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Radical Education

A pathway for new utopias and reimagining European
democracies

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“I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else's whim or to someone else's ignorance.”

bell hooks (in McLeod, 1998)

Introduction

This paper focuses on the educational dimension of issues such as the liberal democracy dystopia¹ and the youth democratic imaginary.² It is based on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's idea that a radical take is necessary for a diversity of social struggles, such as the ones against subordination (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 152), highly and timelessly relevant for young people in Europe and beyond. This article seeks to contribute to the understanding of the socio-political problems to which radical education responds and how this response can be accomplished in democratic contexts. Radical education is hereby understood in the sense of Paulo Freire as a way to unveil the alienating and oppressive reality (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 69) and as a means to develop a youth democratic imaginary beyond the hegemonically established liberal-democratic canon.³

Although there is no substantial literature specifically addressing this topic in the youth field, considerable theoretical contributions do exist regarding radical education. This article reviews four key authors in the theory of radical education – Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Henry Giroux, and bell hooks. The chosen authors have diverse profiles and backgrounds; they adopt different theoretical angles; they have different experiences with practice; they lived, or live, in different contexts; they occupy different places in the history of education thought, including the present. The choice of these specific authors was not necessarily because they define radical education. It was, rather, due to their sociological approach and to the reach of radicalism in their educational proposals – even if they assume different conceptual angles and descriptors, such as pedagogy of the oppressed, deschooling, pedagogy of freedom, critical pedagogy, or pedagogy of hope.

The review first analyses how the authors problematise reality or, in other words, which are the root problems that education shall address. Second, a focus is given to the authors' problematisation of education and the issues they identify in theory and ongoing practices of

1. Addressed in the Offenburg Talks #3 event, in the broadcast talk “Unlearning European Youth Work and disengaging the XXI century liberal democracy dystopia” (Xavier, 2020).

2. Addressed in the chapter “Pluralizing the democratic imaginary - Youth beyond the liberal-democratic canon” in the upcoming Youth Knowledge Book on Youth Political Participation (Xavier, in press).

3. Contemporary democracies have earned a diversity of descriptors such as constitutional democracy, representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, modern democracy, pluralist democracy or, simply, democracy. In this article, the term “liberal democracy” will be used to refer to the kind of democracy which has emerged in Western countries since the 18th century. The choice of this term reinforces the historical articulation between the Athenian democratic tradition (equality, popular sovereignty) and the – post-Enlightenment – liberal tradition (separations between: church/state; public/private; individual liberties; human rights; rule of law), as explored in depth by Chantal Mouffe (2000, pp. 1-16). The liberal-democratic canon refers to the practices emerging from the liberal-democratic ideological scope, which formed historically and naturalised hegemonically, configuring the set of social standards and criteria for what is to be considered reasonable and acceptable, and unreasonable and unacceptable.

(non-radical) education. Third, the review explores how the authors radicalise education, that is, their concrete educational proposals radically addressing the problems they identify in reality, including education practices. The last sections are dedicated to articulating the different elements reviewed, specifically addressing the relevance of radical education for democracy, the features of radical education and an attempt to present a general definition of radical education, aiming to be useful for future research on the topic.

The main findings evidence radical education as the supporting process to understand the gap between the promises of democracy and the existing reality. Radical education has the role of de-alienating learners through radical thinking, configuring a pathway for interrupting the liberal-democratic narrative of the end of history (Fukuyama, 1989). Radical education is the possibility for extending history, conceiving new utopias, and reimagining European democracies beyond the liberal-democratic canon. Ultimately, radical education is a human-led pathway to envision and eliminate societies' radical problems, such as patriarchy, racism or economic inequality.

Problematizing reality

When reviewing literature on radical education, the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire stands out as the central reference, for at least two reasons. First, Freire – particularly with his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*⁴ – pioneered radical education theory (and practice), aiming to liberate the “oppressed” from an oppressive society. Second, key radical education theorists have built from his contributions, either by acknowledging his inspirational importance – as in the case of Ivan Illich⁵ –, or by co-authoring his *oeuvre* – as in the case of Henry Giroux⁶ – or through engaging his educational initiatives in the field – as in the case of bell hooks⁷.

Having education in mind, Freire problematised reality from a sociological standpoint. He is inspirational for the general understanding of the social organisation of the world, which, in turn, is crucial to understanding his pedagogical proposal. For him, society is based on a structure of domination which produces an oppressive reality, where the oppressing elites keep the oppressed population “immersed” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 30-33, 45-62, 130-165). Oppression is achieved through different forms of not necessarily tangible violence called “repression”, “indoctrination”, “alienation”, “exploitation”, or “subjugation” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 55, 78, 85).

Nevertheless, these forms of violence gain the euphemistic title of “welfare”, since the oppressed are regarded as a pathological deviation of a “good, organized, and just” society, and therefore are paternalistically prescribed “integration” treatment, incorporating them into the “healthy society that they have forsaken”. Instead of changing the oppressing situation, the logic of oppression seeks to change the “consciousness” of the oppressed. The more adapted the

4. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published in Chile in 1968, while the author was exiled. After being censored in his home country, the book was only published in 1974 in Brazil.

5. The Austrian academic Ivan Illich referred to Paulo Freire as a source of inspiration and as a friend in his well-known book *Deschooling Society* (1971).

6. The North American scholar Henry Giroux is known for his theoretical contribution to “critical pedagogy” studies. He co-authored with Paulo Freire and Peter McLaren *Teachers as Intellectuals: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (1988).

7. The American professor bell hooks authored numerous books on education and feminism where the work of Paulo Freire was a strong inspiration. She met him at his seminar at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the 1970s, when their friendship began.

oppressed become to the oppressing situation, the “more easily they can be dominated” by the oppressor (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 74).

Furthermore, the social apparatus works towards the “dehumanization of the oppressed” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 44) in different ways. By being prescribed a treatment, the oppressed are also prescribed a behaviour, which further dissuades them from critical intervention (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 46-47, 52) in the oppressive and opaque reality – they are immobilised into the reproduction of the “dominant ideology” (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 36). As the oppressed become “domesticated”, they are also reduced to – and owned as – “things” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 51, 64, 68). They are alienated from “their own decision-making” – they are converted from human beings into “objects” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 85).

The Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich aligns with Freire regarding the prescriptive character of society. He states that “welfare bureaucracies” set the roots for the “modernisation of poverty”, establishing standards for what is valuable and feasible and generating a “monopoly over the social imagination”. This monopoly is, in fact, the “treatment of poverty” and produces dependence, anger and frustration in the ones being treated (Illich, 1970, pp. 3-4).

Twenty-six years after *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and from her own democratic context, the academic bell hooks echoes Freire’s concerns. For her, we live in a fundamentally anti-intellectual society where “critical thinking is not encouraged” (hooks, 1994, p. 202). She explains how people are coaxed into a “culture of domination” where racism, sexism, class exploitation and imperialism are maintained. Freedom is made a synonym for materialism and domination is naturalised – it becomes “right for the stronger to rule over the weak, and the powerful over the powerless”.

She acknowledges her own amazement with the fact that “so many people claim not to embrace these values and yet our collective rejection of them cannot be complete since they prevail in our daily lives”. She adds that many of those declaring to be committed to freedom and justice live their daily lives institutionalising this culture of domination, privately and publicly – helping to create “an unfree world” (hooks, 1994, pp. 27-28). On the other hand, hooks points out that oppressed groups (race, gender, class or religion) often form communities with shared negative understandings of the oppressors, demonising them. This victimisation reinforces the power of those dominating, keeping the oppressive systems intact (hooks, 2003, pp. 73-74).

The North American scholar Henry Giroux updates Freire’s sociological problematisation into the 21st century. He argues that the “cultural apparatus had been largely hijacked by the forces of neoliberalism” and that a “regime of economic Darwinism” is now established (Giroux, 2011, pp. 7-8). For him, neoliberalism – more than an economic theory – is behind a radical reconfiguration of political culture. He believes that there was no previous historical moment where democracy was so much under threat as it currently is (Giroux, 2011, p. 8).

Problematizing education

For Freire, education is a key instrument both in producing a dehumanising, oppressive reality (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 54, 137) and in generating the freedom from it. He calls “banking education” what endures, even 50 years after the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in most schools in the world – a dehumanising approach “in which the action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing” information (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 72). Through a cloak of welfare generosity, banking education attempts to maintain the immersion of the oppressed in a view of the world where certain facts are concealed for the convenience of the oppressors (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 54, 74, 81, 83). The oppressed are made “objects of humanitarianism”, targets of a prescribed assistance which resists dialogue, inhibits creativity and “domesticates the intentionality of consciousness” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 54, 83). They are denied the process of inquiring, they are converted into passive “deposits”, “filled” by the educator with the knowledge that better fits and adapts them to the world – the more antidialogical the educational process is, the less the oppressed will question the fragmented world prescribed to them and the easier it is for the oppressing minority to keep on prescribing (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 72, 76, 85).

In banking education, the tranquillity of the dominant majority rests within – but also beyond – the control of the knowledge in the educational process. Given the overwhelming power asymmetry in creating the world, the oppressed are reluctant to resist, they have “a diffuse, magical belief in the invulnerability” of the oppressor (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 64). The social reality turns out as an unquestionable fatality, or just as a product of chance and destiny (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 51, 84). Even if aware of the oppressive situation, when confronted with the risks required for freedom, the oppressed fears it (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 36). These risks include escalated repression and threaten not only the oppressed person, but also their oppressed peers (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 47). As a result, the oppressed prefers “the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom” or simply remains unconscious of the oppressive situation by confusing “freedom with the maintenance of the status quo” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 36, 48). Teachers who are open to transformation also feel fear standing out as radicals – “as people who rock the boat” – because they are made more visible, more vulnerable. Being “in the opposition instead of safely inside the establishment consensus [involves risks such as] being fired, or not getting a promotion, or not getting a pay raise, [or becoming] a target” (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 54).

The tranquillity of the oppressor is also extended to the fact that banking education is insidiously advertised as neutral, as if there was “no difference between people in their individual or social contexts, whether that be their style of politics or their value systems” (Freire, 1998, pp. 90, 101). Freire claims that all communication is “either implicitly or explicitly for or against something or someone, even when there is no clear reference to them”, where the role of ideology – as the one behind liberal democracy – is to cover or distort “facts and situations, masking the ideological nature of communication itself” (Freire, 1998, p. 124).

For these reasons, education practices are essentially political and never neutral – it is impossible to be in the world with others and maintain a posture of neutrality (Freire, 1998, pp. 67, 73, 100-101). Either one wants, or refuses, the idea of changing (Freire, 1998, p. 68). Avoiding this choice might be comfortable but “perhaps hypocritical”, as it corresponds to “wash[ing one’s] hands in the face of oppression” (Freire, 1998, p. 101). Either strategically or ingenuously, the posture of neutrality in education leads to the reproduction of the dominant ideology, hardly

interrogating it (Freire, 1998, p. 91) and further contributing to the tranquillity of the oppressor. Engaged in the pretence of the neutrality of banking education, educators – even when embracing the “cause of liberation” – are often unaware of its “dehumanizing power” and, paradoxically, they use the “same instrument of alienation in what they consider an effort to liberate” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 79).

Freire affirms that, since social reality is not a result of chance, humankind has the historical task to produce and transform it – it is through their continuing praxis that people “simultaneously create history and become historical-social beings” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 51, 101). Although history is “unfinished” (Freire, 1998, p. 100), the agency in – and the ownership of – the historical process is unfortunately not equal to all. By rejecting history’s unfinishedness,⁸ the oppressor manipulates the historical process, domesticating time and hence domesticating people (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 38). Banking education plays a structural role in this propaganda, since it denies “people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 55).

Illich problematises education similarly to Freire, departing from the critique of the school as a socially controlling institution. He defends that schooling involves a “hidden curriculum” which initiates pupils to the “myth that bureaucracies guided by scientific knowledge are efficient and benevolent” (Illich, 1970, p. 74). Not even the “best of teachers” can entirely protect learners from it (Illich, 1970, p. 24). Pupils (particularly the poor classes) are processed by – and made dependent on – institutions. They are alienated into a production-centred existence – an ideology of economic growth first – to achieve a better life (Illich, 1970, p. 67). The schooling society develops school “fanaticism” (Illich, 1970, p. 7), granting school an almost “unquestioned immunity”. While not being the only modern institution with the primary purpose of shaping people’s vision of reality, schools work as the “advertising agencies” making one believe that one needs the “society as it is” (Illich, 1970, pp. 47, 113). Illich believes that any fundamental change in the school system is an illusion, despite any efforts undertaken (Illich, 1970, p. 74). Young people are burdened with the responsibility of social transformation, aggravated by the fact that, given the mythological and reproductive character of the school system, “neither ideological criticism nor social action can bring about a new society” (Illich, 1970, pp. 37-38, 67-68).

For him, a schooling process can be neither liberating nor educational, since instruction is reserved for the ones who conform the learning steps to preapproved “measures of social control” (Illich, 1970, pp. 11-12). School is rather “enslaving”, because – paradoxically – it forces individuals to learn and to form critical judgements based on a pre-packaged process and disables them from taking control of their own learning (Illich, 1970, pp. 8, 47). Once young people allow curricular instruction to form their imaginations, their imagination horizon is hindered by institutional planning (Illich, 1970, p. 39). Concerning research, while education is assumed to be the result of the relations between a supplier (educator) and a consumer

8. A contemporary example of the rejection of history’s unfinishedness is the academic proclamation of the end of history after the fall of the Berlin Wall, carried out – and reiterated – by Francis Fukuyama in 1992, mainly through his book *The End of History?* and *The Last Man*. Fukuyama states that liberal democracies are the last form of humankind’s ideological evolution and government, with no room for alternative history lines and other democratic possibilities. In this sense, for Fukuyama – and for the whole hegemony he represents – history is finished. Critical analysis on this matter was carried by many thinkers. Previous research includes perspectives in the youth field (e.g. Xavier, in press).

(learner), educational research will remain a circular process, with no relevant impact on educational realities (Illich, 1970, p. 69).

The Greek etymology for “school” (*skholé*), signifying a leisure activity, meaningful for all – teachers and learners – is made meaningless, both by the mutual alienation of work and leisure and through the dichotomisation of the learner-spectator/teacher-worker (Illich, 1970, pp. 22, 101). The “school has become the planned process which tools man for a planned world (...), inexorably we cultivate, treat, produce, and school the world out of existence” (Illich, 1970, p. 110). Due to schooling, social reality becomes divided, encompassing an “unwordly education” and a “noneducational world” (Illich, 1970, p. 24). By enforcing the abdication of responsibility for individuals’ growth, the school “leads many to a kind of spiritual suicide” (Illich, 1970, p. 60).

Certification is understood as an instrument serving social control. The ability of everyone to learn and to facilitate learning is “pre-empted” by certified teachers who, in turn, are restricted to what is expected to happen in schools (Illich, 1970, p. 22). Moreover, the reason behind the scarcity of skills in the educational market is the exclusion caused by the institutional requirements and formal opportunities to gain “public trust” to exercise those skills – through a certificate. A diploma is confused with competence, grade advancement is confused with education, and teaching is confused with learning (Illich, 1970, p. 1). Transgressing the established process is “felt as a multiple offense”, and the ones transgressing are portrayed as “outlaws, morally corrupt, and personally worthless” (Illich, 1970, p. 32). Illich states that “the alienation of modern society in a pedagogical sense is even worse than its economic alienation” (Illich, 1970, p. 23). He takes the issue as a global reality, since

[schools] are fundamentally alike in all countries, be they fascist, democratic or socialist, big or small, rich or poor. This identity of the school system forces us to recognize the profound worldwide identity of myth, mode of production, and method of social control (Illich, 1970, p. 74).

For hooks, American teachers only started to radically question the educational content and their methods in the 1990s. Both in the public school system and in higher education, education was an unquestioned tool for colonisation, serving to “teach students allegiance to the status quo [...] reinforcing the politics of imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2010, p. 29). Many brilliant students – from a diversity of backgrounds – become dismayed at the dehumanising structure they find in colleges and universities, giving up hope, losing heart, taking on the mantle of victimhood, failing in their studies, and dropping out. Afraid of entering a system designed to dominate, they fear “[*becoming*] it, they turn away” (hooks, 2003, pp. 48-49). Democratic educators, in turn, often find themselves at the margins of the corporate-based educational mainstream, having the additional burden of being perceived as a threat by their peers (hooks, 2003, p. 72). Bias in education has produced – and continues to produce – psychological damage whose full extent will never be known (hooks, 2010, p. 32).

hooks also points out that excitement was taken out from educational processes, rather seen as “potentially disruptive” to the essential seriousness of learning. Few professors – no matter how eloquent – can create an “exciting classroom”, as it also implies transgressing the accepted boundaries for teaching practices (hooks, 1994, pp. 7-8). Concomitantly, academic training fosters the assumption that teachers shall always be right (hooks, 2010, p. 10), blocking the excitement of interaction and mutual learning. Competitive education makes excitement very challenging, since it makes students “experience levels of disconnection and fragmentation that destroy all pleasure in learning” (hooks, 2003, p. 49). Together with a culture of domination, competitive education fails to teach how to live in a community (hooks, 2003, p. 163). Rather

than a learning opportunity, (competitive) “education has been undermined by teachers and students alike who seek to use it as a platform for opportunistic concerns” (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

Actors in the field of education are presented with (and present) a rewarding – and punishing – logic by the dominant educational hierarchy, diminishing “efforts to resist and transform education”. Many so-called radical thinkers “engage in conventional practice sanctioned by dominator culture” (hooks, 2010, p. 27). In academic circles, there is often little more than lip service given to the hard work required for a transformational commitment (hooks, 2010, p. 38). Issues such as diversity used to be openly addressed but are now “slowly being pushed back into the realm of silence and misinformation” (hooks, 2010, p. 110).

For Giroux, after public education was highly influenced in the 1980s by the politics of economic growth, education institutions were assaulted by a market-driven model where critical thought, analysis and dialogue were limited. This “stripped down version of education” aimed to train future workers for the sake of global competitiveness. Students were to be included in a “wider market-oriented culture of commodification, standardization, and conformity”. Advocates of critical pedagogy and radical educational theory were fired from educational facilities. Young people were to be treated as customers and clients, and “poor youth” [sic] were simply excluded from educational process, through “zero-tolerance policies that treat them as criminals to be contained”. “Neoliberal pedagogy” has emerged and now dominates education, while pervading “every aspect of the wider culture [...] reducing citizenship to the act of consuming” (Giroux, 2011, pp. 7-8). Subordination to capital – once a hidden curriculum – became an “open and much-celebrated policy of both public and private higher education” (Giroux, 2011, p. 113).

Much beyond the school environments, a new mode of permanent education⁹ takes place today and undermines the possibility of democratic politics – “the educational force of the broader culture has become one of the most important political sites in the struggle over ideas, values, and agency”, happening through advertising, television, film, the internet, video games and the popular press (Giroux, pp. 134, 176). While education remains vital to any democracy, the greater educational influence democratic societies are producing is now “driven largely by commercial interests that often miseducate the public” (Giroux, 2011, p. 137). For Giroux, people are being made superfluous and “making human beings superfluous is the essence of totalitarianism” (Giroux, 2011, p. 104).

Radicalising education

Freire states that the very possibility of education exists in “a radical form of human experience” – the awareness that “we are unfinished”. (Freire, 2014, p. 3). Because of the human condition of radical unfinishedness, human beings are also historical (Freire, 1998, p. 100) – they can

9. Permanent education as a concept emerged in the late 1960s as a co-operation policy aiming to considerably transform the education systems within the member states of the European Cultural Convention, promoted by the Council of Europe (1954). The main objectives of permanent education were to establish education as a lifelong process, to articulate it with informal individual experience and to converge individual learning needs with collective needs (social, cultural, economic). As, Giroux refers to a new mode of permanent education –the perverse dimension of education – which is included in the outcome of the initial project. The enlargement of the spheres and means of education indeed happened, but under the domination of economy, to the extent that formal education systems end up hypothetically overshadowed by priorities from the realm of economics.

create history, becoming “historical-social beings” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 34). The aspiration of education is then to change the immobilisation of history and the protracting of an unjust socio-economic and cultural order, continuously retrieving historical beingness to human beings (Freire, 1998, p. 99). Education is also about liberating men and women, radically unveiling the alienating reality, opacified by the dominant ideology (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 36 and Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 24). Emerging from the oppressive reality becomes an educational priority. Reality should be critically read and confronted by learners, through reflecting beyond the “mere perception” of it and acting upon it, transforming it (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 18, 51-52). A “radical requirement” for whoever finds oneself as oppressor or as oppressed is that “the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed”, instead of patiently waiting for oppression to fade by itself (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 50).

While curiosity and critical perception of reality are fundamental for social transformation, it is not enough by itself (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 110). In one of his last works and after the most recent form of constitutional democracy was established in Brazil,¹⁰ Freire speaks of the need to

[convert] merely rebellious attitudes into revolutionary ones, in the process of the radical transformation of society. [There is a need for a] more radically critical and revolutionary position, which is in fact a position not simply of denouncing injustice but of announcing a new utopia. Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: denouncing the process of dehumanization and announcing the dream of a new society (Freire, 1998, p. 74).

Freire calls the specific process of this positioning “conscientisation”¹¹ – the “particularly radical posture from which to gain an understanding of the world [which] involves assuming an awareness, but then [deepening] it” (Freire, 2014, p. 38). The unveiling conscientisation leads to a step forward in one’s emergence from the immersing reality (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 109). It enrols people “in the search for self-affirmation” and, while avoiding fanaticism, conscientisation might be perceived as a threat for questioning the status quo (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 36).

Pedagogically, conscientisation entails another “radical requirement” regarding who is involved in the educational process and how this involvement is carried out. Because people cannot be liberated through alienation and because “propaganda, management, [and] manipulation – all arms of domination – cannot be the instruments of rehumanization”, the pedagogy of the oppressed, as Freire calls it, is a “task for radicals” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 23, 39, 68). The pedagogy of the oppressed must be “animated by authentic, humanist (not humanitarian) generosity [and] cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors”. The oppressed cannot be the object of paternalistic humanitarianism, even if cloaked as generosity, because that condition maintains oppression and dehumanization (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 54). The “oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 53-54). The pedagogy of the oppressed “makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed [engaging them] in the struggle for their liberation”, being made and remade during this struggle (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 48). Making education popular also means a radical transformation of society in terms of the political influence of the popular classes, which “might achieve power” (Freire, 2014, p. 67).

10. The tumultuous transition from the Brazilian military regime to democracy took about a decade and was ultimately achieved in 1990, when the current Constitution fully entered into effect.

11. *Conscientização* in the original Brazilian Portuguese.

In opposition to the banking notion of education, Freire suggests a problem-posing education. Instead of an approach that obviates thinking, problem-posing education “rejects communiques and embodies communication”, exploring the “problems of human beings in their relations with the world” (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 76, 79). Problem-posing education concerns acts of cognition, not transferrals of information; it involves a constant unveiling of reality, not a constant inhibition of creative power; it strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality, not the maintenance of submersion of consciousness; it is committed to demythologising reality, not to concealing facts and building myths; it brings people to see the world as a transformative process, not as a static reality; it regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition, not as something to be resisted; it treats students as critical thinkers, not as objects of assistance; it poses people’s fatalistic perception of their situation as a problem for them, not reinforcing it; it takes people’s historicity as their starting point, not as something to relegate and immobilise (Freire, 2005 (1968), pp. 79, 81, 83-85).

The dialogical approach in problem-posing education seeks the encounter between people, “mediated by the world, in order to name the world”. This dialogue is not possible between “those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied to them” (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 88). In opposition to antidialogical action – which hinders the radical transformation of reality, preserving situations favouring its own agents and culturally manipulating the oppressed – dialogical action’s objective is liberation, rather than domination (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 179). In practice, the dialogical approach departs from the learners’ view of the world where “their own generative themes are found”, constantly expanding and renewing. The educators’ task is to re-present that world view, not as a lecture, but as a problem for the learners (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 109). Given the critical unveiling of reality and the re-creation of knowledge are made through common reflection and action, educators and students are both subjects in the learning process – both discover themselves as permanent re-creators of knowledge of reality (Freire, 2005 (1968), p. 69). The vertical pattern of banking education is therefore broken by the dialogical approach of problem-posing education. Instead of a teacher and a student, there is only the “teacherstudent”, who teaches and is taught in dialogue with other teacherstudents – both “engage in the experience of assuming themselves as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons, dreamers of possible utopias” (Freire, 1998, p. 45).

Illich uses the same kind of discourse as Freire to argue that school is not liberating and foreshadows “revolutionary strategies for the future” (Illich, 1970, pp. 48-49). He affirms that “education for all means education by all”, which means “a radical alternative to a schooled society”, requiring “new formal mechanisms for the formal acquisition of skills”, a “new approach to incidental or informal education” (Illich, 1970, p. 22). He states that “only disenchantment with and detachment from the central social ritual and reform of that ritual can bring radical change” (Illich, 1970, p. 38). For Illich, “the most radical alternative to school would be a network or service” giving each person equal opportunity to share own’s learning needs with others who are motivated by the same needs (Illich, 1970, p. 19), promoting a needs-based social exchange of skills between individuals.

In the 1970s, Illich was radically contesting the reproductive nature of educational policies: “a political programme which does not explicitly recognize the need for deschooling is not revolutionary; it is demagoguery calling for more of the same” (Illich, 1970, p. 75). This radical programme of deschooling, according to him, could prepare youth for “the new style of

revolution needed to challenge” obligatory wealth and security, as they feature in the social system (Illich, 1970, p. 49). The purposes of such an initiative should be: assuring continuous availability of resources for the ones wanting to learn; empowering all the ones wishing to share their skills to find those looking forward to learning from them; providing the conditions for all wanting to make an issue or a challenge publicly known. Constitutional guarantees, such as no enforced curriculum and no discrimination based on previous access to certificates or diplomas,¹² should be granted (Illich, 1970, p. 75).

Giroux defends a pedagogical principle in which “comfortable humanism is replaced by hard-headed radicalism”, integrating necessity, spontaneity, imagination and basic skills (Giroux, 2011, p. 56). To challenge neoliberalism, critical pedagogy shall be capable of utilising radical theories coming from feminism, postmodernism, critical theory, post-structuralism, or neo-Marxism – this could allow a “basis for imagining a life beyond the dream world of capitalism”. He calls for the expansion of critical theory’s engagement with Enlightenment,¹³ through the postmodern problematisation of the modern “universal project of citizenship, its narrow understanding of domination [and] its obsession with order” (Giroux, 2011, p. 70). While the Enlightenment tradition importantly recognises that “a substantive democracy cannot exist without educated citizens” (Giroux, 2011, p. 136), postmodernism builds from that refusal to “decouple education from democracy, politics from pedagogy”. It advocates for the revitalisation of the notions of “democratic citizenship, social justice and the public good”, as it “signals the importance of cultural politics as a pedagogical force for understanding how people buy into neoliberal ideology” (Giroux, 2011, p. 141).

Critical pedagogy needs to be linked with the process of democratisation. It needs to construct “new locations of struggle, vocabularies and subject positions” allowing the wider group of people to “become more than they are now” by questioning what they have become within the existing “institutional and social formations” and by imagining the transformation of “relations of subordination and oppression” (Giroux, 2011, p. 73). Critical pedagogy is self-reflexive. It “problematizes its own location, mechanisms of transmission, and effects” while functioning as a part of the wider project of contesting the different forms of domination (Giroux, 2011, p. 76). It shall connect politics to social responsibility and expand the students’ capacities “to move beyond the world they already know without insisting on a fixed set of meanings” (Giroux, 2011, p. 77). Giroux synthesises as follows.

At its best, critical pedagogy must be interdisciplinary and radically contextual, engage the complex relationships between power and knowledge, critically address the institutional constraints under which teaching takes place, and focus on how students can engage the imperatives of critical social citizenship, [it] must be self-reflexive about its aims and practices, conscious of its ongoing project of democratic transformation, but also openly committed to a politics that does not offer any guarantees (Giroux, 2011, p. 81).

For Giroux, education shall make visible and address the contradicting, and “deep gap between the promise of a radical democracy and the existing reality” (Giroux, 2011, p. 73). He does not necessarily resonate with Illich’s proposal of deschooling society. He underlines the “central

12. It remains important to underline that Illich defends neither nepotistic nor corrupt attitudes, unequally favouring some over others. On the contrary, Illich points to the fact that a plain meritocratic educational system based on the precondition of having had access to certification is limiting, always favouring those who have had the precondition as a previous opportunity, over those who have not. In summary, Illich’s point concerns the discrimination implicit in merit, paradoxically enacted in the name of equality.

13. Such as in the issues of freedom, equality, liberty, self-determination and civic agency.

importance of formal spheres of learning” which, in competition with the permanent education apparatus and beyond the mission of enhancing literacies, must enable people to “both read the world critically and participate in shaping and governing it”. He claims that, given the privileged position of schooling, its main concern should be “pedagogy at the popular level”, preparing students “for a world in which information and power have taken on new and powerful dimensions” (Giroux, 2011, p. 137). He adds that educators “need to defend public and higher education as a resource vital to the democracy and civic life of the nation”, while opposing the domination of education by economics and the transformation of public schools into “commercial spheres” (Giroux, 2011, p. 77).

Nevertheless, faithful to his belief that the new sites of permanent education are overshadowing the reach of formal education, Giroux advocates for “a critical understanding of how the work of education takes place in a range of other spheres” than the school (Giroux, 2011, p. 137). He proposes “a new understanding of the connection between critical and public pedagogy [...], a renewed sense of imagination, vision, hope” and the urgent recovery of the promise of a radical democracy, as an antidote to the existing totalitarian “superfluization” of human beings (Giroux, 2011, p. 104). The realm of public pedagogy, as he calls it, as the new sites where people learn and unlearn, are crucial in mediating how they get, or not, prepared for becoming critical agents, understanding the world, and assuming leadership (Giroux, 2011, p. 176). Giroux sees culture as the broad ground that can host the “radical demand of a pedagogy that allows critical discourse to confront the inequities of power and promote the possibilities of shared dialogue and democratic transformation” (Giroux, 2011, p. 139).

Giroux mentions the importance of making the pedagogical more political, so that students have diverse opportunities to understand and experience how politics and power work within and outside schools (Giroux, 2011, p. 81). Along his profuse evocations of Freire, Giroux states that the Brazilian educator “embodied the important but often complicated relationship between the personal and the political” (Giroux, 2011, p. 160). For him, in a Freirean perspective, pedagogy is the environment where subordinate groups find space to speak out and act “in order to alter dominant relations of power” (Giroux, 2011, p. 161). Giroux reminds us that “human suffering does not stop at the borders of nation-states”, hence a notion of global citizenship would necessarily “develop a sense of radical humanism that comprehends social and environmental justice beyond national boundaries” (Giroux, 2011, p. 170). Bringing a more political pedagogy into practice requires that educators anchor their diverse work in “a radical project that seriously engages the promise of an unrealized democracy” (Giroux, 2011, p. 145). Educators need “a new vocabulary” linking hope, social citizenship, education, knowledge, learning, critical thinking, action, social engagement and substantive democracy. Again, fulfilling the “promise of a radical global democracy” is mentioned as the final aim of education, for which people need their “full intellectual resources to provide a profound critique of existing institutions”, while exposing human misery and eliminating the conditions producing it (Giroux, 2011, pp. 148, 175).

For bell hooks, education implies spirituality and feelings. Love, hope, passion, possibility, and radical openness are fundamental elements of educational processes where “paradise can be realized, (...) where all that we learn and all that we know leads us into greater connection, into greater understanding of life lived in community” (hooks, 2010, p. 151). In hooks’ educational locus, emotions burst. Love is about looking beyond our “culture of domination”, where even many of those seeking radical social change impose, rather than propose. Guidance by love “is to live in community with all life”, particularly relevant in a society that does not teach “how to

live in community” (hooks, 2010, p. 162). The “most radical intervention” is not speaking of love, but to “engage the practice of love”. Love “is the only way we create a world that domination and dominator thinking cannot destroy. Anytime we do the work of love we are doing the work of ending domination” (hooks, 2010, p. 176).

hooks also extensively evocates Freire in her books, for example referring to the Freirean politicisation of the individual. While life-changing personal transformations occur through “making the personal political”, problematisation alone does not suffice. Removing a “constructive focus on resolution” is taking away hope and eventually making critique a mere “expression of profound cynicism, which then works to sustain dominator culture”. In order to not reinforce “systems of domination, of imperialism, racism, sexism or class elitism”, the work of educators can practice a pedagogy of hope (hooks, 2010, p. xiv). The reinforcement of the dominator culture as an absolute system works towards the narrative that “it cannot be changed”. The role of democratic educators is to facilitate the “unlearning of domination (...) and to cultivate a spirit of hopefulness about the capacity of individuals to change” society (hooks, 2010, p. 73).

Spirituality is the “magical force that allows for the radical openness that is needed for genuine academic and/or intellectual growth” (hooks, 2010, p. 150). Also, deprived of the capacity to think critically about oneself and one’s own life, it is not possible to “move forward, to change, to grow” (p. 202). Having an open mind is essential for critical thinking and “a radical commitment to openness maintains the integrity of the critical thinking process and its central role in education” (hooks, 2010, p. 10).

Radical openness is therefore about learning to reflect and broaden own vision as a form of everyday practical wisdom. It is about an “ongoing experience of wonder”, the “ability to be awed”, the feeling of excitement towards the possibility of learning, and to be “ecstatic about thoughts and ideas”. It is about the “recognition of the power of mystery” (hooks, 2010, p. 188). Being radically open means to value wholeness over division, to be willing “to explore different perspectives and change one’s mind as new information is presented”, and to engage in “*true dialogue, where both sides are willing to change*” (hooks, 2003, pp. 48, 192). By remaining continuously open-minded, willing to acknowledge what one does not know, and by celebrating together the ability to think critically, the conditions for radical openness are reunited and a radically open pedagogical praxis is engaged.

Radical openness also comes from the understanding that learning to cope with conflict and different opinions is safe. Learning processes that value dissent and treasure critical exchange prepare one to face reality but might take place in circumstances where one does not necessarily feel well nor in control. In learning processes, true safety is about discerning between “when one is in a situation that is risky but where there is no threat” and a situation that is unsafe and needs to be handled accordingly (hooks, 2010, p. 88). Safety in learning environments is the practice of freedom, allowing possibilities “to collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress” (hooks, 1994, p. 207). While there are multiple challenges for educators to practice outside the norm, hooks claims that “every system has a gap” (hooks, 2003, p. 23). She sees the classroom as “the most radical space of possibility”. hooks calls for a renewal and rejuvenation of teaching practices “beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable”, allowing one to think and rethink, to create new visions, to transgress against those boundaries, to make education the practice of freedom (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

For hooks, education needs to address the world's diversity from unbiased perspectives. Both educators and learners "need to fully understand differences of nationality, race, sex, class, and sexuality if we are to create ways of knowing that reinforce education as the practice of freedom" (hooks, 2010, pp. 105, 110). Nevertheless, the mere inclusion of a more radical subject matter is not sufficient to create a liberatory pedagogy – "a simple practice like including personal experience may be more constructively challenging than changing the curriculum". The sharing of personal narratives, both from learners and educators, enhances our capacity to know (hooks, 1994, p. 148). Having an unbiased perspective means to hold a critical stand towards biases, in order to "restore the integrity to the classroom". Linking theory and practice also converges in integrity – the "congruence between what we think, say, and do" (hooks, 2010, pp. 32, 38). Having an unbiased perspective also means to "pursue all opportunities to decolonize our minds [as educators] and the minds of our students" (hooks, 2010, p. 28). Mind decolonisation is a tool to "break with the dominator model of social engagement" and to "imagine new and different ways that people might come together" (hooks, 2003, p. 35).

Creating exciting learning spaces implies the "full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices". Agendas need to be flexible enough to accommodate a spontaneous shift of direction and the individual needs of learners. It requires the radical approach of continuously acknowledging everyone's presence, with genuine value, beyond statements and through pedagogical practices, nurturing everyone's contribution to the learning process dynamics. It also implies the "deconstruction of the traditional notion that only the professor is responsible for classroom dynamics", because "excitement is generated through collective effort" (hooks, 1994, pp. 7-8).

Radical education and democracy

All the reviewed authors converge on the liberal assumption¹⁴ that the assurance of educated citizens is a fundamental feature for a substantive democracy and, therefore, they see education as fundamental to democracy. Convergence also exists when they imagine the socio-political transformation process needed to overcome oppression and social injustice. Education is not only needed because democracy needs educated citizens, but also because learning and growing implies a political dimension – the personal becomes political, hence the pedagogical becomes political as well. When learning, people are engaging in a transformational project – of themselves and of the world – which cannot be separated from – neither subjugated to – their socio-political context. The politicisation of learners happens when they learn because they transform the world around them – when they become actors in that transformation.

Another point of convergence of the reviewed authors concerns what they exactly mean by social transformation. They imply that social transformation resulting from a superficial impression of reality is not necessarily transformative and, therefore, does not really tackle the root problems of democracy, such as oppression and social injustice, but rather reproduce the democracy that causes and/or aggravates them. This is very clear through many instances the authors refer to, such as Freire's many phenomena behind the tranquillity of the oppressor, Illich's prescribing society, Giroux's new permanent – neoliberal – education, or hooks'

14. Particularly originated by the North American John Dewey in his 1916 book *Democracy and Education*.

dominator culture. To engage a truly transformative endeavour throughout their education, people need to gain awareness beyond the mere perception of reality – as Freire puts it, people need conscientisation. This goes with gaining deep awareness about oneself, including an understanding of self-alienation.

A deep understanding of reality means to radically understand it, hence, to radically unveil it through critical reflection. It implies moving beyond the world one already knows, without insisting on a fixed – prescribed – set of meanings. It means to demythologize reality by exploring different perspectives and changing one's mind as new information is presented. A deep understanding of reality requires a deep understanding of hegemonic cultural phenomena and the derived forms of domination, such as patriarchy, racism or economic inequality. Since our democracies exist in compatibility with those phenomena, a non-radical education will always be limited in reaching a deep awareness of reality, being rather an instrument to diffuse and alienate learners to a specific – even if hegemonic – way to perceive and organize the world.

The kind of socio-political transformation processes proposed by the authors reviewed are impossible to be carried out without thinking radically about society. Social justice, presently widely pursued through comfortable humanism, needs hard-headed radicalism because the mechanisms leading to social justice cannot be the same mechanisms leading to social injustices. Both the moderate neutrality and the generosity of liberal-democratic humanitarianism might work as tokens of concern for – and even attenuation of – social issues, but they are not enough to radically expose and radically eliminate problems such as social injustice. Those are perceived as structural and infinite in liberal democracies. Furthermore, suffice is to mention that social injustice is neither necessarily visible, nor naturally exposed, in the global democratic contemporaneity.

Having a deep – radical – understanding of reality is the only way to make visible and address the contradicting, tensioning, and deep gap between the promised democracy and the existing situation. A radical understanding of reality rethinks and renews the narratives and vocabularies hegemonically used to explain social problems of democracies. It allows one to bring out of stagnation – and radically rethink about – issues seen as structural and indefinitely persistent, such as patriarchy, racism or socio-economic inequality. A radical understanding of reality unlocks imagination beyond the dream world of capitalism, and beyond the liberal-democratic end of history (Fukuyama, 1989). It allows one to announce new possible utopias and to dream new societies. A radical understanding of reality grants the interruption of the immobilisation of history and makes human beings historical, rather than making them superfluous. It develops a spirit of hopefulness about the capacity of individuals – and their collectives – to change society and to make history.

Radical education has the role to provide the conditions for broadening learners visions at the extents of the whole picture of reality, through problematising and radically thinking about it and one's self-alienation within it. Radical education enrolls learners in acting in reality through exposing social injustices, radically eliminating their causes and imagining alternative – possible – utopias. In democracies, a radical change does not necessarily mean a non-democratic alternative nor an illiberal democratic alternative. On the contrary, in the converging angle of the reviewed authors, radical education is the means to achieve a better, more real, substantial democracy. In the context of liberal democracies, radical education is a way to explore the solutions that are protracted and/or relegated by ongoing – and hardly challenged – hegemonies. Radical education is a way to imagine – and to realise – the end of patriarchy, the end of racism or the end of socio-economic inequality. Additionally – and beyond the scope of

this review – for Europeans, radical education is a pathway to address other intimate problems of European democracies such as populism, authoritarianism, the rise of the far right, social polarisation, xenophobia, homophobia, corruption, electoral abstention, distrust in institutions and citizen apathy.

What makes education radical?

While there are some similarities between the educational proposals from the reviewed authors and other widespread educational practices – for instance, non-formal education in the European youth field – there are also substantial differences. This review shows that education is made radical through different articulated and interdependent dimensions, which can be systematised as aims, actors, methodology, ethics and epistemology.

The aims of radical education are twofold. On the one hand, radical education is about individuals, because it aims to liberate people from their condition of oppressed – or oppressors – and making them historical beings, restoring hope for bringing into history their imagination and visions of society. Radical education is therefore a process of rehumanisation where individuals reconnect with their radical human condition, by deepening awareness about the social practices that dehumanise them – such as the dominator culture – and by unlearning their own practices that dehumanise others. For instance, under radical education, a learner is set to unlearn domination.

On the other hand, radical education is about society, because it aims to identify, expose, and eliminate the conditions behind social injustice and dehumanisation in order to achieve social justice. Notwithstanding the full scope of social injustice, the reviewed authors do identify specific social issues to be addressed by radical education. For instance, Freire mentions the need to redistribute the property of history, so that the oppressed can emerge, from mere spectators of a history course being set for them, to historical beings, creating history. Illich defends the deinstitutionalisation of education, so that every learner is empowered to educate, to choose who educates them, what the content of that educational process is, and how this education is materialised – education for all means education by all. Giroux calls for the challenging of neoliberalism, so that the ongoing transformation of educational spaces and processes into commercial spheres is interrupted, and the urgent recovery of the promise of a radical democracy is established. hooks advocates for the breaking of the dominator model of social engagement, so that the different forms of domination can be brought to an end and that a greater connection and understanding of life lived in a community is reached.

Regarding their actors, radical education is meant as a task for radicals and for the oppressed, who should be among the developers of theory and practice. Radical education inverts the traditional power structure in the different widespread practices of education, such as the globalised formal education systems, but also non-formal education promoted by European institutions – educators conflate with learners, and learners conflate with educators. Instead of assuming a prescriptive and directive role, education institutions assure the continuous availability of resources for learners to learn, to network and to meaningfully politicise a social challenge they want to share with a wider public.

Methodology-wise, radical education resorts to the problem-posing approach, bringing into question issues that might be naturalised, practices that might be crystallised or ideas that might

be seen as hardly questionable. The problem-posing approach is the constant unveiling of reality that allows – and requires – radical thinking and leads to the progressive conscientiation of learners. Radical education explores disenchantment with – and detachment from – the central social ritual, instead of avoiding, dismissing or treating it. Human misery and injustice are thoroughly identified, denounced, and countered through learners' action. The profound critique of existing institutions is their lack of encouraging and welcoming reflection and formulating alternative solutions and new social utopias.

Radical education does not relegate emotions from learning processes. Instead, it benefits from their humanising potential. Love, passion and excitement are made central in educational practice. Feelings are treated as the main substance that makes learning happen. Radical learning recognises and engages the power of mystery. It connects with – and stimulates – the ability to be awed. It incorporates an ongoing experience of wonder. Radical education is dialogical and rejects antidialogical – banking – approaches. Knowledge is built from dialogue between different sides, and both sides are willing to change in their learning process.

The ethical dimension of radical education can be perceived as quite challenging for some. It is about the integrity of keeping the educational spaces open and safe for – radically – thinking against dominant – hegemonic – ideas, practices and social dispositions. Radical education needs educators to fully and critically understand how education takes place in other spheres in order to value and bring into practice the particular environment which safeguards radical thinking. The safe space to think against – and to transgress – boundaries is what provides hope to the disenchanted, and to those willing to explore the hypothesis of radical social transformations. Radical education is self-reflexive and conscious of its ongoing project of democratic transformation, while remaining open to alternative ideas and practices that do not offer any guarantees.

Radical education continuously endorses the radical project of ending domination and the domination culture. While it contests the different forms of domination, it also transforms the relations of subordination and oppression in society. It changes the power relations and positions in order to increase the political influence of the dominated – undominating them, liberating them. The work of ending domination requires the work of love and the strengthening of connections between learners, rather than their mutual competition. Radical education develops everyday, practical wisdom, which can be successful within and beyond radical learning environments.

Last, but equally crucial, radical education requires continuous curation of the epistemologies it contains. Looking beyond domination culture also means having constant awareness of the nature and limitations of the knowledge being presented. For instance, eurocentrism is problematic in this regard, as it builds and presents knowledge from a particular angle, disempowering other epistemologies. An epistemology-aware educational process revitalises and renews the vocabulary it uses and allows a change of dominating narratives.

Defining radical education

Taken together, the various elements of this review come together in a general concept of radical education, which can be synthesised as the supporting process leading to radically thinking about reality and oneself, beyond institutional, social-normative, and epistemological constraints, while acting towards the exposure and elimination of radical problems of society. Radical education is realised twofold. On the one hand, as learners become politicised by

expanding their self-awareness, they feel liberated from identified forms of dehumanisation, oppression or inequality, and they dialogically imagine – and collectively engage – new utopias. On the other hand, radical education is realised through the radical transformation of society, ethically attained. Both achievements converge into the final and continuous aim of social justice.

Therefore, in the European context, radical education does not necessarily result in the improvement of liberal democracies, as it rather results in their critique. Radical education progressively forms alternative democratic utopias, incompatible with the types of oppression historically entangled with liberal democracies, such as socio-economic inequality, racism and patriarchy. Radical education in the context of liberal democracies does not necessarily integrate liberal ideological traditions in its approach – it forms objectivity based in emotional wealth, rather than in a rationalist procedure; it fosters the strengths of collectiveness, rather than asserting competition and individualistic rights; it looks radically into contexts and values dissensus, rather than inducing a universalist and consensual proposal. Radical education rejects the idea of educational neutrality and the end of history by expanding the scope of – and the hope for – historical possibilities beyond established hegemonies. In current European democracies, radical education restores people with the power to feel, interpret, compose and make history, regardless of the history written for them.

Future research

Future research on the topic can explore different angles. More authors can be reviewed and compared, particularly those sharing a liberal-democratic spectrum, and other methodologies can be used in this process, such as systematic reviews. The densification of the review could allow a better understanding of the concept of radical education and further consolidate its theoretical ground.

As a response to the contemporary *zeitgeist*, the prejudice against the radical¹⁵ can be addressed by research. This includes investigating the generalised narrative of the radical as having a relation with violence and, therefore, as something to be prevented, as promoted by counterterrorism policies in Europe. In parallel, the association of the radical with the phenomenon of the growing far right and extremism in Europe needs to be addressed as well, aiming to clarify the different motivations, causes, resources and methodologies of radicalism in the context of liberal democracies.

Last, future research can explore how non-formal education and youth work in Europe relate to radical education. Analysing current principles, practices, actors and policies can provide important knowledge to the European youth sector, including re-defining policy priorities, inventing new practices, retuning institutional roles, and reinterpreting the general aims of youth work. While nowadays, radical education might occur as fragmented, there is a potentially fertile ground to explore in producing a coherent and accessible practice for – and with – young people in Europe in the very immediate future.

15. As introduced in the chapter “Pluralizing the democratic imaginary - Youth beyond the liberal-democratic canon” in the upcoming *Youth Knowledge Book – Youth Political Participation* (Xavier, in press).

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