Anaheed Al-Hardan

Knowledge and Power in Sociology

Colonialism, Empire and the Global South

The discipline of sociology has in recent years seen the concerted publication of books in English that have ultimately served to highlight the relationship between knowledge and power in sociology. They have done this through centring empires and colonialism in the making of modern social theory and as analytic categories of analysis;[1] calling for the "decolonisation" of sociology;[2] questioned the canon and the notion of the canonical;[3] proposed alternative forms of sociology;[4] and foregrounded the Global South as the site for the production of diverse sociological traditions.[5] As a result of this conversation, it has become increasingly difficult to dismiss the fact that who and what has come to count as theory and knowledge has reflected the status of the US and Europe as hegemonic global political powers.

This ongoing conversation in sociology has unfolded within the context of the discipline's normative identity, especially the two central and interlinked assumptions upon which it is based. The first revolves around the birth of the discipline from the upheavals wrought upon Europe by modernity, including the French and Industrial Revolutions. Closely related to this is the genius of three European men – Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim – who made sociology possible as they attempted to come to terms with the resultant changes wrought on their societies. These assumptions, which continue to be advanced in undergraduate and graduate sociology textbooks across the world today, are based on the premise that modernity was a historical process endogenous to Europe and one that took place independently of Europe's imperialist colonisation of the majority of the world.[6] Moreover, they presuppose that the founders of sociology developed transcendent and universal theories, applicable to all

1 Bhambra 2007; Bhambra and Holmwood 2021; Steinmetz 2013.
2 Meghji 2020; Rodriguez, Boatca and Costa 2010.
3 Morris 2015; Alatas and Vinha 2017a.
4 Alatas 2006; Connell 2007; Go 2016.
5 Patel 2010.
6 See, e.g., Giddens and Sutton 2017.

An earlier version of this article appeared as "Colonialism, Empire, the Global South and Sociology" in *Contemporary Sociology* 51, no. 1, 2022, 16–27.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110733198-005

societies and historical eras despite their roots in the Enlightenment and Renaissance, and therefore worthy of study and engagement by aspiring and practicing sociologists across the world.[7]

More recent critical interventions in sociology, however, have demonstrated how the discipline was born in the capitals of imperialist societies, and was primarily concerned with elaborating laws of progress by theorising the difference between the "primitive" (i.e. colonised) and the "advanced" (i.e. coloniser).[8] As a study of "global difference," sociology essentially "displaced imperial power over the colonised into an abstract space of difference [through a] comparative method and grand ethnography [which] deleted the actual practice of colonialism from the world of empire."[9] Thus, rather than being concerned with modernisation and industrialisation in European societies, the early sociologists were in fact not primarily concerned with modernity, but with ancient, medieval or colonial societies.[10]

Moreover, sociology also didn't initially have a list of classics or a canon. The early sociology practitioners saw themselves as engaged in an "encyclopedic" and broad advancement of knowledge – rather than a canonical one – of their so-called new "science." "As late as the 1920s," the sociologist Raewyn Connell has argued, "there was no sense that certain texts were discipline-defining "classics" demanding special study [...] it was only in the following generation that the idea of a classical period and the short list of classical authors and canonical texts took hold."[11] Thus, the sociology associated with European modernisation, the Industrial Revolution and Marx, Weber and Durkheim, emerged following the First World War and in the US. This took place after the sociology of the first-generation was brought to an end by dynamics of global power and the eventual rise of totalitarianism in Europe which destroyed the intellectual community that had developed around the North Atlantic in the preceding decades. It is within this context that sociology re-emerged in North America following the Second World War, and was transformed to a study of difference within the imperialist centres. The search for legitimacy of this new sociology lasted well into the 1950s, and it operated in a conceptual vacuum in which the formation of what we today understand as sociology and its canon began. This was enabled by a change in the audience of sociology and the introduction of higher education on a mass

7 Alatas and Sinha 2017b.
8 Go 2016.
9 Connell 1997, 1530.
10 Ibid., 1516.
11 Ibid., 1514.

scale following the Second World War. It was only in the 1960s, following the student movements, that Karl Marx was added to the discipline's canon. This new sociology changed both its object and method, and became concerned with a study of metropolitan societies and their internal differences.

Despite contemporary claims to what sociology is, the discipline was therefore formed within the imperialist centres and as a response to the colonisation of the world by European empires. In view of this, sociology had to deal with the social relations of imperialism and colonialism, including race, and gender and sexuality, even if in order to justify the inferiority of the colonised. In this chapter, I will provide a sketch of this emergent sociological literature, particularly as it pertains to colonial modernity and its relationship to social theory; the "decolonisation" of the discipline; the canon and the notion of the canonical; alternative forms of sociology; and the question of a Global South sociology. I argue that a dissident sociology that attempts to effect political change in the classroom and beyond needs to foreground empires and colonialism as analytic categories that continue to structure our world, and that such a conceptual and analytic agenda needs to be grounded in the work of anti-colonial theorists. I understand anti-colonial theorists as thinkers, activists and movements who were, or continue to be, invested in dismantling colonial and neo-colonial structures of power and who propose theories with which to analyse these structures in order to overcome them. While the question of the geographical location of these thinkers does indeed matter – in terms of their institutional contexts, experiences, language and their "universe of discourse" more broadly – geography alone is not sufficient to delineate the site for the production of anti-colonial social theory. Instead, it is the explicit political positions of these thinkers, and the questions that they were engaged in, that are paramount to a rethinking of what counts as anti-colonial social theory, and therefore, the very questions that the discipline of sociology can ask in order to effect meaningful change in the world.

Colonial Modernity and Social Theory

Modernity has been social theory's dominant frame through which to understand the world. This frame has rested on two assumptions that continue to guide sociology, which the British postcolonial sociologist Gurminder Bhambra has argued is that of "rupture and difference."[12] The rupture is temporal, the move

12 Bhambra 2007, 1.

from tradition to modernity, while difference refers to the fundamental distinction between modern European societies and those of the colonised "others" of modernity. Central to these assumptions are therefore dominant and interrelated historical and conceptual views of modernity. The former posits modernity as an endogenous European process, rooted in the Renaissance and later the Industrial and French Revolutions, and unrelated to European conquest, genocide and slavery. The conceptual approach draws on this Eurocentric historical framing of the world to argue for modernity's universal conceptual applicability. This particular mode of thought, Bhambra argues, emerged in eighteenth century Europe, in which the "social" became a site of investigation, with colonial domination and slavery providing much of the data, even if implicit, for these arguments. In the nineteenth century, these arguments became the basis upon which laws of progress were expounded, leading to historical and normative understandings of modernity in sociology in general and later modernisation theory in particular.

In a more recent book, Bhambra and Holmwood (2021) develop this argument to demonstrate how modern social theory, as a product of the history it seeks to interpret and explain, has been shaped by colonialism. They define modern social theory "as a product of European societies from the fifteenth century onwards, embodied initially in philosophical reflections about social changes that were beginning to transform those societies."[13] Social theory, they argue, is predicated on modernity's rupture and difference, as well as the double displacement of colonialism from both modernity and social theory. By rendering European colonialism in the Americas to the "pre-modern," colonialism has been made inconsequential to the development of modern European empires and modernity more broadly.[14] Similarly, nineteenth century social theory acknowledged and displaced colonialism and empire, while later social theory has been for the most part in denial about its configuration through Europe's colonial and imperial past.[15] The challenge, then, is to reconstruct "the colonial context in which the contemporary European understanding of modern social theory has been formed [and] take seriously the histories that created the context for the development of these ideas and the ways in which these colonial histories were elided in subsequent discussions."[16]

The implications of these postcolonial interventions in sociology is that we cannot think of modernity without thinking of those that modernity conquered,

13 Bhambra and Holmwood 2021, 10.
14 Ibid., 5.
15 Ibid., 6.
16 Ibid., 21.

enslaved and exterminated; and that this has always been the other side of social theory and therefore of sociology. The centring of these structural and historical realities necessitates their conceptual translation into sociology and social theory more broadly. Before doing so, I will examine another two ways in which the centring of the relationship between power and knowledge has led to the reconsideration of the discipline of sociology. The first has been through calls to "decolonise" it, and the second through an invitation to reconsider the canon and the canonical in sociology.

The Decolonisation of Sociology

The belated arrival of postcolonial theory to sociology has also been accompanied by another late arrival: decolonial theory, and closely related to this, calls to "decolonise" the discipline. Post- and decolonial theorists are both inspired by the anti-colonial struggles and theorists of the post-World War Two decolonisation era. However, postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said ([1978] 2003), Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1994) read these struggles and the works of anti-colonial theorists and activists primarily through French poststructuralism. Decolonial theorists, on their part, as exemplified by the research of the modernity/coloniality group of the mostly US-based South American scholars, have attempted to make an intervention in what they see as the largely British Empire-centric postcolonial theory.[17] The modernity/coloniality group centres the conquest of the Americas in the emergence of the modern and colonial world, and argues that the world continues to be governed by a form of global power that is fundamentally colonial even though nineteenth century colonialism is allegedly over (hence, "coloniality" and not colonisation).[18] Coloniality, they contend, can be countered through decolonial subaltern knowledges that attempt to confront and delink from the colonial matrix of global power (hence, "decoloniality" and not decolonisation).[19]

The Germany-based sociologists Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Manuela Boatcă and Sergio Costa (2010) edited a collection of essays that brings this "decolo-

17 This group of scholars emerged from a split within the Latin American Subaltern Studies group in the US in the late 1990s, between those who approached subalternity as a postmodern critique, and those who approached subalternity as the site from which to critique mainstream (including postmodern) knowledge (Grosfoguel 2007).

18 Quijano 2002.

19 Mignolo 2011.

nial turn" into a conversation with European sociology and from European perspectives, with the stated aim of "decolonizing European sociology".[20] The colonial relationship between knowledge and power, and an attempt to begin the task of undoing this relation, is therefore a central aim of the book. The editors attempt to further this aim through assembling essays that bring a postcolonial critique to sociology, pluralise modernity, and that examine difference, the others within and the south in Europe. Thus, what this collection also does is to bring the question of "decolonial theory" to sociology and social theory. By drawing on this theory, Rodríguez, Boatcă and Costa also propose that bodies of knowledge like sociology that are historically constituted through colonial power relations can be "decolonised."

Paying attention to recent decolonial interventions in postcolonial theory by sociologists is a welcome addition to recent attempts to centre the questions of colonialism and empire in the discipline.[21] Similarly, a serious consideration of what "decolonising sociology" entails is important in light of students' mobilisation in South Africa in 2015 that have most recently propelled the higher education decolonisation discourse. This mobilisation centred on the call for the decolonisation of universities through the removal of colonial era statues from campuses and the undoing of enduring structural colonial legacies like faculty and curricula composition.[22] In this spirit, decolonising sociology has led to arguments to "redesign curricula, reshape sociology's workforce, and redistribute resources" on a global scale.[23] At the same time, sociologists have also cautioned against the appearance of an intellectual decolonisation "craze" that has led to a "decolonial bandwagon" in the Global North.[24] This trend can also reinscribe the power relations it sets out to deconstruct, not least through overlooking the Global South as a site for the production of social theory.[25] Moreover, through an overwhelming focus on epistemology, the decolonisation discourse could also potentially downplay the structural aspect of relations of power.

Thus, one of decolonisation's meanings within the context of sociology today is increasingly professionalised. As a prefix, it is meant to signal a critical theoretical approach that seeks to rethink Eurocentric and therefore colonial social and political categories and ideas that we continue to use in universities, research and the classroom. The other meaning of decolonisation, tied to past and ongoing

20 Boatcă, Costa and Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010, 9.
21 Bhambra 2014; Meghji 2020.
22 Roy and Nilsen 2016.
23 Connell 2018, 399.
24 Moosavi 2020.
25 Ibid.

anti-colonial struggles,[26] is linked to a commitment to insurrectionary politics that unfold not only inside the university, but also outside of it, in connection not only with ideas, but also political mobilisation. Are these two different understandings of decolonisation reconcilable? They're only reconcilable if we tie the first understanding of decolonisation, the one based on critical theoretical work to the second understanding of decolonisation that comes from a particular history: which is an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist political commitment that needs to manifest itself structurally and institutionally in, and most importantly, outside, the university. Otherwise, "decolonising" does indeed run the risk of not only becoming metaphor,[27] but also another intellectual trend, which like all other trends will eventually wane while the important work of dismantling structures of oppression in the world remains as relevant as ever.

The Sociological Canon

The centring of colonialism in the discipline, and calls for its decolonisation, has been accompanied by a similar questioning of the sociological canon. A recent book by US sociologist Aldon Morris on the sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois has been particularly important in this regard. The main argument of his book is that contrary to disciplinary wisdom in which the Chicago School is generally seen as the pioneer of US sociology, Du Bois was the founder of the first scientific school of US sociology during his approximately decade-long tenure in the historically Black Atlanta University (1897–1910). Although completely obliterated from disciplinary memory, at Atlanta Du Bois built a sociological research laboratory that produced studies on Black communities and convened annual conferences that were open to all scholars and that attracted prominent scholars like Franz Boas. In addition, a first- and second-generation of Black sociologists educated in the north were mentored by Du Bois as researchers in Atlanta. These sociologists' commitment to empirical sociological studies of Black communities, and novel theories and research methods, were premised on their shared belief in, and commitment to, Black American liberation through sociology.

Morris (2015) contends that "it is ironic that a small black university, without adequate funds and considered inferior by whites, introduced scientific sociol-

26 Prashad 2007.
27 Tuck and Yang 2012.

ogy to the South under the leadership of a new type of sociological scholar."[28] Although a scholar denied, Du Bois drew on "liberation capital," or "capital used by oppressed and resource-starved scholars to initiate and sustain the research program of a nonhegemonic scientific school,"[29] and an "insurgent intellectual network"[30] to sustain the Atlanta School and its production of counterhegemonic ideas, students and mediums through which to produce and disseminate scholarship that challenged dominant paradigms. Central to Morris' argument, and the project of resuscitating Du Bois and his Atlanta School in sociology more broadly, are therefore the interrelated questions of power, racism and history, on the one hand, and their relationship to institutional structures of knowledge production, scholarly commitments, and the insurgent and liberatory potential of the activist sociology of the oppressed, on the other hand.

Syed Farid Alatas and Vineeta Sinha (2017a), two Singapore-based sociologists, have also recently taken up the question of the sociological canon and the notion of the canonical. They have done this through a textbook-style book which is designed as a practical tool with which educators could mitigate what Alatas and Sinha argue are sociology's persistent Eurocentrism and Androcentrism. Their book is not meant to discard European and therefore "classical" sociological theory altogether. Rather, their main concern is how to interrogate what is considered to be the "classical" canon in a way that is relevant to students who live amidst the continuing legacies of European empires and colonialism in the Global South. A second and interrelated concern is to provide students with a cross-section of theorists from the formerly colonised world who tackle the realities of colonisation and decolonisation in a way that is relevant to these students' lives and histories. They also introduce women thinkers to the canon with the aim of rectifying yet another shortcoming in sociological theory.

Alatas and Sinha's book is ultimately an attempt to redress the way in which sociology is taught in universities in Asia and Africa which they argue largely follows the European and North American model. To this end, the authors examine ten different social theorists and social thinkers, and draw on very different writing genres for their analysis. Most notable in their efforts is an attempt to establish Ibn Khaldun as a progenitor of sociology with relevance to a contemporary Khaldunian sociology; interrogate the classics against the context of empire and colonialism; introduce women thinkers to the canon; and incorporate anti-colonial activists and sociologists from the Global South into sociolog-

28 Morris 2015, 97.
29 Ibid., 188.
30 Ibid., 193.

ical theory. In conclusion, Alatas and Sinha argue that they are not invested in making the case for yet another must-read sociology list. Rather, their aim is to add names to the existing canon in order to enable a cosmopolitan sociology.

The questioning of the sociological canon is ultimately an attempt to address power and knowledge in the discipline: who and what has come to be counted as legitimate producers of theory, why and how they have been read, and what questions have been elided. Thus, the centring of Du Bois, and the introduction of a practical handbook for sociologists to mitigate the way in which sociological theory is traditionally taught, are both important endeavours in this regard. Other sociologists have also warned that, while doing so is important, sociologists must pay attention to both the accomplishments as well as shortcomings of thinkers who emerge from a reconsideration of the canon.[31]

Alongside calls to reconsider the canon and the canonical, sociologists have also put forward arguments for different approaches to the discipline, all of which are keenly attentive to the way in which knowledge and power operate in the realm of social theory. These different approaches point to these larger structural processes by putting forward political economy, colonial and postcolonial or geographical approaches to social knowledge production. They therefore critique normative understandings of knowledge production which obscure questions of power, and suggest alternative paradigms.

Autonomous, Southern and Postcolonial Sociology

In his book on the problems of knowledge production in the Asian social sciences, Syed Farid Alatas (2006) has argued that there is a problem of academic dependency in the Asian social sciences. Academic dependency translates into the dependence of social scientists in the Global South "on their counterparts in the West for concepts and theories, research funds, technologies of teaching and research, and the prestige value attached to publishing in Western journals."[32]

Alatas argues that there are two orientations within these alternative discourses: nativism and autonomy. While nativism encapsulates, for the most part, what Alatas sees as reactionary calls to reject Euro-American social science, autonomous orientations are based on calls for a social science that is neither

31 Burawoy 2021a. For example, I examine and critique Du Bois's Zionism, as indicative of a shortcoming in his analysis of imperialist colonialism more broadly, in Al-Hardan, forthcoming in Aldon Morris et al. 2022.

32 Alatas 2006, 31.

dependent on Euro-American social science structures nor the state in Asia: "The chief traits of autonomous social science," Alatas contends, "are autonomy in the conceptualization and prioritization of problems, in the development of research agenda, in the building of original theory, and in the conduct of empirical research [...] lead[ing] to a constructive critique of Western knowledge as well as a serious consideration of non-Western sources of knowledge."[33]

Alatas's attention to the centre-periphery relationship in the realm of the political economy of global knowledge production is echoed in Raewyn Connell's (2007) arguments on what she refers to as "southern theory."[34] This theory, Connell contends, is meant to emphasise unequal power relations between intellectuals and institutions in the Global South and Global North; underscore and contest both the Euro-American and imperialist orientation of dominant articulations of theory in the social sciences; and emphasise that the location for the generation of theory in fact matters.

At the same time, the limits of geography are evident in Connell's discussion of Australia, particularly early Australian settler-colonial scholars, as historically part of the world periphery exporting facts on indigenous communities. She in fact demonstrates how these settler-colonial scholars were beneficiaries of the colonial global political economy of knowledge production, even if their status as "mere" exporters of knowledge on indigenous communities vis-à-vis their counterparts in the "centre" has not been on par with scholars based in the centres of empire. Her book begs the question, how can we define what constitutes the "southern" in southern theory?[35]

Sociological approaches which underscore political economy approaches to knowledge production, and those that foreground the question of geography, and its limitations, in the generation of theory, have recently been joined by calls for a "postcolonial" sociology. One of the most notable advocates of this approach is US sociologist Julian Go. Go (2016) argues for bringing postcolonial theory as developed in the humanities into a conversation with social theory as developed in the social sciences. This conversation, he argues, is necessary as the two theoretical traditions have developed in opposition to each other. Social theory, Go argues, was birthed in, of and for empire, while postcolonial thought, on the other hand, was born in opposition to it. By bringing these two divergent schools of thought into conversation, a postcolonial sociology could be developed which

33 Alatas 2006, 114.

34 The question of the south has been further developed, most notably by the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, see Santos 2014 and 2018.

35 For a critique, see Burawoy 2021b.

pays attention to empire and colonialism, and that is analytically centred on postcolonial relationality, subaltern standpoint theory and postcolonial perspectival realism.

A conversation between postcolonial theory and sociology, Go contends, could and should be developed into a "third-wave" of postcolonial thought based in the social sciences. It is essentially an invitation for sociology to reconsider its imperial and colonial standpoint in terms of its historical formation and analytic frameworks and assumptions; its persistent orientalism, Eurocentrism and historicism; its occlusion of empire and resultant analytic bifurcation and repression of colonial agency; and, finally, its metrocentrism, or the viewpoint from the former and current empire's metropoles that is ahistorically and apolitically universalised.

Global South Sociology

The emergent debates and different approaches discussed thus far foreground the question of the colonised "other" within sociology and colonial modernity. This "other" is centred on the Global South, understood as a geo-political demarcation based on "colonial legacies, neocolonial interventions as well as of resistance".[36] Such a definition could also include racialised and colonised communities in the US and Europe (what is sometimes referred to as the "Global South in the Global North"). When understood in this way, the critiques and approaches discussed thus far foreground the question of the Global South as the "other" of colonial modernity, analytically and conceptually, directly[37] and indirectly,[38] through the questioning of the canonical in the discipline, or the centring of postcolonial approaches.

The question of the past and present realities of the institutional location of the social sciences in the Global South is important for this conversation. It is examined in a collection edited by the Indian sociologist Sujata Patel (2010) on global sociology traditions in which Asian, African and South American traditions of social sciences are examined in great depth. The book is the fruit of Patel's labor as the Vice-President of the International Sociological Association's National Associations. Patel's aim in this edited collection, as per her introduc-

36 *Review of African Political Economy* 2020.
37 Alatas 2006; Connell 2007.
38 Go 2016; Morris 2015.

tory chapter, is to "create discussion on how to assess all aspects of the discipline organised and institutionalised across the globe: ideas and theories; scholars and scholarship; practices and traditions; and ruptures and continuities, through a globalising perspective that examines the relationship between sociological knowledge and power."[39]

Patel is emphatic that the book is not a Handbook of national sociologies. Rather, her goal is to present "diverse and universal sociological traditions [that] present distinct and different perspectives to assess their own histories of sociological theories and practices."[40] As a large number of the contributors to the Handbook are from Africa, Asia and South America, the book foregrounds approaches and debates in sociology in institutional contexts outside of Europe and North America, and fills an important lacuna in the English language in this regard. The different contributors approach the question of sociology within their own countries or regions in different ways. Some authors present a historical overview of the emergence of sociology in the respective countries.[41] Others undertake a transnational and/or conceptual approach.[42]

While an institutional examination of the question of the production of sociology and the social sciences is important, such an approach does not automatically centre the question of colonialism and empire in the discipline. This is evident in Patel's book, in which, for example, the chapter on South Africa by Tina Uys stands in stark contrast to the chapter on Israeli sociology by Victor Azarya. The latter ignores the realities and dynamics of Israeli of settler-colonialism and the discipline's intimate relationship to the architecture of the occupation of Palestine, focusing instead on its relationship to Euro-American standards of "academic excellence."

Thus, an institutional approach to the question of the production of sociology and the social sciences must be accompanied by a conceptual approach that explicitly examines the entanglement of the discipline and social theory with empires and colonialism, and that centres both as analytic categories of analysis. The US sociologist George Steinmetz's (2013) edited collection on sociology and empire does precisely that, and also offers historical sociological studies of colonialism and empire from different parts of the world. Such an analytic approach foregrounds historical, social and political experiences that have underwritten imperial societies and the formerly colonised world, and is an important back-

39 Patel 2010, 2.
40 Ibid.
41 Porti and Dwyer 2010; Pereyra 2019.
42 Briceño-León 2010; Beigel 2010; Sall and Ouedraogo 2010; Uys 2010.

drop to any examination of the institutional emergence of African, Asian and South America sociology and the social sciences more broadly.

Conclusion: Anti-Colonial Social Theory

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of an emergent conversation in sociology which I have argued is ultimately centred on a critical approach to the relationship between power and knowledge. If we understand Empire and colonialism as co-constitutive of modernity, and modernity as the necessary beginning of a conversation on social theory and sociology, then our starting point must be grounded in the how and why of social theory's support, justification or obscuring of the colonisation of the majority of the world at the moment of its emergence. The question of the colonised "others" of modernity has led to calls for the decolonisation of social theory and sociology as well as the questioning of the very notion of the canonical given that canons are reflective of hegemonic power relations. These critiques, which have led to the fundamental questioning of the core tenants and assumptions of social theory and sociology, have also yielded innovative approaches to the question of the study of the social. As I have demonstrated, these innovative approaches have centred on the political economy of the circulation of global knowledge, the question of geography in the generation of social theory, and the question of colonial and postcolonial theory in the social sciences. While a more sustained focus on the institutional context of the emergence of the social sciences in Asia, Africa and South America has been an important contribution to this conversation, an institutional focus can only be enhanced and enriched by an analytic approach centred on empires and colonialism.

This focus on the analytical and conceptual raises the questions: what kind of theory and theorists must we invoke, from what locations, and for what purpose, if we are invested in a self-consciously critical social science and sociology that understands colonialism as central to its own making, and one that we can continue to teach as relevant across the world? Here I'd like to suggest that examining and centring the works of anti-colonial theorists is one possible way to pursue and propel this conversation forward. This is because if the development of social theory and the social sciences was enabled through the imperialist colonisation of the world, a careful attention to an engagement with these structural processes, and their ideational justifications, by anti-colonial theorists allows for a construction of a genealogy of social theory formulated in order to understand structures of domination and for the purposes of overturning them. The examination of this kind of social theory begins from the political positions of these

theorists, regardless of whether they were writing, and continue to write from the centres of Empire or from the colonies. While the question of their institutional context and the traditions of discourses they invoke is of course important, a focus on the analytical and conceptual questions of colonialism and, conversely, anti-colonialism allows for the formulation of social theory, and a sociology, invested in analysing past and present ongoing systems of colonial and neocolonial domination and for the purposes of overturning them.

Bibliography

Alatas, Syed F. 2006. *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Sciences: Responses to Eurocentrism*. London: Sage.

Alatas, Syed F., and Vineeta Sinha. 2017a. *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Alatas, Syed F., and Vineeta Sinha. 2017b. "Introduction: Eurocentrism, Androcentrism and Sociological Theory." In Alatas and Sinha 2017a, 1–16.

Al-Hardan, Anaheed. Forthcoming 2022. "Sociology Revised: W. E. B. Du Bois, Colonialism and Anti-Colonial Social Theory." In *International Handbook on W. E. B. Du Bois,* eds. Aldon Morris et al., Oxford University Press.

Azarya, Victor. 2010. "Academic Excellence and Social Relevance: Israeli Sociology in Universities and Beyond." In Patel 2010, 246–56.

Beigel, Fernanda. 2010. "Dependency Analysis: The Creation of New Social Theory in Latin America." In Patel 2010, 189–200.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. 2021. *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2007. *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2014. "Postcolonial and decolonial dialogue." *Postcolonial Studies* 17, no. 2: 115–21.

Boatcă, Manuela, Sérgio Costa, and Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez. 2010. "Introduction: Decolonizing European Sociology: Different Paths Towards a Pending Project." In Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Boatcă, and Costa 2010.

Briceño-León, Roberto. 2010. "The Five Dilemmas of Latin American Sociology." In Patel 2010, 177–88.

Burawoy, Michael. 2021a. "Decolonizing Sociology: The Significance of W. E. B. Du Bois." *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4–5: 545–54.

Burawoy, Michael. 2021b. "Why is Classical Theory Classical? Theorizing the Canon and Canonizing Du Bois." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2021: 1–15.

Connell, Raewyn. 1997. "Why Is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 6: 1511–57.

Connell, Raewyn. 2007. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Cambridge: Polity.

Connell, Raewyn. 2018. "Decolonizing Sociology." *Contemporary Sociology* 47, no. 4: 399–407.
Go, Julian. 2016. *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2007. "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2–3: 211–23.
Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación, Manuela Boatcă, and Sérgio Costa, eds. 2010. *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*. Farnham: Ashgate.
Meghji, Ali. 2020. *Decolonizing Sociology: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. Cambridge and New York: Polity.
Mignolo, Walter D. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Moosavi, Leon. 2020. "The Decolonial Bandwagon and the Dangers of Intellectual Decolonization." *International Review of Sociology*: 1–23.
Morris, Aldon D. 2015. *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Patel, Sujata, ed. 2010. *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Pereyra, Diego E. 2010. "Dilemmas, Challenges and Uncertain Boundaries of Argentinian Sociology." In Patel 2010, 212–22.
Porto, Maria S. G., and Tom Dwyer. 2021. "Development, Dictatorship and Re-democratization – Trajectories of Brazilian Sociology." In Patel 2010, 201–11.
Prashad, Vijay. 2007. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. New York: The New Press.
Quijano, Anibal. 2002. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3: 533–80.
Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE). 2020. "From Africa to Asia: Political Economy, Solidarity and Liberation." October 21, 2020. https://roape.net/2020/02/17/from-africa-to-asia-political-economy-solidarity-and-liberation/.
Roy, Srila, and Alf G. Nilsen. 2016. "Globalizing Sociology: An Introduction." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29: 225–32.
Sall, Ebrima, and Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo. 2010. "Sociology in West Africa: Challenges and Obstacles to Academic Autonomy." In Patel 2010, 225–34.
Said, Edward. [1978] 2003. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.
Santos, Boaventura de Sousa, ed. 2014. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. 2018. *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson, and Lawrence Grossberg, Chicago and Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
Steinmetz, George, ed. 2013. *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. "Decolonization is not a Metaphor" In *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 1: 1–40.
Uys, Tina. 2010. "Dealing with Domination, Division and Diversity: The Forging of a National Sociological Tradition in South Africa." In Patel 2010, 235–45.