

What the Syllabus Hides: Epistemic Racism and Whitestream Sociology in the Teaching of Sociology

Amurabi Oliveira

Ph.D. in Sociology from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE).
Associate Professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC).
amurabi.oliveira@ufsc.br

Abstract

This article argues that the history of sociology is inseparable from the colonial project, as modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin. It introduces the concept of "whitestream sociology" - borrowed from Sandy Grande and originally coined by Claude Denis - to critique the false universality of a sociological canon structured around white, European, bourgeois male experience. Using Brazil as a case study, the article demonstrates how sociology syllabi have historically replicated European and North American authors while marginalizing local, Black, and Indigenous intellectual production. Despite recent transformations - including the expansion of higher education, affirmative action policies (quotas), and Law 10.639/03 (mandating Afro-Brazilian history and culture in basic education) - empirical data show that Brazilian social science curricula remain overwhelmingly white-centered. The article proposes a Sociology of Color (SOC) as a pedagogical response, which involves not only diversifying authors but also reorienting teaching practices around the experiences of People of Color (POC). The conclusion argues that moving from whitestream sociology to a Sociology of Color is an ethical and political imperative for training sociologists capable of understanding and transforming racialized, colonial realities in the 21st century.

Keywords: Decolonial pedagogy; Epistemic racism; Brazil; Affirmative action; Whiteness; Coloniality of knowledge; Southern theory.

Introduction

The debate surrounding the canon of sociology is far from new, yet it has gained unprecedented urgency in the 21st century. For decades, scholars from the Global South and other marginalized communities have questioned the universality of a discipline born from the crucible of European modernity. This critique is not merely an exercise in intellectual history; it is a fundamental challenge to the pedagogical practices that continue to shape how we understand the social world. The central argument is that the history of sociology is inseparable from the colonial project. As Raewyn Connell (1997, 2007) has powerfully demonstrated, what has been crystallized as the "classical" tradition is, in fact, a provincial narrative—one centered on a specific group of white, bourgeois European men—that has been erroneously universalized.

This paper engages with this critique by introducing the concept of "Whitestream Sociology," a term borrowed from Indigenous scholar Sandy Grande (2003) and originally coined by Claude Denis (1997). "Whitestream" is a more precise alternative to "mainstream," as it refuses to naturalize the dominance of white, Anglo-Saxon experience as the neutral standard. Instead, it highlights how social structures, including academic knowledge production, are principally organized around this specific, yet hegemonic, experience. This framework allows us to analyze how epistemic racism operates—how a particular matrix of knowledge destroys or sidelines other epistemes by refusing to recognize them as valid forms of knowledge, as argued by Anny Ocoró Loango (2021).

The primary objective of this text is to analyze how "whitestream" logic has historically molded sociological theory and its teaching, using Brazil as a central case study. Brazil presents a unique and contradictory scenario: a country with a majority Black and mixed-race population where the university curriculum remains overwhelmingly white and European. The text will first trace the historical institutionalization of a "whitestream" sociology in Brazilian education, from early didactic manuals to the consolidation of university programs. It will then examine

contemporary challenges and transformations, such as the impact of affirmative actions and the emergence of new student demographics. Finally, it proposes a pedagogical path forward, advocating for a "Sociology of Color" (SOC)—a deliberate practice of decentering whiteness not by simply inverting the canon, but by pluralizing it and reorienting it around the experiences, bodies, and intellectual traditions of People of Color (POC). This includes engaging with innovative proposals like the "Pedagogy of the Crossroads" (Pedagogia da Encruzilhada), which subverts traditional hierarchies of learning.

By doing so, this work aims to contribute to a necessary transformation: moving from a sociology that examines coloniality to a sociology that actively decolonizes its own pedagogical soul.

The central contribution of this article is to reinterpret the critique of the sociological canon not merely as a historiographical debate or a theoretical impasse, but fundamentally as a *pedagogical problem*. Treating the canon as a pedagogical problem means asking how syllabus design, reading lists, and classroom dynamics daily reproduce or disrupt epistemic racism (Loango, 2021). While existing decolonial critiques analyze the coloniality of knowledge (Quijano, 2000; Ballestrin, 2013), this article advances the debate by proposing 'Sociology of Color' (SOC) as a concrete pedagogical response. SOC goes beyond adding non-Western authors to an existing matrix; it provides a framework to reorient how sociological theory is taught, learned, and assessed. Conceptually, while "whitestream sociology" diagnoses the naturalized hegemony of white, Euro-American middle-class experience as the default universal, SOC operates as its pedagogical counterpart, operationalizing the decentering of whiteness. In an era marked by the global expansion of university access alongside the persistence of structural racial inequalities, addressing these dynamics in the classroom has acquired an unprecedented urgency.

Whitestreaming Sociology

From my perspective, it is impossible to separate the history of sociology from the colonial project, since the emergence of sociology is also deeply linked to

modernity. Some would argue that it is, par excellence, the science of modern societies, with coloniality and modernity being two sides of the same coin. Connell (2007, 2019) has drawn attention to how a certain version of the history of sociology has been crystallized. In this history, a specific group of white, bourgeois European men began to perceive the contradictions of the modern world and laid the foundations for all sociological thought as we know it today.

The modernity/coloniality group has strived to think, from Latin America, about the intimate relationship between these two projects, drawing attention to the fact that modernity as we understand it begins with the colonial encounter in the so-called "New World" (Ballestrin, 2013). Moreover, it is from this colonial encounter that the classification system shaping the modern concept of race also emerges. Thus, race, modernity, and coloniality are inevitably intertwined.

If we understand that sociological theory as we know it is also a theory of modern societies, and that modernity is the other side of the same coin as the colonial project, then we can understand that sociology is also a science of coloniality. Sociology relates to coloniality by examining it, but also as a product of it, reflecting the contradictions of this process, as well as the exclusions that are constitutive of it.

According to Quijano (2000), in colonial modernity, it is primarily race and sex (he does not use the category of gender in this text) that shape the experience of subjects, mainly considering the social classification process produced from these markers. Sociological theory is also permeated by such markers. Thus, as Connell (2012) highlights, what we recurrently call social theory is what is produced by white European men, marginalizing all theoretical production originating from other subjects, be they women or people of color.

Although there has been a growing movement in recent years to question the sociological canon—the terminological shift from "classic" to "canon" points in this direction—we still face a reality where whiteness predominates in our theoretical references. Some seek to defend the classics of sociology, indicating that they are under attack (Sell, 2025). However, when we carefully examine the syllabi of courses at major universities in both the Global North and South, we can observe that the place of the classics remains quite preserved.

In this text, I would like to deepen the idea of how whiteness has shaped sociological theory, and consequently, the entire way we have taught sociology in different educational institutions, whether schools, universities, etc. I borrow the expression "whitestream" to think about the idea that we have dedicated ourselves to teaching and reproducing a whitestream sociology. I first read this expression in the texts of Indigenous scholar Sandy Grande, who uses it to critique what she calls whitestream feminism. According to the author:

(...) what has long passed as "mainstream" feminism is perhaps more appropriately termed "whitestream" feminism - that is, a feminist discourse that is not only dominated by white women but also principally structured on the basis of white, middle-class experience; a discourse that serves their ethno-political interests and capital investments. Other characteristics of whitestream feminism include a heavy dependence on postmodern/poststructuralist theories, a privileging of "academic feminism" over the feminist political project, and an undertheorizing of patriarchy as the universal oppression of all women - all features that have been critiqued by feminists of color and other radical scholars. (Grande, 2003: 331)

To a large extent, what the author considers about feminism can also be said about sociological theory. Whitestream sociology is structured from a singular experience that imposes itself as universal: whiteness. Whitestream sociology reproduces whiteness through course programs, authors cited in articles, the most prestigious research centers, and has as its horizon a certain ethnic-racial homogeneity. It understands that doing sociology, producing sociological knowledge, only exists based on the singular experience of theory produced by white authors.

Grande (2003) clarifies that the concept of whitestream was coined by Canadian sociologist Claude Denis, who sought to indicate that, while society is not white in sociodemographic terms, it remains principally structured around the basis of white, Anglo-Saxon experience (Denis, 1997). Bringing this issue to the field of sociological theory becomes even more evident in countries like Brazil. Although whiteness does not represent the majority of the population, there is a predominance of representation of this whiteness in academia, in the bibliographies indicated, among graduate students, etc.

It is impossible to dissociate the debate about the idea of a whitestream sociology from what Loango (2021) calls epistemic racism and privilege. According to the author:

Epistemic racism is a form of domination based on the hierarchy of human beings, their practices, their history, and their knowledge. Historically, the global exploitation of capitalism racialized and feminized bodies in order to exploit them and extract greater profit from them. Exploitation and racialization run parallel, not only to the imposition of a culture or power group, but also to the establishment of a hegemonic epistemic matrix. This is articulated with a project of global domination that, by imposing Western epistemology as the only valid form of knowledge, destroys other epistemes, stripping them of their power to be recognized as such. (Loango, 2021, p. 424, Author's translation)

We must understand that knowledge structures are also crossed by the racial hierarchies constructed in modernity, and that intellectuals and producers of social theory were not immune to the elements that shape modernity. I would like to insist here that the organization of syllabi gives us relevant clues about how epistemic racism operates. After all, the process of routinizing knowledge through teaching in educational and research institutions is one of the main daily ways of sacralizing or ostracizing certain authors.

Notably, I am referring here to a global phenomenon that is produced and reproduced in different institutions in the Global North and South. However, if we consider the colonial experience lived in Global South countries, this phenomenon becomes even more contradictory. The social experience in which these theories are forged is substantially different from those experienced by subjects in the Global South (Connell, 2007). In this sense, I believe the concept of whitestream sociology is useful, as it highlights the singularity of a theoretical proposal that pretends to be universal.

The Teaching of Sociology in Brazil: A White Experience?

The history of sociology in Brazil has some singularities even when compared to what happened in other Latin American countries. The first substantive difference is the fact that sociology was institutionalized in Brazil first in secondary education, and only later in higher education. At the end of the 19th century, Brazil had its first

experiences of teaching sociology in secondary education (Alves & Costa, 2006; Bodart & Cigales, 2021), whereas the creation of undergraduate programs in social sciences only occurred in the 1930s¹. Between the 1920s and 1930s, a series of educational reforms gradually made sociology a mandatory subject in complementary secondary education courses, which aimed to prepare students for entry into higher education. Thus, we can observe an expansion in this period of the publication of introduction to sociology manuals, many of which were disseminated in schools.

When we examine more closely the sociology manuals produced in Brazil between the 1920s and 1940s—with the Capanema Reform in 1942, complementary courses ceased to exist, so sociology lost space in Brazilian secondary education, resulting in a loss of editorial interest in publishing school manuals for this discipline—we can observe that they tend to replicate authors and theories produced in Europe, with authors like Spencer, Comte, and Durkheim gaining space (Meucci, 2011). It should also be considered that in this period, a whole debate developed around so-called "Catholic sociology," with the production of school manuals from this perspective, highlighting the leadership role of Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983), a prominent Catholic intellectual at that time who published the book *Preparação à Sociologia* in 1931 (Cigales & Oliveira, 2021).

As a rule, the authors involved in producing these manuals were self-taught intellectuals in the field of sociology, dedicating themselves to writing books in various areas of knowledge such as history, philosophy, geography, literature, etc. In some cases, they had academic training abroad, such as Delgado de Carvalho (1884-1880), who studied Law at the University of Lausanne and Political Science in Paris, publishing the books *Sociologia educacional* (1933), *Sociologia experimental* (1934), and *Práticas sociológicas* (1938). Another notable distinction in this period is Gilberto Freyre (1900-1945), who had completed a master's degree in Social History at

1 In Brazil, specialized academic training in sociology occurs through interdisciplinary undergraduate courses in social sciences, which center their activities in the areas of anthropology, political science, and sociology. Thus, disciplinary training is concentrated at the graduate level.

Columbia University in the 1920s, also taking courses in the Sociology department. He became a professor of sociology at the *Escola Normal de Pernambuco* and published the book *Sociologia* (1945).

Despite there being a vivid intellectual tradition in Brazil and Latin America already in that period, involving schools of thought and authors focused on interpreting national society, most of the manuals and course plans were focused on replicating European and North American theories and authors. Notably, this marker was not only geographical but also racial and gendered. Authors like Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), who already had a consolidated production at that time, do not appear in these works, nor does Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who had already been translated into French at the end of the 19th century, is not cited.

Despite the advent of social science courses starting in the 1930s, which enabled the formation of the first generation of professional sociologists trained in Brazil, this scenario remained largely untouched, as the courses continued to reproduce this pattern of theoretical-conceptual training. A quite forceful critique in this period is that elaborated by Guerreiro Ramos in his book *Cartilha brasileira do aprendiz de sociólogo* (1942). In it, he criticizes not only the lack of preparation of sociology professors who worked in Brazil between the 1920s and 1930s but also the fact that they recurrently turned to a "canned sociology" in opposition to an "authentic sociology," elaborated from national problems. To a large extent, Ramos anticipates by a few decades the problem posed by Connell in *Southern Theory* (2007).

Ramos's critiques help us glimpse the limits of how sociology was taught in Brazil; however, he does not highlight the whole problem. If Brazilian sociology lacked the formulation of a theoretical framework conceived from the tropics, it is true that even the most impactful interpretative formulations of national social theory came from white men, mostly coming not only from wealthier classes but also from the richest region of the country, concentrated in the Rio-São Paulo axis. The preface written by Cândido (2006) for the work *Raízes do Brasil* (2006 [1936]) marked a powerful synthesis in Brazilian social sciences, for in this text he consecrated the "authors who invented

Brazil," namely: Gilberto Freyre, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, and Celso Furtado. I want to emphasize with this that in addition to the issue of Eurocentrism, which indeed reproduces itself in theoretical production—what Quijano (2000) called the coloniality of knowledge—there are still other layers of production and reproduction of inequality and stratification of knowledge, also involving race and gender.

Throughout the 20th century, the number of social science courses in Brazil expanded, making the country one of the main centers in Latin America. The unique trajectory of these social sciences in the country, especially during the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985), marked by political-ideological persecution but also by the expansion of undergraduate and graduate courses in this area (Liedke Filho, 2005), was a factor. This expansion meant something relevant in the Brazilian context, as it enabled the emergence of academic social science courses (undergraduate and graduate) outside the Rio-São Paulo axis (Barreira, Cortes & Lima, 2018). This was accelerated in the last two decades, following the advent of public policies aimed at expanding the federal network of higher education.

Another relevant development in Brazilian higher education was the so-called affirmative actions, which implemented a quota policy in undergraduate courses considering different markers of inequality, with emphasis on racial issues (Childs and Stromquist, 2015; Heringer, 2024). Here we must address a relevant point in this discussion: the consideration that Brazil is a country formed by a majority Black population, which historically was not reflected in the student body of higher education institutions, especially public ones, which are also the most prestigious in the national academic field.

The increase in new publics in Brazilian higher education has also generated new demands, not only for policies supporting university permanence but also for curriculum revision. In the case of courses that train teachers—including the teaching degree in social sciences—this becomes even more evident given the legal obligations imposed by Law No. 10.639/03, which made the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture mandatory in all grades and all disciplines of basic education.

This led to a revision of teacher training courses, which began to introduce mandatory courses such as: History of Africa, Ethnic-Racial Relations, Afro-Brazilian Studies, etc. However, the introduction of new disciplines has not necessarily led to an automatic revision of how the others are taught, or even of the criteria for choosing authors read and debated in the classroom.

We thus have a scenario in which, in a country like Brazil, formed by a majority Black population, the syllabi of social science courses continue to be conceived from a white-centered framework. In other words, we continue to teach a whitestream sociology in a majority-Black country. To a large extent, the university in Brazil still reproduces a colonial model of education, conceived from whiteness, even if this is a changing scenario.

Understanding why Brazilian sociology curricula have persistently privileged European and North American authors - despite the presence of robust national traditions - requires examining both historical institutionalization and ongoing structural conditions. Historically, as early secondary manuals (Meucci, 2011; Cigales & Oliveira, 2021) and higher education programs were consolidated, Western European frameworks were adopted as the sole markers of scientific legitimacy. Institutional incentives, international publishing hierarchies, and graduate training programs continued to reward alignment with Global North scholarship, reinforcing what Connell (2007, 2019) describes as the global division of labor in social science. However, this academic continuity directly clashes with the contemporary institutional reality in Brazil. The demographic transformation driven by affirmative action policies (Childs & Stromquist, 2015; Heringer, 2024) and the legal mandates of Law 10.639/03 have brought a racially diverse student body into universities. This creates a structural paradox: an increasingly diverse student population is being trained through syllabi that remain anchored in whitestream assumptions. Addressing this disconnect is not merely an academic exercise, but a pressing pedagogical necessity.

From Whitestream Sociology to a Sociology of Color (SOC): Pedagogical Challenges

As indicated above, Brazilian education has undergone profound transformations in recent decades, and I consider affirmative actions to be the most profound of them. This has invited professors—not only of sociology—to rethink how they have organized their courses and how they have taught them to the next generations. I often say that millennial university professors (the generation to which I belong) face their greatest challenge in teaching in a completely different way from how we were taught. This statement is based on the recognition that a rapid sociodemographic transformation has occurred in Brazilian higher education, which has also occurred concomitantly with important transformations in how we have produced our discussions in the social sciences.

In the specific field of sociology, questioning the place of the classics has assumed a relevant role in attempting to remodel this science, also redefining the very place of sociology in the contemporary world. In my view, this is not a simple attack on the classics (N. Oliveira, 2024; Sell, 2025), but a valid inquiry into the place that certain subjects have occupied and occupy in the production of knowledge, especially in the case of women and people of color in general. We must recognize that these social markers intersect, such that we can speak of a true intersectional erasure of certain figures from the history of the social sciences, considering how geographical origin, class, race, and gender articulate in their trajectories (A. Oliveira, 2025).

In my perception, this questioning of the classics—which does not imply their refusal but rather a demand for their expansion and inclusion—must be posed not as a strictly theoretical problem, or even as a problem in the history of sociology, but as a pedagogical problem. It must be faced considering how we have taught sociology, which becomes even more glaring in the case of teaching that occurs in the Global South, in countries that experienced the colonial experience.

Connell's (2007) elaboration around southern theories, for example, emerges directly from her pedagogical experience of teaching classical sociology in the United

States, despite being a person from and academically trained in Australia. Her inquiry into why we continually cite authors like Bourdieu and Foucault in our works—even though they were forged in the Global South (Connell, 2012)—remains valid, as it denaturalizes how we organize knowledge.

In a recent survey involving curricula from different Brazilian public universities, Carvalho and Klein (2023) conducted a detailed survey of which authors are most present in these curricula. Without any surprise, one can observe that among the twenty most cited, they are all white men, concentrated almost exclusively in the Global North. This means that despite the great uproar around the attack on the classics (Sell, 2025), when we empirically observe reality, it is still quite grounded in maintaining a certain status quo, in reproducing a whitestream sociology.

Still according to Carvalho and Klein (2023), the books most present in the curricula of social science courses in Brazil are: *The Rules of Sociological Method*, *Economy and Society*, and *Capital*, referring to the three classical authors of sociology. Next, Bourdieu, Giddens, and Elias appear as the most cited authors, as a kind of "canonical triad of contemporaneity." Among the twenty most cited authors, in addition to those of European and American origin, we also find Florestan Fernandes, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Caio Prado Júnior, and Gilberto Freyre, considered classical authors of Brazilian social thought.

Although there may be some curricular variation, if we consider what is taught of sociology in Brazil in social science courses, we can observe that they tend to recurrently have an introduction to sociology discipline, followed by sociological theory disciplines ranging from classical to contemporary, and eventually some discipline of Brazilian sociology, in addition to methodological disciplines. In the analysis carried out by Oliveira (2015) on the teaching of sociological theory in these courses, it is observed that in the case of classical sociological theories, there is a replication of authors who are quite canonical, whereas in the teaching of contemporary theory, there is greater diversity of authors (however, all are white men).

In this sense, we must produce a racialized look at the curriculum, observe it through the social markers of difference, and question to what extent this curricular organization replicates structures of production and reproduction of inequalities. To a large extent, we can say that the problem posed by Du Bois (2007 [1920]) in the classic essay "The Souls of White Folks" remains present, as the author questions the production of a white supremacy that perceives itself as the only group capable of producing valid knowledge.

The idea of producing a racialized look at the curriculum refers to the idea that every curriculum is racialized. However, its racialization from whiteness tends to be naturalized and thought of as the "natural order of things." It is no coincidence that a course organized only with non-white authors, for example, is normally only possible in special elective courses, not covering mandatory courses. We must also produce a gendered look at the curriculum, ask where the women are, where the trans people are in our courses, where we place these people in the hierarchy of knowledge production when we organize what we teach in the classroom.

This look at the curriculum implies a critical reflexive exercise on the ways we learn sociology and also the ways we teach it, as well as on the role of greater epistemological diversity that proposes to be truly plural within pedagogical practice. Considering the entrenchment of colonial processes, the rupture with the pedagogical replication of a whitestream sociology is only possible consciously and deliberately, by engaging in dialogues with diverse intellectuals located in different parts of the world. This is currently more facilitated due to search tools, translation, and artificial intelligence.

I look retrospectively at the sociology of education courses I have taught. This is a discipline I have taught regularly for the last 18 years, and indeed my first courses reproduced this whitestream sociology. Even teaching in small towns in the interior of Brazil, I centered my courses exclusively on authors like Durkheim, Bourdieu, and Foucault. However, reflexively and continuously, as my audiences changed, as did the debates in sociology itself, my courses also changed. They began

to present greater racial and gender equity, including Black and Indigenous intellectuals, seeking to produce what I have called a Sociology of Color (SOC).

By homology to the idea of "people of color," I propose here the idea of formulating and thinking about teaching a Sociology of Color (SOC). This means not only making visible the sociological intellectual production of non-white people but also valuing their pedagogical experiences and forms of knowledge circulation. Certainly, looking at the curriculum in a racialized way is a fundamental step to advance the debate, seeking to expand the racial (and also gender) diversity of authors that make up academic training in sociology. However, this is only part of the process.

If we recognize that there is a whitestream sociology and that we want to move towards a sociology of color (non-white), we must also think about how to build a sociology and a pedagogical practice structured from the experiences of People of Color (POC). We must question the universality of whiteness, singularizing it and situating it alongside other intellectual experiences.

Returning to the specific case of Brazil, from where my experience comes, it is necessary to recognize that there has been a conscious effort to make visible and update the work of authors like Guerreiro Ramos and Lélia Gonzalez, Black social scientists of the 20th century who started from their experiences in the world to produce their theories. Ramos (1954) drew attention in the 1950s to the fact that Brazilian sociology treated the "Black-theme" and marginalized the "Black-life." Thus, many white intellectuals—such as Gilberto Freyre and Florestan Fernandes—occupied themselves with thinking about the lives of the Black population in Brazil as a research theme but marginalized the lived experiences of these populations, including marginalizing dialogue with other Black intellectuals.

Some pedagogical proposals dialoguing with Black Brazilian culture have gained visibility in Brazil in recent years, such as the proposal for a pedagogy of the crossroads (Rufino, 2019), which re-signifies the learning process by subverting hierarchies and valuing other forms of knowledge and learning, such as learning through the body, dances, capoeira circles, etc. Although we can point out limitations to this and similar

proposals, mainly regarding its application in the school context, it is important to think about how to challenge the colonial model of education, based on a static hierarchy between teacher and student, so that the change is not only through the introduction of new authors but also through the production of new ways of learning.

To demonstrate how SOC functions as a practical pedagogical framework rather than an abstract concept, consider the reorganization of a foundational “Classical Sociological Theory” course. In a traditional whitestream model, the syllabus is structured chronologically around Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, presenting their concepts (e.g., division of labor, rationalization, alienation) as universal diagnostics of modern society. Under SOC, this structure is transformed through three concrete pedagogical practices:

First, Syllabus and Module Reorganization: Instead of treating non-white or Southern authors as optional supplementary readings or isolated “special topics” at the end of the term, the curriculum is organized around thematic modules where canonized and non-canonized thinkers are placed in direct dialogue. For instance, a module on Labor, Capitalism, and Modernity pairs Marx's analysis of primitive accumulation with W.E.B. Du Bois's (2007 [1920]) analysis of racial capitalism and colonial exploitation, or Guerreiro Ramos's (1954) critique of how sociology treats Black life versus the 'Black-theme'.

Second, Classroom Activities and Assignments: Pedagogical practice shifts from passive reception to critical comparative analysis. Students are assigned “canonical translation exercises,” in which they apply classical concepts (e.g., Durkheimian solidarity or Weberian legitimacy) to colonial and postcolonial contexts, evaluating where these concepts explain local realities and where they fail due to their unstated whitestream origins. Furthermore, drawing on Rufino's (2019) “Pedagogy of the Crossroads”, assignments incorporate multimodal formats- such as oral histories, archival analyses of local marginalized intellectuals, and collaborative syllabus redesign projects - subverting traditional academic hierarchies.

Brazil is formed predominantly by POC, although we must situate here that race is a social construction and many people considered white in Brazil would not be considered white in other national contexts. The expansion of authors and debates in the curricula of sociology courses is an exercise that must be carried out considering the dialogue with national society itself, also considering the changes in public that we have seen in Brazilian universities in recent years as a result of so-called affirmative actions, which expanded the participation of POC in Brazilian higher education.

It is necessary to make visible the contradiction of maintaining syllabi centered on a whitestream sociology in the contemporary world and even more so in a country formed predominantly by POC. The coloniality of knowledge to which Quijano (2000) refers materializes in the process of routinizing sociological knowledge in its daily teaching. The way we select authors, the way gender and race issues cross our pedagogical choices, but at the same time naturalize a whitestream and malestream sociology.

Conclusion: Towards a Decolonial Horizon in Sociology Pedagogy

This paper has sought to demonstrate that the teaching of sociology is not a neutral or purely technical act. It is, fundamentally, a political and epistemological practice that has historically been complicit with the colonial project. By adopting the concept of "whitestream sociology," we have been able to unmask the supposed universality of the discipline, revealing it to be a particular, situated, and racialized knowledge that serves to reproduce the intellectual hegemony of the Global North and white elites, even in countries like Brazil, where the majority of the population is Black.

The analysis of the Brazilian case is particularly illuminating. It shows that the problem is not merely the geographical origin of classical authors but the structural logic that marginalizes "Black-life" in favor of the "Black-theme," as Guerreiro Ramos critically noted. Despite recent advancements—such as the implementation of Law 10.639/03 and the expansion of access through affirmative action, which have brought new bodies and demands into the academy—the curriculum remains stubbornly anchored in a white, European, and male-centered canon. The empirical data from

Carvalho and Klein (2023) confirms that the much-touted "attack on the classics" has yet to result in a substantive transformation of course syllabi.

However, the current scenario of demographic and social change is not a threat to the discipline but its greatest opportunity. The arrival of a new, more diverse student body creates an urgent pedagogical demand. We can no longer teach a sociology that explains the social world exclusively through the eyes of those who benefited most from coloniality. This is where the proposal for a "Sociology of Color" (SOC) becomes essential. SOC is not about replacing one canon with another but about expanding the field of vision. It means placing the intellectual production of Black, Indigenous, and other subalternized authors—from Lélia Gonzalez to Guerreiro Ramos, from Connell to Fanon—in dialogue with the traditional canon, not as a "special topic" but as a central, structuring axis of the discipline.

While SOC is deeply informed by the Brazilian context and its specific demographic and legal trajectory (Heringer, 2024; Law 10.639/03), its underlying pedagogical principles are highly transferable to other national and institutional settings, including the Global North. In large lecture halls or smaller seminars alike, SOC does not demand the total abandonment of dominant theoretical traditions; rather, it equips students to engage them critically. By learning to deconstruct the whitestream origins of classical sociology, students in both the Global South and Global North gain a more rigorous understanding of global academic debates. SOC does not isolate students from mainstream scholarship; on the contrary, it enables them to participate in international academic discourse with heightened analytical clarity, empowering them to critique epistemic hierarchies while mastering dominant texts.

In conclusion, moving from a whitestream sociology to a SOC is not just an academic exercise; it is an ethical and political imperative. It is a commitment to training sociologists capable of understanding and transforming the complex racial, gendered, and colonial realities of the 21st century.

References

- Alves, E. M. S., & Costa, P. R. S. M. (2006). Aspectos históricos da cadeira de sociologia nos estudos secundários (1892-1925). *Revista Brasileira de História de Educação*, 6(2), 31-52.
- Ballestrin, L. (2013). América Latina e o giro decolonial. *Revista brasileira de ciência política*, 89-117.
- Barreira, I., Côrtes, S., & Lima, J. C. (2018). A sociologia fora do eixo: diversidades regionais e campo da pós-graduação no Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Sociologia*, 6(13), 76-103.
- Bodart, C. D. N., & Cigales, M. P. (2021). O ensino de sociologia no século XIX: experiências no estado do Amazonas, 1890-1900. *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, 28, 123-145.
- Cândido, A. (2006). Prefácio. In S. B. de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil* (pp. 9-22). Companhia das Letras.
- Carvalho, L. P., & Klein, S. (2023). Contribuições para o ensino de teoria e história da sociologia: reflexões sobre o presente e propostas desde o Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Sociologia-RBS*, 11(27), 103-132.
- Childs, P., & Stromquist, N. P. (2015). Academic and diversity consequences of affirmative action in Brazil. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(5), 792-813.
- Cigales, M., & Oliveira, A. (2021). La sociología católica en Brasil a través de textos escolares. *Revista mexicana de sociología*, 83(1), 157-184.
- Connell, R. W. (1997). Why is classical theory classical?. *American journal of sociology*, 102(6), 1511-1557.
- Connell, R. (2007). *Southern Theory: Social Science and the Global Dynamics of Knowledge*. Polity Press.
- Connell, R. (2012). A iminente revolução na teoria social. *Revista brasileira de ciências sociais*, 27(80), 09-20.
- Connell, R. (2019). Canons and colonies: the global trajectory of sociology. *Estudos Históricos (Rio de Janeiro)*, 32, 349-367.
- Denis, C. (1997). *We Are Not You: First Nations and Canadian Modernity*. Broadview Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2007). The souls of white folk. In *Darkwater: Voices from within the veil* (pp. 29-46). Cosimo Classics. (Original work published 1920)
- Grande, S. (2003). Whitestream Feminism and the Colonialist Project: A Review of Contemporary Feminist Pedagogy and Praxis. *Educational Theory*, 53(3), 329-346.

Heringer, R. (2024). Affirmative action policies in higher education in Brazil: outcomes and future challenges. *Social Sciences*, 13(3), 132.

Holanda, S. B. (2006). *Raízes do Brasil*. São Paulo: Ed. Companhia das Letras.

Liedke Filho, E. D. (2005). A sociologia no Brasil: história, teorias e desafios. *Sociologias*, (14), 376-437.

Loango, A. O. (2021). O racismo e a hegemonia do privilégio epistêmico. *Revista de Filosofia Aurora*, 33 (59), 417-434.

Meucci, S. (2011). *Institucionalização da sociologia no Brasil: primeiros manuais e cursos*. Hucitec Editora.

Oliveira, N. (2024). Canônicos, anticanônicos, e nenhum cânone em absoluto: ir “para além do cânone” ou escrutinar as opções anticanônicas?. *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, (105), 141-158.

Oliveira, M. (2015). O ensino da teoria sociológica em alguns cursos de Ciências Sociais de universidades públicas brasileiras. *Política & Sociedade*, 14(31), 87-113.

Oliveira, A. (2025). Marina de Vasconcellos, pioneira da antropologia brasileira. *Antropolítica*, 57 (1): 1-17.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International sociology*, 15(2), 215-232.

Ramos, A. G. (1942). *Cartilha brasileira do aprendiz de sociólogo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Andes.

Ramos, A. G. (1954). O problema do negro na sociologia brasileira. *Cadernos de Nosso Tempo*, 2(2), 189-220.

Rufino, L. (2019). Pedagogia das encruzilhadas Exu como Educação. *Revista Exitus*, 9(4), 262-289.

Sell, C. E. (2025). The Destruction of the classics of sociology: democratization or homogenization?. *Revista Brasileira de Sociologia-RBS*, 13.