



Institutional and Contextual Factors that Shape Sociological Teaching Practices:

The Importance of Global Collaboration among Sociology Educators

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In this paper, we offer a preliminary outline of the proposed disciplinary, pedagogical, and pragmatic issues the ISA's newly founded *Sociological Teaching* thematic group will address in its future work. Teaching sociology itself is becoming a well-recognised specialty within our discipline. We argue that the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning can enhance teaching and learning sociology in post-secondary institutions. In this paper we critically reflect on *what, how, and who* we teach sociology taking into account how global relations of knowledge production inform core curriculum and pedagogical philosophies and practices. We make a case for the need to create opportunities and enabling spaces for collaboration and dialogue between sociologists from the Global South and Global North to expand the forms of knowledge we teach, both in terms of curriculum as well as forms of classroom engagement.

Keywords: sociological teaching, SoTL, teaching development, educators, Global South, Global North

In this paper, we offer a preliminary outline of the proposed disciplinary, pedagogical, and pragmatic issues the ISA's newly founded *Sociological Teaching* thematic group will address in its future work. We argue for the need to create opportunities and enabling spaces for collaboration and dialogue between sociol-

ogists from the Global South and Global North on *what, how, and who* we teach sociology, strengthening awareness of how global relations of knowledge production inform core curriculum and pedagogical philosophies and practices, and developing teaching resources for educators through open access, multi-authored texts.

In the 1990s, Ernest Boyer's work (Boyer, 1990) laid the foundation for a new interdisciplinary field of inquiry. Today, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), which focuses primarily on post-secondary, undergraduate education, seeks to enhance teaching and learning in post-secondary institutions through research-informed, pedagogical practices (Poole, 2007) and changes that place student learning at the forefront of teaching practices (Barr and Tagg, 1995). SoTL makes visible the work required to teach and to learn, for example sociology, effectively by highlighting that successful teaching practices require concerted effort, namely carefully planning, facilitating, and assessing learning activities (Briggs, 2014) as well as providing constructive feedback. Moreover, teaching informed by scholarship requires constant reflection on teaching practices and the underlying assumptions that inform our teaching (Kreber and Cranton, 2000). In other words, effective teaching is increasingly recognised as an active accomplishment,

a craft, rather than a function of simply talent or natural inclination (Riddell, 2019).

SoTL is now informed by various theoretical frameworks and empirical research and has become increasingly professionalised. Universities invest in teaching-focused institutes (in the Global North, for example, the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning at the University of Calgary, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of British Columbia), and professional organisations emerged (for example, the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Canada (STLHE), the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), or the International Teaching and Learning Cooperative (ITLC)). Both universities and organisations now host annual conferences bringing together SoTL scholars and teaching enthusiasts at the national and international level (e.g. the STLHE and ISSOTL annual conferences, the Symposium on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning organised by Mount Royal University's Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, or the ITLC's Lilly Conferences). In addition, a series of awards now recognise outstanding educators (in the United States and Canada, for example, the University of Calgary Teaching Awards, the Desire2Learn STLHE's Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning or their 3M National Teaching Fellowship, and the ASA's Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award). Conference proceedings, think pieces, and empirical research results are now regularly published in teaching-focused journals, among others:

- Asia-Pacific Forum on Science Learning and Teaching
- Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning
- Curricula: Journal of Teaching and Learning
- Enseñanza & Teaching,
- Higher Education in Africa Innovations in Education and Teaching International,
- International Journal on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Journal of Teaching and Learning,
- Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives
- New Directions for Teaching and Learning
- Teaching & Learning Inquiry
- Teaching in Higher Education
- The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Perspectives in Education (South Africa)
- Journal of Education (South Africa), and
- South African Journal of Higher Education.

Teaching sociology itself is becoming a well-recognised speciality within our discipline, particularly within post-secondary institutions in the Global North (Harley and Natalier, 2013; Howard, 2009; McKinney, 2018). Several professional sociological associations created teaching-focused subdivisions (for example, the Teaching Practice Cluster at the Canadian Sociological Association, the 'Teaching Social Problems' division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the American Sociological Association's Teaching and Learning in Sociology section). ASA TRAILS now offers a host of teaching resources on every conceivable topic online. In 1973, the American Sociological Association launched its own speciality journal *Teaching Sociology*, which to our knowledge remains the only journal that publishes a wide variety of theoretical, empirical and reflective articles pertaining specifically to teaching sociology and sociological teaching. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* (formerly *Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences*) does not primarily focus on teaching sociology, but contains a fair amount of sociological content, and has an international focus.

Despite the wealth of teaching-focused institutes, professional organisations, and journals, in 2019 the authors proposed to establish a thematic group focusing on teaching sociology and sociological teaching at the ISA. Through our research into scholarly teaching practices, we have found that national and international teaching journals tend to be multidisciplinary in nature with limited sociological input. Sociology-

specific teaching publications tend to be limited and mainly written for a national audience located primarily in the Global North. The goal of the ISA Thematic Group *Sociological Teaching* is to bring together international sociologists who have an active research interest in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, specialise in teaching sociology, and/or incorporate sociological insights into their teaching practices and thereby address some of the remaining gaps in current scholarship and teaching practice (while pushing to transform it). Indeed, the founding members of the Thematic Group teach undergraduate sociology in five continents. Since *Sociological Teaching* is still very much in its formative stage, our discussion of the group's preliminary objectives here will focus on *what, how, and who* we teach, and how institutional and socio-political contexts shape teaching practices. We will highlight throughout our discussion how the new thematic group *Sociological Teaching* seeks to address these issues.

First, we have to critically reflect on *what* we teach in our sociology courses. One recurring field of investigation is concerned with identifying the theories, methods, concepts, issues, etc. that form the core of teaching sociology (see, for example, Keith and Ender, 2004; Wagenaar, 2004; D'Antonio, 1983; Wagenaar, 1991), a topic that has been regularly revisited and expanded since (see, for example, Ballantine et al., 2016; Howard et al., 2014; Schwartz and Smith, 2010). Other researchers focused on learning outcomes and skill development (see, for example, Persell, 2010). This body of research focused primarily on introductory courses and generated data through content analyses of course outlines (see, for example, Grauerholz and Gibson, 2006) and introductory textbooks (see, for example, Keith and Ender, 2004) as well as surveying of sociologists (see, for example, Wagenaar, 2004) and students (see, for example, Howard et al., 2014).

The majority of this research is primarily concerned with examining and curating an inventory of relevant content without critically investigating the content itself. As Connell (2019) reminded us, sociology, as with other academic disciplines, emerged as an institutional practice in a specific historical con-

text, and contexts continue to shape the direction and assumptions of the intellectual labour of sociologists. Historically, sociology as a discipline has been dominated by the work of urban, heterosexual, 'white bourgeoisie men from western Europe and North America' (Connell, 2019: 35). They established departments and research programs, founded professional associations and affiliated journals, organised conferences, and produced textbooks (Connell, 2019). Connell (2018) pointed out that sociology as a discipline continues to be dominated by western institutions and their researchers, not due to their intellectual superiority but due to the concentration of power in those institutions and systematic exclusion of other knowledges (Connell, 2019). Jackson and Scott (2002: 28) noted that this concentration of power affects 'the construction and production of knowledge, what can be known, and who decides what counts as legitimate knowledge.'

The global political economy of knowledge production parallels a metropole – periphery model, with the periphery serving as raw data for theorising in the metropole (Hountondji, 1997/1994). Theoretical packages are then exported back to the periphery, for example through research publications and textbooks (Connell, 2019). While researchers in the periphery are by no means passive and have pushed the discipline forward in innovative ways, in a highly stratified global economy of knowledge production, knowledge producers in the periphery are encouraged to obtain their credentials from Western institutions, adapt Western theoretical and methodological approaches and assumptions, focus on social research problems deemed relevant by Western journals, and publish their work in the English language and in accredited high impact international journals or remain irrelevant (Connell, 2019; Connell, 2018). Insofar as knowledge filtering down to development initiatives in the periphery, failed programmes and projects from the West are tailor made to work in peripheral countries. Local conditions and knowledges are seldom factored into these development initiatives resulting in further hardships to the citizenry and Western development aid often prescribes how programmes and projects should be implemented.

Sociology as a discipline is certainly diverse and employs various theoretical frameworks and research methods (Schneickert et al., 2019), and there seems to be considerable debate about whether sociology has a core and what that core should be (Ferguson, 2016). However, there is a disconcerting commonality that unites sociology courses, namely their focus on Euro-Western sociology. For example, the first couple of chapters of introductory textbooks are usually dedicated to the discipline's foundations, central paradigms, and core research methods. Much of the aforementioned discussion of the sociological core focuses on central theoretical approaches and key theorists. D'Antonio (1983), for example, mentioned as relevant 3 core theoretical approaches: Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism, and corresponding key male theorists from the Global North—Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Mead, and Weber—who wrote in response to specific, primarily western European societal transformations and contexts.

Textbooks, for example, are where sociologists (re)tell the story of the discipline, and educators have an opportunity to reimagine the standard universalising narrative by drawing on a broader range of sources in writing these texts. For example, in the recent edited book, *Key Texts for Latin American Sociology* within the 'SAGE Studies in International Sociology' series, sociologist Jorge Rovira Mas (2019) outlined the unique founding problems and institutionalisation of sociology in Latin America, noting that this work 'began in a historical period with a very different economic, political, cultural and institutional framework' than those in Europe and the United States. Yet, a quick glance at current introductory texts reveals that the Eurocentric focus has not changed much over the last four decades. Arguably, some Canadian introductory textbooks now have included (primarily Western) feminist perspectives, and make mention of Middle Eastern thinkers such as Ibn Khaldūn (see, for example, Steckley, 2017), as well as North African thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and Black sociologists from the Global North like W.E.B. Du Bois and Agnes Calliste (see, for example, Quan-Haase and Tepperman, 2018). However, their discus-

sion remains confined to the opening chapter and their work finds little to no application in subsequent discussions and thematic explorations. In addition, these textbooks rarely, if ever, include the work of contemporary Sociologists from the periphery.

Textbooks, a key pedagogical tool especially in introductory undergraduate courses, tend to reproduce dominant ideas and practices within a discipline rather than challenging them (Manza et al., 2010; Greenwood and Howard, 2011). While Manza et al. (2010) and Schweingruber (2005) argued that textbook content is often outdated and therefore a poor reflection of the current state of Sociological Inquiry, Connell's (Connell, 2018; Connell, 2019) discussion suggests that the issue of poor textbooks is slightly more complex. Textbooks, particularly at the introductory level, tend to be written in the metropolises of the Global North and exported globally with local data and examples often provided by local scholars, that however support the dominant theoretical frameworks. For example, *Society: The Basics* (Macionis, Burkowicz, Jansson and Benoit, 2019)—a textbook that one of the authors uses in her introductory sociology teaching (written originally in the US and adapted for Canada)—also has adapted editions available for sale in Pearson's collections for Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and Australia. It is unlikely that introductory sociology teaching materials written by knowledge producers theorising from the periphery would be exported globally to such a degree. As sociologists in Canada, the sales and editorial representatives we work with have exclusively recommended introductory texts written within the United States and Canada. As noted above, these texts however are limited in their inclusion of non-Western sociologists and sociologies. Certainly, individual educators can make choices to incorporate alternative materials and can seek out texts to expand the conceptual scope of their teaching (albeit this can be constrained by text language and other access barriers), but at its root we face a systemic issue beyond the control of individual educators. *Sociological Teaching* will identify and work to reduce barriers to teaching that incorporates the theorising of scholars from the periphery, and will engage institutionally-embedded

actors beyond the discipline, such as textbook publishers, in this process. That said, to enhance accessibility we will also explore alternatives to commercially available textbooks, such as open-source teaching materials that are available to educators and students free of charge as well as textbooks written and translated in numerous languages.

The ISA Thematic Group *Sociological Teaching* seeks to facilitate the interaction between diverse educators from the Global South and the Global North to start transnational conversations and exchange about global sociologies, teaching-focused research, and teaching practices and philosophies. In addition, *Sociological Teaching* sets out to bring together educators from the Global South and the Global North to collaborate on producing more diverse and inclusive teaching materials, such as multi-authored, open-access textbooks to counteract the erasure of entire knowledge systems and sociologies by engaging in ‘different knowledge practices’ (Connell, 2014: 219). We further seek to develop, curate, and coordinate a peer-reviewed global repository of sociology teaching exemplars, including syllabi, teaching practices and strategies, lesson plans and assessments.

However, as Connell (2018) reminded us, simply adding more diverse content by more diverse researchers is not enough as long as theoretical frameworks, methods and social realities of the Global North remain firmly intact and normalised. Curricula, too, emerge in a particular social context, are shaped by societal power relations, and their limited content reflect the interests of the dominant culture. The so-called ‘hegemonic curriculum’ therefore tends to perpetuate and legitimise the status quo (Connell, 2019). Our efforts must extend to decolonising syllabi, curricula, institutions, and the knowledge economy in general to fundamentally challenge Eurocentric research paradigms, course content, and teaching methods and forward Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) (Battiste 2013; Connell 2018). The challenge here is to engage in ongoing reflection, conversation, and collaboration to ensure that *Sociological Teaching* does not performatively, superficially, and in principle only adopts the language of decolonisation and diversity, thereby turning it into a

metaphor that in effect maintains existing social structures, hierarchies, privileges and inequalities in the global economy of knowledge (Tuck and Yang, 2012; Connell, 2019; Ahmed, 2012). *Sociological Teaching* will facilitate dialogue and debate about how we as educators can expand the forms of knowledge we teach, both in terms of curriculum as well as forms of classroom engagement.

The previous discussion strongly suggests that we must critically investigate *what* we teach. Equally important, we have to critically investigate *how* we teach sociology (Persell et al., 2008; D’Antonio, 1983) and *who* we are teaching. As noted above, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in general, and scholarship-informed teaching of sociology are now firmly established fields of inquiry. That said, here too work remains to be done. For example, Sweet (2019) pointed out that during his tenure as editor much of the research published in *Teaching Sociology* focused on teaching about social inequalities and social problems, but little attention is being paid to teaching about solutions to these problems (not to mention solutions that go beyond focusing on the Global North). Moreover, much of the research focuses on the course, not the program or institutional level. Therefore, while individual courses might have transformative potential, more research needs to be done on how to coordinate courses (vertical and horizontal articulation) across the program and establish transformative curricula. Finally, SoTL as a field of inquiry is dominated by disciplines other than sociology. Much work is left to be done in contributing sociological insights in SoTL research (Sweet, 2019). The latter includes a critical, sociological investigation of the genesis and purpose of SoTL as a field in inquiry itself (Hanson, 2005). For example, several authors have pointed to the tension between a laudable promotion of scholarship informed teaching and the application of neo-liberal principles to higher education which focus on the utilitarian value of education rather than learning per se (see, for example, Servage, 2009). Sociology, as articulated in threshold concepts such as the sociological imagination, has the tools to engage with these ideas from multiple perspectives.

Sociological Teaching will go beyond questioning

how to effectively teach sociological content, or the pedagogy *of* sociology, and will include what Halasz and Kaufman (2008) called ‘sociology *as* pedagogy.’ The goal here is to use and recontextualise sociological insights and reflexivity to inform and (re)direct teaching and learning practices themselves and to use a sociological perspective to critically examine social phenomena occurring in our classrooms (Howard, 2009; Atkinson et al., 2009). That said, conceptualising sociology as pedagogy is closely linked to the first discussion outlined above in that we have to ask: whose sociology? Collaboration of educators from the Global North and the Global South (while being mindful of systemic resource constraints shaping this collaboration) is essential to the successful development and implementation of such sociologically informed, trans-national pedagogy of sociology as well as sociologically informed pedagogy.

Though as sociology practitioners, we are often trained and funded within national borders, the international nature of this thematic group offers the potential to work toward a global perspective (broadly defined) of comprehensive, collaborative sociological teaching practices. Due to the complex dynamics outlined above, undergraduate classrooms often reproduce theoretical lenses, knowledge artifacts, learning processes and pedagogies generated based on societal histories and conditions of the Global North, while simultaneously normalising and privileging methodological nationalism. Individual educators certainly challenge these norms, and in doing so work toward a more inclusive learning environment that prepares students to acknowledge assumptions grounded in particular histories and address social problems that transcend national borders. Yet, this labour tends to be taken on mainly by marginalised faculty who may not find these efforts necessarily acknowledged or rewarded. When this kind of labour is conducted primarily at the individual level, the benefits remain limited and localised. Moreover, individual educators who seek to create more inclusive learning environments and incorporate more diverse forms of knowledge creation might face student and colleague resistance, increased emotional labour, burn out, and devaluation of their work which might go unrecog-

nised according to institutional markers of excellence.

Scholarly analysis and reflections on teaching a global sociology remain underrepresented in journals such as *Teaching Sociology* (see Giuffre and Sweet, 2017). Teaching about globalisation processes within sociology, including relations between the local and the global, is not necessarily teaching a global sociology, particularly if done almost exclusively through the theories of Western scholars. Sociology educators have begun documenting different models for teaching a global sociology, including making the sociocultural context for concepts in specific research traditions visible, systematically comparing social trends across diverse national contexts, and questioning the nation as the unit of analysis linking the local and the global (Deutschmann 2001; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003; Parvez, 2017; Ritzer, 2004; Rousseau, 1999; Sohoni and Petrovic, 2010). Yet, we seek more international dialogue between sociologists trained in diverse traditions and working on different continents about the meaning of global sociology teaching. This will involve the development of pathways for pursuing global sociology teaching projects that shift the curriculum itself, but also the social relations through which the curriculum is defined and organised. Scholarly sociological educators and researchers (most of us are both) have a joint investment in reshaping these processes because teaching a global sociology requires a shift not just in dissemination and engagement practices for sociological knowledge, but also in the production and legitimising of this knowledge itself.

While the SoTL literature tends to focus on teaching at the classroom level, *Sociological Teaching* will draw on sociological perspectives and methods to examine structural factors such as culture, political climate, institutional resources and policies, etc. that shape teaching practices in the classroom (McKinney, 2005). For example, the rise of neo-liberalism, which emerged initially as a development strategy in Latin America in the 1970s (Connell and Dados, 2014) and then more broadly surfaced in the 1980s and 1990s, contributed to ideological shifts advocating values such as individualism, self-sufficiency, independence, and free choice (Giroux, 2004). The implications for

teaching sociology are noteworthy.

First, neo-liberal ideologies directly contradict a variety of sociological explanations of society and its elements. Most students subscribe to individual-level explanations of social phenomena and the challenge in teaching sociology is to demonstrate how social contexts shape individual choices, experience, and social practices (Sweet, 2019; Greenwood and Howard, 2011).

Secondly, due to complex factors we see a dramatic expansion of post-secondary education since the 1960s. However, neo-liberal policies rooted in a theoretical emphasis on free markets, reduction of state control, and privatisation translated into at times dramatic funding claw backs for post-secondary institutions in many countries (Baker, 1976). Consequently, we see a reduction in tenure-track faculty, the emergence of precarious labour, the rise of online courses, and increase in class sizes (Davies et al., 2006). However, large class sizes do not necessarily mean that sociology is a popular major. They might be a function of limited course selections and service teaching, where most students take sociology classes as electives in their degree. At some institutions, students can register for any sociology module at any level, meaning pre-requisites and co-requisites are dispensed with. While D'Antonio (1983) emphasised the importance of small classes, active learning and extensive writing for effective teaching in sociology, the above mentioned changes gave way to 'mass instruction in sociology' instead, especially at the undergraduate, introductory level, which has created new pedagogical challenges for teaching sociology as we are continuously asked to do more with less (Baker, 1976).

However, there are limited institutional incentives to assume the task of teaching well, especially in research universities where prestige is derived primarily from research grants and publications in reputable journals. Teaching—and especially teaching well—is not particularly rewarded in most post-secondary institutions (especially large research institutions). Except for sessional instructors and those in the teaching streams that have formed at some universities, teaching usually does not factor meaningfully in hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions. Moreover, SoTL as

a field of research is not recognised by all administrations as legitimate, and engaging in SoTL does not usually bring in notable grants, another marker of faculty excellence commonly used in research intensive universities (Grauerholz and Main, 2013). Finally, teaching and teaching-related activities remain gendered as women tend to engage in this devalued labour more so than men (McKinney and Chick, 2010). That said, we need a critical sociological analysis of other factors that shape individual teaching practices. For example, who is the professionalisation of SoTL excluding? Taking into consideration professional journals behind expensive paywalls, costly conference travel and fees, and pricey teaching workshops, as well as the time it takes to participate in these activities, the ability to engage in pedagogical development is highly stratified. *Sociological Teaching* will develop more accessible opportunities for pedagogical development, communicate the importance and value of teaching in the discipline (Sweet, 2019), and invite discussion about how we communicate evidence of teaching expertise within and beyond our discipline to a larger audience (Knapper and Wright, 2001).

Third, budget cuts are justified by undermining the legitimacy of publicly funded education, universities, and university-educated elites (Connell, 2019). As an academic social science discipline, sociology not only has to contend with devaluation within the academic community, but also with public attacks that seek to undermine the work sociologists do, which affects both their research and their teaching. Consider, for example, the open anti-intellectualism currently displayed by the provincial government and its representatives in Alberta, Canada. The Premier of Alberta openly dismissed the political commentary of a University of Calgary professor in the legislature, citing her campaign for political office over a decade earlier as evidence for the political bias in her analysis (Jeffrey and Yousif, 2019). Six years earlier, then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper responded to calls examining the root causes of terrorism by stating 'this is not a time to commit sociology' and a year later declared that the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is a criminal issue, not a

sociological phenomenon (Kaye and Béland, 2014). Consistent with a neo-liberal worldview, structural social problems are thereby individualised and simplified and solutions to these problems are then squarely located in the individual domain (Singh and Jakeet, 2014). These attacks, which blame and problematise the victim, are neither new, nor particularly original. In his book *Dave Barry's Bad Habits: A 100% Fact-Free Book* comedian Dave Barry (1993: 202-203) noted:

I sat through hundreds of hours of sociology courses, and read gobs of sociology writing, and I never once heard or read a coherent statement. This is because sociologists want to be considered scientists, so they spend most of their time translating simple, obvious observations into scientific-sounding code.

These public attacks on sociologists and sociological work have created a public relations crisis for sociology. Students' exposure to disparaging views of the discipline before they even set foot into our classrooms makes teaching sociology all the more challenging (Greenwood and Howard, 2011).

Not surprisingly, post-secondary institutions in some nations have noticed a declining popularity of their sociology major, and data from the U.S. (Sweet 2016) and Canada (Guppy, Greer, Malette and Frank 2017) suggest that the number of bachelor degrees awarded in sociology has been steadily declining over the past few decades. At the same time, in other contexts, such as South Africa, there is an increasing trend in some contexts in pursuing sociology as a major. While the reasons for the shifting popularity of sociology among students in certain regions are complex, teaching sociology will be an integral part of addressing this particular issue.

Teaching sociology, at a very basic level, seeks to teach students how to think sociologically by raising their sociological imagination about a range of social phenomena and encouraging them to apply what they have learned in their daily activities. To the extent that sociological teaching emphasises the complex forms, causes, and consequences of social stratification and patterned local and global inequalities, it can bring about a shift in students' perspective (for example, in making visible ongoing relations of neocolonialism

that play out in everyday life). Students can thus become catalysts of social change in the communities in which they learn, work, and live, and thereby contribute to resolving the persistent social injustices sociologists study and teach about (Alexander 2005; Ingraham 1996; Ropers-Huilman 1999). To that extent, teaching and learning become reconceptualised as a social movement (Howard, 2009), and teaching sociology becomes a form of public sociology, connecting the classroom with the wider community in which we learn, work, and live (Burawoy, 2008) and making the discipline accessible to a larger audience (Zipp, 2012).

We are excited about the inaugural meeting of the Sociological Teaching thematic group at the ISA Forum of Sociology in Brazil in 2020. We will have two professional development sessions on teaching sociology. Firstly, Michael Burawoy will speak about teaching social theory and secondly the authors will host a panel to facilitate dialogue between experienced and early career sociologists teaching introductory courses in diverse national contexts on teaching sociology, especially at the introductory level, as a form of public sociology.

In addition, the Thematic Group *Sociological Teaching* will host two oral presentation sessions, which will focus on the institutional frameworks in which teaching and learning happens and critical approaches to teaching sociology. We would also like to invite teaching enthusiasts to our inaugural business meeting to help shape the future direction of *Sociological Teaching*.

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