the current multiple global crises we are facing should indeed pay attention to knowledge production in the classroom (Giroux, 2022a; Giroux, 2022b), whilst centring the fact that critical thinking is always already framed by the dominant culture (Dreamson, 2018). This step is key, if we are to address the ways in which education reproduces colonial systems of oppression, and it requires that we critically

interrogate and challenge concepts such as democracy, which seem to be constitutive of Eurocentric epistemology and, because of that, are assumed. Addressing Eurocentrism in the classroom is not necessarily a road towards moral relativism (see e.g. Oxley and Morris, 2013) or an endless pluralism (see e.g. Pashby, da Costa and Sund, 2020). Instead, it requires that we target and delink from Eurocentric onto-epistemological frames of reference, so that we can re-frame the ways in which international development issues get constructed and discussed in the classroom (see e.g. Pashby and Sund, 2020; Sund and Pashby, 2020); and that we do so in ways that retain the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in this work (e.g. Amsler, 2010, Andreotti et al., 2018; Pashby and Sund, 2020). Taking up democracy as a problem for development education, an idea that can be interrogated in the compromised space of the classroom might help identify the Eurocentric tropes that this concept carries (i.e. the teleological development, heroic action, sovereign emancipation). This is a reflection that can be translated to development education and help us question our Eurocentric assumptions about development.

Anker's second conception of ugly freedoms offers an alternative framework for thinking about development education practice, and reinforces the importance of acknowledging complicity in causing the issues we are trying to address (Andreotti, 2006), whilst disinvesting from our modern attachments to purity and certainties (Andreotti et al., 2018), which we tend to cling on when thinking about action. By acknowledging complicity and the complexity of the systems of oppression we are implicated in, we might recognise our morally ambiguous positions and (Pashby and Sund, 2020) move from a position of 'epistemic certainty' to one of 'epistemic reflexivity' (Andreotti, 2016). Anker's (2022) work also reminds us that we need to make peace with the 'systems hacking' approach identified by Andreotti and colleagues (2015). Systems hacking retains a concern with opening up spaces within schools for critical engagements with global issues in ways that address modernity's violence and disinvest from the comforts it affords those of us in Euro-western contexts. This position within modern institutions, which we know have caused and continue to reproduce the very issues we are trying to

address, as well as our own investments in modernity's benefits (Stein et al., 2020), places us in a necessarily compromised position. However, understanding that freedom can be enacted within such morally ambivalent spaces, can be freeing in and of itself, and will help us think about development education in more ways than one – going beyond a focus on 'beating the system' (e.g. Giroux, 2022a) or waiting for the system to 'beat itself' (see Andreotti et al., 2015).

There is likely a wide range of ways in which we might consider taking on the learnings from Anker's ugly freedoms in development education. Below, I suggest a performative tool that deconstructs part of democracy's Greek roots (*DEMOS*) to elicit critical conversations within development education, where problematising democracy might be used as a starting point for conversations.

Destabilising Democracy	What are the assumptions informing mainstream understandings of democracy? How does our position within/outside the modern imaginary frame our assumptions about democracy? What are the implications of these assumptions to our understanding of democratic education?
Eurocentric Critiques of Eurocentrism	What are some of the limitations of mainstream understandings of democracy? What critiques are available to challenge the conceptualisations within European contexts? What are the possibilities offered and foreclosed by these critiques for development education?
Multiple Perspectives	To what extent have we engaged with perspectives from where democracy was imposed, rather than assumed? How do other perspectives help us challenge our assumptions about democracy and freedom? To what extent/how do concepts such as degrowth and

	postdevelopment support alternative engagements with global issues in development education?
Ongoing Reflection	What possibilities are opened by our engagement with other perspectives? Are there new concepts that might supplement our understanding and offer alternative ways for thinking about democracy and development education? How can we learn from these concepts, whilst resisting their assimilation, within a Eurocentric framework?
Supporting Development Education	How can we read development education differently through non-modern perspectives on democracy? What might development education practice look like when modern concepts such as democracy and development are challenged and reframed?

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"WE MUST DISSENT": HOW A BELFAST URBAN COMMUNITY IS BUILDING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE

GARETH ROBINSON, FIONNTÁN HARGEY AND KATHRYN HIGGINS

Abstract: At a time of perceived permacrisis across the UK and Ireland, certain places and people are being further subjected to the unequal and unjust distribution of resources and opportunities. Inequality has a geography and shocks like the 'cost-of-living crisis' have been felt more deeply in the so-called 'left behind' places that already experience lower standards of living and services. Top-down approaches to community renewal have had mixed results, with evaluations often citing a lack of contextual relevance, which has led to growing cynicism within the community sector. For that reason, there is a greater sense of urgency to think critically about place-based inequalities and to challenge the dominant assumptions, systems, and structures that reinforce them.

In this article we present the example of a working-class community in urban Belfast, pursuing spatial justice by employing their own rights-based framework for renewal. We offer a critique of this framework through the lens of critical pedagogy, highlighting its basis in praxis, and describe how participative methods have been used to develop the community's critical consciousness.

Key words: Spatial Justice; Critical Pedagogy; Place; Community; Education.

At a time of perceived permacrisis certain places and people are being further subjected to the unequal and unjust distribution of resources and opportunities (Bell, 2019; Patel et al, 2020; Leyshon, 2021; Rodrigues and Quinio, 2022). Inequality has a geography and people within these places, where less favourable outcomes tend to concentrate, experience lower standards of living and services. As this socio-spatial character becomes more pronounced there

is a greater sense of urgency to think critically about place-based inequalities and to challenge the dominant assumptions, systems, and structures that reinforce them (Amin, 2022).

Policymaking at national and international levels has become increasingly informed by a place-based agenda (McCann, 2019). Yet, the outworkings of this often fail to deliver the structures and practices necessary for an inclusive and democratic process of change. In this context, there is a growing need to capture and reproduce grassroots pedagogies that effectively support the deep transition of underserved communities - those that help to develop resilience against crises and respond to the intractable challenges of place-based inequalities, e.g., local poverty reduction (Pinoncely, 2016) - and equip them to become agents of their own socio-spatial transformation.

This article focuses on how critical pedagogy has influenced the grassroots regeneration efforts of an urban, working-class community in Belfast, called the Market. We offer an account of residents leading their own learning and making meaningful connections to the world around them by turning the community itself into a site of education, constructive action, and conscientisation. Their collective praxis has culminated in a rights-based framework for community renewal called *We Must Dissent* (Hargey, 2019). Using this framework, the community has been able to grow capacity, mobilise local knowledge, build an evidence-base, and empower local voices, leading to a process of transformation and a legitimate plan for equitable change.

The context of space-blind policy

In February 2022, the UK government published its Levelling Up white paper framing the transformation of places and addressing uneven economic development. It proposed maximising the power of *left behind* places to *level up*, in which *opportunity* is conceptualised as a driver for national growth with the potential for increasing living standards and remedying regional, place-based inequalities (Tomaney and Pike, 2020; Leyshon, 2021). The language and intentions echo previous neoliberal urban policy initiatives and there is a risk that it will repeat the same failures (see Drozdz, 2014). It conceives an

economic solution that targets the symptoms of an unjust, unequal society, rather than truly empowering local communities to address the underlying causes of their hardship. The Government's interpretation of place-based inequality misjudges its complexity and fails to recognise that issues like poverty and social exclusion cannot be fully understood unless located within its local context (Pringle, Walsh, and Hennessy, 1999). In fact, the overall structure for decision-making (as described in the White Paper) is unsympathetic to this.

As the draft Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill now makes its passage through scrutiny, there is an evident lack of representation for left-behind places in decision-making - symptomatic of the 'hollowed out' infrastructure for local democracy (Telford and Wistow, 2022). In the first instance, the broader policy regime is managed and controlled by Whitehall with little influence from the devolved regions, and secondly, it claims to empower local businesses and leaders as decision-makers in local areas. This removal of the deliberative process from its social, historical, geographical, cultural, political, and administrative context is problematic, particularly in the devolved regions. In Northern Ireland (NI), for example, 'place' is still heavily politicised along ethnonational lines and often characterised by patterns of segregated living and contested spaces - a socio-spatial reality that Levelling Up fails to acknowledge. Investment in infrastructure will not address the complexity of this issue, particularly if it excludes local problem owners from the development of solutions. In fact, as the Conservatives incorporate planning reforms into the Bill's language, morphing it into a 'planning Bill with a bit of levelling-up wraparound' (Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, 2022: Q167, para 1), there is a danger of reinforcing processes of socio-spatial segregation (Alonso and Hita, 2013) and limiting the democratic spaces for local communities to engage with proposals.

It is claimed that neoliberal 'space-blind' policy has failed and must give way to place-based policymaking that empowers local communities and destabilises the status quo, to allow them to escape from under-development traps (Barca, 2019). Levelling Up does not go far enough to repair the socio-

spatial injustices experienced by 'left-behind' places due to austerity. It is an example of the neoliberal turn in the global political economy that has also seen a trend in community development away from a model of organising to one of service provision, blunting its engagement with critical pedagogy in the process (Baker and McLaughlin, 2010; Ledwith, 2007; Legg, 2018). At its best, community work is practiced at educational sites of resistance and the interfaces between oppressive elements (Ledwith, 2001; Mayo, 1999). However, there are concerns that it risks being removed from its grassroots, participatory context thereby stripping it of its empowering and emancipatory purpose (Kenny, 2019). Regaining the radical edge of the field is a key challenge (Ledwith, 2020). Communities at risk of socio-spatial segregation must be empowered to push back against these trends, or risk becoming disconnected from their places.

Critical pedagogy and place
Critical pedagogy provides a framework for social transformation through education, in which learners are encouraged to examine the issues and structures of power and oppression and engage in the act of *conscientisation:* 'learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Freire, 1970/2017: 9). Critical pedagogies are claimed to be inherently pedagogies of place (McClaren and Giroux, 1990: 263). They recognise that the spatial aspects of social experience are critical to understanding the processes of oppression (Pringle, Walsh, and Hennessy, 1999). Individuals are perceived by Freire as rooted in temporal-spatial conditions that 'mark them', which he expresses as *situationality* (1970/2017: 82). However, the prominence critical pedagogy gives to place varies by tradition and application.

One of these traditions is critical pedagogy of place, which has been described as an attempt to establish an educational theory responsive to the cultural and ecological politics of place (Greenwood, 2013). It is a pedagogy informed by the ethics of environmentalism and eco-justice in the context of economic overdevelopment, yet the way in which it draws out socio-spatial experience has merit beyond these foci. The framework augments Freire's

situationality by bisecting it into corresponding spatial dimensions referred to as *decolonisation* and *reinhabitation* (Greunewald, 2003). Both are conceived as broad educational goals concerned with how geographical conditions shape people and vice versa. In short, critical pedagogy of place aims to:

> "…identify, recover, and create material spaces and places that teach us how to live well in our total environments (reinhabitation); and (b) identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places (decolonisation)" (Ibid: 9).

The approach is useful for enabling communities to decode and read places in the world as political texts, so that they may then decolonise and reinhabit their 'storied places' through reflection and praxis (Johnson, 2012). Similarly, critical spatial practice, described as a form of civic pedagogy, adopts a situated learning approach that uses the environment as a resource to make people aware, skilled, and prepared to act over their surroundings, reinforcing a form of local active citizenship (Martinez, 2019).

Critical pedagogy and its place-conscious variations offer a practical way for the communities characterised as left-behind to resist neoliberal policies that diminish the control and ownership of their spatial contexts. As an example of this, we turn our attention to the case of the Market community in Belfast, where place-conscious pedagogy has influenced a praxis for spatial justice. In keeping with the principles of critical pedagogy, the subsequent account of their transformative process is co-authored with a leading project worker from the community.

A reflection upon situationality: The Market
The Market is one of the oldest working-class communities in Belfast, situated directly within its urban precinct, to the south-east of Belfast City Hall. It takes its name from the fourteen commercial markets - fish, fruit, cattle etc - which once dotted the area, with St George's Market being the last remaining. In tandem with the markets, there was a range of industries including bakeries, abattoirs, chemical works, iron foundries, as well as dozens of shops and public

houses. The area, historically, was built on a grid pattern and completely integrated into Belfast city centre. Although people were never wealthy, they never went hungry.

The complexion of the area began to change in the late 1960's with a combination of planning, infrastructural, and economic decisions leading the area to become deindustrialised and badly impacted by road traffic. To compound matters, long overdue housing redevelopment in the 1970's and 1980's was informed by the euphemistically termed 'defensive planning' policies, which erased the historic grid pattern and led to a further marginalisation of the community. These urban development practices carried over into the Peace Process, and while over one billion pounds was invested by the Laganside Corporation into the vacant waterfront surrounding the Market, the area was segregated by gates, walls and fences that amounted to an economic interface that cut the community off from the peace dividend surrounding it. The conflict has been a significant factor in the trajectory and shape of the community and despite relative peace for a generation, the negative impacts of its legacy on health, education, and employment remain. In this time, the Market community has seen its population drop from approximately 6,000 people before redevelopment, to 2,500 at present. The community's physical size was also greatly reduced and coupled with the barriers, road network, and disinvestment, a strong sense prevailed in the community that it was slowly being squeezed out of the city centre.

The Market Development Association (MDA) was established in December 1995, aiming to promote the well-being of all residents and develop the community into one where people want to live, work, and socialise. Its ongoing function is to advocate on behalf of the Market community on socio-economic issues, by adopting a community development approach. In 2010, the MDA drafted a wider regeneration plan for the area. The central theme of this plan was connectivity. Primarily this meant overcoming the historic legacy of physical disconnection that resulted from the unrelenting redevelopment processes and redesigns, but also reconnecting the community back to the wider economic, social, and cultural life of the city. The flagship

project of this Regeneration Plan was the conversion of local tunnels into a series of social enterprise business units, which would provide employment, social, educational, and cultural spaces for both the community and wider area.

From 2010 onwards the area was faced with a number of existential challenges, ranging from the ongoing austerity policies that set the general context, to planning decisions on specific sites within the community. The nadir of this time was the assassination of the MDA's leading strategic regeneration worker in 2015, who had overseen its key capital projects, as well as education projects in the area, and provided a constant support to younger residents in organising their own initiatives. This loss had a harrowing impact on the community and was followed closely by the disappointing approval of further commercial developments on sites presumed for community use. The feeling at this time was that the area's viability was being rapidly diminished, as the challenges the community faced intensified by the day. At this time, conversations were being had about the way forward, what constituted community development and the need for a renewed focus on critical education.

The pedagogy of 'We Must Dissent'

The *limit-acts* of the Market - seeing and acting beyond the limits of their situation, to overcome their obstacle(s) - have evolved from a much older working-class organising tradition of worker inquiry (Hoffman, 2019), drawing upon the experiences of activism within the community, from the Republican and Civil Rights Movements, as well as community development practices. They mean to educate the community in the literacy of struggle (cultural and political), intent on raising individual and collective consciousness, whilst also generating spaces for action. The community itself is the primary site for this, where their physical world and social history inform a broad *programme of popular place-conscious education*. In collaboration with other partners, the MDA has codesigned and facilitated several learning projects, including the Market 1916 Centenary Project, Social Education Project, Guerrilla Filmmaking course, research workshops, and social history project - ranging from traditional lectures to discussions, book clubs, and the

sharing of oral histories through storytelling, workshops, and performances. Collectively these have formed a curriculum in which the socio-spatial context of the Market community is located at the centre.

Participation in *community-led research* is a critical aspect of their pedagogy, which enables residents to decode their collective experience and generate themes that inform a shared praxis. Community surveys are co-designed by resident-activists with the intention of capturing data on their collective experience. The results are then analysed in a series of *workshops* with residents, to prioritise the key issues and agree human rights indicators against which progress can be measured. This process is consciously influenced by critical pedagogy and the concept of generative themes, which set the boundary curtailing the residents' quality of life, while also allowing them to conceptualise it as a barrier to overcome, by linking their experiences to broader civic, national, regional, continental, and global trends (Freire, 1970/2017: 83-85). Survey results, workshop feedback, and human rights indicators are subsequently compiled and synthesised with the spatial, economic, and social history of the community to contextualise the issues in a report - an artefact of the community's struggle. The community-led research and report for *We Must Dissent* (WMD) identified Overdevelopment, Road Safety, Housing, Health, Education, and Work as issues that required community action (Hargey, 2019). While the WMD report endeavoured to document these thematic issues, it also sought to avoid a purely deficit-based approach to community life - the evidence gathered suggested a strong sense of community pride and an eagerness on the part of residents to become more active. The report has since served as a rallying point for community mobilisation, allowing residents to engage in the political, legal, and planning processes in a way that has become increasingly uncommon.

The survey itself coincided with the launch of the 'Save the Market' *campaign*, a residents' grassroots network for highlighting their concerns with planning decisions and to raise awareness via media campaigns, street actions, resident mobilisations, and protests, along with political, statutory, and legal engagement. This has been ongoing since 2017 and has had some notable

successes in the Judicial Review Court and at Belfast City Council's Planning Committee, along with its various sub-campaigns. In essence residents are fighting for the right to have an equal say in the uses and shaping of their urban environment on the same basis as the private and public sector, which has been characterised as the 'right to the city' (Harvey, 2013). This form of participative method is complemented by specific *action g*roups, aligned to each of the themes identified within the WMD report. The purpose of these groups, comprised of residents, local stakeholders, and academic experts, is to consider a strategic response to each theme and co-design follow up programmes. Both the campaigns and actions groups are mutually reinforcing and together offer opportunities for dialogics, reflection, and action.

The challenge to this pedagogical approach has been a lack of local capacity, leading to research bottlenecking. To address this by building research capacity, the MDA has established a unique *Higher Education partnership* with nearby initiative Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP) (Higgins et al., 2022). The MDA and QCAP have a strong working relationship across co-produced work strands - broadly focusing on education, health, and community wealth - having signed a social charter outlining the University's commitment to the Market community. The purpose of this partnership is to confront the contradictions of their socio-spatial experience through place-based research and enhance the community as a site of pedagogy, thus enabling critical agents for democratic change. In addition to this, it is seen as a way of disrupting hierarchies of knowledge by elevating local voices in the process of inquiry.

As anchor institutions, universities have the capacity to support the deep transition of disadvantaged communities, so they can develop resilience against exogenous shocks and respond to more intractable challenges. They are well-placed to link academic knowledge with local problem owners (Benneworth, 2017) and lead social innovation ecosystems to address local challenges (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010; Baturina, 2022). Universities can provide spaces and intellectual resources to complement and build on the enormous cultural and social capital of communities (Tandon et al., 2017).

Yet, this potential of anchor institutions is not easily realised. If universities are to proactively shape the local conditions for positive change, then a different type of community-university partnership is required. One that is driven by social and civic responsibility, with a clear transformative mission (Aranguren, Canto-Farachala, and Wilson, 2021). Research must be integrated with community engagement to co-produce socially relevant knowledge, by bringing those from the academic ecosystem together with community members in ways that raise local voice (Tandon, 2014).

A place-conscious model of praxis
We Must Dissent (Hargey, 2019) is an example of a working-class community equipping themselves with the types of literacy and tools required to identify, address, and confront the contradictions of their socio-spatial experience. It is a model of place-conscious praxis and grassroots transformation, with the community at its core, in pursuit of spatial justice and the betterment of socio-economic outcomes.
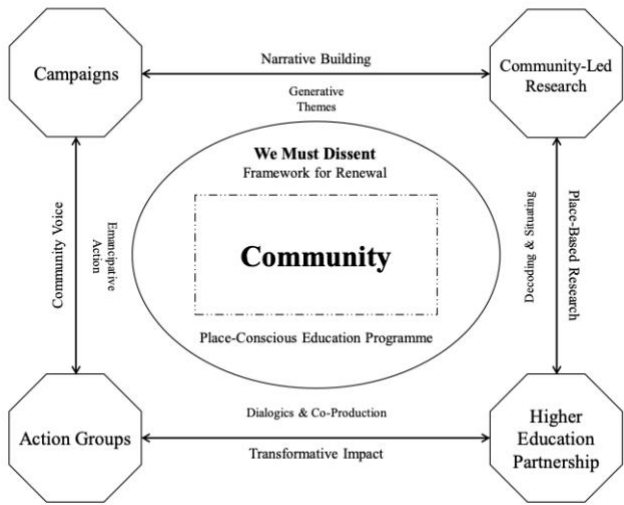
Figure 1 We Must Dissent Model of Place-Conscious Praxis

Each of the community's activities - community-led research, campaigns, action groups, and higher education partnership - represent four mutually reinforcing pillars of action (illustrated in Figure 1). Individually the pillars are limited in their transformative potential. It is only when combined and underpinned by a programme of popular education do they start to generate the benefits of praxis. They establish the community's praxis by combining: (i) mechanisms for reflection that establish the complexity of their contradictions; (ii) a means to co-produce evidence that contextualises their socio-spatial reality; and (iii) the apparatus to act upon objective reality. The product is an effective framework for countering dominant narratives, perceptions, and established facts relating to the community. It permits people to contextualise their lives within a broader social totality, rather than individualised misfortunes, looking at the economic forces impacting them within this context. A resident who is first equipped for 'struggle' through participation in the place-conscious education programme, will then have legitimate mechanisms to express their disaffection through the pillars of action. It also sets targets for community renewal in its true socio-spatial context, which residents can champion through collective ownership, in pursuit of equitable change.

The application of this model, through praxis, has been an effective way for the community to re-establish a connection to a world and reality of their making. They have managed to secure multiple sites for social housing; planning and funding arrangements are progressing for the community's capital projects; and the engaged partnership with QCAP is building capacity for place-based research and regeneration. However, the community's history is still being made - the work is ongoing, and its ultimate efficacy remains to be seen. The WMD report was never intended to be the final word on the community's issues, more like a milestone in an ongoing process. The Market's praxis is now being 'made and remade', as the context and residents' priorities change (Freire, 1970/2017: 22). Like a cycle of inquiry, the reflections made during the WMD are now feeding into new deeper processes in partnership with QCAP. Moreover, there is merit in the Market connecting to other communities facing similar issues and sharing their praxis, as it will

further bolster the discovery of their own struggle. Once the community has seen a positive change to their reality, their pedagogy moves into Freire's second stage and 'pedagogy for all people in the process of permanent liberation' (1970/2017: 28). This perspective is also informed by Wenger's Communities of Practice (1998), in which strong inward facing boundaries are initially preferrable to establish solidarity and shared purpose, but eventually to renew practices and improve outcomes, these boundaries must become porous.

The community's pedagogy is informed by resistance and place, supported by a place-conscious education programme that initiated the creation of conditions for residents to critique their history of colonialisation and act upon economic dispossession. Through its various education programmes, campaigns and the WMD report, the Market community has sought spatial justice, and to open the process to as many voices within the community as possible. The report was designed in such a way as to allow any resident, no matter their educational level, to pick it up, engage with the themes most pertinent to them, and to gain some level of understanding of that issue from a historical, socio-economic, and environmental context, as well as the international, European, and regional human rights frameworks relevant to these themes. It also links all these issues together in a way that draws attention to the wider historical processes that now manifest as homelessness, unemployment, or addiction.

We argue that a recognition of 'place' within praxis is necessary to fully achieve conscientisation. The Market is a community that perceives themselves as having been historically and presently colonised and disconnected from the city. For that reason, connections to their heritage, history, and place are particularly important to their identity as a working-class community. By understanding how their community came to be, their belief is that they'll be better able to deal with the traumas and manifestations of colonisation. Their liberation comes from building critical awareness of this reality and drawing out the contradictions of their socio-spatial experience through praxis and recognition of the necessity to fight. This resonates with

critical pedagogy of place - decolonisation and re-inhabitation. You cannot understand a person, their situation, nor experience if you separate it from their world. Peoples' social networks, culture, history, and politics are tied to places. The spatial as Freire sees it is not only physical, but historical. Places of meaning contribute to an individual's sense of self and being. It then follows that as communities lose control of their physical surroundings, seeing the area decay or lose it to overdevelopment, they become less human in the Freirean sense. Genuine place-based approaches aim to restore communities, which in turn aims to restore the people. Where residents are separate from their world, place-based approaches strive to re-situate them and inspire reconnection with place, pride, and hope - removing socio-spatial obstacles to their liberation.

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CRISIS TRANSFORMATIONISM AND THE DE-RADICALISATION OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN A NEW GLOBAL GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

AUDREY BRYAN AND YOKO MOCHIZUKI

Abstract: This article critically considers the implications of 'crisis transformationism' for development education's radical agenda of cultivating politically engaged, self-reflexive global citizens who have a deep understanding of power and politics and who are firmly committed to working collectively toward fundamental change.[1] Crisis transformationism is a mobilising ideological framework which deploys crisis rhetoric in order to consolidate the corporate takeover of education from a democratically controlled system to one designed and run by private actors in service of the global economy. In this article, we demonstrate how this takeover has accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We draw on the 2022 *United Nations' Transforming Education Summit* (TES) as exemplary of a growing trend in global educational governance whereby the values and interests of global corporations – through the ascendancy of Big Tech philanthropic foundations – increasingly shape educational policy and programming. Our primary purpose is to consider the implications of crisis transformationism for the future of development education's genuinely transformative goal of achieving global and ecological justice. Applying critical discourse analytic techniques, we explore the ways in which the discourse of crisis transformationism is being deployed by influential policy actors to legitimise the expansion of the private sector in the delivery of education and to accelerate depoliticised notions of the 'global' via a

[1]We use the term 'development education' when referring to the emancipatory, Freirean-inspired movement which seeks to address the root causes of global injustice. We use the term 'global citizenship education' (GCE) to refer to neoliberal and neurologically-imbued iterations of these adjectival educations.

skillification agenda premised on the acquisition of neurologically-inflected social-emotional skills or competencies which seeks to yield a productive (i.e., mentally healthy, resilient and skilled) workforce and a pliable, politically docile citizenry.

Key words: Crisis, Development Education; Neoliberalism; Philanthropy; Private Sector; Skillification; Social-Emotional Learning.

Introduction: the hijacking of transformative education

This article critically considers the implications of what we characterise as 'crisis transformationism' for development education's radical agenda of cultivating politically engaged, self-reflexive global citizen subjects who have a deep understanding of power and politics and who are firmly committed to working collectively towards fundamental change (Westheimer, 2020). Crisis transformationism is a mobilising ideological framework that advances crisis narratives in order to consolidate the takeover of education from a democratically controlled system to one designed and run by corporations in service of the global economy that has accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It speaks to the hijacking of emancipatory educational initiatives designed to work towards ecological and global justice – such as those based on radical theories of equality and de-growth – in order to ensure continued capital accumulation and the interests of a minuscule minority of economic elites (Hickel, 2020). Drawing on the 2022 *UN Transforming Education Summit* (hereafter TES) as exemplary of crisis transformationism, we critically explore how overlapping global policy actors are mobilising around a perceived crisis in education via global summits, platforms, transnational networks and partnerships to advance a skillification agenda premised on the acquisition of neurologically-inflected competences which seeks to yield a productive (i.e., mentally healthy, resilient and skilled) workforce and a pliable, politically docile citizenry.

We characterise the learner envisioned in this new 'transformative' education agenda as an (economic) *global citizen with benefits* – in other words, an individual imbued with a set of social-emotional skills (SES) who

engages in politically detached forms of service and action rather than politically engaged, self-reflexive global citizenship. We demonstrate the ways in which the intertwined logics of skillification and *neuro*liberalism – with their prioritisation of specific SES necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – shift attention away from the substantive causes of global poverty and injustice and the need for widespread political engagement, collective action and a major overhaul of existing political-economic arrangements, norms, practices and ideologies.

The article is organised as follows. After outlining the methods informing the study, we provide a brief overview of a number of interlocking policy trends that are contributing to the (re)imagining of global citizenship in individualised, reductive, depoliticised terms. We then turn our attention to a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the ways in which the discourse of crisis transformationism is being mobilised by influential policy actors to legitimise the expansion of the private sector and digital technology in the delivery of education. The concluding section considers the implications for development education, re-imagined as a set of neurologically-inflected SES or competencies rather than a radical form of pedagogy that addresses the structural causes of poverty and injustice in the global North and South (McCloskey, 2014). In so doing, we contemplate the pedagogical and political implications of this neurologically-inflected *global citizen with benefits*, with a particular emphasis on what is being foreclosed by the framing of global citizenship in politically detached terms.

Methods

The UN 2022 Transforming Education Summit
For illustrative purposes, our analysis focuses on *TES* – a major international event convened by UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, which took place in September 2022 at UN headquarters in New York. TES was variously heralded as a 'turning point for education', a 'milestone for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)' and 'a conceptual and political platform for transforming education' (UN, 2023: 22). It evolved out

of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to accelerate progress on SDG 4 on foot of the realisation that most of its targets would not be met (IEFG, 2022). Over 2,000 education stakeholders participated in the Summit, whose stated purpose was to 'elevate education to the top of the global political agenda…to mobilize action, ambition, solidarity, and solutions…and sow the seeds to transform education for the breakthrough that our world so urgently needs' (UN, 2023: 6).[2] The main TES event comprised a youth-led *Mobilisation Day*, showcasing youth recommendations on transforming education; a *Solutions Day* featuring representatives of UN-based agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO, the Word Bank, and corporate entities; and a *Leaders Day*, dedicated to the presentation of National Statements of Commitment by Heads of State and Government in the form of Leaders Roundtables.[3] This main event was preceded by an extensive preparatory process with inputs across three work streams: 1) national and regional consultations, 2) thematic action tracks and 3) public engagement, communications and advocacy.[4] A Pre-Summit event attended by Heads of State, over 150 Ministers and a wide range of education stakeholders was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in June 2022.

Why the Transforming Education Summit?

The COVID-19 pandemic provided the impetus for education to be reimagined according to pre-pandemic priorities, interests and agendas, most notably in relation to the role of private organisations in the design and implementation of digital technologies and online learning (Morris, Park and Auld, 2022; Schweisfurth, 2023; Zancajo, Verger, and Bolea, 2022). TES is exemplary of

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[2]TES stakeholders included those representing nation-states, donors, policy-makers, civil society groups, young people, teachers, education advocates, academia, the private sector and philanthropies.

[3]Private sector companies included, inter alia, Google, IBM, KPMG, Deloitte, Ericsson, and Microsoft. Philanthropies included the Aga Khan Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Lego Foundation, and The Qatar Foundation.

[4]The five thematic action tracks included 1) inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools; 2) learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; 3) teachers, teaching and the teaching profession; 4) digital learning and transformation; and 5) financing of education.

a number of interlocking policy trends in education which have major implications for the practice and enactment of global citizenship. As outlined in more detail below, these include: 1) the ongoing influence of neoliberal rationality, bolstered by the ascendancy of *neuro*liberalism – an ideology combining neoliberal principles with insights derived from the behavioural and neurological sciences (Whitehead et al., 2018); 2) the increasing influence of private philanthropic actors in educational governance, and a corresponding emphasis on techno-solutionism and personalised learning; and 3) the promotion of specific skills, values and mind-sets that cultivate 'entrepreneurial' citizen subjects modelled on billionaire, for-profit philanthropists (Williamson, 2017).

We chose TES as the focus of our analysis because we regard it as exemplary of a new global educational governance landscape increasingly shaped by private actors and corporate interests, most notably Big Tech. TES crystallises a discursive shift away from a Freirean conception of transformative education as an *enabler* of social and ecological justice towards an understanding of transformation as a *lynchpin* for (green) economic growth in a digitised economy. It marked a consolidation of multiple forces and discourses that have been ascending in the global educational policyscape pertinent to the future of education enshrined in SDG 4.7 (concerned with education for sustainable development and global citizenship).

Given that one of the major outcomes of TES was the establishment of a 'global movement for transforming education' to ensure that education remains on top of the political agenda (UN, 2023: 4), we anticipate that the TES agenda and the associated ideology of 'crisis transformationism' will intensify over the coming decade.

Critical discourse analysis of the Transforming Education Summit
Rizvi and Lingard (2010: 8) suggest that policies always manufacture problems (or crises) in certain ways, and 'from a particular point of view' in order to give legitimacy to specific policy proposals and proffer solutions constructed by the policy itself. With this in mind, we used critical discourse

analysis (CDA) to interrogate the discursive construction of a global educational crisis, as well as the kinds of solutions that are envisioned and enlivened by it (Fairclough, 2010). In the interests of manageability, our analysis was limited to several major documents associated with TES, namely the 2023 *Report on the 2022 Transforming Education Summit Convened by the UN Secretary-General* (UN, 2023), and the *Secretary-General's Vision Statement for TES* (UN, 2022a), *Transforming Education: An Urgent Political Imperative for our Collective Future* – which was the primary formal outcome of TES. We also subjected a number of statements, discussion papers and declarations of particular relevance to our analysis, including the *Youth Declaration on Transforming Education* (UN, 2022b), the *Statement by Philanthropic Actors Supporting Education* (IEFG, 2022) and the discussion papers informing each of the TES Action Tracks. We also reviewed the TES website and the Summit programme – as well as a select number of video-recorded side events – to build a comprehensive picture of TES content, participants, representation, interests and emphasis. Applying CDA techniques, we examined various degrees of presence or absence in these texts, such as foreground information (those ideas that are present and emphasised), background information (those ideas that are explicitly mentioned but deemphasised), presupposed information (that information which is present at the level of implied or suggested meaning) and absent information (Fairclough, 2010). The next section sets the stage for the analysis of TES with reference to a number of interlocking policy trends and their implications for the acceleration of depoliticised notions of 'the global' in the post 2015 context.

Interlocking policy trends in education

'Heightened ambitions': The growing influence of private sector and private foundation involvement in education
Private sector involvement in education has expanded rapidly in recent years, perhaps most notably in relation to the growing influence of 'new' or 'big philanthropy' in education (e.g., Ball, 2020). Writing over forty years ago about 'old' philanthropy, Arnove (1980: 1) warned that philanthropic

foundations could undermine democratic societies because 'they represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentrations of power and wealth which buy talent, promote causes, and, in effect, establish an agenda of what merits society's attention'. Three decades later, Arnove and Pinede (2007: 422) reaffirmed this observation in relation to the 'Big Three' United States (US)-based philanthropies – namely the Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations – when they suggested that philanthropic institutions are corrosive of democratic processes and pre-emptive of more radical, structural approaches to social change:

> "It is still the foundations, with the profits that they have derived from the given social system, that determine what issues merit society's attention, who will study these issues, which results will be disseminated, and which recommendations will be made to shape public policy. Decisions that should be made by publicly elected officials are relegated to a group of institutions and individuals who cannot conceive of changing in any profound way a system from which they derive their profits and power".

Philanthropic involvement in the delivery of education has expanded considerably in recent years (UN, 2023). Between 2016 and 2019, for example, total global philanthropic funding for education was USD 4.5 billion and cross-border philanthropic giving represented the eighth largest source of financing for education towards developing countries, which is comparable to more traditional sources of aid (IEFG, 2022). In addition to providing financing, philanthropic actors play a significant role in educational governance by providing expertise, supporting, managing, producing, and disseminating data and using knowledge to forge new political relations and to legitimise their intervention in the public sphere (Viseu, 2022). In the context of TES, education philanthropies articulate their role in terms of policy advocacy, 'partnership building', 'knowledge brokering', and 'enabling a culture of evidence in policymaking' (IEFG, 2022: 1).

In practical terms, the deepening involvement of philanthropy in education has led to a series of educational reforms and interventions premised on market logic, business strategy, and 'social return on investment'. Other implications of growing philanthropic involvement include: the prioritisation of outcomes-based educational interventions, based on a 'what works' logic which privileges measurable aspects of education (such as skill acquisition) over more valuable elements of education which defy measurement (Unterhalter, 2020); pre-distributive (rather than re-distributive) approaches which prioritise early childhood education and foundational skills that seek to enhance productivity and reduce social spending (Gillies, Edwards and Horsley, 2016); and an increasing emphasis on 'personalised' learning platforms which capture 'data' and mine users' personal information (Mertanen, Vainio, and Brunila, 2021; Williamson, 2021).[5] Building on our earlier work examining how global citizenship is being reimagined in de-politicised ways (Bryan, 2022; Mochizuki, 2023; Mochizuki, Vickers and Bryan, 2022), we contend that the amplification and intensification of private (and in particular 'new philanthropic' involvement in education) (Ball, 2020) is a major driver of the de-politicisation of global citizenship. As outlined in more detail below, this intensification of private, philanthrocapitalist involvement in education is intimately bound up with the increasing emphasis on techno-solutionism in education, i.e., a reliance on educational technologies (EdTech) to deliver educational programming and as a 'solution' to perceived deficiencies in teaching and learning.

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[5] Outcomes-based investment approaches are premised on the idea that governments, philanthropists etc. should pay *only* for what works and to the extent that it works – hence the need for measurable indicators and standardised data.

Techno-solutionism in education

As outlined by Marelli, Kieslich and Geiger (2022: 1), techno-solutionism is a mode of intervention that emphasises 'technological fixes' and 'silver-bullet solutions', 'which tend to erase contextual factors and marginalise other rationales, values, and social functions that do not explicitly support technology-based innovation efforts'. This trend in education is being driven by a complex transnational network of powerful, for-profit actors (including Big Tech philanthropists such as the Chan-Zuckerberg, Bill and Melinda Gates and Bezos Foundations) for whom education comprises a largely untapped market (Mertanen, Vainio and Brunila, 2021). These education policy entrepreneurs seek to disrupt public schooling in order to privatise educational data infrastructures, provide services and profit from data accumulation, thereby corporatising and privatising education as a public good (Hogan and Sellar, 2021). Elsewhere, we have argued that the increasing emphasis on digital technology as a pedagogical tool to foster global citizenship espoused by organisations such as UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) has profound implications for the realisation of social, global and ecological justice. Specifically, we argued that MGIEP's preoccupation with neuroscience, digital technology and social-emotional learning (SEL) (including so-called SES such as empathy, compassion, critical thinking and mindfulness) reinforces a reductive, depoliticised vision of education which threatens to exacerbate educational inequality while enhancing the profits and power of Big Tech (Bryan, 2022; Mochizuki, 2023; Mochizuki, Vickers and Bryan, 2022).

'Personalised learning'

'Personalised learning' is one of the main techno-solutionist responses championed by private companies, big-tech philanthropies and multilateral agencies alike (e.g., MGIEP) (Mochizuki, Vickers and Bryan, 2022). The increasing emphasis on personalised learning is reflective of 'larger global trends where young people's education is becoming more individualised, privatised, behaviourised and datafied than ever' (Mertanen, Vainio and Brunila, 2021: 737). Besides posing a major threat to personal privacy and ceding control to algorithms in setting curricula and assessing learning,

personalised learning undermines relationality between teachers and students and the broader social and civic purposes of schooling (Hogan and Sellar, 2021). For example, tailoring learning in response to student needs, preferences, interests and so on could easily become the basis for non-engagement with more civic or political aspects of the curriculum, which can be all too easily dismissed as overly-contentious, distressing, sensitive, risky, or uninteresting. Moreover, personalised online learning platforms, by their very nature, filter and select what content *individual* learners are exposed to, based on algorithms that ascertain what engages them most. This has profound implications for how students learn about political and democratic life, potentially closing them off from new or alternative perspectives, for example (Williamson, 2017). Furthermore, personalised learning jars with active, group-based, participatory learning modalities that are integral to development education.

Having provided a brief overview of some of the most relevant intersecting policy trends affecting education and contributing to the de-politicisation of global citizenship, the remainder of the article draws on TES as illustrative of the ways in which major policy actors and global initiatives are re-orienting educational policy and reshaping the goals, purposes, and values of education. Inevitably, this re-configuration of education has major implications for the teaching and enactment of global citizenship education (GCE). Specifically, we examine the ways in which the discourse of crisis transformationism is being deployed by multilateral agencies, academic 'gurus', economic think tanks, philanthrocapitalists and commercial EdTech providers, thereby paving the way for education to be reimagined in service of the global economy and private interests. We demonstrate how the characterisation of global citizenship as a set of (social-emotional) skills, elsewhere defined as 'the global currency of twenty-first-century economies' (OECD, 2012: 10), is central to this educational reimagining.

'Transforming Education': The crystallisation of a new global educational governance landscape

The undeniability of 'crisis in education'
As Morris, Park and Auld (2022: 692) point out in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, crises - real or perceived - have long provided an opportunity to usher in radical processes of educational and political-economic reform, often with 'questionable motives and variable consequences'. Schweisfurth (2023) argues that discourses of crisis and disaster in education (particularly in relation to teaching and learning) are now widely taken-for-granted in mainstream development discourse. Crisis rhetoric was ubiquitous in all of the TES texts we analysed, featuring ten times in the UNSG Vision Statement and over thirty times in the TES Report. Within these texts, education is variously characterised as confronting 'a dramatic triple crisis' (UN, 2023: 1); a 'deep crisis: a crisis of equity, quality, and relevance' (UN, 2023: 3), and a 'learning crisis' (UN, 2023: 3).

The undeniability of this crisis is reinforced with reference to statements such as 'study after study, poll after poll, draw the same conclusion: education systems are no longer fit for purpose' and 'young people and adults alike report that education does not equip them with the knowledge, experience, skills, or values needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world' (UN, 2022a: 1). Meanwhile, we are informed that 'employers complain of a major skills mismatch while many adults are left with little or no access to affordable training and re-skilling opportunities' and that 'parents and families decry the value or lack of return on the investments they make in education and their children' (UN, 2022a: 1). Collectively, this gives the impression that there is a consensus amongst all sectors of society, including children, young people, parents, policy-makers, employers, academics/researchers etc. that education is experiencing a deep crisis and in need of radical reform.

What does 'transforming education' involve?
Education's perceived failure to 'equip the new generations with the values, knowledge, and skills they need to thrive in today's complex world' is

identified as the source of the crisis of *relevance* in education (UN, 2023: 1). Predictably, the proposed solution to this particular crisis lies in the cultivation of various forms of 'knowledge, skills, values and attitudes', including 'foundational learning' skills (which are defined as literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills) (UN, 2023: 18); various 21st century skills including 'resilience', 'curiosity', 'creativity', 'empathy', 'kindness', 'problem solving' and 'critical thinking' as well as education for sustainable development, employability and entrepreneurship skills (UN, 2023; UN, 2022a). According to thematic Action Track 2, *Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development*, one of the five thematic action tracks underpinning TES:

> "Transforming education means empowering learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to be resilient, adaptable, and prepared for an uncertain and complex future while actively and creatively contributing to human and planetary well-being and sustainable societies" (UN, 2022c: 4).

Action track 2 addresses three key issues: (a) foundational learning; (b) education for sustainable development, including environmental and climate change education; and (c) skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Key recommendation four arising out of this Action Track calls upon every country to:

> "Ensure all learners gain foundational skills, including the ability to read with understanding, do basic maths, and master appropriate socio-emotional skills by age 10. Digital skills, transferable competencies for sustainability and entrepreneurship mindsets and skills should also be embedded in learning goals, curricula and programmes" (UN, 2022c: 14).

The co-articulation of 'transferable competencies for sustainability' with basic literacy and numeracy as well as socio-emotional, digital and entrepreneurship skills or 'mindsets' conflates the goals and aspirations of education for sustainable development (ESD) with job-ready skills. The

discussion paper makes numerous references to 'mainstreaming ESD' in education (e.g., UN, 2022c: 6) and 'empowering individuals for human and planetary sustainability' (Ibid). It also identifies the need for 'reflection and unlearning of unsustainable ways of living and ideas about how we measure success', and to empower individuals 'to make structural changes by holding government and industries to account' (Ibid: 7). However, there is a major incongruity between these more critically-oriented aspects of ESD/GCE and the mobilising framework underpinning TES as a whole, namely the SDGs. TES seeks to 'advanc[e] the SDGs in every corner of society' and espouses a (green) growth-focused agenda that seeks to 'empower individuals as agents of change to lead the twin transitions towards digital and green economies' (Ibid: 1).

Calls to 'mainstream ESD' notwithstanding, TES's primary emphasis is on promoting skills to ensure the smooth running of the neoliberal machinery that pursues sustainable economic growth on a finite planet. The 'learning to do' section of the UNSG Vision Statement, for example, focuses almost exclusively on the need for an entrepreneurial and flexible workforce, legitimising the role of elites in global capitalism (notably billionaire philanthropists who push for a digitisation and privatisation agenda) in guiding education transformation.

> "Learning to do calls for a focus on a whole new set of skills, including digital literacy, financial skills, and emerging technical and STEM skills. Transformed education systems should develop flexible career management skills, and promote innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship. This also calls for qualifications that recognize skills, work experiences and knowledge throughout life, and beyond formal education" (UN, 2022a: 3).

Similarly, rather than playing the role of revolutionary subjects or rebels against the machinery that makes their life precarious, young people themselves urge decision-makers to 'foster an education that advances critical thinking, imagination, communication, innovation, socio-emotional, and

interpersonal skills' (UN, 2022b: para 9) and invest in 'future-proof skills development, technical and vocational training, apprenticeships, and other relevant opportunities to ensure access to decent jobs for youth' (para 16), 'green and digital skills' (para 17) and 'the digital infrastructure of education' (para 20). It can be argued that UN forums such as TES provide a perfect platform to showcase the self-empowerment of (elite) youth and youth agency, enabling political elites to present education (narrowly conceived as skilling and competence building) as a panacea and to celebrate youth as a symbol for positive change. Reflecting the UN's status as an intergovernmental organisation, the representations of education and youth in these outcome documents reflect the constructs of education and youth shaped by the predominant global, capitalist and neoliberal world models. As we elaborate in more detail below, this discourse on transforming education functions in service of the global economy, undermining the future of humanity for the capital accumulation of a minuscule minority of economic elites (Hickel, 2020).

'Harnessing the digital revolution for the benefit of public education' is unsurprisingly another of the major elements of crisis transformationism advanced in TES (UN, 2022a). Reflective of the convergence of corporate interests, new (Tech-based) philanthropy, EdTech (Educational Technologies), neoliberal (or *neuro*liberal) policies and funding infrastructures (e.g., Ball 2020), the role of digital technology is championed as a means of enhancing educational quality and expanding access, transforming the way that teaching and learning happens and ensuring more creative ways of teaching and learning:

> "If harnessed properly, the digital revolution could be one of the most powerful tools for ensuring quality education for all and transforming the way teachers teach and learners learn" (UN, 2023: 30).

> "The digital revolution can be harnessed to expand access and to ensure more creative ways of teaching and learning" (Ibid: 2).

The next section, which documents TES's fulsome embrace of the private sector and private philanthropies in global educational governance, interrogates the vested interests involved in re-defining educational transformation in terms of the digital revolution.

'Louder Together': The role of the private sector and private foundations in advancing crisis transformationism

Morris, Park and Auld (2022: 704) demonstrate the 'mutually reinforcing' role played by multilateral organisations and corporations in 'constrain[ing] the future [of education] as a privatised techno-utopia' which reduces schools and teachers to consumers of digital, personalised learning platforms and deliverers of 21st century 'skills' and 'competencies' (Ibid: 691). Despite the rhetoric of 'strengthening education as a public endeavour and a common good' (UN, 2023: 13), TES outcome documents are replete with reference to the 'active role' of the private sector and foundations in delivering education (Ibid: 23) and to the 'heightened ambition and engagement of the private sector' in global educational governance (Ibid: 11). The TES report calls for private philanthropies to 'step up their contribution to transforming education' (Ibid: 31) and urges decision-makers 'to support, fully fund, and establish multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships to ensure dedicated funding to transform education' (Ibid: 36).

TES represented a turning point in global education governance by enabling 'education philanthropy to speak louder together as a committed and credible voice towards a common, broader but shared goal to transform education' (Missika and Savage, 2022: n.p). Driven by philanthropic funders identifying as 'the education philanthropy community', sixty educational philanthropies – including, *inter alia*, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Jacobs Foundation, The Varkey Foundation, The Mastercard Foundation, The LEGO Foundation, and the Aga Khan Foundation – issued a joint statement to TES, representing 'the first moment…of joined-up education

philanthropy to a UN summit' (Missika and Savage, 2022: n.p.).[6] According to the statement, educational philanthropies plan to 'use [their] convening power …and [their] networks to strengthen collaboration with each other and with philanthropies in other sectors to align [their] strategic engagement'. Moreover, the statement urges 'education partners' to work closely with philanthropies and fund alongside them to ensure the advancement of SDG 4, and to 'capitalise on the contribution of philanthropy to sustainable development going forward'. One of the major outcomes of TES was the representation of private sector and private foundations on the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee (HLSC), co-chaired by UNESCO and Sierra Leone.

The *Statement by Philanthropic Actors Supporting Education* was welcomed by TES as a 'strong signal that private foundations are eager to leverage their influence, resources, and tools for transforming education' (UN, 2023: 11). The Summit 'encourages further mobilization of private foundations and the private sector in cooperation and coordination with Member States' (Ibid: 44) and identifies private sector actors more generally as having 'contributed to identifying solutions and creating a global movement' (Ibid: 11). Entirely absent from TES is any recognition of the risks associated with increased private sector involvement in education, such as those identified by Arnove (1980) over forty years ago in relation to undermining democracy, or more recent developments in relation to digital technology and personalised learning discussed above. Other associated risks include the prioritisation of educational initiatives which are funder or donor-led, rather than needs or values driven, and the re-appropriation of the SDGs to serve corporate and political-economic interests (Gorur, 2020: 25). Moreover, as Wulff (2020: 14) points out:

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[6]This statement was facilitated by the OECD Development Centre, the International Education Funders Group (IEFG), and the OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD). IFED and netFWD are networks that connect and enable collaboration between private philanthropy actors. The OECD Development Centre is an independent platform for knowledge sharing and policy dialogue between OECD member countries and developing economies.

"When private actors and organisations enter public spaces and domains of the government, there is a more ideological dynamic at play, where power is being renegotiated simply through the new role taken by the private sector and its implicit or explicit side-lining of the government".

This 're-imagining' of educational transformation to include a digital revolution and greater involvement of the private sector and private foundations is perfectly aligned with Big Tech's efforts to reconfigure public education as a marketplace for its products, platforms and services (Mertanen, Vainio, and Brunila, 2021).

Don't worry, be happy: 'Deepening the impact of education for sustainable development'

As outlined above, TES echoes and amplifies existing efforts to align global citizenship with a SEL agenda traditionally associated with educational policies designed to promote academic success and economic productivity through the nurturing of 'social and emotional skills, empathy, and kindness' (UN, 2022a: 2). Similarly, the Youth Declaration calls on decision-makers to 'foster an education that advances…socio-emotional, and interpersonal skills' (UN, 2022b: para 9) and 'centre the mental health and wellness of all learners within and beyond the classroom throughout our educational journeys…as well as create the optimal environments to promote recreational activities, such as arts and sports' (para 12). Under the heading 'learning to be', the UNSG Vision Statement declares that 'the deepest purpose of education' is 'to instil in learners the values and capacities to lead a meaningful life, to enjoy that life, and to live it fully and well' (UN, 2022a: 4). Echoing the Youth Declaration, this is understood as:

"developing every student's potential for creativity and innovation; their capacity to enjoy and to express themselves through the arts; their awareness of history and the diversity of cultures; and *their*

disposition for leading a healthy life, to practice physical activities, games, and sports" (Ibid, emphasis added).

This formulation of 'learning to be' is individuating and reflective of the shifting of attention towards social-emotional wellbeing in schools (Bryan, 2022). The increasing alignment of SES with SDG 4.7 reduces global citizenship to the cultivation of pro-social/pro-environmental behaviour and positions mindfulness programmes as key to addressing problems as intractable as violent extremism and climate change (Bryan, 2022; Mochizuki, 2023). In this sense, it represents a significant departure from development education characterised as a radical form of learning that addresses the structural causes of poverty and injustice in the global North and South (McCloskey, 2014). The next section considers a number of allied discourses which prioritise subjective happiness, well-being, and affect regulation as a means of 'deepening the impact of ESD', and their role in inculcating self-reliant, self-responsible, self-managing, and resilient citizen subjects.

'Build back happier'

A TES side event convened by Mission 4.7 entitled *Deepening the Impact of Education for Sustainable Development through Social Emotional Learning and Happiness* is a particularly vivid example of the de-radicalisation of GCE in action.[7] Mission 4.7 is co-chaired by the academic 'guru' of sustainable development Jeffrey Sachs, who also serves as a Board Member of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. Sachs is also Director of the Global Happiness Council (GHC), 'a global network of leading academic

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[7]Mission 4.7 is an initiative to transform education by Global Schools and the SDG Academy (both flagship programmes of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – SDSN) whose partners include UNESCO, the SDSN, the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, and the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. Andreas Schleicher, Director, Education and Skills, OECD, sits on its High Level Advisory group.

specialists in happiness…[that] identifies best practices at the national and local levels to encourage advancement of the causes of happiness and well-being' (GHC, 2022: n.p.). Sachs and a number of other highly influential, densely networked actors who hold leadership and/or advisory positions across various policy/advocacy networks, have been instrumental in aligning ESD with SEL (Bryan, 2022). GHC's *Global Happiness and Well-being Policy Report* (GHC, 2022) devotes an entire chapter to recent initiatives to 'incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) into child learning environments' and sees 'the opportunity to build back happier' as central to the 'broader social justice agenda' (GHC, 2022: 6). This report contains multiple references to 'self-management', 'empathy', 'teamwork' and 'resilience', and conceptualises peace and human rights education in terms of SEL competencies such as 'self-awareness and empathy' (GHC, 2022: 32).

This SEL agenda promotes habits of mind and ways of being that individuals need to thrive in competitive neoliberal economies, such as capacities for learned optimism, personal agility, adaptability, resilience, positive thinking and other forms of 'adversity capital' (Pavlidis, 2009). The happiness industry reproduces and amplifies the emergence of an entrepreneurial self via processes of psychological essentialism and responsibilisation (Adams et al., 2019). Rather than promoting educational conditions conducive to emancipatory forms of GCE, forums such as TES therefore legitimise what Adams et al (2019: 191) call 'neoliberal selfways', the core features of which include: a sense of radical abstraction from social and material context, an entrepreneurial approach to self as an ongoing development project, an imperative for individual growth and personal fulfilment, and an emphasis on affect regulation. In other words, instead of cultivating global citizens committed to addressing political issues of resource allocation, recognition, and redistribution, 'deepening the impact of ESD' is preoccupied with subjective happiness, well-being, and affect regulation in order to inculcate self-reliant, self-responsible, self-managing, and resilient citizen subjects. As Evans and Reid (2013: 83) remark in relation to the cultivation of resilient citizens, 'The resilient subject is a subject which must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world, and not a subject

which can conceive of changing the world, its structure and conditions of possibility'. Furthermore, the alignment of SEL with ESD is incompatible with the pursuit of global justice because it implicitly frames certain people as deserving of care, rights, or justice while positioning others as undeserving of the same treatment, thereby pre-empting the very relations that lie at the heart of global justice (Bryan, 2020).

Concluding thoughts

Concerns about the de-politicisation of development education (arguably a far more political term than global citizenship which has its origins in the scholarship and praxis of the radical educator Paulo Freire) were addressed in this journal over a decade ago as part of a special issue concerned with the 'de-clawing' or de-radicalisation of the field in the context of its professionalisation (Bryan, 2011). In that issue, Selby and Kagawa (2011: 18) argued that the related fields of development education and ESD were in danger of 'striking a Faustian bargain', that is of compromising their 'radical, status quo critical, value system commitment' in exchange for a purchase on policy. The foregoing analysis suggests that this de-radicalisation agenda has accelerated in a post-2015 context driven by an SDG framework that espouses contradictory and fundamentally incompatible goals, such as economic growth, on the one hand (SDG 8) and ecological sustainability, on the other (Goals 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15) (Wulff, 2020).

Whereas global citizenship has long been recognised as a highly contested concept, or 'floating signifier', subject to diverse interpretations and encompassing competing objectives and agendas (e.g., Auld and Morris, 2019; Pashby et al., 2020), our analysis points to considerable ideological convergence amongst the most privileged voices in the contemporary education policyscape. The kind of global citizen being envisioned in UN-convened TES is indistinguishable from the OECD's globally competent citizen, for example, which reflects a way of belonging and being in a globally-competitive market society and economy (Robertson, 2021). The learner at the heart of this new transformative education agenda is an (economic) *global citizen with benefits* – a citizen subject imbued with a set of social emotional

'skills' that prepare them for politically detached forms of service and action rather than an understanding of power, politics, and their role in local and global transformation.

The increasing emphasis on 'human-centric' skills or competencies – such as resilience, learned optimism, empathy, compassion, agility, etc. – offers limited scope for students to question implicit beliefs, to embrace different ways of knowing, or to transform existing political-economic arrangements and injustices. Rather, it forestalls political dialogue and diverts energy away from the pursuit of global justice and equality.   For education to be truly transformative, it needs to equip students with the capacity and commitment to critique the dominant norms, values, institutions and discourses of society; to contest power inequalities and vested economic interests; to make complex connections between intersecting local and global trends, crises and developments; to reflect critically on their role as *agents* in perpetuating and alleviating local and global injustices and to enhance their awareness of the complex intersection between individual actions and structural forces.   As Westheimer (2020: 289) observes:

> "Without an analysis of power, politics, and one's role in local and global political structures – and without showing students how they can work with others toward fundamental change – students will be unlikely to become effective citizens who can transform their communities and the world by addressing issues identified by the 2030 Agenda such as poverty, hunger, and inequality. ...Programmes that privilege individual acts of compassion and kindness often neglect the importance of social action, political engagement, and the pursuit of just and equitable policies. The vision promoted is one of citizenship without politics or collective action – a commitment to individual service, but not to social justice".

The rhetoric of crisis transformationism has profound implications for the future of democracy in a world increasingly dominated by, *inter alia,*

political capture and political rigging[8], media monopolies, disinformation, wealth inequality, ecological breakdown and a political system that allows 'a few people to sabotage our collective future for their own private gain' (Hickel, 2020: 246). As educators concerned for the future of humanity and democracy, we must at once actively resist the corporate takeover of education which is currently underway and reclaim development education's radical roots.

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[8]Political capture refers to 'the exercise of abusive influence by one or more extractive elite(s) – to favour their interests and priorities to the detriment of the general good – over the public policy cycle and state agencies (or others of a regional or international scope), with potential effects on inequality (economic, political or social) and on democracy's correct functioning' (OXFAM Intermon, 2018: 14).

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PEDAGOGY OF RESISTANCE AND REFLECTIVE ACTION: EXAMINING THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT OF INDIA IN 2020-21

PRACHY HOODA

Abstract: The farmers' movement of 2020 - 2021 against three contentious farm laws and the corporatisation of Indian agriculture has been one of the largest in the history of post-independence India. These laws can be seen as part of the larger neoliberal policy of the right-wing dispensation that has already been applied to education, public health and other sectors (Kumar, 2022). While the movement has been widely celebrated for its unprecedented alliance of farm and trade unions, cultural and religious institutions, this article aims to study the extensive efforts that were undertaken by the farmer unions to educate the protestors: from the biweekly newspaper *Trolley Times* to the setting up of *Nanak Hut* library to opening a makeshift school at the protest site for the children of protesting farmers, creating a sense of political awareness and the effect it might have on the trajectory of substantive democracy in India.

The first section will focus on radical approaches to learning, with emphasis upon Paulo Freire's conceptualisation of critical consciousness and key aspects of development education, contributing to the study of alternative, participative paradigms that focus on reflection and action toward social transformation. The second section will focus on tracing these ideas in the context of the Indian farmers' movement in 2020-21, and how community-based learning played a crucial role in creating a better sense of political awareness among the protestors. Educational processes in the forms of libraries and a makeshift school were linked to a plan of action towards greater social justice and equity. It also resonated with Freire's conceptualisation of *conscientização* by making the protesting farmers better aware of the structural social and economic inequalities that define their lived experiences and affect their community as a whole.

Key words: Indian Farmers; Farmers' Movement; Critical Consciousness; Social Participation; Democratic Learning

Freire's *conscientização*: reflective action and development education

Paulo Freire's insistence on progressive literary praxis, radical democratisation of voice and focus on socio-economic and political experiences played crucial roles in late twentieth century education for social justice and democratic empowerment. His work prioritised human agency and called for liberation and radical reconstruction. He argued that we must be educated to understand that our situation is neither determined nor unalterable, it is only limited (Brosio, 2000: 199). Rather than submitting to the decisions made by others, he wanted education to enable 'men' to analyse and re-evaluate constantly, to perceive themselves in a dialectical relationship with social reality and assume critical attitudes toward the world to transform it (Freire, 2005: 30). Education is thus considered as the praxis for liberation, where liberation is conceived as 'both a dynamic activity and the partial conquest of those engaged in dialogical education' (Freire, 2005: viii).

Freire focuses on the idea of a 'reflecting subject' which involves a 'dynamic and dialectical movement between 'doing' and 'reflecting on doing' (Freire, 2000: 23). It marks the essentiality of critical reflection on one's actions or practice. While action without critical reflection is ineffective activism, theory in the absence of collective social action is escapist idealism and naïve consciousness (Freire, 2005). Thus, his approach to education is especially notable when assumed by communities in struggle. As succinctly put by Martin Carnoy, Freire 'believed in the inseparability of learning from political consciousness and of political consciousness from political action' (Freire, 1998: 7). The starting premise for critical education is to enable conditions for learners to engage in interactive experiences where they assume themselves as 'social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons' (Ibid: 25). It is our permanent movement of curious interrogation that creates the capacity to intervene and transform the world. Thus education 'as a specifically human experience, is a form of intervention in the world' (Ibid: 71).

According to Freire, education is not and cannot be neutral. In the introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull elucidated that 'education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the young…into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom' (cited in Brosio, 2000: 198). His ideas were inspired from Marxist tradition, most notably propounded by Gramsci and Althusser in the twentieth century. Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971) viewed civil society as consisting of political parties, print media, education, and other voluntary associations: its collaboration with the state being crucial to contain class struggle and organize consent. It is institutions like schools, family, church, political parties, media that shape the political and social consciousness of citizens. A similar theorisation, on the lines of Gramsci, was taken further by Louis Althusser (1970) by terming it as 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (ISA) constituted of family, church, schools, trade unions, political parties, law, media and the cultural domain of sports, literature and arts which function primarily by ideology and secondarily by coercion.

While it was church that was the most dominant ISA in pre-capitalist times and all ideological struggles were anti-religious and anti-clerical, and aimed against it (since the Reformation), under capitalism it is the educational ideological apparatus which has become the most important. Schools provide students with the required understanding as to the role one has to play in the hierarchical production process as well as the ideology suitable to the ruling class, while at the same time portraying the school as a 'neutral environment purged of any ideology'. Such instrumental and functional learning approaches dehumanise learners 'by robbing them of their right to reason, to speak and to act' (Dale and Hyslop-Margison, 2010: 129). Freire's pedagogy presents the social order as artificially constructed to serve the ideological interests of the dominant groups. For Freire, education should be a mechanism to liberate people, rather than another instrument to dominate them. Such liberatory education is embedded in existential experience as well as critical reflection on it.

The critical education as advocated by Freire's Marxist pedagogy is a crucial mechanism in deconstructing and challenging unequal socio-economic structures as it exposes the impact of ideology on consciousness and social construction (Dale and Hyslop-Margison, 2010: 129). Freire has termed the transformation of consciousness as *conscientização* (i.e., the deepening of critical consciousness and awareness). It is only after this change in individual consciousness, through increased contextual awareness and understanding how that context shapes identity, that liberation through praxis or reflective action can occur (Ibid). It is such transformative intervention that makes us uniquely human as we can create and recreate material goods, social institutions and ideas (Brosio, 2000: 206).

Democracies, in their true spirit, should provide their citizens with discursive spaces where political options shall be debated, alternative social visions discussed and prevailing social and economic structures critiqued. In recent decades, the politics of populism has acquired new significance (Revelli, 2019). Populist leaders present themselves as representing 'the people' in opposition to 'the elites' who are portrayed as having exploited the interests of the masses. In the context of India, Bello (2019) has elaborated on how the distinctive brand of populism has sought to 'normalise Hindu nationalist discourse, transforming the public discursive space in an attempt to define an exclusive national imaginary' (Rizvi, 2021: 6). While, on the one hand, educational practices have been aligned to Hindutva's sense of cultural and ideological legitimacy, on the other hand neoliberalism has been representing 'a new relationship between government and knowledge through which governing activities are recast as non-political and non-ideological problems that need technical solutions' (Ong, 2006: 3).

In *The Anti-Politics Machine*, James Ferguson (1990) has also argued that by reducing questions of development to technical problems and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of the oppressed, the hegemonic problematic of 'development' becomes the principal means to depoliticise such questions, enabling suspension of politics even from the most sensitive political operations. This has highly authoritarian tendencies, according to

James Scott (1998), as only those with required scientific acumen (certainly the political elite, leading to the exclusion of citizens from developmental plans or visions) are seen fit to rule, making it the ideology of bureaucratic intelligentsia, technicians, and planners with responsibilities of social transformation as well as changing the cultural level of the population.

Knowledge that is not gained out of scientific experiments is not even considered knowledge and thus leads to neglect of *Metis*, i.e., wisdom of local groups acquired through personal experience. *Metis* (Scott, 1998) is devalued in favour of 'specialised' knowledge backed by state authority which changes the 'balance of power' between the local communities and the state. In a way, it reminds one of Freire's description and condemnation of the 'banking' method of education, whereby the teacher is considered as the one who knows all while the learner is perceived to be ignorant. On the contrary, Freire envisaged that everyone must become a Subject rather than a mere Object who is acted upon, as persons capable of constructing and reconstructing their own meanings and realities, critical analysis, solidaristic action and responsible citizenship (Brosio, 2000: 203). It is only then that the people become politicised and renounce emotional resignation.

This radical approach to learning has been further explored by development education that 'explores the intrinsic link between education and development and addresses the fundamental causes of inequality and injustice' (McCloskey, 2014: 1). It intends to 'demystify social, economic and cultural relations within the neoliberal system that perpetuates inequality and contribute to the debate on alternative, transformative paradigms that are sustainable, equitable and just' (Ibid). It focuses on active and participative learning, unequal social relations based on class, race and the differential conditions of the global South by employing various tools like social media, information technology, etc. It seeks to enable critical awareness of one's situationalities (local as well as global) based on the knowledge of social, economic and political processes. It seeks to develop critical knowledge, skills and values that further encourage action (which is a pivotal outcome of the educational process). Such education aims at social transformation to further

the ideals of equality, inclusion and social justice. This advances Freire's conception of reflective action that brings together theory and praxis which involves critical consciousness of power structures and social relations within society as well as reflective action informed by dialogue.

The next section explores the ways in which active, participative leaning for the purpose of progressive social, economic and political transformations were witnessed during the Indian farmers' movement of 2020-2021, described as one of the largest in the history of post-independence India.

Kisaan Andolan: origins of the movement

The farmers' movement of 2020-2021 was one of the largest movements in the history of independent India, marking resistance to neoliberalism and the corporatisation of Indian agriculture (Kumar, 2022). The protesting farmers camped at the borders of the nation's capital to demand the repeal (now repealed due to the sustained year long struggle of the farmers) of the three contentious farms laws: the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020, that were designed to liberalise India's agriculture markets and change the existing regulatory framework of agriculture.

Over forty Indian farmers' unions came under the banner of *Samyukta Kisan Morcha* to protest against these laws. This was especially notable given the Central and state governments constantly asking the farmers to vacate the protest sites in order to avoid the spread of COVID-19. The government brought in COVID-19 control regulations and tried to forcibly clear out the sites of protests, ban gatherings of people and implemented a slew of measures that restricted access to public spaces making it very difficult to organise any kind of mass protests. In spite of COVID-19 regulations being in place and series of enforced lockdowns, the Indian protestors found a way to mass mobilise and storm the capital with demonstrations (Chakrabarti, 2022). Multiple health camps were arranged at the protest sites by the unions to ensure

availability of medical assistance in case of emergencies. Such resilience was especially impressive given that the mass mobilisation of a similar nature against the CAA-NRC had to be suspended due to the pandemic earlier in 2020. Secondly, it was the marginalised sections, especially migrant labour, women and children who were the worst affected by the lockdowns. This made the farmers' mobilisation that constituted significant participation of Dalits and women even more radical and powerful. While initially there were multiple leaders leading different pockets of protestors, after the 26 January 2021 Red Fort fiasco, it was Rakesh Tikait of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) who emerged as the face of resistance. This forces one to look back at the history of BKU and how the organisation had internalised the communal discourse that preceded the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013. Theoretical work has been done on the political intermediation of the traditional institutions of *khap panchayats* as being central to this process. There have been tensions between *Jats* and Muslims, and *Jats* and Dalits especially in Western Uttar Pradesh. Despite these setbacks in the past, the movement witnessed the coming together of these sections to form a politically productive alliance.

While in Punjab, it was the farmers' unions, workers' unions as well as *gram panchayats* that mobilised protestors on the ground, Haryana witnessed 'resolutions' being passed by *khap panchayats* (caste councils: traditional bodies of governance that affect one's conduct in spheres ranging from marriage, property rights to sexuality and so on) about participation of at least one male member from each household, or else risk facing social boycott. It has been these communitarian social ties (*bhaichara*) that provided the required momentum and solidarity in the state of Haryana. While these institutions have been usually analysed as regressive, conservative 'sovereign' entities based on caste solidarities (Verma, 2019; Chowdhry, 2011; Ramakumar, 2016), these were also fundamental in ensuring solidarity within and across communities during the movement. The significant presence of women and considerable focus on women centric issues was another positive development. While such unprecedented women's participation primarily surged to counter the threat posed to their 'land, livelihood, food security and farming identity by the new farm laws, it was also rooted in the historical

conditions and treatment meted out to them on social, cultural, economic and political fronts' (Sangwan and Singh, 2022: 46). Women activists not only took charge of activities and delivered speeches, but also conducted *Mahila Kisaan Sansad* (Women Farmers' Parliament) to put forth resolutions related to land rights, wages, access to credit, etc. Women asserted their right to protest as well as their right to occupy public spaces. Thus, the success of the movement could be linked to the building of solidarity across caste, class, gender and religion as well as the broader coalition of farm and trade unions, civil society organisations and cultural institutions like the *khap panchayats*.

Similarly, other such instances of solidarity from the protests can be mentioned too: *Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union* (PKMU)'s leadership is primarily from the landless Dalit community and many protestors affiliated to the Union were from Punjab villages where Dalits had once clashed with other communities over common land, one-third of which is meant to be reserved for Dalits. They were reportedly saying, 'We don't own land, but these laws are dangerous for us too. We had a conflict with landowners over our common land, but there is no personal enmity between us' (Singh, 2021). Mukesh Maloud, president of the *Zameen Prapati Sangharsh* Committee added:

> "This is not only a fight against the new farm laws. It is a protest against the fascist government that has jailed intellectuals, brutalised Kashmiris and changed labour codes, and brought in the NRC laws" (Singh, 2021).

Thus, the farmers' protest had accommodated Muslims, Dalits and women, thereby changing the very imagination of a farmer. This was in stark contrast to the earlier fragmented nature of the struggles waged by different subaltern classes in India and the limitation of their political imagination that had led to the disorientation of politics of social justice and aided the rise of the Hindutva movement, as argued by Ajay Gudavarthy and Nissim Mannathukkaren (2014).

Importantly, the theoretical division between civil society and political society (see Chatterjee, 2011) seems blurred in such contexts. According to Chatterjee, subjects forming political society (different from the civil society which comprises the middle class, English speaking citizens) make their claims on government not on the basis of constitutional rights, but by temporary political contextual negotiations, that are tenuous, periodically renewed, with no assurance of outcome. Such distinction does not hold up in cases like the farmers' protests where the protests by peasantry (that is a part of the political society) had increasingly taken up the issues of rights, constitution and legality in order to assert what is rightfully theirs, and is no longer only limited to contextual, everyday negotiations. It stemmed from the role of education and consciousness as seen in the powerful visuals of aged protestors studying books of Bhagat Singh, Ambedkar and Marx, and the setting up of various libraries like *Nanak Hut*. Thus Chatterjee's 'subjects' of the political society who were hitherto only accepted as citizens in terms of negotiating their contextual claims with governmental authorities not only successfully challenged the populist politics of the ruling dispensation, but did so in the name of the nature and essence of the constitutionality of the Indian state.

Dip Kapoor's (2014) work has focused on the engagement of development education with political society by focusing on the subaltern social movements of rural India. According to Kapoor, subaltern social movements of the political society inform development education by highlighting the need to embrace indigenous theoretical perspectives to 'expose the links between capitalism, colonialism and contemporary capitalist development and globalization', and elaborate on 'pluri-versal projects of subaltern, rural and indigenous people as pre/existing versions of cultural, political-economic and socio-educational forms of development and ways of being/living and the ongoing capitalist/modernist colonisations and social movement resistances/responses to the same' (Kumar, 2014: 222). The farmers' movement in India, too, developed critical awareness and active engagement with regards to inequalities embedded in capitalism, ecological exploitation and social relations.

Learning by doing: critical engagement

Social movement participants learn 'by doing' and in the process create a new culture and knowledge (Isaac et al., 2019: 4). Such movements thereby end up being sites of active learning, cognitive transformation and social development. They contribute to the process of knowledge production by transforming participant protestors' consciousness, such new knowledge is further circulated to wider audiences and creates grounds for social change.

Such study of critical and democratic educational models utilised by social movements can be understood as a facet of what has been termed as 'pedagogies of resistance' (Bajaj, 2015: 154). The term has been explained as encompassing reciprocity, solidarity and democratic decision-making structures (Jaramillo and Carreon, 2014). In the Latin American context, Jaramillo and Carreon have elaborated on how social movements are accompanied and strengthened by 'popular educational methods that create the conditions for participants to critique and act upon relations of dispossession' (Jaramillo and Carreon, 2014: 395). It emphasises anchoring the learning process in local meanings and experiences that enables agency, democratic participation and social action that seeks to disrupt asymmetrical power relations. Such learning and educational processes thus contribute to substantial social change. As sites of transformation, these movements provide the space and scope for participants to engage in critical self-reflection.

During the Indian farmers' movement, too, educational processes in the forms of libraries and a makeshift school were linked to a plan of action towards greater social justice and equity. It also resonated with Freire's conceptualisation of *conscientização* by making the protesting farmers better aware of the structural social and economic inequalities that define their lived experiences and impact the community as a whole. The protestors, while arguing for required agrarian reforms, simultaneously worked towards positive socio-cultural changes such as the rapprochement of Hindu-Muslim relations, especially crucial for areas like Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh which witnessed violent communal clashes in 2013. In public meetings, leaders often spoke of brotherhood and unity, farmer-worker unity, unity across caste, anti-

communalism as well as pro-democracy slogans. To commemorate Human Rights Day celebrated on 10 December, the farmers expressed solidarity with activists and intellectuals who had been arrested as well as anti CAA protests by saying that the farmers' movement could not be isolated from the larger political developments in the country.

The inclusive nature of the movement can be starkly contrasted with the sectarian, communal and exclusivist rhetoric of populist politics. Here, particular interests of a group were linked to wider issues of justice. Such empathy and solidarity viewed injustices faced by other groups and marginalised communities as limits to the freedom of all. It was thus a quintessential example of how 'reflective practices, acts of solidarity and participation can occur in authentic ways' (Bajaj, 2015: 160).

Protesting farmers were subjects in a dialogue about the issues that affect their lives: democratic citizens possessing the required dispositions to decide between various political, social and economic possibilities. Their reflective action led to the fostering of democratic critique in a time when dissent is not well tolerated. Diverse pedagogical and communication strategies were adopted to convey key ideas to diverse audiences including multimedia, social media, community education, etc. This became even more important as mainstream media had weaved an anti-protest narrative by branding the protestors as naïve, misguided, anti-national separatists and *Khalistanis*.

In order to counter state propaganda with its own narrative, alternative media became a prerequisite to articulate their demands and engage with the wider audience. This led to the popularisation of *Trolley Times*, a newspaper that came up from the sites of the protest and documented stories and experiences of farmers, discussions among leaders of the movement, issues concerning gender, class and caste, becoming the voice of the protests and a representation of rural and agrarian distress. Such alternative media was utilised as an organisational as well as educational mechanism. Young women created alternative platforms like *Karti Dharti* to increase the reach and impact

of the movement (Sangwan and Singh, 2022:48). The makeshift school that was set up at the protest site of *Singhu* border was attended by more than 150 children from nearby slums. This was also crucial because millions of underprivileged children across India could not attend virtual classes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic due to various reasons like inaccessible internet connections, inability to afford smartphones, and the burden of household chores, etc. The elderly would share their experiences, customs, culture and suggestions for moving forward with these children, in a way navigating the distinction between home and school. The tent where the makeshift school was conducted was popularly called *Sanjhi Sath*, in order to recreate a familiar village tradition of having a common place to hold discussions on important issues. A library was also set up which displayed works of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Ché Guevara to familiarise the protestors with their ideas.

The tradition of *langar* (community kitchens) is an intrinsic part of Sikhism that focuses on feeding the hungry. The purpose is also to bring the community together by serving the needy. The concept of *langar* became an intrinsic part of the protest as residents from the surrounding areas would supply milk, others distributed medicines and books. We not only witnessed food *langar*, but also other kinds of library *langar*, health *langar* (volunteers were running health check-up centres too) as part of *sewa* (*sewa* is a way of life for Sikhs: it means selfless service, helping others without expecting any reward) of the protesting farmers. The processes involved in such activities reaffirmed participation, by simultaneously cultivating empowerment and mobilisation.

In the backdrop of the farmers' movement, it seems imperative to revisit Spivak's concern regarding the subalterns' ability to speak for themselves. In Spivak's work, the term subaltern signifies 'subsistence farmers, unorganized peasant labour, the tribals and communities of zero workers on the street or in the countryside' (Spivak, 1988: 288). Spivak also criticised Foucault and Deleuze who posited that if given a chance, the oppressed (via solidarity through alliance politics) can speak and know their

conditions. In the context of erstwhile colonies marred with the circuit of epistemic violence of imperialist law and education, Spivak then raises the question: can the subaltern speak? She concludes by positing that there is no space for the subalterns to articulate and make their experiences or interests known to others on their own terms. However, India (some regions more than others) has particularly witnessed a vibrant culture of peasant politics (along with periods of breaks and fissures, certainly), most notably under the charismatic leadership of Sir Chhotu Ram, Chaudhary Charan Singh, Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra led by Sharad Joshi, and the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Western Uttar Pradesh led by Mahendra Singh Tikait as well as the latest movement of 2020-21. Not only are the peasants speaking, but they are also being heard, to the extent that laws have been repealed in the latest instance. The protestors were not on the sidelines, rather they were active subjects with the capacity to analyse, articulate and question. Such mechanisms added considerable depth to the movement and enabled it to effectively challenge unequal social, economic and political conditions, finally culminating into the repeal of the three laws.

Conclusion

This article analysed the farmers' movement against the three farm laws that were later withdrawn by the Indian government, by focusing on the nature of organisation and participation. It marked the assertion of *kisani* identity in the social and political spheres by developing informed political agency among the protestors. One can draw parallels with the way Freire wanted the oppressed to inculcate social and political experience through experience, by participating in associations, unions, etc. It was considered to be a prerequisite for political and socio-economic democracy. His conception of education as development of individual and collective identity, democratic participation and cooperation resonated during the farmers' movement that had wider participative democratic implications in times marked by heightened populist rhetoric, communalism, identity politics and widening inequality. As witnessed during the movement, critical consciousness enabled the protesting farmers to become the transforming agents of their social reality.

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PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION: FINDINGS FROM A SELF-STUDY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

BRIGHID GOLDEN

Abstract: Democracy and global education are intrinsically linked in their shared commitment to debate and the opportunity to evaluate multiple perspectives and make informed decisions on topics that impact the world around us. A focus on critical thinking within education offers the opportunity to teach students the skills necessary to question the status quo, develop informed opinions and contribute to the preservation and promotion of democracy in society. This article explores a self-study action research project which took place across three academic years which aimed to identify effective approaches for incorporating critical thinking into initial teacher education. Research was undertaken with students in their second year of study and data sources included ongoing personal reflections, critical conversations with two colleagues who acted as critical friends, alongside a variety of data collection approaches undertaken with students. This research project was undertaken in response to an identified gap between students perceived levels of criticality and the skills they would demonstrate during class time or within assessments. Consequently, this research project focused on identifying strategies to successfully support students to both demonstrate criticality and to understand and identify core critical thinking approaches relevant to global education. Findings indicated that students had the capacity to become critical thinkers and develop an understanding of the potential impact for their future teaching. A focus on providing opportunities to practice critical thinking in a supported setting was key for students' skill development. The consistent incorporation of active, engaged opportunities to share ideas and work collaboratively supported students to develop core critical thinking skills.

Key words: Critical Thinking; Democracy and Global Education; Initial Teacher Education; Self-Study; Dialogical Approach.

Introduction

This article aims to highlight the impact that a focus on critical thinking can have on promoting democracy within the context of global education. Through examination of the relevant literature this article begins by presenting the argument that fostering criticality within global education is crucial to nurturing democratic citizens. The article continues on to present the methodology and findings from a self-study action research project which took place within initial teacher education (ITE) in Ireland. The study was undertaken with student teachers in the second year of their degrees, and explored approaches to support their development of critical thinking skills. Findings from this study demonstrate the potential for a focus on nurturing critical thinking skills within ITE to promote democratic values amongst students. The study found that participative dialogical teaching approaches worked effectively to provide students with opportunities to practice their critical thinking in a supportive and structured setting.

Global education and democracy

In the recent Dublin Declaration, the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) (2022: 2) defined global education as:

> "education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future".

One of the key challenges global education has faced as an educational approach grounded in its commitment to social justice, human rights and equity, is the rising support internationally for political parties and perspectives with narrow nationalist agendas (GENE, 2020: 6) and the increase in xenophobic populism and hate speech in societies (Council of Europe,

2018). Westheimer (2019) cites the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit votes in 2016 as two examples with significant global consequences in which the winning parties employed right-wing nationalism to rally supporters against the common enemy of 'foreigners', promoting racism and bigotry in politics. McCartney (2019) cautions that populism, such as these examples, enables the erosion of democracy and democratic values.

Democracy is commonly thought of as 'power of the people' due to the Greek origin of the word. While there are varied approaches to democratic governing around the world, the Council of Europe (no date) states that:

"properly understood, democracy should not even be 'rule of the majority', if that means that minorities' interests are ignored completely. A democracy, at least in theory, is government on behalf of all the people, according to their 'will'".

Consequently, democracy, by definition, should value multiple perspectives and afford genuine opportunities for opposing sides to be heard, to share knowledge based in lived-experiences and factual balanced research, ultimately enabling citizens to make informed choices and navigate compromises.

McCartney (2019) maintains that democracy is being lost through the rising support for narrow nationalist politics and that education must answer the call of John Dewey (1910) in ensuring that democracy is born new and fostered in every generation to counteract and challenge passivity in society. Where democratic values are under threat in society, so too can global education be pushed to the margins in favour of more passive approaches to education focused on compliance rather than debate and dialogue. Westheimer (2019: 9) declares that the waning trust in democratic values and the 'toxic mix of ideological polarisation' currently seen in countries across the world makes it critical that education should ask learners to imagine more just societies, should provide learners with multiple perspectives on controversial issues, and should actively teach them to be critical. He believes that centring education

on democratic values and promoting critical thinking is crucial to counteract rising xenophobic populism (Ibid.).

Through education which is focused on the ideals of democracy and committed to social justice, students learn to question and become critical thinkers. Like Dewey, hooks (2010: 14) proposes that democracy must be reborn in every generation so that freedoms can be maintained, or where necessary, fought for. This article proposes that where criticality, curiosity, and creativity are not fostered in education, it is not possible to nurture active democratic citizens committed to challenging injustice and acting to change society. In this way, the promotion of democratic values in society and the teaching of critical thinking in schools are inextricably linked.

What is critical thinking?
Dewey (1910: 6), seen by many as the father of critical thinking in education, defines reflective thinking, widely accepted to be synonymous with critical thinking, as 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends'. Critical thinking theorists have often mirrored Dewey's contention that critical thinkers must employ persistent effort and knowledge, skills, and attitudes that ensure they are disposed to examining beliefs and ideas.

However, critical thinking is not inherently concerned with social change. Indeed, Linskens (2010) asserts that while critical thinking focuses on identifying and examining falsehoods in ideas, it is not innately concerned with rectifying the consequences of these falsehoods. It is in its connection to critical pedagogy that critical thinking offers an opportunity to contribute to the transformation of society and a focus on democratic values. Freire (1970) positioned critical thinking as a fundamental component of critical pedagogy, asserting that we must not simply critically reflect upon existence but critically act upon it. Commenting on *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Ibid.), Giroux (2010: 16) proposes that for Freire, critical thinking was 'a tool for self-determination and civic engagement' in presenting a way of breaking the cycles of history by

'entering into a critical dialogue with history and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present'. Critical pedagogy is, by definition, attentive to social change and justice through theoretical, political, social, and cultural framings (Giroux, 2011). Critical thinking was the core skill advocated by Freire (1970) to enable learners to challenge orthodoxies and imagine and work towards alternative futures.

Critical thinking and global education

Critical thinking and global education share a commitment to unravelling and analysing varied perspectives and experiences and in doing so encourage learners to challenge orthodoxies and imagine alternative futures. A focus on critical thinking within global education provides a counter approach to the educational direction seen in many countries around the world tending towards high stakes testing which usually rewards recall over criticality. This passive approach to education runs counter to the aims of democracy and the dialogical approach which is fundamental to democratic education.

Furthermore, the promotion and development of critical thinking within the context of global education is central to supporting learners to navigate the challenging nature of global education topics. It is commonly cited (Andreotti, 2006; Shah and Brown, 2010) that many of the issues that global education is concerned with are contested and necessitate engagement in discussion and exploration of multiple perspectives to support a broader awareness of issues and challenge dominant discourses. MacCallum (2014: 39) contends that global learning is a process of 'realized critical thinking' which allows for consideration of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental issues from multiple perspectives. Global education learners should come to understand that knowledge is not a fixed state but needs constant critical evaluation as they engage with new perspectives and experiences.

The research study which this article explores identified a set of core critical thinking skills relevant to the context of global education. These skills were identified through an extensive literature review and finalised in

conjunction with empirical research findings. The identified skills include developing and using a global learning knowledge base, learning to question orthodoxies, engaging in self-reflection, and using a values-based lens when exploring global justice issues.

The centrality of Initial Teacher Education
While education has the potential to uphold and reignite democratic values within society, this will not happen without a focus on teacher preparation. To pass on critical thinking skills within their future classrooms, teachers must first learn to become critical thinkers themselves (Maphalala and Mpofu, 2017; Pithers and Soden, 2000; Taşkaya and Çavuşoğlu, 2017; Williams, 2005; Sezer, 2008). ITE is a crucial space for ensuring that teachers are prepared for and committed to doing this work in their future classrooms. Indeed, Williams (2005) highlights that it is unlikely that classroom teachers will become skilled critical thinkers if critical thinking is not emphasised and fostered in ITE.

While critical thinking is often positioned as a core outcome of higher education (Lederer, 2007; Stupple et al., 2017), students often arrive with limited experience of critical thinking from their primary and secondary school educational experiences (Ghanizadeh, 2017). This can be correlated with the strong, and in some countries increasing, focus on standardised, high-stakes testing internationally and the consequent rote learning which permeates much formal education. Furthermore, limited exposure to criticality prior to entering higher education can mean that stereotypes and orthodoxies have become strongly engrained. ITE is an important space to challenge these pervasive, and often incorrect or dangerous, viewpoints prior to teachers entering classrooms through a focus on open discussion of competing viewpoints guided by a values-based lens (Williams, 2005).

Methodology
This article explores the outcomes of a self-study action research project which took place across three academic years within ITE in Ireland. As a teacher educator focused on the field of global education, I was motivated to inquire into my own practice and identify strategies to best support learners to develop

their critical thinking skills. Prior to beginning the research project, I had found that students often self-identified as critical thinkers but I rarely saw the evidence of this in their class work or assessments. I undertook this research to explore this gap between their perceived and demonstrated skill levels and to ascertain what elements of my own teaching could either support or hinder them in developing and demonstrating the critical thinking skills I was looking for.

I undertook a three-cycle self-study action research process across three academic years. The main participants in this study were B.Ed. students in the second year of their degrees. I collected data during one of their core modules, social studies, which included global education as one-third of the module. Due to large cohort sizes on the B.Ed., students were taught in groups of roughly sixty on this module, with the same session being repeated seven times with different groups. During cycle one, just one of the seven groups took part in the study, during cycles two and three there were two groups who participated. Students were invited to participate and data was collected only from those who had given both written and verbal consent to participate. Table 1 details the structure of each cycle along with participant numbers and relevant module related details.

Table 1: Details of Action Research Cycles

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
When?	Spring Semester 2018 (half academic year)	Autumn semester 2018 and Spring semester 2019 (full academic year)	Autumn semester 2019 (half academic year)
Duration	12 weeks	12 weeks in Autumn plus 10 weeks in Spring	12 weeks
No. of modules	1 module	2 modules	1 module
Frequency of lectures	2 lectures/week	1 lecture/week	1 lecture/week
Participants	1 group (47 students in group A)	2 groups (51 students in group B, 59 students in group C) (same groups across both semesters and modules)	2 groups (44 students in group D, 45 students in group E)
Module focus	Joint focus on exploring global justice topics and learning how to teach GE in the primary school classroom (taught simultaneously).	Joint focus on exploring global justice topics (Autumn semester) and learning how to teach GE in the primary school classroom (Spring semester).	Exploring global justice topics.

The focus of the study was on examining my own teaching practices and the impact they had on students' learning outcomes. During the first cycle I taught as I had done prior to the research project and reflected on what was and was not working. Using emerging findings from cycle one alongside the

critical thinking skills identified through literature, I designed teaching interventions and made changes for cycle two, and then tweaked these again for cycle three in response to findings from cycle two. Changes included altering elements of my questioning style, including additional displays and adopting a new seating arrangement within the physical learning environment, introduction of new interactive teaching approaches alongside larger changes to my overall approach to teaching. Larger scale changes focused on the student experience and addressing the balance between content delivery and active, engaged learning opportunities. Just as the literature review shaped and informed my teaching and the interventions designed, so too did the emerging findings shape the structure of the skillset identified.

I adopted a self-study action research methodological approach which is commonly utilised by practitioners interested in studying and improving their practice and sharing the outcomes. Self-study research places the researcher at the centre of the inquiry they are exploring rather than investigating a topic in the abstract (Samaras, 2011). Although the motivation for the study related to my students' learning outcomes, the research focus remained on my practice as an educator and its impact on their learning. As outlined by Roche (2016: 29):

> "my pupils could be the mirror in which I saw my practise reflected, but I needed to see that I was researching 'me': my thoughts, my ideas, my solutions to problems, my actions, decisions and plans".

While the research design suited the enquiry, there are recognised limitations to the self-study approach, particularly the generalisability of results. The nature of self-study research means that it is small-scale and findings are therefore context bound and cannot be generalised or applied beyond the context from which they emerged. I was conscious of this challenge throughout and worked to mitigate against it by offering my findings as an example for other educators to consider in light of their own contexts. Critically, the findings from this research respond to the need identified by Bourn (2020: 5) for 'research and evidence to demonstrate its [global education

and learning] effectiveness, importance, and impact' as this study demonstrates that it was possible for students to develop their critical thinking skills within the context of global education.

Although by its very nature self-study entails examining the self, it is not a purely introspective practice, but necessitates collaboration and drawing on sources of knowledge beyond the self (Samaras, 2011). Self-study legitimises the knowledge that educators can generate based on their own practices, however, this knowledge is the result of consultation and critical conversations with other relevant parties (Russell, 2008). The inquiry process I undertook in this project included support and engagement from my students, critical friends, and colleagues. Consequently, a variety of data collection approaches were employed across all three cycles. This included multiple means of data collection with students (see Table 1 below) alongside ongoing personal reflections and critical conversations with two colleagues who acted as critical friends.

I engaged in reflection in a number of ways throughout the three cycles of data collection. At the outset, I developed a set of simple questions to guide my reflections and narrow the focus of what I recorded to ensure it was relevant to the overall project. However, as time went on, I became more comfortable with the process and was better able to identify the moments or ideas of value without the aid of the guiding questions. I captured both written and audio reflections throughout the research process. When engaging with critical friends, data was gathered through recorded critical conversations, written feedback after observation sessions, and written reflections offered by the critical friends after our conversations or in response to particular problems or scenarios.

Table 2: Data Sources

	Cycle 1 (group A)	Cycle 2 (groups B and C)	Cycle 3 (groups D and E)
Focus group interviews	3 FG1: 6 participants FG2: 5 participants FG3: 3 participants	4 Group B FG1: 4 participants FG2: 4 participants Group C FG1: 4 participants FG2: 4 participants	6 Group D FG1: 3 participants FG2: 4 participants FG3: 2 participants FG4: 1 participant Group E FG1: 11 participants FG2: 3 participants
End of semester surveys	20	Group B Sem 1: 46 Group B Sem 2: 14 Group C Sem 1: 53 Group C Sem 2: 15	Group D: 47 Group E: 51
Most significant change stories	13	Group B Sem 1: 46 Group B Sem 2: 14 Group C Sem 1: 53 Group C Sem 2: 15	Group D: 47 Group E: 51
Evidence from students' work	Exit slips: 2 sessions, 32 responses from each. Task: Session 1: 8 group responses. Session 2: 10 group responses. Assessments: 47	Exit slips: 3 sessions per group, 30-59 responses each. Tasks: 7 sessions per group, 7-14 group responses each. Assessments: Group B: 51 each semester. Group C: 59 each semester.	Exit slips: 3 sessions per group, 14-51 responses each. Tasks: 7 sessions per group, 4-14 group responses each. Assessments: Group D: 44 Group E: 45

The numbers of students involved in individual data collection methods varied based on students' individual circumstances. While some data collection methods, such as surveys, Most Significant Change Stories (MSCSs), and evidence from class work were collected during class time, not all students within each group chose to contribute their class work as data, or chose to complete the surveys. Additionally, as focus group interviews took place outside of class time, participation from students was dependent on their interest in the research project and availability at the interview times. There was an effort made in all cycles to provide opportunities for participation at times which were suitable for students interested in taking part. Although there was variety in terms of participant numbers in different methods, all students in each group took part in at least one method. The variety of data collection methods helped to capture not only what was happening in the classroom but also included layers of interpretation through the multiple lenses of students sharing their own experiences and perspectives, my own reflections, and the considerations of critical friends who both observed me teaching and engaged in teaching the same materials themselves.

Following each cycle, interviews were transcribed and analysed and the emergent findings were used to inform and shape ongoing data collection. Quantitative data from surveys and MSCSs was minimal and was organised using excel which was then used to compare data and generate graphs which represented quantitative findings from each cycle. The purpose of the quantitative data was to offer side-by-side comparison (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) with the qualitative data findings and reveal where one set of data supported or contradicted the other. The qualitative data analysis employed within this study followed the steps for reflexive thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2020). There was a significant quantity of qualitative data to be analysed across all data sources and so the programme Nvivo was used to organise data and facilitate the process of analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis involved systematic data coding, both deductive and inductive. Themes were then developed and refined from the codes. All data sources were revisited at the conclusion of the three cycles and codes and themes were

revised where relevant in light of new information from other cycles. Thematic maps were then created and used to structure the findings.

Both ethical approval and institutional approval were sought and granted at the outset of this research project. This ensured that the methodology was in line with best practice ethically, and that the institution where the research took place had approved the approach taken. Participants in the study were identified through purposive sampling. I had access to students through my post as a teacher educator and selected groups for inclusion in the project based on group composition in terms of student diversity to ensure a variety of student experiences and perspectives would be included. Written consent was gathered at the outset of each module and verbal consent was negotiated on an ongoing basis with students. Critical friends were identified and invited as a result of their professional relationship with me and connection to the relevant modules. Other ethical considerations which shaped the project included the potential impact of practitioner bias and the dependent relationship between my students and me as their lecturer. These considerations are typical in practitioner self-study research. The potential impact of bias was mitigated through open and ongoing discussions with participants and colleagues within academia. I addressed the dependent relationship by consistently reassuring students both verbally and through my actions that involvement in the study would not impact on the student-lecturer relationship. Additionally, I adopted a flexible and responsive approach to data collection which aimed at all times to be mindful of student wellbeing.

When sharing excerpts from the data, the source for each quote has been labelled following the structure outlined in Figure 1 below. This key has been used for focus group interviews (FG), surveys and MSCSs.

Figure 2: Key for identifying data sources
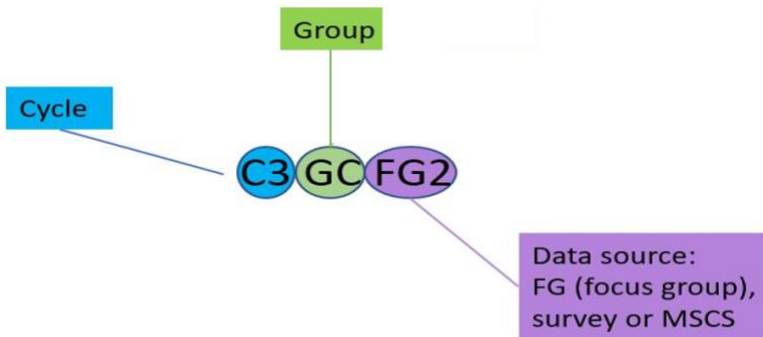
Findings

Although the findings from self-study research are not generalisable, they do present observations which have significance for others working within similar contexts (Sullivan et al., 2016). The findings presented here are the result of three cycles of data collection within modules that were shaped and modified in response to analysis and emerging findings from previous cycles. Throughout cycle one, I taught the module as I had done previously and focused the analysis of data on what was working well and where there were areas for improvement in relation to supporting students to develop their critical thinking skills. Based on analysis of data from cycle one the following changes were made within cycle two:

- Division of content across two modules allowing for focus on personal development prior to focus on teaching approaches;

- New assignment created that allowed for focus on understanding concepts, making connections between different concepts, and self-reflection;

- Re-envisaged specific sessions to include more interactive methodologies;

- Provide ongoing opportunities for feedback and questions;

- Introduced a baseline measure to gauge understanding of development and prior critical thinking experiences;

- Ensured that each topic had a variety of support materials in different formats online;

- Focus on asking questions of students – many of the first semester sessions were previously delivered to large groups so when used with smaller groups in cycle two, an effort to include more questioning was made.

While changes were made to teaching between the two cycles, findings from both cycles remained similar. Despite the changes, findings from both cycles show that while some students demonstrate an increased commitment to and engagement with criticality, many did not. Many students expressed a perception that they were being critical, but in practice I was still seeing many examples of uncritical work such as lack of reflection or an absence of questioning stereotypical interpretations of justice issues.

Following analysis of data from cycle two, and acknowledging the limited progression between the first two cycles I developed a two-part conceptual framework which was implemented in cycle three. The first part of the framework took the form of a model for teaching critical global learning, which was grounded in literature and informed by findings from cycles one and two. The model included a framework of core skills to be developed in the classroom alongside pedagogical considerations within the context of ITE. The second part of the conceptual framework was a planning tool which aimed to mitigate against challenges faced in the first two cycles. The planning tool included four lesson elements to be included in all sessions to ensure a consistent focus on the development of critical thinking skills. The elements included: a focus on presenting challenging content through indirect and direct teaching; opportunities to honour all voices through group work; ensuring that

issues were personalised through individual work; and a sustained focus on collective responsibility through whole-class work. The combination of these lesson elements, which would range in time from just a few minutes to a more sustained focus depending on the session, led to the development of what one student described as a 'discussion culture' in the classroom.

The following findings focus on data from cycle three as this cycle was the culmination of the project and reflects all changes implemented as a result of analysis of data from cycles one and two. Consequently, the findings from cycle three offer the most significant learning from the research project in terms of factors which contributed to students' acquisition of critical thinking skills. The findings showed that it was possible for these students to develop critical thinking skills within the context of global education and that a focus on dialogical approaches had a significant impact on their acquisition and demonstration of those skills. By the conclusion of the project, I saw a marked improvement in the gap between students perceived and demonstrated skill levels. Not only were students demonstrating critical thinking skills, but they were more aware of what critical thinking looks like in the context of global education. Although there was also an acknowledgement from students that the process of developing critical thinking skills was challenging due to their prior experiences. Describing the transition from post-primary to higher education, one student stated that 'I know when I first went to university, when I left secondary school, I hadn't a clue about how to be able to think critically' (C3GDFG1). This feeling was mirrored by other students who described having to adapt to 'a totally different mindset' and the struggle to adjust to a new way of thinking and learning. Students recalled the process of learning about critical thinking on entering higher education. One student described the experience as follows:

> "everyone was talking about critical thinking and it's so important but we never knew what it was or like … we never came across it before, but it's kind of like we're developing it now, we're developing the skill" (C3GDFG2).

This was mirrored in other conversations at the end of each cycle where students shared that they were starting to find it easier to think critically now that they had the opportunity to practice the skills in class. The absence of critical thinking within student's post-primary education was exacerbated by conservative family backgrounds for some, and by exposure to narratives within the media which do not encourage criticality or exposure to diverging perspectives. It was helpful to me to reflect on the transition that students were going through in their learning styles and to be mindful of this when considering my expectations for them.

Findings highlighted that one of the most transformational approaches utilised during the modules was affording students regular opportunities to practice critical thinking in a scaffolded way. As a result of the structure of the planning tool, students were provided with multiple opportunities during all sessions to share their ideas, experiences, to hear from classmates, and to work together to interpret and analyse information and external perspectives shared with them. Students felt that the opportunity to contribute during classes in multiple and diverse ways was very important to their learning and skill development, as captured by one student:

> "I think we get to do so much interactive and group work and it's not all just sit there and put up your hand with an answer or … I feel like a lot of people are given opportunities if they didn't want to talk in front of the whole class, they still have an opportunity to get their opinion across. The different methodologies have already made it open to a lot of different learners and styles" (C3GDFG3).

Students also shared that the sustained focus on opportunities to practice sharing their perspectives across multiple classes in different ways helped them to develop and build their confidence and skill levels over time. One student highlighted this by stating that 'If you keep doing it like, you get more comfortable with it' (C3GEFG1). Group work opportunities were strongly highlighted by students across all three cycles as critical to building confidence in stating personal opinions or perspectives. Students indicated that when they

had the opportunity to discuss topics in small groups of familiar peers first, this supported them to have the confidence to then offer opinions in front of the whole class.

When students engaged in group work, whole class work or individual work it always took place following a focus on knowledge development which was approached in a variety of ways from direct teaching using a PowerPoint presentation to student-guided learning using prompts, videos or readings. At the conclusion of each module students were asked to identify what the most significant change they experienced in relation to their criticality was, many students cited their increased knowledge-base, naming 'being informed/educated in the module', 'the content from lectures', and 'my awareness on the topic' (C3GDMSCSs) as catalysts for changes to their levels of criticality.

The final focus within the identified critical thinking skills and the lesson elements which were set up to facilitate learning those skills is self-reflection and personalising issues. Data analysis revealed that students appreciated opportunities to reflect during each session. Indeed, seventy-six per cent of students in cycle three reported that the most significant change they had experienced as a result of the module was that they were now more aware of their own opinions and values. Furthermore, not only were students indicating that the module supported them to become more aware of their own opinions, but that they appreciated that being given opportunities to engage in reflection also taught them that their perspectives were authentically valued in the classroom as they were given time and space. The following excerpt from a focus group interview highlights the importance of ensuring students feel that their perspectives are valued in the classroom:

> Student 3: 'To know that it's a safe environment where you can have your own opinion and not that you're going to be judged'.
> Bighid: 'And how do you know it's a safe environment?'.
> Student 3: 'Because the lecturers are willing to hear what you say' (C3GDFG2).

Opportunities to contribute and engage in activities through the lesson elements were accompanied by a focus on classroom atmosphere and a commitment to the ground rules within the approach 'Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry' (Andreotti et al., 2006). This enabled me to ensure that I valued all contributions given, but that students knew I was also committed to questioning them. I regularly challenged students' contributions and encouraged them to think about issues in different ways. In adopting this approach, I endeavoured to model the approach to critical thinking that I wanted students to engage in themselves. This approach appeared to deepen their self-reflection, and from my observations, did not hamper engagement as students continued to contribute diverse views.

Not only was there evidence of students demonstrating critical thinking, but students also showed an understanding of the significance of this new skill for them. Students were consistently conscious of their future roles in the classroom and the impact that their teaching could have. When discussing how they would integrate critical thinking into their own teaching practices during a focus group, one student stated that 'you're not forcing your own opinion then on other people and especially on children like, because they need to form their own opinion and thinking as well' (C3GDFG2). Students showed an appreciation for different perspectives and a commitment to honouring multiple voices in their own classrooms.

Conclusions

Amongst the many lessons learned from this project was the importance of explicitly teaching critical thinking. This includes setting clear expectations for students in terms of what critical thinking looks like alongside providing opportunities for them to practice their criticality in a scaffolded manner in the classroom. The research project identified teaching strategies to counteract the passivity and tendency towards compliance evident amongst many students during this study and perpetuated by the media. The findings from this research highlight the potential transformative impact of dialogical approaches in the classroom in raising students' critical consciousness.

This article explored the impact that a focus on critical thinking can have in promoting democratic values in education. Critical thinking offers opportunities to counteract passivity and promote engagement in debate, encouraging citizens to make informed decisions, thus honouring the democratic focus on dialogue.

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Deeper Democracy through Community Learning: From Education to Empowerment

Alireza Farahani and Behnam Zoghi Roudsari

Abstract: Following the assumption that the levels of education and social capital are good predictors of democratisation (Barro, 1999; Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2007), many development agencies have promoted a depoliticised education in the global South toward enhancing the individual skills of citizens who would, in turn, find their own ways to promote democracy and sustainable development in their countries. However, the persistence and resurrection of authoritarianism and unbalanced development in both the global South and North (Diamond, 2015) necessitates revisiting education. Based on our experience and research on the role of learning to reduce regional imbalances and to revive marginalised places, as well as pragmatic planning initiatives in neighbourhood development in Iran, we seek to propose an alternative approach to learning for development. Our alternative approach goes beyond the individual adaptive learning conventionally recommended to the South and proposes experiences of individual transformative and community-based reflexive learning processes that would directly contribute to empowering the local community, building local capabilities, lowering inequalities, and strengthening the foundations of democratic institutions at the local level.

With roots in Freirean critical pedagogical approaches, we articulate learning processes at the individual and community level and the ways in which they lead to transformative institutional change in facilitated planning and development programmes. We believe that this new approach will eventually lead to the empowerment of marginalised parts of society and strengthen democracy at the national level as it results in more diverse and distributed sources of political power across developing societies. We ground our discussion with examples and cases drawn from development practices throughout Iran during the rise of pro-democratic forces before widespread

disappointment about electoral democracy paved the way for the extreme right to take over local and national governments leading to the recent countermovement in Autumn 2022.

Key words: Institutional Learning; Reflexive and Adaptive Learning; Community Development; Bottom-up Intervention; Deep Democracy.

Introduction
Increasing inequality has been a long-term global trend (Blanchard and Rodrik, 2021), leading to dire consequences including but not limited to the rise of populism, social polarisation, and reduced trust in democratic institutions (Berman and Snegovaya, 2019; Ignatieff, 2020). Many countries in the global South lack the representative government capable and accountable to identify and solve the problems of inequality and underdevelopment (Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2017). Market-based solutions have not produced convincing successes either. In contrast to the promises of the neoliberal doctrine, liberalisation efforts have not channelled capital toward underdeveloped regions with lower production costs (Stiglitz and Lin, 2013) rather it has accentuated inequality (Chancel et al., 2022). The response to government and market failures has been a vague democratisation project that would change the political equilibrium in favour of the left behind places in an unknown timetable (Robinson, 2010).

Current theories of democratisation either framing it as an elitist project with no significant role for the masses (North, Wallis and Weingast, 2009; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012) or, on the other side of the spectrum, formulating democratisation as a mass grassroots centric project as a chapter in the total social transformation of society (Hardt and Negri, 2005; Purcell, 2013), do not promise to bring positive change to the majority of the South given persistent problems of authoritarianism, especially in the post-Arab Spring outlook. We believe that here lies a crucial conceptual space for learning and an imperative for scholars working on the intersection between education and development. On one side of the spectrum, the second group of theories of change leveraging on grassroots movements face a paradox that

society needs to learn in practice to overcome some of the problems impeding collective action and institutionalise their solutions through political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other civil society organisations. Nevertheless, authoritarian leaders find these entities as existential threats and attempt to prevent these forms of civil activism. At the other end of the spectrum, elitist theories of democratisation face a problem of learning too. They assume that authoritarian leaders somehow learn that it is in their interest to gradually open the political system to more inclusive political participation.

Our alternative focuses on education and learning. But it diverges from the de-politicised formal (Freire, 1970; Kane, 2013) form of education mainly focused on individual skills like Information Technology, foreign languages, and mathematics prescribed by many international development agencies (UNESCO, 2015). These documents produced by development agencies utilise the language of community building to sugar-coat their business-as-usual educational approach and they integrate education into the development of human resources for global value chains of production (Kane, 2008). Furthermore, it is assumed that the newly literate individuals would, in one way or the other, find their own ways to act in solidarity to push for democracy and development. Alternatively, we are talking about experiences of learning that would directly (and not by vague intermediaries, if such an approach bears fruit) contribute to empowering the local community to bring about institutional transformation, building local capabilities, lowering inequalities, and strengthening the foundations of democratic institutions at the local level.

We believe an integral element of any development project should be premised upon Freirean education and learning (Freire, 1970): to recognise different types of knowledge, to promote political knowledge, to encourage dialogue, and to empower critical subjects (Kane, 2013). Our solution for the problems of rising inequality, populism, and a constantly downgrading environment is designing development programmes based on the participation and learning of the local community as the main unit of intervention. But we highlight the processes of individual reflexive learning as well as institutional

learning as vital complementary learning processes that should be triggered and nurtured for sustainable social transformation.

We provide evidence from Tehran municipality and the Iranian Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives, and Social Welfare (MLCS) to ground our discussion. Reform in several aspects of urban management and city development was pursued from 2017 to 2021 including a wide-ranging change in favour of facilitation-based community-oriented urban development. Similarly, MLCS led several initiatives, such as sustainable regional employment, and supporting and upgrading the livelihoods of street vendors. A critical reflection on the reasons for the collapse of these progressive initiatives is vital here. We believe that in reflecting upon the link between development and democracy, learning can be a useful mediator. Hence, to facilitate this reflection, we first articulate a conceptual framework to help distinguish between different types of developmental interventions as well as between different types of community-based programmes.

Learning for development: a categorization of the archetypes
Our argument is that community-based initiatives are central to development work that might activate substantial grassroot learning potentials to support democracy. We also claim that initiatives that provide local communities with the opportunity to learn and overcome the problems that impede collective action might be the key to engaging larger parts of society in a broader strategy of development and democratisation. Here, we set out different types of education and learning envisaged by different development approaches to show how community-based learning has been widely neglected by development practitioners and theorists. To begin with and to build a comparative framework, we pose two fundamental questions about the learning approaches attached to development interventions.

'Who?' The first question of learning
The first question is regarding the 'who'; asking about the entity that learns. In response, we distinguish between three scales of learning: individual-level learning, community-based learning, and social learning. An example of the

most prevalent instance of individual learning considers the basic computer and language skills prescribed and facilitated by development agencies to provide opportunities for the better-educated individuals to compete in a free (but unfair) labour market; the familiar barometer of neoliberal success. As an instance of social learning, one might consider the gradual transformation of the dress code in Iran over the past three decades and the social acceptance of new forms of Hijab despite the persistence of institutionalised legal regulations, which have fuelled the current uprising in Iran.

For an example of community level learning processes, we can look at efforts to cope with the water scarcity crisis in Iran. First, we can point out the patriarchal proposals coming from the mainstream policy-makers advocating a sharp rise in the price of water to let the invisible hand of the market rearrange the current order of agriculture and irrigation. We use the term 'patriarchal' in direct reference to the learning model they have in mind to solve the problem. The learning process they try to activate takes place among the undemocratic circles of decision-makers dominated by the tyranny of experts. This type of learning takes place among a limited group (community) of so-called 'experts', deciding on removal of 'unproductive subsidies', without any input from the wider local population most affected by these decisions (Fazeli, 2016). On the other hand, environmentalist groups who employed a facilitation-based approach to make bottom-up solutions, designed interventions that encouraged dialogue and cooperation among farmers around Urmia Lake (Northeast Iran) that facilitated a change of economic behaviour, transformation of patterns of cropping and repositioning of these farmers in the value chains based on learning at the community level. But, as the community-based learning was not integrated in a broader social learning process that institutionalised the transformed livelihood at the community level, it fell short in saving the lake in the face of the stronger political economic forces at work. In this example, we see that two modes of learning in the form of community-based collective action and individual entrepreneurial skills complementarily worked to bring about local change. However, this local project did not foster institutional and discursive skills to lead a sustainable transformation.

'What?' The second question of learning

The second characteristic of learning that helps distinguish different modes of learning is related to the 'what' question, asking about the learning processes activated. In response to the 'what' question, the literature in the field of education and development suggests that learning is either: an objective adaptation of the learner to the environment or, in other words, it is behavioural and adaptive; an internal reorientation of internal cognitions, perceptions and discourses which can be labelled cognitive or reflective; or a complicated temporal relation between the internal and external dimensions and is reflexive.
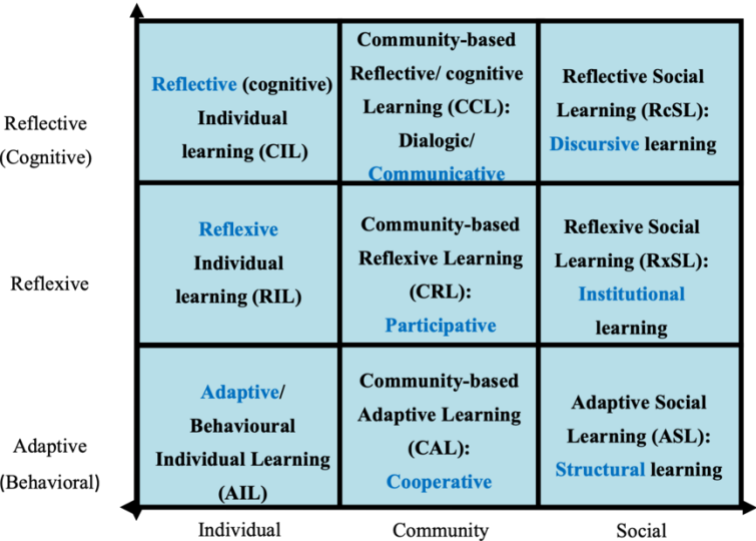
The process of adaptation to responses from the environment by individuals with minimal changes to the scheme or cognitive and social patterns and norms that guide the individuals' interaction with the environment is defined as adaptive or behavioural learning. This process is theoretically captured with various models and names in the literature, including a 'process of assimilation' (Illeris, 2009; Kolb, 1984), and 'single loop learning' (Argyris, 1977; Senge, 1990). Reflexive learning can be defined as a change of mental and habitual models in response to reflection by the agent on the adaptive learning cycle. This mode of learning can be traced in the literature as accommodative (Illeris, 2009), transformative (Mezirow, 1991), andragogical (Tennant, 2019), or double loop learning (Argyris, 1977). Cognitive or reflective learning can be described as a change in an individual's cognition (cognitive frames, frameworks, habits of mind, points of view, and espoused theories) by reorienting cognitive categories without direct relation to the outside world and the adaptation process.

In contrast to reflexive learning, which takes place in interaction with the world and in the course of practice, cognitive and reflective learning is abstracted from action, and is described as being expansive (Engeström, 1987), transitional (Alheit, 1992), and concentrated on the life-world of individuals (Kegan, 1994; Jarvis, 2007). The main difference between reflexive and reflective/cognitive learning is related to the ways in which these mental models are treated in theory and practice: as a stand-alone and separate

phenomenon from action and adaptation (in reflective/cognitive learning), or as entangled with action and the adaptive learning processes (for reflexive learning). For instance, within the saffron producing and export cluster in northeast Iran that supplies more than fifty per cent of the world's exported saffron, adaptive learning limits the scope of action of the businessmen to adapting to local market pricing trends, leaving international trade to Spanish and other players. While a major part of the value of saffron export is related to finding and developing new market channels, the persistence of negative competition (adaptive learning) on price, prevented Iranian actors from opening up trade to new markets in East Asia. This progress was realised by a major revision of mental and habitual models about travel habits, collective marketing, personal investment and consumption, and mutual identity building processes all identified as part and parcel of reflexive learning at the community and individual level (Farahani, 2013).

With the two axes (what and who) and three categories for each of them, nine possible learning archetypes (ideal/theoretical types) are developed as depicted in Figure 1 (Farahani, 2021). This categorisation, developed in detail with precise references to educational and developmental literature (Farahani, 2021) helps to make implicit the learning processes embedded in various development paradigms including those that try to overcome feminist, post-colonial, post-development, and structural criticisms of development explicit from a learning perspective. A more precise understanding of the learning components in development practice can lead us toward a more systematic and conscientized embedding of the considerations of learning in design, practice, and monitoring of development projects. Although some elements of this table may seem competing, it must be noted that any developmental programme, when deconstructed from a learning perspective, is composed of several elements of the table with different intensities.

Figure 3: Nine archetypes of learning created by the intersection of two axes (Farahani, 2021)

	Individual	Community	Social
Reflective (Cognitive)	Reflective (cognitive) Individual learning (CIL)	Community-based Reflective/ cognitive Learning (CCL): Dialogic/ Communicative	Reflective Social Learning (RcSL): Discursive learning
Reflexive	Reflexive Individual learning (RIL)	Community-based Reflexive Learning (CRL): Participative	Reflexive Social Learning (RxSL): Institutional learning
Adaptive (Behavioral)	Adaptive/ Behavioural Individual Learning (AIL)	Community-based Adaptive Learning (CAL): Cooperative	Adaptive Social Learning (ASL): Structural learning

For example, take the approach of mainstream development practitioners to adopt some of the progressive strategies of empowerment, vocational training, and community development. These neoliberal approaches have been accused of being merely 'window dressing' (Tussie and Tuozzo, 2001) and coopting the language of dissent (Roy, 2004). But what makes it distinct from the genuinely progressive schemes? Liam Kane (2008) points out that civil society's participation in these programmes remains decorative and in practice the governments and powerful international agencies manipulate the process. This is an entry point to adopt the conceptual matrix above. When evaluating the programme design, an important concern would be its potential to enhance the capacities of local communities to work together, and to integrate meaningful participation from the collective body of locals (not from the externally imposed agents), and to take community as the unit of intervention, not the individual. A large body of seemingly progressive community-based interventions, if analysed according to Figure 1, are still

circumscribed in targeting the individual rather than triggering participative community-based processes that are entangled with the transformation of shared mental and habitual models among the local community.

To make the point clear, take the neoliberal version of vocational training to reduce poverty and unemployment. This approach tries to stimulate development by activating the adaptive mode of learning at an individual level by developing marketable transferable individual skills. An alternative proposal might diagnose the cause of the problems of underdevelopment as one of innovation; hence it might adopt a different educational strategy that focuses on the entrepreneurial skills of the population, resorting to reflexive individual learning. Further, if the root of poverty is attributed to lack of voice in the national policy-making system, you might resort to strategies that try to initiate a reflective learning process at the national level to address the regional imbalances that are fundamentally different from the first proposition. What distinguishes these proposals is the shade of each learning mode brought forward.

This conceptualisation of learning models in development work also helps to better frame the critics of some of the current depoliticised and under-productive development interventions to draw concrete solutions to contribute in the discourse of 'empowerment'. Zakaria (2021) argues that the idea of empowerment has become disconnected from the idea of collective political action. She explains that 'empowerment' used to revolve around components of power, conscientisation, and agency. Today, however, it has been reduced to mere participation in the economic sphere. Drawing upon Figure 1, we can reformulate the critics of Zakaria as a transition of the empowerment programmes' design from social and community-based reflexive learning toward programmes focused merely on individual learning.

To revive the emancipatory dimension of empowerment programmes, one should think of how to integrate ever more elements that might strengthen the legal and political capabilities of the local collectives, instead of a sole focus on transferable knowledge gained at the individual level. Mainstream

development agencies are focused on the lower row of the table: adaptive individual learning (e.g. how to foster income from chickens) and community-based adaptive learning when it comes to collective skills (e.g. investing in agglomeration effects of business clusters or de-politicised livelihood methods). But our conceptualisation of the learning for development guides us towards the second and third row of the table where a surplus is generated through successful praxis of community, leveraging on the capacities for consensus building, problem solving, advocacy, as well as civil protest and social resistance. This surplus contains collective action capacities and political know-how that goes beyond the algebraic sum of individual learning and economic power of each member of the community.

With this formulation of the link between learning and development, we turn to the second link necessary for our discussion: the link between democracy and learning that will assist us in making the final link between democracy and development with learning acting as the pivot.

Alternative pathways to democracy and their discontents
The proposed quick fixes to liberal democracy (ranked-choice voting, electoral quotas for women, etc.) normally revolve around the same discourse and point of view that produced the crises in the first place, hence fall short of amending the problems facing our democracies (Farahani and Hadizadeh, 2020). Unfortunately, the few radical alternatives of the left aiming to go beyond the tyranny of this pseudo-pragmatism do not seem promising. We identify two strands that try to move beyond conventional representative democracy to critically engage with them from a 'learning for development' point of view to draw attention to the third alternative.

The first alternative discourse has roots in Habermas-inspired deliberative democracy. Habermas argues for a true dialogue in an 'ideal speech situation' (Green, 1999: 22), in which both sides are 'freed from the influence of specific problems' (Habermas, 1971: 73) as the way forward for establishing a more inclusive and better-functioning democracy. Habermas does not explain specifically how the powerless and the marginalised can

contribute to these processes of decision-making for the shared resources; rather, his conception of deliberative democracy in practice remains shackled to chains similar to that of the present system delegating power of decision-making to the representatives mostly made up of unaccountable political elites and technocrats. Based on our categorisation, the learning process aiming to be activated through the deliberative approach to democracy advocated by Habermas (Hadizadeh Esfahani, 2013; Holden, 2008; Evans, 2005) is community-based reflective learning (top row on the second column of Figure 1). Here, development subjects are turned into mere absorbers of the learning that has happened for politicians, social scientists, philosophers, and public figures. We believe this to be one of the major shortcomings of the deliberative democracy prescriptions, suggesting that the process of becoming a critical-minded citizen is where the role of education becomes critical. Meaningful participation in democratic dialogue to make policy decisions needs practical skills that are acquired through the processes of learning by doing. But the asymmetry of power in any society undermines the Habermasian dialogue. In addition, opportunities of practical learning at a social level provided through mass movements such as the ones in Iran, Egypt, or Sudan are rare and, arguably, at high costs for the whole of society. Instead, we propose that collective actions in local communities, can facilitate and activate the processes of learning that would serve as a critical element of meaningful participation.

The second alternative to address the ailments of representative democracy is anarchistic, populist, or absolute democracy, that is best formulated in the work of Hardt and Negri (2005). From this perspective, democracy is described as living in a state-less and structure-less world. In this worldview, after the multitude takes over, institutions governing the society are simply turned into tools under the control of the multitude. Thinkers in this framework are primarily concerned with the ways in which hegemony, empire, and apparatuses of capture control not only the coercive power of governmentality but also consent and the governing of the self. This strategy aiming to change the key scenarios and root metaphors (described as hegemonically shaping discourses) of a society by grassroots activism,

problematising these discourses, and protesting hegemonic discourse to replace it with a socialist and liberating one serving the interests of the multitudes, mainly focuses on reflective social learning (top right corner of the matrix). Learning in their viewpoint occurs when social truths are destabilised.

Both of these left strategies remain circumscribed to assumptions specific to the global North and fail to provide a roadmap toward democracy in the South. They take the existence of organised popular groups for granted, a phenomenon that Mukand and Rodrik (2020) find peculiar to the industrialised West, hence making their path to democracy inimical to late comers. Rodrik (2016) also notes that due to the differences in structural factors that produce social forces, even when mass political mobilisation takes place in the global South, it would not necessarily revolve around economic disparities aiming to transform the relations around labour rights, taxes, and social welfare; rather the main cleavage is identity. Hence, both strategies might fall short of mobilising social forces towards institutional transformation of the political economy to fight inequality and injustice.

Towards a third alternative discourse of democracy: revisiting learning
The third alternative, on which we try to ground our work, is a pragmatic alternative of creative democracy (Lake, 2017), deep democracy (Green, 1999), and radical democracy (Bernstein, 2010) with roots in the framework of early pragmatist thinkers, notably John Dewey. Dewey develops the idea of democracy 'as an ethical form of life', as a normative consequence of humans being more than 'isolated non-social atoms' (Bernstein, 2010: 72) which closely resembles Freirean approaches to centring community in social reproduction. He was also critical of 'democratic elitism' and the argument that in the face of complexity of social problems and manipulation of individuals by mass media, 'the wisdom of an intelligentsia' which has the responsibility to make wise democratic decisions, is necessary. Moreover, he argued that whatever expert knowledge was required for understanding situations, it was not the experts who should take over the debate, and it was up to democratic citizens to judge and decide (Bernstein, 2010: 75). This again has close affinities with Freirean learnings about community knowledge and

the process of conscientisation. For Dewey (1960), the ideal of democracy was thoroughly associated with the ideal of community. It is in the 'deeply democratic community' that democracy is realised, and this is the point that justifying development relying on community-based learning ties development initiatives into pragmatic democracy. This ideal of democracy relies on the engagement of individuals in reflexive community-based problem solving and learning that is deeply rooted in emancipatory participatory methods of facilitation and community planning (Farahani and Hadizadeh Esfahani, 2020).

While the ailments of representative democracy are real and should be dealt with, the way to progress does not come from either an elitist or a populist route. Rather, the focus should be on creating space for enabling more direct community-based democracy that could provide space for reflective processes on daily practices to make way towards institutional transformation. True, meaningful dialogue that emerges from participation in collective problem solving in community-based planning is one imperative and instrumental for a non-elitist and non-populist approach to practicing deep democracy.

Ailments of the seemingly progressive community-based efforts to strengthen democracy: lessons from Tehran

After setting out our framework, below we briefly present our understanding of the entanglement of democratisation and development in tandem with reflexive participatory community-based learning in our experience in Iran.

Our major learning from the experience of Iran in this framework is that well-designed community-based learning interventions make possible dialogue - as formulated by the pragmatist and emancipatory approach - for progression in democratisation synchronised with development based on participation. Community-based learning and affiliated methods in democracy and development can facilitate the path towards democracy with more inclusive development, and development with deeper democracy. Our experience with the transformation of Razavieh city on the outskirts of

Mashhad is a telling example. In 2015, women were initially confined to traditional and religious roles with sewing machines seen as a tool to fulfil their feminine duties at home. This was the entry point for an empowerment initiation, activating a process of community-based learning that started with twenty-five women struggling to support their families' livelihoods beside the patriarchal roles assigned to them at home. Facilitators provided trainings and connected these women to markets through a community-based learning project grounded in a broader regional development programme that realised the important role that the garment industry could play in job creation in the Mashhad metropolitan Area (including Razavieh). This project, carefully designed regarding the necessary modes of learning in the specific context of Razavieh paved the way for social and political empowerment of women in this region, transforming their role in social hierarchy. After the initial intervention, these women themselves proceeded to deliver twenty workshops (with an average of four employees including men) led by women that became the core of economic life in the city. It also led to the recognition of their socio-economic role in the city, symbolised by an enormous sewing machine sculpture placed in the city's central square as the signature element of Razavieh.

Furthermore, what became evident in our experiences including in the case of Razavieh is that a clear transformational and progressive vision is needed to guide community-based learning processes. Community-based learning gets derailed from progressive goals in democratisation and development and can turn into small projects without sustainable impacts which can easily fade away. Several of these small initiatives have been carried out in Iran by international, national, and local organisations. But there is a need for broader transformational goals both at the local and societal level that guide community-based initiatives. For example, the anticolonial language of the most progressive community-based initiatives is adopted by the authoritarian quasi-governmental institutions and foundations in Iran to push monumental '*Mahroomiyat-Zodayi*' (literally meaning 'removing deprivation') projects (Karami, 2023). While defined as local projects to 'empower' poor communities in theory, they fell short of delivering sustained

results in the face of rising poverty (Salehi-Isfahani, 2022). The massive budgets appropriated to these programmes have done nothing more than foster heavy networks of patron-clientelism as they are intentionally detached from the democratic transformative aims of community-building, turning a blind eye to oppressive and disempowering processes that produce mass poverty in the Iranian society in the first place. These community-based development plans, detached from democratic goals, also contribute to the political economy that produced and reproduces poverty by massive wealth accumulation on landgrabs, corruption, and rent-seeking economic activities (Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, 2023).

We have also learned that within communities, community-based learning does not start from the community as a whole; rather it is individual transformational leaders that ignite and motivate community-based learning. The process of learning of such individual leaders (labelled as social entrepreneurs in business and business-related activities) is reflexive individual learning. The activation of individual reflexive learning processes for social entrepreneurs is closely related to activating effective community-based learning if not confused with entrepreneurial rent-seeking hedonistic business promotion. We faced an illuminating instance in a project to have street vendors recognised by the state as formal workers, benefiting from loans, insurance, and social security support. In this experience, a talented young street vendor, who called himself 'uneducated vendor' received media training and consultations from an NGO. Trying to represent the interests of street vendors in the media, he acted as a champion to neutralise the propaganda propagated by conservative urban policymakers who resisted recognising this profession (Shamsi, 2017). Nurturing the individual reflexive skills of this social entrepreneur seems much more effective than a superficially benevolent state agent or NGO advocating on behalf of the 'voiceless' marginalised community and became instrumental in triggering participative community-based learning among street vendors.

What we have learned more generally and in the face of the broader democratisation movement in Iran is that democratisation endeavours focused

on elections without community-based learning and local community empowerment are unlikely to bring about enduring and inclusive development. Rather, they most probably ignite counter-democratic populist movements and halt developmental processes for several years as Iran's experience in democratic reforms in the early 2000s and most recently, in the past six years, attest (Dabashi, 2011; Mahmoudi, 2011; Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, 2023). The discouraging results of democratisation without community-building is depicted in the experience of city council elections in Iran (Tajbakhsh, 2021). While the reformist government made it a priority to restore city councils as a means for democratic consolidation, the second city council elections became a launch pad for former president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad's, antidemocratic political career. An elitist electoral approach to democracy (based on reflective learning among elites) has led to inattention to community-based democratic life (reflexive learning among citizens). This arrangement strengthens the propensity for democratisation and development by means of dialogue behind closed doors among elites, which leads to a sense of exclusion and reactionary populist voting in turn. The recent pattern of the rise of the ultra-right in Tehran city council, a city with a population of 8.5 million, attests to this trend (Hamshahri, 2021).

Development without community-based learning and local community empowerment is unlikely to bring about democratisation. Rather, it results in decreased well-being either due to failure to stimulate growth rates necessary for institutionalisation and sustainability of developmental efforts or by the burdens of unbalanced growth: reactionary populist movements for depriving the voiceless, marginalised and under-represented communities. The failed growth resulting from distributional policies relying on various forms of reactionary politics adopted by the mass of people (by electing populists like former president Ahmadinejad) and unbalanced growth dependent on neoliberal growth-oriented policies based on adaptive (individual and societal) learning processes both stifle development (Sarzaeem, 2018).

Conclusion

The narrative of these local communities with their complicated connection to a gradualist blueprint for development and democracy in Iran based on a theory of a learning society might not seem appealing for the mainstream theorists of democracy in prestigious western academia who are fascinated by the contentious politics of the Middle East. In the face of the abyss of another Arab-Spring-style state collapse, we dare to narrate the life story of people like the 'uneducated vendor' in Iran as an alternative to adopting a de-politicised stance in doing development work in authoritarian contexts or audacious prescription of Mahammed Bouazizi (the Tunisian street vendor whose self-immolation triggered the Arab Spring uprisings) style struggle for democracy without recognising the risks we might inflict to the target society.

We argue that constant learning in different modes among different segments of society is needed to guarantee the inclusive and meaningful participation of citizens. To make interventions more effective, stable, and sustainable, pro-democracy forces and development practitioners can take advantage of a learning framework that helps improve the design of programmes towards the meaningful empowerment of society. Ailments of the present form of democracy have a direct relationship with decision-making processes behind closed doors. Those most affected by these decisions are the ones least involved in the processes of decision-making and implementation and their political participation is limited to an instance of engineered balloting. We believe the solution might lie in paying more attention to learning that could pave the way for the political participation of ever more sectors of society throughout the year, not just election day. This is where genuine sustainable solutions and innovations are nurtured, not under the shadow of benevolent top-down reformists.

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Perspectives

Teaching Macroeconomics and Political Science in Higher Education Using the Sustainable Development Goals

Maria Inmaculada Pastor-García, Ignacio Martínez-Martínez and Antonio Francisco Rodríguez-Barquero

Abstract: This article reflects on the outcomes of a three-year teaching innovation project in which Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) content was integrated into a traditional macroeconomics syllabus, and the subjects of Global Governance and Comparative Politics. The project provided training to practising university lecturers on development education and global citizenship education. By including the SDGs in teaching, the effects that certain economic and political decisions can generate in social, environmental and economic terms could be analysed. Under a humanistic approach, some economic and social trends are examined and valued considering the secondary effects that these actions produce, including generating poverty and social injustice.

The order and structure of the SDGs offer a conceptual framework that has facilitated critical analysis and understanding of the causes of inequality. In this regard, although the SDGs can be criticised as not being an effective instrument to achieve the goals for which they are designed, they are a useful reference for undergraduates and an efficient teaching resource to simultaneously comply with the delivery of subject content and introduction of development education. This teaching experience allows us to extract various reflections on the results obtained, some of which refer to the teaching activities carried out, and others on university students' perceptions monitored using a survey.

The project improved the training of the participating university lecturers, who acquired greater knowledge, skills and enhanced their teaching practice. The project demonstrated the need of the university to enhance support for sustainability, involving the entire educational community and coordinating planning that contributes to the development of sustainable academic and professional capacities.

Key words: Development Education; Global Citizenship Education; Higher Level Education; Sustainable Development Goals; Economics; Political Science.

Introduction

For decades, international initiatives have been in place for universities to enhance development education and global citizenship education (DEGCE) by integrating training in economic, social and environmental sustainability into university curricula. Key reference documents, such as the guide *Getting Started with the SDGs in Universities* (Kestin et al., 2017), give universities a leading role in achieving a culture of sustainability. As such, universities are recognised as institutions dedicated to education, research, and the creation and transmission of knowledge, which contributes directly to providing agents of change and shaping more sustainable societies.

However, recent research, such as that of Valderrama-Hernández et al. (2020), indicates that, in the case of Spain, there is still much work to be done despite advances. Accordingly, the rectors, the highest authorities representing Spanish universities, recommended incorporating transversal competences into the curricula for sustainability in university education. This is reflected in the document approved by the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities which includes the following skills:

- "Competence in the critical contextualisation of knowledge, through the linking of social, economic and environmental issues on a local and/or global level.

- Competence in the sustainable use of resources and in the prevention of negative impacts on the natural and social environments.

- Competence to participate in community processes that promote sustainability.

- Competence to apply ethical principles related to sustainability values in personal and professional behaviour" (CADEP-CRUE, 2012: 7).

On the one hand, it can be seen that more work needs to be done to introduce these contents at the university level. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly common to introduce, even unknowingly, DEGCE topics that reinforce various values in formal education, specifically under the consolidated approach of education for sustainable development (ESD), which according to UNESCO 'Empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations' (2017: 7).

DEGCE is delivered at the university level but needs more impetus. There are many reasons to justify the implementation of DEGCE in our university subjects, including SDG 4.7 which has the following aim:

"By 2030 ensure all learners acquire 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" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Under the umbrella of the SDGs, the opportunity was found to create a group of university lecturers and professors to join others who were already

working along these lines. The topics covered under the auspices of the SDGs coincide with those focused on DEGCE, thus the SDGs provide a programme of educational content to cover the key elements for understanding and addressing current global challenges.   The United Nations is the sponsor of the SDGs, giving them a great deal of visibility that should be maximised. Moreover, they attract widespread international support and offer a framework for collective action on global poverty eradication. The 2030 Agenda is a facilitating framework that has allowed for the establishment of objectives such as: enabling undergraduates to be informed, educated and committed regarding poverty and its causes, and the economic, political and social interrelationships between the global North and South; promoting values and attitudes related to solidarity, social justice and human rights; and enabling them to effectively contribute to achieving the SDGs.

This article describes the strategies for the creation of an educational innovation project that enabled the training of university lecturers to introduce the content and values of DEGCE into their subjects. It focuses on the specific case of the macroeconomics subjects taught as part of the Marketing and Market Research Degree at the University of Málaga, and the global governance and comparative politics subjects taught in several degrees at the Complutense University of Madrid. We outline how the SDGs were used as a teaching resource and describe how lecturers and university students viewed this experience. Finally, we also offer some conclusions that analyse the successful aspects, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Our approach to the 2030 Agenda: a necessary critical vision
Incorporating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into university social science teaching is an exercise that is both complex and necessary. It is complex because it involves addressing elements of a different nature: it raises epistemological questions and requires theoretical reflection with a critical perspective. It also raises methodological questions about how to develop teaching practices that enable the incorporation of content linked to the 2030 Agenda. And it is necessary because it offers a way to address the challenges we face in the social sciences (Gil, 2022).

Before going into the more applied aspects of teaching practice, we want to make some observations on the epistemological and theoretical perspective adopted in relation to the 2030 Agenda. The approach adopted assumes that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are not in themselves a sufficient mechanism to drive structural transformations. Their mere existence will not place sustainable development at the centre of the policies and actions of global society actors. For this to happen and for this agenda to be truly meaningful, a critical and transformative outlook is needed. Only in this way can the 2030 Agenda become a political framework capable of guiding critical and transformative action in relation to the current hegemonic development approach (Martínez-Osés and Martínez, 2016).

If, on the other hand, we consider the 2030 Agenda to be a 'technical recipe', we would be accepting the neoliberal framework for the reproduction of problems (McCloskey, 2019). This framework is also compatible with the 2030 Agenda, but not without a critical and transformative vision of it. Understanding teaching as a critical exercise that addresses the challenges of the current multidimensional crisis requires a multidisciplinary approach to teaching. It also requires a critical perspective on the 2030 Agenda, one that highlights the redistributive and pro-global justice character implicit in many of the SDGs and their targets, and incorporates the necessary ecological perspective on the interpretation of the challenges and goals. Moreover, a perspective that recognises the importance of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which leads to the assumption that the current situation is the result of an unequal distribution of power, opportunities and resources.

All these elements, explicitly or implicitly present in the 2030 Agenda, call for a rethinking of the different disciplines and subjects taught by the university lecturers and professors involved in the teaching innovation project: economics and political science. The more orthodox approaches traditionally presented in academia are thus called upon to be more open and rethink their own objects of study. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and

especially a critical and transformative vision of these, constitute a unique opportunity for this paradigm shift.

Creation of a working group based on an Educational Innovation Project
A programme at the University of Málaga in Andalusia, promotes Educational Innovation by bringing together professors and university lecturers. Its appeal to participants is based on the fact that it offers several incentives, both of an intellectual nature and in terms of professional development. It serves as a means to create interdisciplinary research teams, encourages research and scientific publications, provides a small amount of funding and, in addition, participants receive a certificate of participation that provides useful points for professional advancement. One of the projects approved in 2019 brought together nine university lecturers and professors from different disciplines and universities in Spain, (see Table 1).

Table 3: Interdisciplinary Group Components

University	Subject	DEGCE expert
Valencia	International Development Cooperation	Yes
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	Social Work	Yes
País Vasco	Business Organisation	Yes
Complutense de Madrid	Global Governance and Comparative Politics	Yes
Málaga	Macroeconomics	Yes
Málaga	Macroeconomics	No
Málaga	Macroeconomics	No
Málaga	Macroeconomics	No
Málaga	Microeconomics	No

All the members of the group who do not belong to the University of Málaga teach different subjects, but they all share the common characteristic of being experts or very familiar with DEGCE. In contrast, the lecturers at the University of Málaga were not familiar with this educational process, with the exception of the project coordinator who called on colleagues from the same department to be part of the intervention group, a proposal that was well received in all cases. The fact that they were close by and taught the same subject, facilitated the monitoring of the training process.

The end goal was that the working methodology and educational intervention adopted by the new trainee lecturers should emulate what the more experienced professors and lecturers in the group were already doing. That is to say, contextualising the different subjects involved to give undergraduates a sense of the socio-economic and environmental reality that surrounds them. It was also important to introduce issues related to sustainability in everyday life in order to address them later on in a permanent way and from different areas and disciplines. The SDGs were used as a vehicle to incorporate cross-cutting concepts and activities. This complemented the training of the university students involved, enabling them to become sensitised professionals, able to look at problems critically and to be equipped with the answers provided by the various disciplines. The undergraduates were exposed to aspects of reality that are not usually dealt with during teaching practice and which relate to the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

The diversity of subjects covered in the group, with different levels and timetables for each subject and faculty, meant that a certain degree of autonomy was required. Thus, from the outset, the implementation of the programme was flexible, making it easier to adapt to the specific needs of each lecturer, subject and group of undergraduates. It also meant that activities could be adjusted to the circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it has shown that, regardless of the subject taught, discussions regarding solidarity can also be incorporated into university courses.

Training for practising university lecturers
One of the first steps taken to provide training for university lecturers with little or no experience of implementing DEGCE, was to propose an initial action-research task. This involved finding experiences and teaching methodologies currently used in Spanish universities to integrate, disseminate and help achieve the delivery of the SDGs in traditional subjects. A preliminary review of the scientific literature identified a significant number of conference papers by university lecturers describing their experiences. The variety of pedagogical methodologies found and applied for this purpose was remarkable, thus facilitating the work of compiling the various methods, procedures and common practices carried out. This resulted in a synthesis of results, recommendations and conclusions drawn from these experiences.

This activity provided a better understanding of what DEGCE is, how it is implemented, in what situations and by whom, as well as its connections with the SDGs. A brief inventory was drawn up describing the most appropriate interventions in each situation. This served as a database for consultation, as well as to find out which universities are incorporating these educational practices into their teaching activities. A mapping phase was set up to find out what was already being done, and a limited research project was formally carried out that compiled methodologies used to introduce the SDGs in universities. The inventory serves both as a model and as an incentive for other lecturers to implement the SDGs.

Using the classic review methodology, we analysed the most representative experiences of thirty-nine papers from the three conferences listed in Table 2. Their proceedings were chosen as databases because they were related to educational innovation and implementation of the SDGs in Spanish universities. In turn, at the end of 2019, the result of this research was presented at the VIII University and Development Cooperation Congress held in Santiago de Compostela.

Table 4: Congress Proceedings Consulted

Congress	Celebration year
IN-RED, V National Congress on Educational Innovation and Networked Teaching (Vega Carrero, V and Vendrell Vidal, E, 2019).	2019
Research on development faced with the limits of globalisation. IV International Congress on Development Studies (Martín Lozano, J M et al., 2019).	2018
Universities and the Sustainable Development Goals. VII Universities and Cooperation Congress (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2017).	2017

This review highlighted the significant number of activities carried out in other universities, which served as a great motivation for our trainee university lecturers. It provided confidence, since the methodologies used for the DEGCE interventions were familiar to the lecturers, as in many cases the innovation consisted of making small changes to a known teaching method or the combined use of methodologies.

The search also found a wealth of recommendations for involving more actors outside the teaching environment. This helped to understand the positive impact of collaboration with other groups, provide confidence to disseminate what is being done, and to focus on working with others. Recommendations were found to create discussion groups with university teaching staff, involve institutional departments and services, as well as include non-university institutions, social organisations and other external actors that can influence the training of university students, such as organic and sustainable production companies, civil society organisations, public institutions and others.

The papers consulted also provided advice on DEGCE activities, concluding that the more practical, participatory and active they are, the more effectively they attract new participants, in addition to gaining greater recognition as transformative experiences. It was also concluded that the more time spent on DEGCE and the earlier in the university students' life the work is started, the more is achieved. It is not advisable, therefore, to wait until the final years of the degree or until internships begin to intervene.

Adapting and introducing the SDGs in each subject area
The project explored the links between the content of each subject and the SDGs and their targets so that a critical analysis could be introduced at the appropriate time. This task became part of the undergraduates' assessment, as this approach complemented, contrasted, or reinforced the knowledge traditionally acquired in the subjects in question.

In general, and not only for the case study presented in this article, but it is also relatively easy to refer to different SDGs in microeconomics, macroeconomics or political science subjects. The possibilities for including them are wide-ranging. Among others, we could give the example of microeconomics, where externalities are studied, i.e. those activities that once carried out can affect others, such as the production of emissions or pollution. Microeconomics analyses different solutions from an economic point of view, but it can also introduce concepts in which the goals and SDGs are not met. The emission of polluting waste can undermine the achievement of the first SDG, making those affected more vulnerable and reduce their average income. It can affect the third and sixth SDGs if the discharge harms health, wellbeing, and clean water, and it affects the tenth SDG because it can increase inequalities, among other distortions. In this way, connections and responses emerge that are simultaneously part of the economic sphere and the field of sustainability. Thus, terms such as the circular economy, green economy or degrowth make sense, as these alternative economies also provide solutions. This intersection makes it easier to understand the link between economic disciplines and the SDGs, which are aimed at fulfilling human rights, the same goal as that of DEGCE, which is also based on the protection of human rights.

In economics, it is argued that sustained growth in production achieves healthy economic rates, but this is challenged by the biophysical limits of our planet. When we come to this issue in the subject, it creates an opportunity for undergraduates to explore the possibility of achieving sustainable economic growth while using fewer resources. Thus, concepts such as improving productivity and technology, promoting a greater supply of services rather than goods, or repairing obsolete products so that they can be reused, make sense. It also makes sense to raise awareness among people of the need to set sustainable targets, since they are the ones who create the demand. This makes it easier to understand that companies can change consumer behaviour according to their values, and that consumers can demand changes from companies. In this brief process, we can talk about the ninth, eleventh, twelfth, fifteenth and other SDGs. The SDGs offer the opportunity to move freely between them, to go through them and address the different issues they contain because they all form a single whole. This is an advantage because the SDGs make it easier to implement DEGCE issues.

It does not take long to add a critical analysis that compares the content of these subjects with the SDGs, increasing the elements of judgement that help to better understand the subject, while raising awareness and educating university students on the issues that have concerned the DEGCE.

In macroeconomics, there is a central topic of study: the labour market, where people are considered as factors of production, capable of generating greater output and wealth. It relates directly to the eighth SDG: 'Decent Work and Economic Growth'. Traditionally, models of labour market functioning are studied based on the assumption that wages can be varied flexibly, ignoring the social effects this could generate for workers. But no distinction is made about different human natures and needs. This is an opportunity to draw attention to the fifth and tenth SDGs, which aim to reduce inequalities, whether gender-based or otherwise. This topic also makes it easier to talk about immigration as a phenomenon that increases the host country's wealth. An immigrant, regardless of whether he or she joins the

labour market or not, consumes. To satisfy this consumption, more must be produced, and this creates new jobs. From an economic perspective, there is no room for hate speech, xenophobia or racism, as immigrants are a source of wealth and, through remittances, contribute to development in their country of origin and host country. But the question also arises: what causes migratory flows? We find that many of the answers lie in the fact that it is very difficult to achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda in their country of origin.

Once the initial phases of the pandemic had passed and normality had resumed in the 2021-22 academic year, other activities for undergraduates could be organised. In particular, they were asked to work in teams for the macroeconomics course and to write an essay that began by explaining what the SDGs are, their origin and other general aspects, followed by a more in-depth exploration and analysis. In addition, the group was required to connect a specific goal or target of their choice with specific aspects of the subject, provided that they were different from those considered to date. This exercise can be asked of university students, as there is a wealth of information on the SDGs, readily available examples and facilities for self-learning. There was a day set aside for each group to present their ideas to their classmates. This day constituted a real immersion in the 2030 Agenda, providing new insights and nurturing new interconnections between the SDGs and the subject. The activity was awarded marks for the subject, and this was an incentive that ensured the students worked harder. As a result, new points of view were obtained which offered the opportunity for fresh debates and further learning. Marks were based on originality, reliability, significance of the findings and presentation.

Another exercise which was voluntary but still awarded marks asked university students to work individually to identify an observable event where companies or institutions took action towards the achievement of the SDGs. Thanks to this exercise, participants learned about the Global Compact - a UN initiative that is leading the way in corporate sustainability across the world - and through which they obtained a large pool of real examples of companies' actions.

Outside the classroom environment, the university building was decorated with SDG logos, which continued to be displayed afterwards. Several videos were also played cyclically in the foyer of various faculties for weeks, showing the university students associating themselves with different SDGs. Part of the project budget was used for this, with the involvement and support of the Dean's staff of the faculties involved, to whom we would like to express our gratitude. The aim of putting up eye-catching posters and videos outside the classrooms was to arouse the interest of other undergraduates who share spaces in these faculties and of the educational community in general.

Discussion

University students' perception of the experience
By means of an online survey carried out in June 2022 with 211 macroeconomics undergraduates in the University of Málaga, we assessed the students' perception of the experience of incorporating the SDGs into the subject. The questions and their answers are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4: University student perception survey on the inclusion of the SDGs in macroeconomics
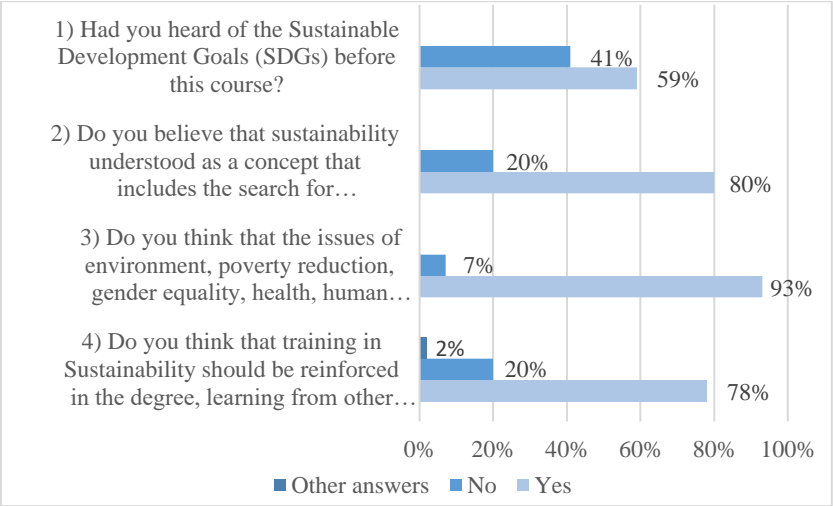
Source: Authors' elaboration based on respondents' data.

When asked if they had heard of the SDGs before this academic year, more than half said 'yes'. When asked the same question three years earlier, in the 2019 academic year, only thirty-six per cent of the undergraduates surveyed said they knew about them. It could be interpreted that word of mouth, knowing that academic activities are being carried out with the SDGs, the dissemination work with posters and videos displayed in the common areas of the faculties, has contributed to making the concept known or, at least, they are more familiar with the image and symbols displayed and what they represent. In the second question, the answer is largely affirmative, but twenty per cent are sceptical, choosing the answer given as an alternative: 'No, I think it is far from becoming a reality, it is a utopia'.

When asked whether they believe that the issues addressed in the SDGs are important for their current education and future professional

practice, the majority answered 'yes', but seven per cent chose the negative option offered in the survey, which was as follows: 'No, I think they are issues that correspond to personal ideological and not professional reflections, such as religious beliefs or political affinities'. For this small percentage of respondents, our interpretation is that the topics included in the SDGs are considered to be alien to the training and professional sphere. In the fourth and final question, a large proportion of respondents believed that this type of training should be reinforced in the degree, but twenty per cent stated that it is not necessary and that seeing it in a single subject is sufficient. A third option was given as an answer, chosen by two per cent of the undergraduates, who considered that these topics should not be included in any subject of the degree.

University lecturers' perception of the experience

Among the difficulties encountered, whether within the group itself or other complexities of external origin and which may require support, are the following: despite the diversity of the teaching staff and subjects involved, the cross-cutting implementation of content and values that comprise the DEGCE, was successful in contextualising the SDGs in each subject. Among the less experienced members of the group, it was found that this teaching activity may initially have seemed contrived and required high levels of knowledge and experience to be integrated in a smoother and more natural way, although once trained, they did not find it difficult to introduce DEGCE into the subject. With this activity, a trend has been set, and although the project was initially scheduled for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, it continues to be implemented today, even without the sponsorship that prompted it. Thus, we can affirm that university lecturers who have been trained, are sensitised, and introduce DEGCE into their teaching because of personal motivation and because better academic results were observed. As Laurie et al. (2016) point out, introducing DEGCE and its questions into a subject brings quality to education, strengthens students' critical thinking and their ability to reflect, debate, approach and seek solutions from different perspectives, as well as providing better levels of knowledge of the subject, which they can use as a tool to address global problems.

In faculties where only one subject of the degree course introduces the SDGs, other activities and subjects dealing with these issues were needed in order to standardise these contents and prevent the entire load from being concentrated in one or two subjects. Another measure was adopted to strengthen administrative aspects and based on the aforementioned document that university authorities use to promote sustainability competences in the teaching guides of Spanish universities (CADEP-CRUE, 2012), so the teaching approach adopted, in which the SDGs are introduced, was made explicit in the teaching guides. Initially it sparked debate and raised concern among some lecturers as to whether including these terms could be interpreted as an ideological position or a personal conviction.

The SDGs include a complex range of social, economic and environmental challenges, and it is essential that future university-trained professionals are able to address these challenges and understand how their work can contribute to improving the socio-economic and environmental quality of their surroundings. For these reasons, the support of the university institution as a trainer of the educational community in general is necessary so that, in turn, it can contribute to the development of the academic and professional skills of university students.

Conclusions

The aim of the Educational Innovation Project presented in this article was to train practising university lecturers to introduce DEGCE through their subjects, incorporating the SDGs in a cross-cutting way in various subjects and Spanish universities in a coordinated manner. It contextualised and established a dialogue of all the contents of each of the subjects involved with the challenges of sustainability. At the same time, university student training was complemented, generating critical analysis, reflections, proposals and actions, in order to achieve professionals who are aware of and committed to aspects of reality that are not usually considered in the teaching practice, and which belong to the three dimensions of sustainable development; economic, social and environmental.

Moreover, it can be affirmed that the desired results have been achieved in the training of university lecturers who were able to actively implement DEGCE content using the SDGs as a tool. In several faculties that have taken part in the Educational Innovation Project, all undergraduates have benefited in at least one subject and for at least one academic year. According to a survey carried out in June 2022, shown in Figure 1, it is clear that, with some exceptions, the student body is satisfied with and values this additional training. However, it is a challenge for professors that a small proportion of them stop seeing the achievement of better levels of sustainability as a utopia, to understand that it can be useful for their professional training, or that these issues are seen as values that have a place in the university environment.

The Educational Innovation Project has carried out methodological and practical proposals that promote integral development in university students, in aspects such as social justice, diversity, autonomy and participation in solidarity actions and development cooperation projects. This, as well as supporting initiatives that respond to improvements in problematic situations, and that facilitate undergraduate self-knowledge. The lecturers who took part in this Educational Innovation Project have received training, that has been strongly supported by other more experienced lecturers and professors. In-service university lecturers have been trained using methods that are highly familiar to them, such as small research projects and meetings at specific congresses where there are other experts in DEGCE. Furthermore, multidisciplinary and inter-university coordination has been promoted, making it easier for inexperienced lecturers to gain access to support.

The SDGs are the supporting conceptual framework that, while it is accepted that they may have their criticisms, helps to implement DEGCE content, as it brings together the most important issues in terms of sustainability and triggers various analyses. In addition, the generally accepted view that the SDGs movement, its brand, and the prestige of the institution that promotes them, the United Nations, has helped to ensure that in the poster and video exhibitions displayed in faculties they are seen as natural and are

generally accepted, which contributes to normalising the presence of solidarity concepts in the university environment.

A reward and recognition system have proven to be important, both for undergraduates and lecturers, as it is a powerful stimulus that attracts and increases interest in the task. University students received points for the teamwork related to the SDGs, and the lecturer received points counting towards their career advancement by participating in the Educational Innovation Project. This has ensured the training of the university students; also, initially attracted the lecturer to participate in the project. The lecturers, once they have been trained in DEGCE, then continue to implement this way of teaching, even if they no longer receive points, because of personal motivation and because they observed better academic results for their undergraduates.

For future iterations of the programme, both internal improvements and external support would be needed. This requires increasing knowledge among members of the teaching staff so they can put this into their teaching practice with greater skill and ease. To achieve this, the support of the university institution would be positive, favouring and increasing the channels for non-curricular education, training the educational community in general, so that in a global and homogeneous way it contributes to the development of academic and professional skills in sustainability issues. However, it would also be helpful if the university institution could provide more in-depth support to faculties implementing DEGCE through the SDGs by, for example, relaxing bureaucratic structures, standardising the cross-cutting inclusion of SDG content and values, adding sustainability competencies in teaching guides, and establishing more strategies that involve the teaching staff. In addition, other activities and subjects that deal with these issues could be included to prevent the entire load from being concentrated in one or two subjects of the degree course, as it may be ineffective to provide university students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand and address the SDGs in a separate and isolated way.

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Viewpoint

Educators and Critical Pedagogy: An Antidote to Authoritarianism

Henry A. Giroux and William Paul

The world in which we live increasingly resembles a dystopian novel. The dream of a more democratic world is diminishing as the global assault on democracy expands. The world is awash in the discourse of white supremacy, Christian nationalism, a culture of lies, and a contempt for democracy. Since the 1980s, there has been an unyielding attack on the social contract, the common good, public goods, and government responsibility. The dark clouds of economic, political, and educational fundamentalism are with us once again. Politics is now driven by big money, civic culture is collapsing, and a form of predatory capitalism (or what can be called neoliberalism) continues to wage war on the welfare state, public goods and the social contract (Giroux, 2019).

Neoliberalism maintains that the market should govern not just the economy but all aspects of society (Piketty, 2022). It concentrates wealth in the hands of a financial elite and elevates unchecked self-interest, self-help, deregulation, and privatisation to the governing principles of society. Under neoliberalism, everything is for sale and the only obligation of citizenship is consumerism. At the same time, it ignores basic human needs such as health care, food security, decent wages, and quality education. Neoliberalism views government as the enemy of the market, limits society to the realm of the family and individuals, embraces a fixed hedonism, and challenges the very idea of the public good. Under neoliberalism, all problems are personal and individual, making it almost impossible to translate private troubles into wider systemic considerations.

We live in an age when economic activity is divorced from social costs, while policies that produce racial cleansing, environmental destruction, militarism, and staggering inequality have become defining features of everyday life and established modes of governance. Clearly, there is a need to raise fundamental questions about the role of education in a time of impending tyranny. Or, to put it another way, what are the obligations of education to democracy itself? That is, how can education work to reclaim a notion of democracy in which matters of social justice, freedom and equality become fundamental features of learning to live with dignity in a democracy?

A pedagogy of repression
The growing authoritarianism in the United States (US) and a number of other countries led largely by far-right politicians has revealed, in all its ugliness, the death-producing mechanisms of white supremacy, systemic inequality, censorship, a culture of cruelty, and an increasingly dangerous assault on public and higher education. The threat of authoritarianism has become more dangerous than ever.

All of this is spectacularly illustrated by Florida Governor, Ron DeSantis, who has folded religious, economic and political fundamentalism into what may only cynically be called 'patriotic education'. It is the antithesis of any viable and democratic form of education as it promotes the banning of books, the disparagement of critical race theory and requires educators to sign what amounts to loyalty oaths, while forcing them to post their syllabus online. DeSantis has also instituted legislation that restricts tenure and allows students to film faculty classes without consent and much more. He has enacted right-wing policies that attack race, class, gender and identity. At the heart of DeSantis's policies is a fundamental attack on thinking, questioning, being informed and, thus, enabling students and others to be able to hold those in power to account for their actions. This is a pedagogy of repression and propaganda that wallows in deception and cover up - all justified by DeSantis' bogus claims that Florida schools have become 'socialism factories' (Atterbury, 2022), and that students need not be exposed to information that makes them uncomfortable.

As extreme as this might appear, experiences in the US should serve as a warning to educators and others across Canada who work to preserve public goods. The same rules apply here, as does the same political calculus whose purpose is nothing broader than preserving a state of neoliberal and authoritarian hegemony. In June 2019, the anti-immigration Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) passed Bill 21, An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State, which barred educators and other public sector workers in Québec from wearing clothing, symbols, jewelry or other items that might be construed as a religious symbol (National Assembly of Québec, 2019). The law was struck down by Québec Superior Court because it violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, 1982) but CAQ Premier François Legault simply overrode the decision by applying the 'notwithstanding clause', section 33 of the Charter, enshrined to allow premiers to ignore fundamental rights (Bowal, Czaikowski and Zablocki, 2020). He recently used the same clause to shut down debate around Bill 96 that promotes French language nationalism.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford faced a similar bump when his government passed the perversely titled Protecting Ontario Elections Act (2021). Its main purpose was to make it easier for his Progressive Conservative Party to collect donations while restricting third party groups from spending money to oppose its policies. Aimed primarily at bothersome teachers' unions, this law too was struck down by the Ontario Superior Court until Ford used the 'notwithstanding clause' to ensure that opposition could continue to be restricted in Ontario. Ford has had plenty of experience disrupting and controlling participation in government, cutting Toronto City Council from 47 to 25 seats as soon as his government was elected in 2018. In the summer of 2022 with no discussion, he invoked Bill 3, Strong Mayors Building Homes Act (2022) which arbitrarily gives strong mayor powers to Ottawa and Toronto so that they can rule more freely - with an eye to provincial priorities (Kelpin, 2022).

There is a lot we can learn from Doug Ford about education's slide to the right; his alleged worker populism belies his actions. Back in 2018, when it suited his political needs to paint the ruling Liberal Party in a bad light, he decried what he called the 'sex curriculum based on ideology' - using proper names for body parts and acknowledging different sexual identities. Ford got into bed with extreme social conservatives like Charles McVety who opposed funding gay pride parades and discussing homosexuality in schools, along with critical race theory opponent Tanya Granic Allen (Cantin-Nantel, 2022) whom Ford dumped as a candidate after she became a liability saying she 'almost vomits in disbelief' at the thought of gay marriage. As soon as the Conservatives came into office, they disbanded a curriculum writing team for Indigenous studies struck in response to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to change the way young Canadians are taught about Indigenous peoples. It was a slap in the face to these educators who had been revising the Ontario curriculum to reflect reality rather than the mythology we once learned as history in schools.

Governments veering towards authoritarianism cleave to a mythological past. This is about more than whitewashing history; it is about a form of racial cleansing not unlike what took place in earlier authoritarian regimes in states like Germany, South Africa and the US. For example, in Spring 2022, Conservative Education Minister, Stephen Lecce had language removed from a science and technology curriculum revision that would have students 'explore real world issues by connecting Indigenous sciences and technologies and Western science and technology' (Alphonso, 2022). In September 2022, Lecce struck another chord for mythical magical thinking after the death of Queen Elizabeth when he learned that one board wanted to ease off on the celebration of her life to spare families who had suffered under British colonialism. His office issued a diktat that schools should 'ensure that the day's activities include learning about the many contributions the Queen made to our province, country and Commonwealth, and the accession of King Charles III to the Throne' (Teotonio and Rushowy, 2022). Once again, historical amnesia functions as a basis for a form of social and political amnesia, all of which amounts to a form of manufactured ignorance.

Over their first four years in power, Ford's Conservatives offered up a master class in neoliberal government: defund basic services before people have time to organise opposition, degrade them so they don't work, demonise progressive people like public servants who complain about it and then 'solve' the resulting problems by privatising everything in sight. In education, that has meant continuous cuts to the point that school boards have dipped into their own reserve funds to cover pandemic-related costs. Since 2017-2018, per-pupil spending has dropped by $800 according to Ricardo Tranjan of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA, 2022). In 2019-20, the Tories increased class sizes in order to cut thousands of teachers and rationalise the system. To the benefit of private firms like McKinsey & Company, the Tories brought in mandatory e-learning, anathema to meaningful education (Farhadi, 2021). They have left over 53,000 students with autism waiting for treatment and have cut special education funding.

The public good, overall, is not nearly as important as the ideology of profit-taking, low taxes and keeping political friends happy. Patriotic frenzy joins with acts of censorship and pedagogical repression in order to weaken the foundation of any democracy: an informed and critical citizenry. Neoliberals, like Doug Ford and others who preceded him made it plain time and again, that education is about training. He made this absolutely clear during the last leaders debate before the election in June 2022:

> "…the purpose of our education system - to make sure we prepare the kids for the jobs (sic) when they get out of school - jobs of the future… and we changed the curriculum to make sure we focused on financial literacy" (TV Ontario, 2022).

Civic ignorance is just fine and so is history based in myth. Hard critical thinking has no place here - just settle back and hope for jobs that may or may not exist and be good consumers.

At work here is a pedagogy of repression and conformity, rooted in a reactionary instrumentalism that decries public schools as a laboratory for educating young people as critical citizens. There is also a notion of education that increasingly resembles a corporate and consumerist logic; an ideology endemic to fast-food chains and the mall.

Critical pedagogy

Given the current crisis of politics, agency, history, and memory, educators need a new political and pedagogical language for addressing the changing contexts and issues facing a world in which anti-democratic forces draw upon an unprecedented convergence of resources - financial, cultural, political, economic, scientific, military, and technological - to exercise powerful and diverse forms of control. If educators and others are to counter the forces of market fundamentalism and white supremacy, it is crucial to develop educational approaches that reject a collapse of the distinction between market liberties and civil liberties, a market economy and a market society. It is also crucial to make visible and attack all attempts to turn public education into white supremacy factories that erase history, degrade LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and students of colour, and define any talk about racism, equality, and social justice as un-American or unpatriotic.

In this instance, critical pedagogy becomes a political and moral practice in the fight to revive civic literacy, civic culture, and a notion of shared and engaged citizenship (Giroux, 2020). Politics loses its emancipatory possibilities if it cannot provide the educational conditions for enabling students and others to think against the grain, take risks, and realise themselves as informed, critical, and engaged individuals. At the very least, critical pedagogy proposes that education is a form of political intervention in the world and is capable of creating the possibilities for social transformation. Rather than viewing teaching as a technical practice, critical pedagogy, in the broadest terms, is a moral and political practice premised on the assumption that learning is not about processing received knowledge but about actually transforming it as part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice.

You can see this thinking in significant efforts on the part of educators across Canada. The long-known but suppressed horrors of Canada's Indigenous residential schools have given rise to compelling work. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation during the week leading up to 2022's Orange Shirt Day focused on remembering the children forced into residential schools, losing their language, homes and families and the life-learning that should have accompanied them. The First Nations Métis and Inuit Association of Ontario (FNMIEAO) has a powerful curriculum aimed at demystifying First Nations histories. One of the units, 'Who We Are', describes people and their connections within the Kitchinuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation, Chapleau Cree First Nation along with language of the Oneida clan. Co-chair Jodie Williams is one of those whose suggestions about Indigenous knowledge were deleted from the final draft of the Ministry's revised science and technology curriculum (Paul, 2022).

The Orange Shirt Society (OSS), led by Phyllis Webstad, whose residential school experience gave rise to Orange Shirt Day, offers a curriculum developed by Alberta teacher Robin Drinkwater that presses students to look critically at Canadian history, rather than accept at face value whatever comes from texts. It combines current affairs and history with literature to help young people grasp the effects of abusive, hostile residential schools on the children who attended them, their families and communities as well as Canada as a whole. The curriculum rests on a dual pedagogy of critical study combined with Indigenous ways of knowing, such as the talking circle which places equal value on the speaker and listener - a concept in short supply today.

Toronto teachers, Tiffany Barrett, D. Tyler Robinson, Remy Basu and Kiersten Wynter developed the high school course, 'Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism' (Barret, Robinson, Basu and Wynter, 2021). It proceeds from the idea that talking about white supremacy is more than just naming obviously racist Ku Klux Klansmen, Proud Boys and so on, but teaching students how

sociologists, historians and other academics have promulgated the myth that white is the default normal. They teach about the historical effects of this default normal running through everything from slavery to the Black Lives Matter movement as well as its pervasive influence in current media. The course gives students language like 'privilege', 'micro-aggression' and similar terms to help them put words to hard-to-define perceptions. Their unit on critical race theory asks fundamental questions: where racism first occurs, why this construct was developed and how enslavement was connected to imperialism and capitalism.

The essential thread that runs through these approaches to critical pedagogy is their focus, not on individualised problems, personal successes against overwhelming odds and aspirations, but on what groups have done and may continue to do in order to deal with circumstances facing their communities. At stake here is a project and vision that embraces notions of solidarity, collective work and struggle, and a vision that is as empowering as it is emancipatory. Critical pedagogy is not aimed at improving students' job chances and greater power to consume and control, but at becoming skilled citizens.

This is not to suggest that learning work skills is not important, but to insist that education is about more than learning such skills. Education reduced to learning work skills functions as a pedagogical coma. It undermines the moral imagination while diminishing any viable notion of political agency. On the contrary, critical pedagogy calls on young people to think, doubt, question, and expand their critical capacities to be reflective about themselves, others, and the larger world. All forms of critical education acknowledge that education is never neutral and constitutes an important struggle over identity, knowledge, authority, power, and what it means to live in a world with deadening inequalities, social injustices, and repressive forms of governing. Critical pedagogy takes seriously what it means to educate young people to learn how to govern, not merely be governed.

Teachers as public intellectuals

Educators and other cultural workers bear an enormous responsibility as public intellectuals in order to sustain and expand the values, knowledge, modes of thinking and identities crucial to bringing democratic political culture back to life. Teachers need to assume the role of citizen educators, acutely aware of the school and their roles and responsibilities to guide young people to be informed, active, creative, and socially responsible members of society and the larger world. They have a responsibility to educate young people to be not only knowledgeable and critically informed, but also compassionate and caring, refusing to allow the spark of justice to go dead in themselves and the larger society (Giroux, 2022).

As public intellectuals, educators must have control over the conditions of their labour, affirm and engage student experience, connect learning to social problems that bear down on the lives of young people, and inspire young people to take risks and combine a faith in reason, moral courage, and the power of justice, compassion for others and democracy itself. Teachers must take active responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach and what the larger goals are for which they are striving. This means that they must take a responsible role in shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling. That much has been evident over the past four years as educators fought with an Ontario government dedicated to narrowing education, increasing class sizes and leaving schools themselves to break down around the students in them.

Their role as public intellectuals is a huge undertaking calling on them to look at their work as a political, civic and ethical practice that combines critical reflection and action as part of a struggle to overcome economic, political and social injustices. Educators, themselves, are following this example when they push their unions beyond traditional bargaining to demand more inclusive curricula, support and conditions for their students to overcome the rapidly increasing disparities in their chances for active engagement in their lives. A critical pedagogical practice does not transfer knowledge but creates the possibilities for its production, analysis and use. Without succumbing to a

kind of rigid dogmatism, teachers should provide the pedagogical conditions for students to bear witness to history, their own actions and the mechanisms that drive the larger social order so that they can imagine the inseparable connection between the human condition and the ethical basis of our existence.

It means:

- Teaching students how to hold power accountable while learning how to govern and develop a responsibility to others and a respect for civic life. This also means treating students as critical agents with an active voice in their learning experiences.

- Making knowledge problematic - open to debate and in doing so, helping students engage in critical and thoughtful dialogue.

- Enabling students to make connections, develop a historical consciousness, and uncover truths hiding in the shadows of lies, misrepresentations, and historical amnesia. At the very least, this would suggest teaching students how to translate private issues into larger systemic concerns, especially at a time when societal problems are individualised and treated as personal issues.

- Central to our concerns is educating students to not only be critical consumers of knowledge but also producers of knowledge and culture. In part, this opens up a more expansive notion of literacy/literacies regarding print culture, visual culture, digital culture, and other domains of knowledge making.

- Educators should teach students how to bridge the gap between history and the present, learning and everyday life, acts of moral and political courage, and the connection between power, self-determination, and knowledge while also teaching them both a language of critique and a language of possibility.

- Finally, it is crucial to teach students to view learning as a life-long process and to embrace their individual lives and their connections with others as a life-long endeavour.

Educators are doing their jobs as public intellectuals when they teach their students to fact check articles about 2021's truckers' convoy in Ottawa, (Paul, 2022) when they give them the language they need to understand and express their experiences with racism and homophobia or show them how genocide of Indigenous peoples is tied to colonial economic interests. Educators are doing this important intellectual work with primary level students when they take the time to help them ask questions and do a deep research dive into the 'real stuff of the world' as they understand it (Martell and MacIntosh, 2019). The process is as varied as the children who engage in it.

The pedagogical starting point is not the isolated student removed from the historical and cultural forces that bear down on their lives but individuals in their various cultural, class, racial and historical contexts, along with the particularity of their diverse problems, hopes, and dreams. It is crucial to remember that education should be seen as a public good, allowing students to realise themselves as critical citizens while creating conditions to enable them to speak, write, and act from a position of agency and empowerment.

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CUBA'S HUMAN-CENTRED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FOR THE GLOBAL NORTH

STEPHEN MCCLOSKEY

Introduction

For more than sixty years, Cuba has been a source of political and ideological contestation from the height of Cold War tension during the Cuban missile crisis to the relentless efforts by the United States (US) to derail its socialist revolution (Bolender, 2010). Cuba's socialism was ideologically bracketed by Western powers with the satellite states of the former Soviet Union fully expected to implode at the end of the Cold War. While the collapse of the Soviet Union meant severe economic contraction for Cuba with an eighty per cent drop in imports and exports, and a shrinking of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by a staggering thirty-five per cent, the country survived through belt-tightening and innovation such as the introduction of organic farming and use of biomass as an energy source. As Helen Yaffe (2020a) suggests:

> "decisions made in a period of crisis and isolation from the late 1980s shaped Cuba into the twenty-first century in the realms of development strategy, medical science, energy, ecology and the environment, and in culture and education".

Perhaps the key factor in the endurance of the Cuban revolution, again under-estimated by the US and its allies, has been the support of the Cuban people for the revolution and the sacrifices they made particularly during the 'Special Period in Time of Peace' introduced in 1991 following the economic crisis. The Cuban revolution could not have triumphed in 1959 without their support and could not have endured for over sixty years without their activism. As Paulo Freire said in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

"Without the communion which engenders true cooperation, the Cuban people would have been mere objects of the revolutionary activity of the men of the Sierra Maestra, and as objects, their adherence would have been impossible" (Freire, 2005: 171).

This article reflects on some of the key development milestones achieved by Cuba over the past sixty years from the 1961-62 literacy campaign to its successful production of home-grown COVID-19 vaccines and rolling out of a vaccination programme. As Helen Yaffe (2020b) asks:

"Just how can a small, Caribbean island, underdeveloped by centuries of colonialism and imperialism, and subject to punitive, extra-territorial sanctions by the United States for 60 years, have so much to offer the world?".

A follow-up question could be why have countries in the global North and the international development and development education sectors in Ireland, Europe and elsewhere been so slow to learn from Cuba's developmental achievements? Cuba's ground-breaking work in health and education from a small economic base, shrunken further by a sixty-year-old US blockade, suggests that exponential growth is not essential to maintaining a developmental state. What is required is the political will to prioritise social needs rather than objectivise humans as subservient to the demands of the market economy. The article begins with an assessment of the impact of the US blockade on Cuba and argues that this has not prevented Cuba from achieving high level development indicators.

The US blockade of Cuba
The most concerted and sustained effort by the US to topple the Cuban revolution has been Washington's 'Embargo on All Trade with Cuba' - Proclamation 3447 – signed into law on 3 February 1962 by President John F. Kennedy. The embargo or blockade had the aim of 'isolating the present Government of Cuba and thereby reducing the threat posed by its alignment with the communist powers' (The American Presidency Project, 2022). This

anachronistic relic of the Cold War continues to inform US policy with Cuba, as President Biden, following the lead of his predecessor Donald Trump, has kept Cuba on Washington's list of 'state sponsors of terrorism'. Cuba was accused of 'repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism in granting safe harbour to terrorists' (Philips, 2021); this is despite President Obama's decision to lift this designation in 2015 and ease the two countries toward greater diplomatic normalisation (DeYoung, 2015).

Cuba estimates the cumulative economic damage caused by the US blockade at $154.22 billion and continues to suffer 'devastating international financial restrictions' with most Western banks refusing to process transactions with Cuba because of the blockade's extra-territorial reach (UN, 2022; Benjamin and Bannan, 2022). The irony for Washington is that despite the aggression of its blockade and its stated aim of Cuban isolation, it is the US that faces an annual humiliation in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) when a resolution titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba', is voted on by members. The latest vote, on 3 November 2022, was the thirtieth time this resolution has been supported by the UNGA, and saw 185 countries vote in favour of ending the blockade and only two, the US and Israel, vote against with two abstentions (UN, 2022).

Despite the economic hardship suffered every day by Cuban citizens as a result of the blockade the Trump administration added 200 restrictions on economic activity between the US and Cuba including remittances sent by Cuban-Americans to relatives living in the island (Augustin, 2020). These restrictions have impacted on trade, banking, tourism and travel which are designed to maximise internal pressure on the Cuban government and secure the support of the 1.5 million Cuban-Americans in Florida, a key swing state in US elections (Ibid). Biden's decision not to remove Cuba from Washington's 'state sponsors of terrorism' list is likely to represent a play for those same votes, placing political efficacy over the humanitarian needs of Cuban citizens. During the pandemic, Cuba's economic squeeze intensified as tourism was choked off by necessity and the island was denied vital hard

currency to buy personal protective equipment (PPE) and medicines. A key element of the US blockade, enshrined in the Cuban Democracy Act (1992), is its extra-territoriality enabling the US to sanction third parties that trade with Cuba (Gordon, 2014: 66). In 2015, for example, the French international banking group, BNP Paribas, agreed to a record $9bn (£5.1bn) settlement with US prosecutors over allegations of trade sanction violations with Sudan, Iran and Cuba (Raymond, 2015).

Marc Bossuyt, from the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, found that the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, attempted to turn 'a unilateral embargo into a multilateral embargo through coercive measures, the only effect of which will be to deepen further the suffering of the Cuban people and increase the violation of their human rights' (Bossuyt, 2000). Amnesty International has found that the US government is 'acting contrary to the Charter of the United Nations by restricting the direct import of medicine and medical equipment and supplies, and by imposing those restrictions on companies operating in third countries' (Amnesty International, 2009: 20). It adds that the US should take 'the necessary steps towards lifting the economic, financial and trade embargo against Cuba' (Ibid).

Cuba's development achievements

According to UN data for 2021, the United States has a mean life expectancy at birth for males and females of 78.8 years, has GDP per capita of $65,133 and spends 19.9 per cent of GDP on healthcare (UN Data, 2022). Cuba has a very similar mean life expectancy of 78.7 with a GDP per capita of $9,295 and spends 11.2 per cent of GDP on healthcare (Ibid). By point of reference, Costa Rica has a mean life expectancy at birth of 80.0 years with a GDP per capita of $12,238 and spends 7.6 per cent of GDP on healthcare (Ibid). These statistics suggest that a high GDP per capita is not a necessary guarantor of a high life expectancy. Granted, life expectancy tells us very little about the quality of life enjoyed by citizens, but statistics from the US Census Bureau for 2021 showed that 11.6 per cent of Americans, or 37.9 million people, were living in poverty, nearly twenty per cent of whom were Black (US Census Bureau, 2022). If we add into this statistical mix that Cuba produces 2.5 carbon dioxide (CO_2)

emissions per capita (tonnes) compared to 16.6 CO_2 emissions per capita (tonnes) in the US (UNDP, 2020) then we can see that the high-growth model of development pursued by high income countries like the US comes at an environmental cost without creating social and economic equality (UNDP, 2020). Fitz (2022), for example, found that between 2019 and 2021, encompassing the worst impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, life expectancy in the US plunged almost three years while for Cuba it edged up 0.2 years.

The decline in US life expectancy can largely be attributed to the pandemic and a private health system based on profit, rather than offered as a public service. In Cuba, healthcare is offered to all citizens as a fundamental human right and free at the point of delivery. The contrasting approaches to healthcare resulted in Cuba having eighty-seven COVID-19 deaths by 21 July 2020, when the US had experienced 140,300 (Fitz, 2022). While the US population is thirty times that of Cuba, it had 1,613 times as many COVID deaths (Ibid). This was the result of national planning by the Cuban Ministry of Health built upon six decades of health infrastructure and good practice. By way of example the table below shows the number of Cuban doctors per 1,000 people compared to selected countries and regions. It illustrates the value of prioritising social values and public need rather than modelling the economic system on endless cycles of growth that serve no purpose other than sustaining elite consumption at an enormous ecological cost (Bhalla, 2022).

Table 5: Physicians per 1,000 people (Cuba and selected countries and regions)

Country	Most recent year	Most recent value
Cuba	2018	8.4
China	2017	2.0
East Asia and Pacific	2017	1.7
Euro area	2017	5.5
Germany	2018	4.3
India	2019	0.9
Ireland	2019	3.4
Latin America and Caribbean	2017	3.0
Middle-East North Africa	2017	1.4
Russia	2018	4.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	2017	0.2
Switzerland	2018	4.3
United Kingdom	2019	5.8
United States	2018	2.6

Source: The World Bank (2022).

Cuba's COVID-19 response

Between March 2020 when Cuba initiated its COVID-19 vaccine development and June 2022, the island's biomedical innovation enabled it to advance five vaccine candidates for trialling with three domestically produced vaccines receiving Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The vaccines are Abdala (approved in July 2021), Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus which received EUA in August 2021. In September 2021, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus received EUA for use in the paediatric population and, in October 2021, Abdala received the same authorisation. All of this meant that by June 2022, ninety per cent of the Cuban population had been fully vaccinated, including 97.5 per cent of children over the age of two. By June 2022, Cuba was reporting less than twenty new daily COVID-19 infections and no deaths while globally there were 843,000 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1,874 deaths per day, with only sixty per cent of the global population fully vaccinated (MEDDIC, 2022:

2-4). Cuba's Finlay Institute which developed the Soberana vaccines is rated third out of twenty-six pharmaceutical companies on a 'Fair Pharma Scorecard 2022' which 'ranks Covid-19 medical product developers based on their commitment to human rights principles' (Rawson, 2022). The scorecard is based on criteria that includes pricing and distribution, technology transfer and open source patents (Ibid). While wealthy countries were accused of 'vaccine hoarding' (Costello, 2021) which put millions of lives at risk in the global South, Cuba agreed to share its vaccines and the technology behind them with other low-income countries in the global South including Nicaragua, Vietnam, Mexico and Venezuela. Moreover, Cuba's vaccines do not require storage at low temperatures, are inexpensive to produce and can be manufactured to scale making them more accessible to low-income countries (Rawson, 2022).

What is evident in Cuba's domestic capacity to successfully manufacture its own vaccines and roll them out to the overwhelming majority of its population, is a total commitment to public health. Cuba's home-grown vaccination programme 'demonstrates the importance of building and nurturing domestic health technology capabilities including ecosystems of suppliers and manufacturers' (Geiger and Conlan, 2022: 55-56). Cuba's sharing the vaccines with other countries at cost reflects an internationalism reflected in health 'becoming a defining characteristic of its revolution' both domestically and overseas (Feinsilver, 1993: 1). Cuba's revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro, made a declaration of intent that Cuba would become a 'bulwark of Third World medicine' and a 'world medical power' (Ibid). The imbalances in vaccine coverage and the lack of solidarity by advanced economies toward countries in the global South was 'coloured by a colonial legacy', argued Geiger and Conlan, 'which substitutes local capacity building in low and middle-income countries with donations' (2022: 46). The Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, pulled no punches when describing vaccine inequity as a situation of 'vaccine apartheid' with only four doses per 100 people of COVID-19 vaccine administered in low-income countries by October 2021 compared to 133 doses per 100 people in high-income countries (Bajaj, Maki and Stanford, 2022).

Henry Reeve Brigade

Cuba's international approach to healthcare long precedes the pandemic, with 400,000 Cuban medical professionals having worked in 164 countries over six decades (Yaffe, 2020b). This health solidarity is best reflected in the work of the Henry Reeve Brigade, an International Team of Medical Specialists in Disasters and Epidemics comprising 1,586 medical professionals, including nurses, doctors and medical technicians dispatched in response to emergency situations wherever they arise. The brigade is named after a Brooklyn-born brigadier-general, who fought and died in 1876 during the First Cuban War of Independence, and was established by Fidel Castro in 2005 to offer assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. While President George W. Bush rejected the offer of assistance, it's instructive to look at how Katrina was used by Republican policy-makers to set in train thirty-two neoliberal policies, including the suspension of wage laws and creation of a 'flat-tax enterprise zone', while parents were given vouchers to use at for-profit charter schools (Klein, 2007: 410). The Cuban response to the disaster was to offer professional humanitarian assistance while politicians in the US sought to exploit the disorientation caused by the 'shock' of the disaster for purposes of privatisation and profit.

The medical missions undertaken by the Henry Reeve Brigade have included the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa when 250 medics risked their lives while fighting the virus in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, (MEDICC, 2017). When COVID swept across the world in March 2020, Cuba sent 593 medical workers to fourteen countries, including Italy's worst-hit region Lombardy (Petkova, 2020). In May 2017, the Henry Reeve Brigade receive the WHO's prestigious Dr Lee Jong-Wook Memorial Prize for Public Health 'in recognition of its emergency medical assistance to more than 3.5 million people in twenty-one countries affected by disasters and epidemics since the founding of the Brigade in September 2005' (Pan American Health Organisation, 2017).

Yet another major contribution to global medicine by Cuba is the Latin American School of Medicine (LASM) (Escuela Latinoamericana de

Medicina, [ELAM]) established in the wake of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 which tore through Central America and the Caribbean causing thousands of deaths and left 2.5 million homeless (Gory, 2015). The mission of the school is to provide a free medical six-year scholarship to students living in marginalised communities in low-income communities in Africa, Asia and the Americas (including the US) who, upon graduating as doctors, pledge to devote their working lives to similarly impoverished communities in need of medical support (MEDICC, n.d.). LASM prioritises female and Indigenous students which prompted Dr Margaret Chan, former Director-General of the World Health Organisation, to say during a visit to the school: 'For once, if you are poor, female, or from an indigenous population you have a distinct advantage… an ethic that makes this medical school unique' (Gory, 2015). By the twentieth anniversary of LASM in 2019, 29,000 medical students had graduated from the school, including 182 from the United States (MEDICC, 2019). A grassroots empowerment programme that is tuition-free, LASM has now benefited physicians from more than 120 countries with former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, saying on a visit to the school, 'Cuba gives us a lesson of solidarity and generosity' (Oram, 2018).

Education

From the beginning of the twentieth century, US interventionism in Cuba was given a legislative sheen with the Platt Amendment which enabled Washington, directly or indirectly through proxies, to control the island's economy and government (Franchossi, 2016). For the Cuban people, this period of neo-colonialism was characterised by poverty and social neglect, particularly in the area of education. Prior to the 1959 revolution, Cuba had one million absolute illiterates, more than a million semi-literate, 600,000 children without schools and 10,000 teachers without work (Correa, 2021). In 1961, Cuba launched a literacy campaign involving brigades of educators with 268,420 members described by the Minister of Education, Ena Elsa Velázquez Cobiella, as 'a momentous revolution in the educational and cultural order' (Ibid). The literacy campaign enabled 707,212 adults to learn to read and reduced the illiteracy rate to 3.9 per cent of the total population, overcoming what Fidel Castro described as 'four and a half centuries of ignorance' (Ibid).

Not content with enabling students to read, the Cuban commitment to education included language schools, education in the community and education services for the disabled, including 1,500 blind students taught to read using braille between 1979 and 1983 (Ibid). Many of the men and women who joined the revolutionary struggle in the 1950s were illiterate peasants or part of the urban poor who used the revolution as a springboard into higher education. Ramiro Abrue joined the revolutionaries in the Sierra Maestra and here describes his upbringing:

> "I was born in a distant peasant hamlet, very humble. Our house was made of mud. My dad was a muleteer. He died after my first school year, which was a disaster for a poor peasant family. We had to move periodically, first to the village of Caibarién and then to Havana. We were always on the move. Once we moved six times in a year. My primary and secondary education was completely irregular. The result was that I was a functional illiterate. Thanks to the revolution I could study" (Kruijt, 2017: 46-47).

Ramiro later became Cuba's liaison with Central American revolutionaries for more than thirty years and went on to hold a doctorate in history. Dirk Kruijt's (2017) oral history of Cuba captures several similar examples of political literacy combining with educational literacy to support transformative learning.

Education, like healthcare, is free to all Cuban citizens and is a leading employer of women with sixty per cent of the workforce female. There are 10,626 schools servicing a population of eleven million. There are twenty-two universities, of whom fourteen are headed by women who occupy sixty-three per cent of the top university positions (Oxfam, 2021: 53). Among the impacts of the blockade on education in Cuba are the severing of exchange visits made by staff and students to universities in the US and impediments to migrating teaching to digital platforms, particularly necessary during the pandemic. Cuba had to fall back on television to broadcast classes to 1.7 million students (Ibid: 55).

However, one of the towering achievements of Cuba in education has been its adult and youth literacy programme, *Yo, sí puedo* ('Yes, I Can') developed by the Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute (IPLAC) of Cuba. The programme has been implemented in thirty countries and, to date, 10.6 million people have been made literate, while 1,317 learners are in classes (Correa, 2021). The majority of beneficiaries are in the global South in countries including Venezuela, Mexico, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Mozambique and Angola. One of the beneficiary countries is Argentina which by 2018, had a total of 33,650 graduates with the results of the programme transformative as well as pedagogical:

> "because it allows for personal change, self-esteem and the relationship with society. In the four months a physical change is seen, the dress changes, the attitude, becoming aware that a better reality is possible" (Rezzano, 2019).

Climate change

Cuba is one of the few countries to have taken a science-based approach to mitigation and adaptability on the question of climate change. It spent a decade working on a climate action plan called *Tarea Vida* ('Project Life') driven by the urgency of exposure to extreme weather systems such as Hurricane Irma in 2017 which pummelled the island causing extensive damage to settlements and infrastructure (Grant, 2017). Passed by Cuba's Council of Ministers in 2017, Project Life takes a long view of climate mitigation premised upon practical action and driven by the need to build the resilience of vulnerable communities. The measures included in the climate action plan are: banning construction of homes in vulnerable coastal areas; relocation of populations threatened by flooding; shifting agricultural production away from salt-water contaminated areas; strengthening coastal defences and restoring natural habitat (Stone, 2018). Cuba will be hoping to access support from the Adaptation Fund agreed at COP27 (Worth, 2022) to enhance resilience for people living in the most climate-vulnerable communities like those in close proximity to the thousands of kilometres of Cuba's low-lying coastline.

Cuba's average sea level has risen by nearly seven centimetres since 1966 and the annual average temperature has increased since the middle of the last century by 0.9 degrees Celsius. Projections by Cuba's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (Citma) estimate an average increase in sea level to twenty-seven centimetres by 2050, and eighty-five cm by 2100. Cuba has been modelling the impact of these dramatic rises in sea level and implications for flooding, agriculture, loss of dry land and increase in salinisation (Milán and Del Toro, 2018). The South-Eastern province of Guantanamo has already made the most significant progress to date in actioning the climate plan by reforesting coastal ecosystems, constructing water treatment plants, and promoting environmentally friendly agricultural practices (Ibid). While Cuba has constructed a long-term mitigation plan modelled to the end of this century, like many small-island nations it lacks the capital needed to fully realise its climate targets.

Family Code

Cuba has also been making advances in domestic legislation toward inclusivity and equality. On 26 September 2022, the Cuban people adopted by national referendum a highly progressive Family Code with 67.87 per cent of the population voting 'yes' and 33.13 per cent opposing. The referendum followed an extensive consultation exercise involving 79,000 neighbourhood meetings that generated 434,000 proposals and twenty-five versions of the Code before the final draft was agreed and put to a vote. Among the measures agreed in the Code are: the right to marriage, adoption and assisted reproduction for same-sex couples; women's reproductive rights over their bodies; rights for the vulnerable including the elderly, children, adolescents and the disabled; corporal punishment made illegal with parents now having 'responsibility' for rather than 'custody' of their children; domestic violence penalties; an equitable distribution of domestic work; and expanded rights for carers (Ramírez, 2022: 15). The emphasis in the Code is on love, human dignity, equality and non-discrimination and backs-up many of the principles enshrined in Cuba's 2019 Constitution on the idea of equality regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity (Ibid: 16). The Code is a rebuttal to

homophobia, transphobia and misogyny and the 'prejudices and stereotypes that are part of the collective imaginary' (Ibid: 17). Perhaps its biggest achievement is in challenging Cuban patriarchy particularly in the family home through legislation that directly targets gender-based violence, women's double-shift at home and in the workplace, and the need to share domestic work.

Cuba's economy

In January 2021, Cuba ended its dual currency system which had seen Cubans use the Cuban Peso and tourists use the convertible CUC which was pegged at 1:1 with the US Dollar. This system had created inequalities in Cuba with those who had access to CUCs through tourism or remittances enjoying a better lifestyle than those depending on salaries in Pesos. The two currencies were unified with the Cuban Peso pegged at twenty-four Pesos to the Dollar. 'The aim of the reform was to improve the relative position of Cuban peso-earners', argues Emily Morris, 'and incentivise import substitution and export growth' (2022: 18). In order to shield Cubans from the 'painful adjustment process' state salaries and social security payments were increased but inflation running at seventy per cent has meant spiralling food prices and a reduction of food imports between 2019 and 2021 of forty per cent (Ibid: 19). One fifth of Cuba's import expenditure is on food which meant that the dramatic loss of hard currency income caused by the shutting down of the tourism sector during the pandemic hit the economy substantially. On a visit to Cuba in April 2022, I saw currency changing hands on the street with Cuban Pesos trading at much higher rates than the official 14:1 official peg with the US Dollar. My taxi driver from the airport refused to accept Pesos and wanted payment in Dollars or Euros, and this policy was replicated in other tourism services. For the Cuban economy, this appeared to be the deepest crisis since the Special Period of the 1990s. Food shortages and spiralling prices, electricity cuts, lengthy queues at stores, disquiet about the pandemic, the loss of tourism hard currency, the tightening of the blockade by the Trump and Biden administrations, and an over-dependence on imports represented an enormous collective challenge for the island.

Cuba's highly successful vaccination programme meant that it could open its doors to tourists again in November 2021 and Havana's international reputation for world-class healthcare meant that tourists had confidence in travelling with safety to the island during the pandemic. Official forecasts suggest that a two-year recovery period will be needed to restore the economy to pre-pandemic levels (Ibid: 20), but a growth rate of four per cent was anticipated for 2022 suggesting that a corner might have been turned (Cordoví, 2021). However, Cuba's economic turbulence is likely to continue as long as it has to withstand the terrible constraints imposed by the US blockade.

Conclusion

When Jason Hickel introduced the Sustainable Development Index (SDI) as a necessary alternative to the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2020), he sought to assess countries on the basis of indices of progress 'defined less by GDP growth and more by social goals' (Hickel, 2020a: 1). The HDI ranked countries mostly on the basis of growth measured by GDP per capita whereas the SDI directly addresses the question of ecological sustainability. The SDI used the same basic formula as the HDI based upon life expectancy, education and income but added new indices for material footprint and CO_2 emissions. This resulted in a very different ranking to the HDI with the latter headed by countries with high carbon emissions and GDP per capita. The SDI, however, is headed by low-income countries with positive development indicators and low carbon footprints. The top five countries in the 2019 SDI are Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, Georgia, Panama and Cuba (SDI, 2019) which, for development educators, offers an opportunity to explore with learners, avenues to development that are more equitable and sustainable. The HDI, like the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is framed in the context of development as growth rather than seriously addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice in the dominant economic paradigm of neoliberalism (Alston, 2020; Fricke, 2022).

This article has suggested that the high-level development achievements of Cuba from a narrow economic base in a wider context of extreme aggression from its near neighbour to the North, offers convincing

evidence that the relentless pursuit of growth is not necessary to address the social needs of all citizens and is highly damaging to the natural environment. The concept of de-growth is gaining significant momentum in academia and civil society as a means of containing growth within planetary boundaries and organising society on the basis of sustainability rather than capital accumulation (Hickel, 2020b). Cuba's remarkable history of six decades of literacy, universal healthcare, community and adult education, and international health solidarity bears the closest of scrutiny. We can now add to that list its momentous advances in biotechnology and climate mitigation under the severest of economic constraints.

This is not to propose Cuba as a cut and paste template for other countries to apply but as a developmental state worth serious investigation by civil society movements, development NGOs, development educators and government ministries interested in sustainability, equity, human dignity and solidarity. Why settle for a state that overuses resources, chews through the planetary boundary, espouses ever ending growth and still fails to meet even the most basic human rights such as health, education, nutrition, housing, employment and inclusivity? Another world is possible.

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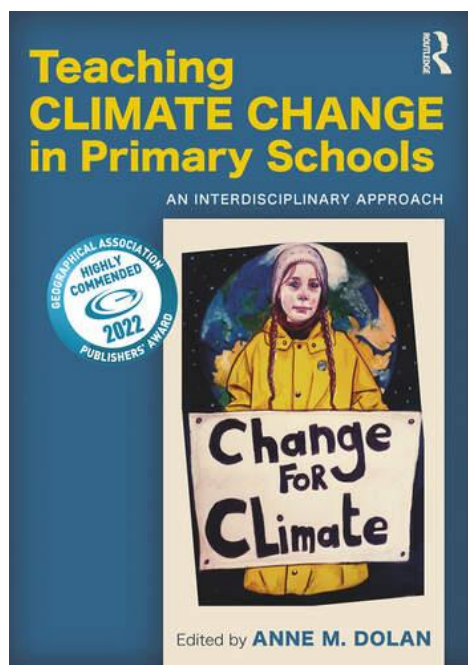
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Resource Reviews

TEACHING CLIMATE CHANGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

GABRIELA MARTÍNEZ SAINZ

Dolan, A M (ed) (2022) *Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, London: Routledge.

This book is a welcome contribution to the field of climate change education (CCE). It adds to emerging literature in this discipline that provides not only a broad conceptual framework for teaching and learning about the climate crisis but demonstrates with concrete proposals how education can respond to the crisis. It will be a valuable resource for teachers in primary schools who might be looking for a comprehensive and well-structured guide on how to incorporate climate change in their classrooms. The book covers a wide range of topics relevant to the climate crisis from very different disciplines and subjects while providing creative and innovative teaching ideas to engage children across the

different ages of primary school and foster their appreciation for nature as well as their sense of agency to protect it.

The book is structured in four broad sections. The first one examines the theoretical underpinning of teaching climate change and how climate change could be integrated into the curriculum. The first section is a useful resource for teachers who might struggle to identify how they could integrate climate change within their subject area (chapter two) but also to have a sense of the methodological approaches in the classroom that can be used when this integration takes place (chapter three). In this first section, the book also argues for the need to start as early as possible teaching climate change (chapter five) highlighting why and how early childhood can be well-placed to foster positive dispositions as well as a personal and collective sense of agency among children to engage with climate change as a subject.

The second section of the book focuses on literacy-based approaches to teaching climate change, including the use of picture books, storytelling and language. The chapters in this section identify different skills that learners can develop as a result of engaging with climate change through literacy, including critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, intercultural awareness and communication skills all of them essential to empower children to act in the face of the climate crisis. These two first sections of the book, and the examples provided in them, emphasise the need for an approach to teaching about the climate crisis that is reflexive, dialogical and contextual. The third section focuses on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) proposals to teach climate change, including challenges to foster students' knowledge but also actions (chapter nine), outdoor learning that promotes community engagement beyond the classroom (chapter ten), project-based learning to develop design thinking (chapter eleven) and visual art projects designed to encourage an ecological mindset. The fourth and final section of the book examines climate change in the context of social science disciplines such as geography, history, citizenship but also drama and physical education. The last chapter encapsulates a common thread across the book by presenting the need for a pedagogy of hope when teaching climate change by

looking at solutions, individual and collective capacity for action and reimagining different futures. The chapters in this section emphasise the importance of making connections between climate action and students' everyday lives and encourage teaching and learning in other relevant spaces for them (their communities, their families, and so on).

The structure of the book facilitates the alignment of climate change as a transversal topic with subjects of the primary school curriculum through webbed and nested models of curriculum integration (see full explanation in chapter two). However, by making explicit the integration process they followed, the authors are facilitating the replication of this process and providing a blueprint for other educators at different levels (e.g. secondary school and higher and further education) and in different contexts with different curricula. Furthermore, some of the proposed lessons and activities could be adapted and implemented outside formal education and benefit practitioners in working on climate change education and its impact on global injustices, dominant economic discourses and power structures.

Overall, the book is a great resource for teachers and student teachers to address key challenges in climate change education. The first challenge relates to the socio-scientific nature of climate change which requires critical thinking to fully grasp the social, environmental and scientific dimensions intertwined (Oberman and Martinez Sainz, 2021). The chapters in the book show how teachers can address misconceptions about climate change by helping students to engage with and understand the scientific evidence and potential personal and social impacts. A second challenge emerges from the emotional responses since teaching about the climate crisis often elicits 'feelings of despair, powerlessness, guilt and denial' (Bryan, 2020: 10). The book addresses this challenge by demonstrating how educators can navigate the difficult task of presenting the reality of climate change, and understand the full scope and implications for the future without increasing despair and helplessness among students, but on the contrary, emphasise the need for hope and action. A final challenge is to develop cross-disciplinary and contextual approaches in climate change education (Kagawa and Selby, 2010), something

that the ideas presented in this book successfully achieve. Overall the book illustrates how to teach climate change in an age-appropriate manner, through multiple disciplines in a way that empowers children from early on. It acknowledges that students are active citizens that have a significant role to play in the mitigation and adaptation efforts in the climate crisis.

This book is an accessible text with innovative examples for climate change education and can benefit not only the intended audience of primary school teachers, student teachers and teacher educators. The emphasis on agency and hope across the chapters are relevant not only for CCE but also for development education (DE), education for sustainable development (ESD), human rights education and other adjectival educations. Dolan's edited collection can help educators in these areas looking to design and implement relevant interventions and projects to incorporate climate change in their lessons and classrooms..

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THE DIGITAL REPUBLIC: ON FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

SU-MING KHOO

Susskind, J (2022) *The Digital Republic: On Freedom and Democracy in the 21st Century*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
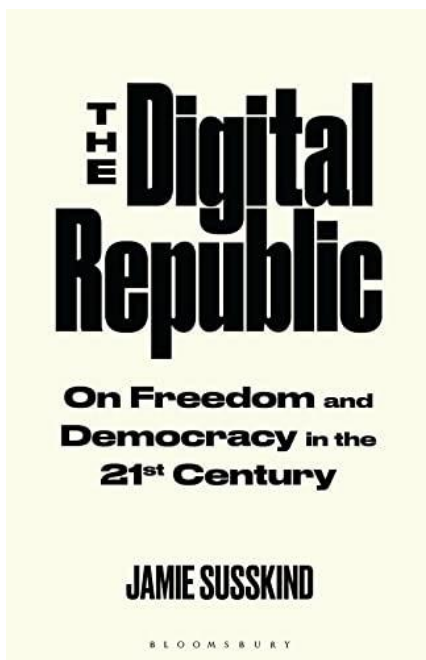
In *The Digital Republic*, Jamie Susskind, a lawyer specialising in commercial, public and information law, argues that digital media needs greater regulation. Moving beyond merely pointing out the increasing power of tech corporations, Susskind argues that the digitalisation of everyday life affects politics very fundamentally, influencing how we conceptualise and enact justice, democracy, equality, property and liberty. Today's defining political relationship lies between the corporations who design and control digital technologies and individuals who have little choice but to live with these commercial technologies, which exert dominating power (Susskind, 2022: 29). 'Digital republicanism' is the proposed response, with 'republicanism' as the alternative to individualism.

This book is quite long at 400 or so pages, but it is readably written and clearly laid out in ten shortish chapters. The first five chapters outline

some problems with digitalisation and sets up the case for digital republicanism. Republicanism is presented as a political ideal to resist technological domination, which comes in the form of permanent supervision, analytics, computational ideology, and the consent trap. Digital technologies are insufficiently governed in the 'mild West', with regulation mostly left to the tech giants themselves, while relying on individual users' consent. The second five chapters present quite familiar regulatory principles and solutions, highlighting expansive European regulation offered by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but also some measures that might counter digital tech's power. Susskind calls for more openness and transparency, suggests that antitrust measures may restrain giant monopolies, and highlights threats posed by runaway algorithms and uncontrolled social media.

Digital information systems should be regulated because they have become just as fundamental as any other economic, legal or political institutions. Giant commercial tech companies like Facebook profit massively by collecting user data, intrusively monitoring individuals' lives and influencing people using targeted information. Digital media filters and shapes our knowledge and habits, decides what is publicly said or unsaid, incubates popular memes and clichés, moulds our interests, and influences our preferences and desires. Digital media influence through both presence and absence, promoting desirable images, while filtering out 'the ugly, the chubby, the old, and the shabby' (Susskind, 2022: 47).

Some of the material reprises arguments advanced in a previous book (Susskind, 2018), particularly those surrounding the 'consent trap'. Technically speaking, consent is needed for corporations or states to gain access to individuals' personal data. However, consent is a trap because a great imbalance exists between huge media corporations (or states) and the individualistic nature of consent. Consent is a trap because clicking 'I agree' fails to protect individuals. Nobody can possibly understand or remember everything they have agreed to, and 'meaningful consent would still be impossible even if every consumer were a highly trained lawyer with an insatiable lust for reading boring legal documents' (Susskind 2022: 109).

Imbalances of informational power are further complicated by the increasing intelligence and autonomy of digital technology itself. Meanwhile, the power of virality reinforces majority rule 'by fostering thumbs up/down culture'. Minority and inconvenient truths are relegated to irrelevance by algorithms that will not show us what we do not want to see (Susskind 2022: 28). We aren't simply being grumpy when we find the digital world unpleasant. Digital media amplifies unpleasantness because of negativity bias - unpleasant things capture our attention more intensely than neutral or positive things (Op.cit: 49). Artificial intelligence automates and exacerbates inequalities, baking them in and deepening them.

Susskind correctly observes that digital corporations currently enjoy too much of a free pass with the prevailing reliance on self-regulation. They will resist greater control, since they profit hugely from current practices, even when these spread disinformation, hate and terrible ideas. Hence, more transparency, control and regulation are needed. The digital is indeed political, and politics should drive technology, instead of technology determining our politics (Susskind 2022: 231). Susskind's discussion of politics compares libertarian coders with digital oligarchs, before discussing the merits of European-style technocratic regulation. Digital republican regulators might experiment with 'deliberative mini-publics' to improve public policies. They could introduce some checklists of do's and don'ts to try to improve practices, or resort to fines or disqualification. Corporate lobbying can be exposed and prosecuted (Op.cit: 243). In the United States (US), in particular, the abuse of lobbying and 'Political Action Committees' are clearly scandalous and not something to be emulated (Ibid.).

Bearing in mind that this review is for the development education community, and not legal regulators, I would not particularly recommend this book as a starting point for interrogating digitalisation and democracy, or finding solutions to its ills. It seems quite reasonable to argue that a body of law ought to be developed to regulate the wilds of tech and protect individuals, but other books with similar scales of intellectual ambition offer more cogent critiques. Examples include Safiya Noble's (2018) critique of digital

technology from the perspective of oppression and racialised discrimination, or Shoshanna Zuboff's (2019) lengthy treatise on surveillance capitalism that brings the very status of humanity into question. A similar, though terser offering might be the critical philosopher Byung-Chul Han's short provocation on the 'infocracy' (2022).

Susskind describes his small 'r' republicanism as being opposed to market individualism, but he remains oddly ambivalent about state and public intervention. Digital republicanism's non-market ideal is based on Philip Pettit's theory of republicanism as abstract 'non-domination'. Pettit opposes the idea of a social structure that theoretically enables one group to exercise unaccountable power over others. Following Pettit, Susskind resists domination in principle, judiciously clarifying that he has nothing against Mark Zuckerberg himself, it is the idea of people like Zuckerberg that is problematic (Susskind 2022: 7). But in today's world, economic hyper-inequality means that a few individuals have come to embody structural characteristics. Twenty-six individuals control the equivalent wealth to an entire half of humanity – some four thousand million people (Oxfam, 2019: 10). The latest Oxfam report, 'Survival of the Richest', on global inequality highlights the fact that the two richest people in Ireland command 50 per cent more wealth than the poorer half of the population (Oxfam, 2023). The UK's Cambridge Analytica scandal showed that money can secure the deployment of algorithmic prediction and manipulation, and that these tools have already been misused to secure Brexit, elect Trump and manipulate around 200 other elections around the world (Cadwalladr, 2018; Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison, 2018; Channel 4, 2018).

The political ideal of republicanism has often been used as a façade by elites engaged in authoritarian rule and power hoarding. Susskind approvingly invokes the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, Adam Ferguson's indignant spirit of the republican citizen (2022: 24), yet he admits that the practice of republicanism (with a small 'r') has often diverged from its own assumptions. What is the 'indignant spirit of republicanism' really, if it doesn't do what it says on the tin? In Decolonizing Politics, Shilliam (2021:

7) argues that democratic theory is fundamentally 'filtered through colonialism', including its racialised logic. Ferguson's Enlightenment indignation offered a way for imperial powers to make sense of how to rule over 'their' colonies.

Pettit's 'republicanism with a small r' is a theoretical currency that enjoys a robust circulation amongst theorists who theorise from positions of imagined, but not experienced oppression. It is not invoked by poorer, racialised, gender or class-discriminated people seeking liberation from actual forms of domination. More diverse critical voices argue that 'too much of (US) American democratic thought has gotten divorced from the concrete struggles that citizens face. This will not do. Democratic theory ought to serve democratic actors' (Brettschneider 2002: 6-8). Brettschneider points to an urgent need to debate how much space democracies should afford to antidemocratic supremacist identity politics and the militias who travel with them, since these forces have become more mainstream and are boosted by digital social media (Op.cit.:14-16).

Farrell (2022) asks what political price must be paid for the theoretical satisfaction of being not-dominated? The US political system, with its absurd reliance on courts, is far from an ideal system for preventing domination. Ferguson's republicanism was, after all, an exercise in political rhetoric and a paean to global imperial and colonial rule. Non-domination and self-mastery in principle required mastery and supremacy in practice, together with the exploitation of discrimination for profit. Susskind's digital republicanism fails to free the republic's citizens from the oppressive social structures questioned by Noble (2018).

Susskind's 'politics of non-domination' rests on choosing 'European' norms as a preferable option to the greater evils of unbridled US commercialism or Chinese authoritarianism (2022: 208). Some of the suggestions are quite sensible, but European GDPR legislation is a behemoth that can hardly be implemented, while remaining grossly inadequate to address what is arguably a greater threat - of global information disorder. This is a

practical rather than a strictly ideational or institutional problem, subverting democratic politics in practice. Manipulative 'post-truth' cynicism has deepened public health crises, obstructed environmental and climate action and encouraged the spread of racist, xenophobic and misogynist hatred and violent insurgence. Large technology corporations ought to be regulated, but they are only one major element in a dysfunctioning digital information ecosystem, characterised by increasing distrust of government and community institutions and the misuse of journalism and media by a growing number of bad actors and conflict entrepreneurs for cultural, political and financial gain (Couric et al., 2021: 8).

Cynicism and fatalism pervade the inadequacies of liberal, mainstream regulation to control the worst excesses of corporate digital monopolies. Such trends were foreseen, resisted and alternatives built from the very beginnings of digital globalisation. The pragmatic approach to digital non-domination originated not in US republican ideals, but in the practices of global citizenship and digital democracy movements. Civic and non-government organisation (NGO) networks arose in the 1980s, uniting to form the Association of Progressive Communications in 1990. Their vision was shared communications technology for global civil society, to work towards progressive social change on issues of environmental protection, peace and social justice (Hamelink, 1994; Association of Progressive Communications, 2007). Throughout the world, civil society has worked with public authorities, citizens, educational and cultural institutions, within and across both the global South and global North to create and build digital commons as global public goods, to support and nourish democratic life globally. Open Science, Open Education and Open Culture initiatives continue to exist and these deserve far greater recognition and support as essential bulwarks, not only against global corporate monopoly, but many other ills of digital, informational and democratic dysfunction, countering these ills with mutual and democratising empowerment.

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DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: A NORMATIVE THEORY

SAM WONG

Culp, J (2019) *Democratic Education in a Globalized World: A Normative Theory*, New York: Routledge.
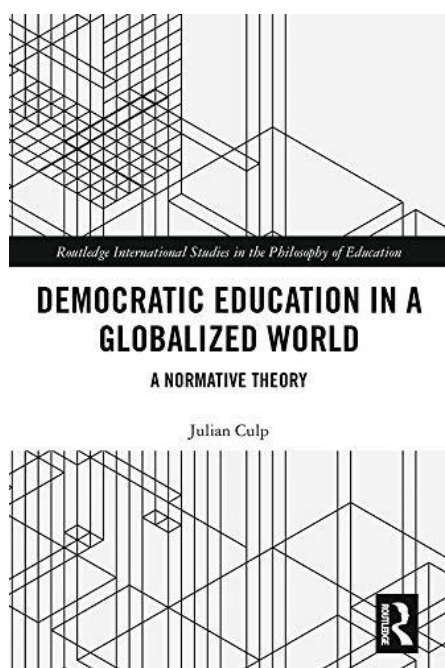
Having been teaching in a few pro-neoliberal universities in the UK and the Netherlands for two decades, I, like many other academics, seem to have slowly and passively accepted the market approach to education, constant performance appraisals, and the rhetoric of public engagement. Questions, as to what education is for, and what alternatives are available, have been put aside in our daily, overwhelming and competing research-teaching-administration agenda. The book by Julian Culp is, therefore, highly welcoming and refreshing. In his book, Culp criticises the functional and human-capital approach to education, and advocates a new perspective to education. Culp particularly champions global democratic educational justice and global democratic citizenship education.

Throughout his book, Culp tries to develop a theory of global democratic education which 'provides a normative conception of how

educational public policy bears on the solution of global problems' (Culp, 2019: 2). In doing so, he uses eight chapters to explain and defend his theory, and each chapter touches on different issues around global education. In chapter two, he draws on the concepts of justice and moral autonomy to challenge the domestic-focused perspective to education. In chapter three, he compares and contrasts the principle of equal education opportunity raised by Brighouse and Swift (2006) and the idea of democratic educational adequacy by Satz (2007). The contrast and the debate about these two theories are used to underline what his ideals of global democratic educational justice are about. In this chapter, he makes the rather controversial argument that the ultimate goal of education is to realise 'the fundamental rights to education of citizens from other states' (Culp, 2019: 78).

Chapter four shifts the attention to the concept of democratic citizenship education. In this chapter, he urges readers expanding the perspective of education from their domestic contexts to the inter-, supra- and trans-national layers of education and democracy. To achieve global citizenship education, Culp uses chapter five to examine how transnational democratic conscientisation is crucial to understanding the process of 'being knowledgeable of globalization' (Ibid: 128). In the following chapter, he explores the complex meaning and ideology of education for autonomy. In chapter seven, Culp makes a strong response to the post-colonial critiques to his normative theory of democratic education. He insists that he does not impose his democratic ideals on the non-Western world, and democratic values are not 'exclusively Western' (Ibid: 174).

I found the book clearly-written and well-structured. The pain-staking and detailed literature review helps articulate the differences of various schools of thought in global justice, morality and values of education. Right at the beginning of the book, Culp expresses his apologies to readers about the excessive abstraction of the book and the normative nature of his proposed theory (Ibid: ix). The author need not be apologetic because his normative theory is intended to set out a different vision to global education.

Additionally, the author has provided sufficient sign-posts and recaps in each chapter, which help clarify the complex arguments he makes.

That said, the author focuses the discussion on global democratic citizenship in the contexts of primary and secondary education only. It is unclear why the tertiary education sector has not been included in the discussion. I fully understand that the nature of education in different levels could be different, and the author has the right to focus on some particular levels, but not all. However, the proposed normative theory seems highly relevant and applicable to the tertiary education level, and the author could have made his decision-making process more transparent right at the beginning of the book.

As mentioned earlier, the author has discussed global democratic educational justice in chapter three and global democratic citizenship education in Chapter four. Are these two concepts identical? If not, what are their actual relationships? Is the notion of justice in chapter three a means to achieving democratic citizenship education in chapter four? It would have been useful for the author to have made the connections clearer.

I also found the author slightly over-defensive in response to the post-colonial critiques to his theory in chapter seven. On the one hand, the author has stated his position very clearly that 'any norms or entitlements that claim universal validity' (Ibid: 129) deserve scrutiny. The author's own theory is no exception. On the other hand, throughout the book, the author is very aware of the 'appropriately structured political discourses' (Ibid: 129) that could derail his vision to the global democratic education in reality. The author could have used the same argument to make a response to the post-colonial critiques, suggesting that he is not blind to the asymmetries of power structures, but he simply wants to develop a normative theory that may offer an alternative to existing un-critical approaches to education, especially in developing country contexts.

Lastly, this book may be successful in developing a coherent normative theory relevant to global democratic education, but how do we know that the author's vision will be achieved? Since it is a normative theory, we cannot simply draw on a typical, positivist assessment approach to examining the effectiveness of the theory or the policies recommended. Perhaps the author could have touched on the issues of assessment and evaluation in the concluding chapter, which would make the whole discussion more transparent and complete.

All in all, this book is highly relevant to pedagogical scholars who may have found the neo-liberal, market-based approach to education unimaginative or frustrating. Those who are in the field of education theory will find this book very interesting too because it explains and demonstrates how normative theories are different from the positivist counterparts. Those who champion public justice, citizenship and morality, especially the educational public policy makers, will also find this book particularly encouraging and inspiring.

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COVID-19, THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND THE PANDEMIC'S DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

CIARA CONLAN

McCann, G, Mishra, N and Carmody, P (2022) *COVID-19, the Global South and the Pandemic's Development Impact*, Bristol: Bristol University Press.
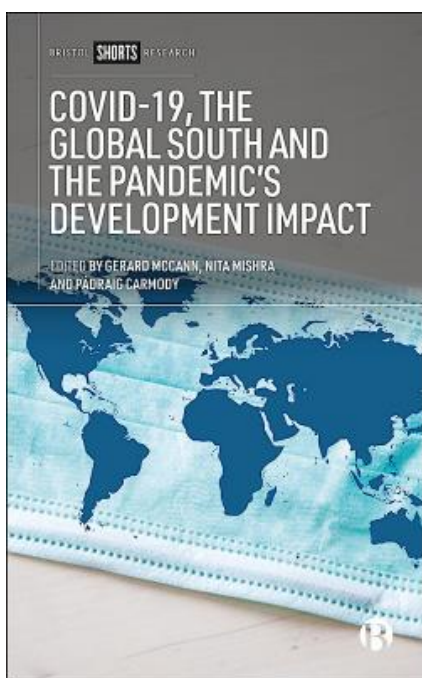
A cliché floated around during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, describing the virus as 'the great equaliser'. This phrase was of course intended to remind us of our interconnectedness and shared humanity, but its utterance quickly felt tone-deaf in front of what is now widely accepted as the vastly unequal health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic, both within and between countries and regions. What has been less widely explored, and what is one of the most important offerings of this book, is the deeply layered context which foreshadowed the ongoing development impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the global South, a background of unfair power-dynamics which spans back through decades and implicates multiple actors across the global financial, trade, political and health systems.

Gerard McCann, Nita Mishra and Pádraig Carmody have edited a highly relevant book, which brings together an impressively diverse and multi-

disciplinary group of contributors to share their perspectives on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of international development. This book manages not only to explore the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on the global South to date, but also to set the scene for the crisis by reflecting on the social, economic and political antecedents to how the pandemic has played out so far. It makes clear that the root causes of these inequalities will need to be comprehensively addressed by both state and non-state actors if the world is to recover and indeed be prepared for future such challenges and shocks. The book also succeeds in delivering on-the-ground accounts and assessments of local and regional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and offers solutions outside of a 'one size fits all' pandemic response.

The book is divided into three parts, each with four chapters contributed to by over twenty researchers writing under the broad umbrella of international development. In part one the chapters are generally more conceptual, and the authors deliver a critique of global inequality, the neoliberal world order, the commodification of health and the challenges faced by modern democracies in providing healthcare. It is difficult to choose a highlight in part one but the overview of the global financial system and its structural inequalities was particularly illuminating for me. Stein and Rowden break down how the current inequities in the global financial order lock African economies into a vicious cycle of commodity export dependence, notoriously vulnerable to price shocks in volatile markets, and how this system affected the capacity of African nations to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. I was impressed by the depth achieved by the authors in the space of their contribution.

Also in part one, necropolitics are explored in the contribution by Khoo and Floss, who analyse the communication and decision making by leadership in Brazil during the pandemic in the context of the global trend towards reactionary, post-truth politics. The authors describe what they see as the cynical attempts to divide and exploit the population by sowing disinformation and cherry-picking scientific evidence.   I found this a

fascinating account of the disinformation crisis which in my opinion has become one of the most important threats to global public health.

Later in part one, McCloskey and Prakash outline just how dramatic the global increase in wealth inequality has been in the era of neoliberalism, but spark hope in their assertion that its flaws can no longer be ignored and that new directions are possible, seen in recent moves towards neo-Keynesianism in many states. As a public health advocate, one can't help but fear that public health reforms and gains are swimming against the tide of an overwhelmingly neoliberal world order, but perhaps the authors vision of a model where 'publicly funded social rights become the cornerstone of any economic growth' can still be achieved.

The final chapter in part one by Rory Horner deals with global COVID-19 vaccine inequity, and how the writing was on the wall for this grossly unjust scenario even before the first vaccines were developed. From my own perspective as a medical doctor and an access to medicines campaigner this was a very relevant chapter. It provoked a reflection on our vaccine equity campaign goals which were more weighted towards allowing diverse regional production of vaccines, rather than on equitable redistribution of vaccine stocks as is emphasised in this chapter.

Part two of the book is centred around the policy context of the COVID-19 pandemic. While each chapter offers a valuable perspective, it is less easy to find the common thread between the chapters in this section. The contributions, however, serve as a bridge from the more conceptual first section to the more applied third section. The chapters in part two range in content from descriptive accounts of the pandemic response in a policy context, to the consideration of policy ideas which aim to improve global health.

An interesting chapter in part two provides an overview of the Indian experience as the first country to legislate for corporate social responsibility (CSR). While the authors are clear that CSR cannot replace sustained, goal directed healthcare investment, they describe its role in terms of filling gaps

which were exposed by the unprecedented surge in demand for health services and products during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was a little sceptical of this strategy, especially linking back to the contribution from McCloskey and Prakash which described how during COVID-19 health systems were overwhelmed in India, in part due to the decades of neoliberal policy reform which increased inequality and threatened the provision of vital public services. I wondered if this may have left an undue reliance on the corporate sector to fulfil a social role, which in fairness appears to have been substantial in India during the pandemic. Overall, mandating CSR may be a viable policy option for other states, acknowledging its limitations.

The other chapters in part two are equally thought provoking. Pieterse deals with the unorthodox response of the Tanzanian Government to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this was partially mitigated by local ingenuity. The next contribution by Carmody and McCann outlines the unintended consequences of the hyper-nationalistic approach taken by high-income countries to the pandemic, including how it led to cycles of revaccination, viral mutation and repetition. In the final chapter of this section, Ngcobo and Pogge discuss the inevitable conflict between public health goals and the primarily profit-centred motives of the corporate sector.

Finally, in part three of the book, the editors have collated contributions which delve into local and community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each chapter is focused on a different region in the global South. The authors take care to include the context-specific challenges and to celebrate what went well in the response. The chapter from India neatly uses a human rights framework to analyse the approach to COVID-19 taken in the communities of Odisha, India. Their achievements in controlling COVID-19 were recognised by the World Health Organisation as exemplary, particularly in terms of the state engagement with NGOs, women's groups and local administration units which is detailed in this contribution.

Later in part three, we travel to Zambia, Latin America and Vietnam to explore the different responses to the pandemic. Matenga and Hichambwa

outline the flexible policy approach taken by the Zambian Government towards COVID-19, including how the benefits and drawbacks of lockdowns were continually weighed up in order to tailor a response appropriate for their context as a largely informal economy. In their contribution, Martí I Puig and Alcántara Sáez are equal to the challenge of summarising and categorising the response to the pandemic across all states in Latin America, as well as analysing how the crisis may have affected trust in democratic institutions, which was already eroding in the region. The final contribution details the timeline of the pandemic response in Vietnam, and shows us how the nation is already implementing health reforms based upon their experience and the lessons learned from COVID-19.

This book will be useful for development educators and students wishing to understand the impact, at least to date, of the COVID-19 pandemic on a deeper level. It will also be useful for those interested in health systems and the political determinants of health, particularly in how access to vaccines and other health technologies can be improved both in general and in the context of a pandemic emergency. The contributions flow well together, and the language and content succeed in being both accessible and stimulating. I also appreciate that the text is available in an open-access format online, in keeping with the principles of equity which are emphasised in this book.

This collection goes considerably beyond its title of exploring the development impact of COVID-19. The connections forged by the editors in compiling these contributions add valuable weight to critiques of neoliberalism which helped to create the environment which left so many regions unprepared for the pandemic. It is clear from this resource that a pandemic will never be our great equaliser. As put so well in the contribution by Ngcobo and Pogge, governments, civil society and other non-state actors must work together as 'duty-bearers' for the deliverance of universal human rights in order to fill that role.

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