

**IDEAH • Vol. 4, Iss. 2 (Open/Social/Digital Humanities Pedagogy,
Training, and Mentorship 2022)**

WeberWeb: Creation of an OER on Sociological Theory in Collaboration with Undergraduate Students

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Published on: Jan 26, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21428/flf23564.dd691d36>

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Open educational resources (OER) have the potential to provide a wide audience with open access to quality educational content. It is not only a matter of offering access without direct charge to the end user; but fundamentally, that such resources are distributed under open licenses that allow access, reuse, adaptation, and redistribution.

In this paper we describe the development of the website “Marianne & Max Weber: a digital project” (hereafter [WeberWeb](#)), an OER created in collaboration with students of the bachelor’s degree in sociology at the faculty of political and social sciences of the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico.¹

This resource was created with the aim of supporting the teaching and learning tasks of a classical sociological theory course. The main characteristic of social sciences courses whose contents are completely theoretical is that the pedagogical strategies are focused exclusively on the reading and analysis of texts, either those written by prominent figures or by authors who analyze or apply them in their research.

The project described here aimed to link the teaching of sociological theory with the creation of a digital project to produce an OER in Spanish that compiled, in one place, the main theoretical proposals of the sociologist Max Weber, as well as those of Marianne Weber, sociologist, pioneer of feminist studies, who also served as editor and posthumous compiler of her husband’s work.

In addition to promoting the development of digital skills among students, the collaborative creation of OER can contribute to making visible the work of people whose scholarly contributions have received less recognition because of their gender, race, or geographic location. To combat this absence and promote the acquisition of digital skills among undergraduate social science students, the WeberWeb project was born.

Open Educational Resources as Part of the Open Movement

What have traditionally been known as educational materials—understood as the media and resources that promote the acquisition of concepts, skills, attitudes, and abilities in support of the teaching-learning process—are now not only physical, but also digital. However, not all materials available in digital formats are open for use by teachers and students. In most cases, it is necessary to pay either to have access to the resources or to the platforms from which they are available. In contrast, those learning, teaching, and research materials—available in any format and digital medium—that are in the public domain or whose copyrights have been released under open licenses are considered OER.

Open licenses (such as Creative Commons) can respect the rights of author attribution, while at the same time they can grant permissions for free access, reuse, adaptation and/or redistribution at no cost to third parties.

OER have been gaining popularity in recent years, which is why in November 2019—a few months before the closure of activities due to COVID-19—UNESCO issued some recommendations related to the open use of

educational resources. This was the first international standard-setting instrument covering the field of openly licensed educational recommendations. To foster networking and information exchange, UNESCO created the OER Dynamic Coalition in March 2020.

Taking these references into consideration, it is possible to state that the development, implementation, and institutionalization of OER is something new, which is part of the so-called open solutions, together with free and open-source software, open access, open data and, in general, all those practices are encompassed by what is known as open science, open humanities, and open scholarship.²

In general terms, the open movement is based on the idea that knowledge is freely available on the internet and open for use with few or no restrictions. There are, however, different obstacles that could decrease the level of openness of OER; for example, Creative Commons licenses cover a spectrum ranging from the most widely open, to options that prevent derivative works or commercialization. Similarly, some technical choices reduce the levels of openness; for example, content that can only be edited with proprietary tools, or whose consumption formats are different from the editing formats, or that require a significant level of technical expertise (Wiley).

In this regard, David Wiley and John Levi Hilton III suggest five key points (also referred to as the 5R activities) to keep in mind when creating or using OER (134–135):

1. **Retain:** the right to make, own, and control copies of the content.
2. **Reuse:** the right to use the content in a wide range of ways.
3. **Revise:** the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself.
4. **Remix:** the right to combine the original or revised content with other material to create something new.
5. **Redistribute:** the right to share copies of the original content, your revisions, or your remixes with others.

Creating OER as part of a course is part of what is called renewable assignments, which take advantage of the 5R to both “provide a learning benefit to the student and result in OER that provide a lasting benefit to the broader community” (Wiley et al. 62). The creation of WeberWeb was also informed by discussions in digital humanities pedagogy, a field that recognizes the value of the creation of open digital projects in the classroom, even outside of digital humanities courses.

For example, including digital humanities methods in non-DH classrooms can be an opportunity for students to develop digital literacy skills and increase confidence in the use of technology, especially among women, who make up the majority of undergraduate students in the humanities and social sciences (Kennedy 1).

Furthermore, it has been argued that digital humanities pedagogy can improve the development of the student’s analytical abilities by giving them space to practice synthesizing information, communicating effectively for multiple purposes and audiences, and collaborating to intervene in the silences and gaps in the digital cultural record (Risam 92). In this case, this approach was used to vindicate Marianne Weber’s contributions to the

social sciences and to create a sociology OER in Spanish when there are very few of these resources in the students' first language.

Use and Creation of Open Educational Resources in Latin America

Higher education in Latin America has been less permeated by the incorporation of technologies and digital tools. This was much more evident during the pandemic, as suggested by the results of a study which, after analyzing 25 universities in five Latin American countries, concludes that the scope of available technology is limited in these institutions and that there is little continuity in the emerging institutional strategies adopted in response to COVID-19 (Paredes et al.).

Likewise, there are several barriers to creating and implementing these types of resources and to incorporating them into daily teaching practice. These barriers are even greater in regions such as Latin America, where inequalities prevail. Barriers include, for example, access to the internet, the flow of knowledge between north and south, and the information literacy of students and teachers (King et al. 1).

Although Latin America has been a driving force in some areas of open scholarship, such as open access, there are few initiatives in areas such as open education and OER (Mireles Torres 87). Among the reasons that could explain this low involvement are the lack of digital skills among teachers and students, the lack of awareness about the opportunities of OER and the lower cost of higher education, at least in public universities and some of the small-scale private universities.

The first reason refers to the fact that teachers and students are not familiar with incorporating digital tools into teaching and learning (Vivar Zurita). In addition, most teachers do not have sufficient knowledge to create or integrate OER in their teaching practice. Therefore, Nadia Mireles Torres has said that the main priority for the region in this field should be capacity development, which consists of promoting legal knowledge about open licenses, developing business models that justify the use of open licenses, and attracting people with expertise to design and develop educational materials with these characteristics (Mireles Torres 84).

As for students, not all of them are accustomed to the use of technology in the classroom. This is because some do not have access to a computer at home (Langer), show resistance because of the lack of development of digital skills (Pérez Zárate), or are not familiar with the ways that technology can complement their education.

If an instructor is interested in incorporating open educational resources in the classroom, they will have (in addition facing student resistance) need to allocate part of the course time to teach the use of digital tools plus the course content itself. Furthermore, even in the 21st century and having experienced the intensive and forced use of technologies to continue education remotely due to the COVID-19-related school closures, there are still many instructors in Latin America who do not know about the existence of OER which can be adapted to their interests and incorporated into their courses (Lizarro Guzmán).

Few Latin American universities have initiatives to create or adapt OER and, moreover, no university or country in the region grants academic performance incentives to professors who develop them. This lack of awareness also implies that there are not enough initiatives that support or promote the creation of OER. In this regard, Javiera Atenas offered an account of some of the main open educational resource platforms available in 2014. Atenas identified 13 platforms in seven countries. Unfortunately, by the third quarter of 2022, five of these sites were no longer available or had changed their URL.

Recently, in the context of the pandemic, some Latin American universities have begun to develop OER repositories, independent of their institutional repositories. For example, some Argentine universities started to develop OER repositories in 2020 that are currently in development (such as the [National University of Cuyo](#) and the [National University of Cordoba](#)); and the [RUA-MX](#) project, which promotes the implementation of an interoperable network of OER repositories in ten public universities in Mexico.

A final reason that less OER initiatives exist in Latin America is the lower cost of higher education in many Latin American countries. One of the main arguments why professors in the United States and Canada incorporate OER into their classes, especially open textbooks, is due to the prohibitive costs of both tuition and textbooks (Bartholomay; Jhangiani et al.; Hilton III et al.). In contrast, in most of Latin America, at least in public universities, tuition costs are highly subsidized by governments (Arias Ortiz et al. 17–20) and there are rarely sharp increases in costs. Therefore, there is not the same motivation for creating OER as there is in countries where tuition costs are absorbed by students.

Open Educational Resources in Sociology

In the specific case of sociology, there are several open education initiatives, particularly introductory textbooks (Conerly et al.; Little) and massive open online courses (MOOCs) that address basic concepts of social theory.³ However, there are fewer of these initiatives for intermediate or advanced courses.

These types of resources have been most popular, both in their creation and use, in the United States, England, and Canada, where both tuition and textbook costs have risen since the late twentieth century. For our part, we have located very few OER on sociology topics available in Spanish, and even fewer created specifically for Latin America.

For example, searching for “sociology” on the OER Commons website returns 570 results for all languages and educational levels.⁴ When filtering by language and choosing Spanish, only five resources are displayed, while 544 are available in English. The language gaps are enormous and, of course, foster inequity in the access and effective use of resources that, by their very nature, should be open.

When searching for “Max Weber” on the same website, the number of results drops to four, and all are in English. Searching for Marianne Weber yields no results at all on that website, confirming that Spanish open educational resources in sociology are an underexplored possibility.

In an article published in the journal *Teaching Sociology* on the use of affordable learning tools during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recognized that “using OER can be a tool to promote equity in education, but OER are not available for all courses” (Bartholomay 68). This is particularly true for intermediate and advanced sociology courses; for example, those focused on a particular sociologist or theoretical approach.

Development of the WeberWeb Project

The WeberWeb project was developed from September to December 2021 in collaboration with third semester students of the sociology degree at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México as part of the course Sociology Founders: Max Weber.

The students’ participation in the development of the WeberWeb site was coordinated by Rosario Rogel-Salazar, the chair in social theory, with the support of Brian Rosenblum, digital humanities librarian at the University of Kansas Libraries, and Alan Colín-Arce, a student in the last semester of a degree in Communication with an interest in digital initiatives, and who acted as a liaison to facilitate the activities developed by the students.

An important characteristic of this course is that it was taught online, because in Mexico universities did not return to in-person teaching until February 2022. Since it was known from the beginning that the entire semester would be online, we decided to develop a completely digital final assignment, where students would collect and select quality information related to the theoretical proposals of Max and Marianne Weber. This information was integrated into a collaboratively developed website so that students and professors from other courses or universities could access it.

Although the students had already been taking online university courses for a year due to the pandemic, they did not have experience working on a digital project as part of a course. Therefore, they had not yet developed digital skills or knowledge related to open licenses, reference management software, information discovery, or web publishing.

Assigning the creation of an OER as part of the classroom work, parallel to the analysis of Max Weber’s main theoretical concepts, was intended to explore alternatives to teaching social theory in an emergency remote teaching setting.

Students faced a year of COVID-19 lockdown, with high levels of boredom, frustration, and anxiety. Teaching social theory under these conditions led us to consider the need to introduce alternative pedagogical strategies. Including the development of the WeberWeb as part of the course allowed students to acquire digital skills and perform playful exercises on their own, while working on mastering the specific topics of a classical sociological theory course.

A second objective of WeberWeb was to give visibility to Marianne Weber's contributions to sociology. She was also a sociologist, published several texts on gender and, after Max Weber's death, organized his notes to edit the first edition of *Economy and Society*. Despite the strength of her own theoretical contributions, and her significant contribution to making Max Weber's work known worldwide, her work as a scholar and editor has not received the recognition it deserves. It should also be noted that Marianne Weber's own contributions are not considered as part of the official contents of the course that is the object of this pedagogical intervention.

Finally, it is important to point out that the development of this OER should be considered as our method of fulfilling the central objective of the course: to analyze the theoretical-methodological postulates of Max Weber's comprehensive approach through the discussion and contrast of concepts.

Configuration and Design of WeberWeb

Developing digital projects as part of a sociology course in a public university in Latin America means facing a context where it is not common for teachers or students to master electronic tools or platforms. Doing so in a context of emergency remote education and school closures also meant facing obstacles related to the digital divide in terms of students' access to the internet and personal computers. Collaborating with a digital scholarship librarian made it possible to solve some challenges related to the configuration and design of the webpage, which the team in Mexico did not have the expertise to address. Likewise, having the accompaniment of a student from more advanced courses, who could provide support to the students, was fundamental to fostering a spirit of companionship and collaboration.

The class met for two or three optional sessions in addition to those scheduled for the traditional course, so that students could become familiar with different platforms, digital tools, and working methods necessary to build the website.

The Jekyll platform was used to create the static website for the project, and the students had to learn how to use the Markdown language to format the text that would be integrated into the page. They also learned how to use the GitHub platform, which was used to host the website and collaborate on the content development. There is a steeper learning curve to these tools than with some other more out-of-the-box options (such as a Weebly site), but these platforms were chosen to introduce students to concepts and foundational tools that can be used in many other contexts. We also had the long-term sustainability of the project in mind. As students only worked on this project for one semester, the website had to require little maintenance to remain online, so that it could be accessible both for users and for the students, who might want to include their work on the project as part of their scholarly portfolio.

As WeberWeb is an open educational resource, all content on the website is licensed under a CC-BY-4.0 license, which allows not only distribution of the materials without prior permission from the authors, but also allows modification and adaptation of the content if credit is given. In addition, the site's code is publicly

available on GitHub. This adds another level of openness, since not only are the educational materials openly available, but also the code itself can be reused and modified by others.

Content structure of the WeberWeb page

To start working on this project, the class was divided into five teams, with each team in charge of developing a topic related to Max and Marianne Weber's theoretical proposal. This allowed us to better organize the contents of the website and avoided having the students learn to use too many digital tools at the same time, since each team only used one or two to elaborate the contents in their charge. The five teams and their assigned topics are described below.

Team 1: Bibliography

Typically, social theory courses are developed through the systematic and orderly exposition of the topics marked in the syllabus. For this purpose, students must have the bibliographic material compiled by the professor and must read such materials prior to each session. During class time the topics are explained, analyzed, and discussed.

As a way of involving students in the selection and compilation of bibliographic material, the first team compiled a bibliography of works by and about Max and Marianne Weber. To do so, they used search engines such as Semantic Scholar and Google Scholar to identify and select texts of interest, which were integrated into an open group in Zotero. This allows interested people to access the bibliography from Zotero, without the need to visit the WeberWeb site. The team also used [BibBase](#), a free tool for publishing bibliographic data to the web, to integrate the Zotero bibliography into the website and have it updated in real time, as items are added to Zotero (see figure 1).

Within Zotero, the team organized the texts by topics of their choice. This activity fostered skills in searching and organizing scholarly information, as well as metadata curation. After sorting the bibliography in Zotero, the team created a video ([available on YouTube](#) under a CC-BY license) where they explain in a general way the main works of both authors.

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Bibliografía

Aquí puedes encontrar las referencias bibliográficas (e incluso, en algunos casos, los enlaces web) de libros y documentos escritos por Marianne y Max Weber, así como bibliografía acerca de su propuesta teórica. Es un grupo público y abierto con contenidos seleccionados cuidadosamente, disponible en [Zotero](#):

Group by ▼ generated by BIBBASE

▼ 2021 (1)

La noción de “desencantamiento del mundo” en el Topo en su laberinto de Vicente Santuc a partir de los conceptos de Max Weber y Marcel Gauchet. Hirata, R.; and Carlos, R. J. . 2021. Accepted: 2021-07-21T02:58:13Z Publisher: Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya

[link](#) [bibtex](#) [abstract](#)

▼ 2020 (2)

Max Weber, 100 años después. Pachón-Soto, D. *Semana.com* \textbar Últimas Noticias de Colombia y el Mundo. June 2020. Section: Sociología; <https://web.archive.org/web/20210827205952/https://www.semana.com/impres/sociologia/articulo/max-weber-100-anos-despues/81934/>

[link](#) [bibtex](#) [abstract](#)

Figure 1. Bibliography section

Team 2: Timelines

When the proposals of classical authors are addressed in the social science classroom, it is essential to put into historical context the contributions that will be analyzed: the political and economic configuration of the time, the social environment, and the cultural and ideological milestones that allow us to understand what was said and why it was said.

It is in this sense that the members of the second team developed an interactive timeline of Max and Marianne Weber's lives throughout the 19th and mid-20th century. They used Timeline JS to create this visualization, and searched for Creative Commons-licensed images to illustrate the events in the lives of both sociologists.⁵

The team also created a second visualization on their own with the Weber genealogy. For the students it was interesting to learn details of the private lives of two classic authors of sociology; humanizing them was for them a more engaging and revealing way of approaching their theory. Knowing that Max suffered from depression or being indignant that Marianne does not appear as a classic author led them to inquire more about their life and work (see figure 2).



The most difficult dimension of a social theory course is the identification of the key concepts of a theoretical proposal. Explaining these concepts with drawings or diagrams requires not only proficiency in the conceptual body referred to, but also a creative process that implies a double reflection: understanding to be able to explain.

Among the topics addressed by the infographics are the reasons why Max Weber is considered a prominent figure in sociological theory, Marianne Weber's contributions to feminist theory, and a comparison of Max Weber with other classic sociologists such as Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx.

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Figure 3. Example of an infographic created about Marianne Weber.

Team 4: Theoretical Architecture

No theoretical proposal is written in a vacuum, they all have benefits, links, and inheritances from other proposals; likewise, they contrast, discuss, and question some others. If there is a challenge for students of theoretical courses—and for some professors—it is to identify these benefits.

The challenge of doing this work was assigned to the fourth team, whose task was to summarize the main concepts of Max Weber's theory and present them in a timeline created with Timeline JS linking the authors with whom they establish a dialogue (see figure 4).

This team also created a video with a Creative Commons CC.BY-4.0 license, where they explained some key concepts of Max Weber's thought, such as ideal types, social action, causality, and social stratification.

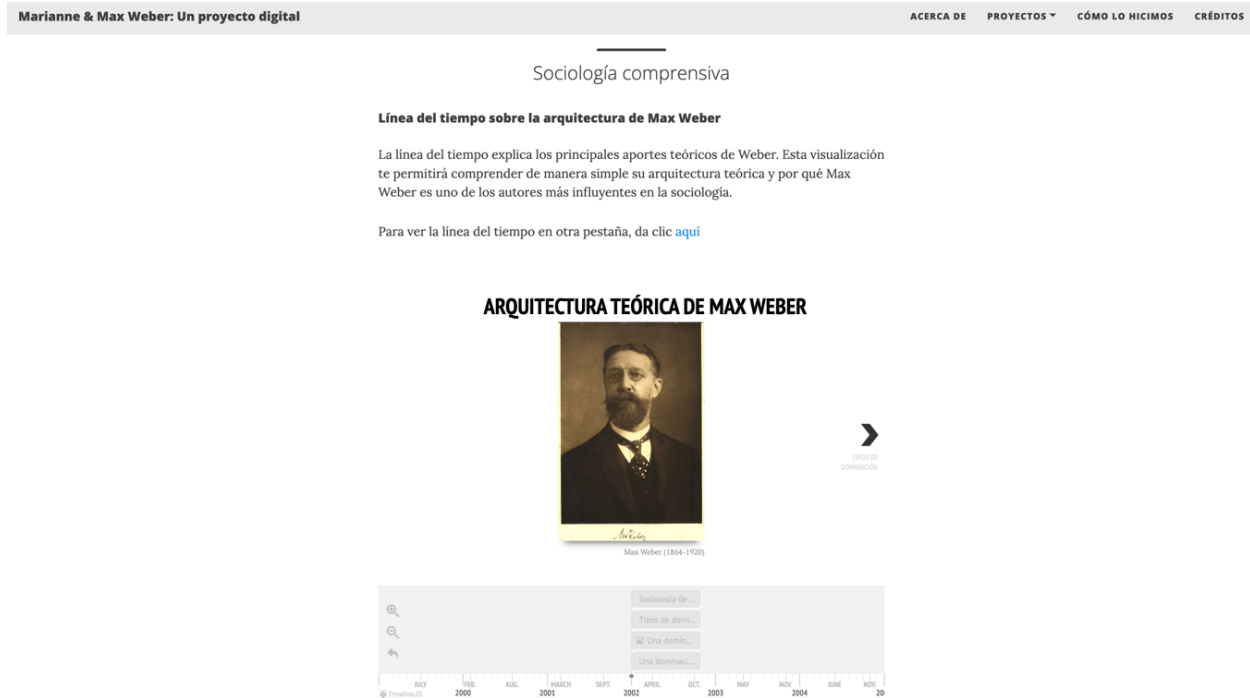


Figure 4. Max Weber's theoretical architecture section created with Timeline JS

Team 5: Internet resources

It would be impossible to address all that has been said and analyzed about Max and Marianne Weber from a theoretical perspective in just one semester. What can be done is to leave some concerns and certain keys of interpretation. Nowadays, it is possible to find thousands of online resources that can support those who are still interested in knowing a little more.

This is the reason the members of team five were asked to develop a compilation of different web resources about Max and Marianne Weber. For this they used the Wakelet tool to create a collection of webpages and videos. Wakelet also allowed them to annotate the resources and explain why they were selected (see figure 5).



Figure 5. Internet resources section, selected with Wakelet

As part of this work, the students created a playlist on Spotify with music that was popular in the years in which the Webers lived. This aimed to temporarily situate the students in the era in which these sociologists wrote, as the context in which they lived undoubtedly influenced their works.

In addition, this team was also in charge of selecting MOOCs (massive open online courses) that discussed Max Weber, even when the whole course was not exclusively about this sociologist (see figure 6). In fact, the five MOOCs they retrieved are about classical social theory in general but have one or more lessons that delve into Weber's thought. This exercise was aimed at fostering students' academic information-seeking skills.

Marianne & Max Weber: Un proyecto digital

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MOOCs sobre Weber

Classical sociological theory

Es ofrecido por la Universidad de Ámsterdam e impartido por el Dr. Bart van Heerikhuizen. Contiene 8 sesiones que se completan entre 1-2 hrs cada una y un examen final con duración de 1 hora. El curso se centra en los fundadores de la sociología, por lo que podremos tener información sobre la perspectiva de Weber y además conocer diferentes enfoques sociológicos para poder compararlos y poder realizar un mejor análisis. Estos son los temas del curso:

- Session 1: Classical Sociological Theory – An Introduction
- Session 2: Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733) and Adam Smith (1723–1790)
- Session 3: Auguste Comte (1798–1857)
- Session 4: Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859)
- Session 5: Karl Marx (1818–1883)
- Session 6: Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)
- Session 7: Max Weber (1864–1920)
- Session 8: Norbert Elias (1897–1990)

Teoría Sociológica Clásica

Este curso es impartido por la Universidad del Salvador, en Argentina. Se trata de un curso sobre Teoría Sociológica Clásica que está disponible en abierto. Aunque te tienes que registrar para poder descargar los contenidos, se envían un correo de confirmación y sigues las instrucciones para quedar matriculado y acceder al curso.

Classical sociological theory

Este curso es impartido por la Universidad NYU Abu Dhabi y describe el pensamiento social, prestando atención en el contexto social e intelectual, marcos, métodos conceptuales y análisis social, aunque abarca más escritores es a partir de la clase 16 a la clase 21 donde se habla sobre Max Weber. Estos son los temas del curso:

- Clase 1. Introducción
- Clase 2. Hobbes: autoridad, derechos humanos y orden social

Figure 6. List of MOOCs that address Max Weber's thought.

Videos (all teams)

The last section of the website—which was not developed by a team, but by the entire class as a group—was the video section. These videos were created throughout the semester with the Flipgrid tool (currently known as Microsoft Flip), which allows recording, editing, and sharing short videos with a cell phone or computer and was created for educational purposes.

The creation of videos was assigned at the conclusion of a class topic and consisted of short summaries or reflections on a concept or reading, for example, the historical context in which Max Weber wrote, George Ritzer's textbook reading in the Max Weber chapter, or the main points of the book *Economy and Society*.

This is one of the most playful sections of the project. Judging from the contents, the students really had fun recording the short videos. We should not forget that, at that time, the students were still locked in their homes and without face-to-face interaction among themselves. Interacting through the videos gave the course a slightly more human dimension.

Recognition of collaborative work

In addition to the various contents hosted on the website, an important part of the project was to set aside a specific section to give credit to every person who collaborated in this effort (see figure 7). In the credits

section, the names of all the students who collaborated in the project are listed, as well as their photograph and a brief description of their academic interests.

This section was vital to recognize the work that everyone did in the selection and creation of content. The importance of crediting student labour has been documented in texts like the *Students Collaborators' Bill of Rights*, which emphasizes that “if students have made substantive [...] contributions to the project, their names should appear on the project as collaborators” (Di Pressi et al.). We were also guided by the principle that the work created in the classroom should belong to the students, especially when it is public (Keralis 287).

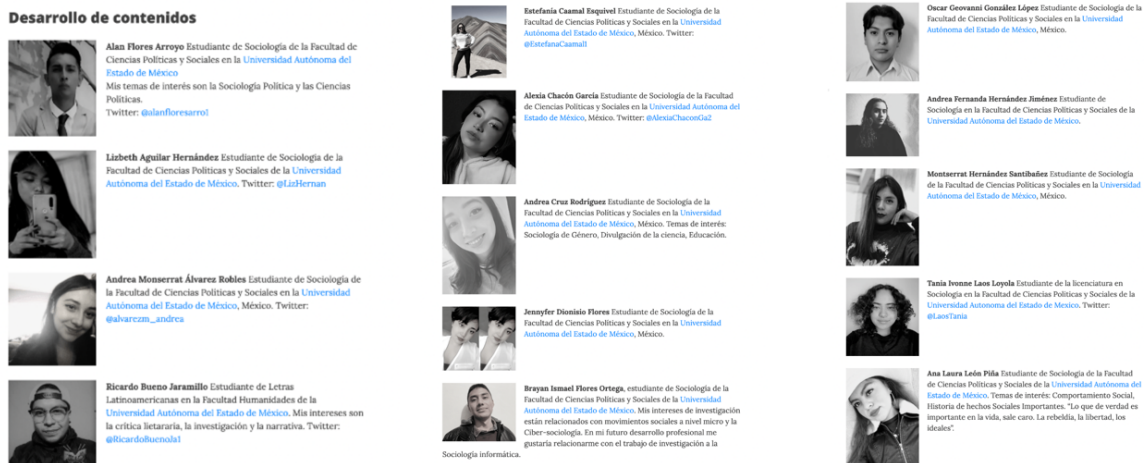


Figure 7. Screenshot of the credits section with students' names and pictures.

Results

Teaching and lessons learned

The use of technological resources in the classroom is not new; however, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the lack of capacity of the educational system to adapt traditional pedagogical practices to digital environments.

Despite undoubted technological advances in higher education, we continue using the same teaching and assessment techniques of three or four decades ago and this, it seems, did not change much despite the pandemic years, which forced us to use platforms for digital teaching. The increased use of technologies has highlighted the limits of our use of digital tools for, as Monella puts it, doing “old things,” rather than as a testing ground for doing “new things” (173).

An example of this is the teaching of theory in higher education, based mainly on directed and annotated reading of books and photocopies, replaced by webpages and PDF files, which are used as mere tools to perpetuate traditional forms of teaching.

In our opinion, an alternative digital education would be possible if we stopped considering information technologies as an external tool and, instead, thought of them in their political dimension, developing and experimenting with digital teaching methods inspired by the principles of active, critical, and creative learning.

This was, at least, what we tried to do by proposing the co-creation of the OER presented here: To move from the mere reading of websites and PDF files and the punctual comments by the teacher, to a co-creation exercise where students discovered varied information on the internet about an author, which they were given the task of organizing, cleaning, selecting, curating, reading, displaying, and explaining using various digital tools.

The importance of our website lies in the fact that there is nothing similar. It is a repertory of academic and scientific information that compiles the most important aspects of an author's work, his life and the impact of his work. It has the citations and includes audiovisual tools created by us, as well as a complete bibliography. I don't know of anything similar. (Andrea Cruz, student)

The result was that the students read much more than they would have read under a traditional didactic strategy, but they read what they found online and decided if it was appropriate, explained it in diverse and interesting ways and in their own words, learned social theory, acquired some digital skills and, above all, discovered new ways of learning:

It is important to create web pages about authors to encourage learning, to exercise new paper strategies and to approach new technological tools. It also serves to make advanced topics easier and more dynamic. (Ricardo Jaramillo, student)

As the above comments demonstrate, the students greatly valued this integrative approach to using technology in the classroom. Because the website is public, the opportunity to make the ideas of Marianne and Max Weber accessible to a larger audience also motivated the students to perform careful and high-quality work. However, given the university context of sociology in Mexico, it is unlikely that they will have the opportunity to engage in similar practices. This leads us to think about the need to make this type of digital assignment a common practice and not just an isolated case.

Site launch and dissemination

Given that the work around the WeberWeb project was developed remotely due to the closures related to COVID-19, one of the main expectations of the participants was the possibility of launching the website in a hybrid meeting. Fortunately, sanitary conditions allowed the launch to take place in a face-to-face meeting during the first week of December 2021, which was [broadcast live](#) on the Faculty's YouTube channel. In this event, one or two students from each team presented the work they developed for the website, which follows the *Students Collaborators' Bill of Rights* principle that "students should be empowered to present on projects on which they have collaborated" (Di Pressi et al.).

With this opportunity, in addition to disseminating the work developed for the website, it was possible to meet in person for the first time the students who made possible the creation of this resource, something that was valued and emotional for them after more than a year and a half of studying online.

Outside our university, both students and authors shared the website on personal social networks (particularly Twitter) so that people interested in sociological theory and Max Weber could learn about the site.

Given the fatigue of emergency remote education and the scarce knowledge of OER in Latin America, we did not have high expectations about the reception of this material. However, the initiative attracted the attention of professors from other universities, who were interested in learning about how work on the project was organized and about what tools were used.

We received several comments, valuable feedback, and suggestions for improvement from Mexican and Chilean professors. Later, in March 2022, the project was presented at a seminar on Sociological Theory at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa. The students that collaborated in the creation of WeberWeb were invited to join this presentation, but they could not make it because of their class schedule.

Furthermore, to increase the visibility of the site, we added the page as an external link in the Spanish Wikipedia pages of Max and Marianne Weber, where it is possible to learn more about the theoretical proposals of both. Finally, we have recently submitted the WeberWeb metadata to OERCommons so that the resource is searchable, shareable, and has a backup outside the project's own site.

Opportunities

The first opportunity that a resource like WeberWeb offers, like any OER, is the ability to adapt the content. This means that any professor can take some (or all) of the content of the project and modify it; for example, they can add content (such as examples or different readings to the proposals), they can adapt it to their own context to facilitate learning, or even translate the content into another language. In the sociology departments of Mexican universities, it is quite common for courses to be devoted to a particular sociologist, especially prominent figures such as Max Weber, so the potential for adaptation is considerable.

While the content of the website may potentially be of uneven quality, as some students may have spent more time on the project than others or had more interest in the course content, OER adaptation encourages the improvement of these contents as part of a class assignment or in the creation of a new educational resource. This is part of OER-enabled pedagogy, which takes advantage of open licenses so that “each work becomes the beginning of an ongoing conversation in which other learners participate as they contextualize and extend the work in support of their own learning” (Wiley and Hilton III 136). Therefore, the website contents are not final and static, instead they are a source of renewal for future students and instructors.

A second opportunity for OER as final assignments is that they allow for the creation of content that addresses biases and absences in a discipline's educational materials. In the case of WeberWeb, we addressed both the lack of OER in Spanish on sociology and the lack of recognition and visibility Marianne Weber has received for her contributions to sociology. In the future, other resources could be created for sociologists and theories from non-Western countries.

Such projects are also a way of assigning practical assignments in theoretical courses that will replace the essays usually required as final work in such classes. In addition, since the work is public, students tend to pay more attention and spend more time on the project than if it were only reviewed by the instructor.

Challenges

The discoverability of OER in general is a challenge, but in social science disciplines and in regions such as Latin America it is even more difficult because OER are not as well known or used. In addition, our target audience does not necessarily have the informational skills to take advantage of this type of educational material. Despite this, we have taken several initiatives to disseminate the site among our colleagues, with reliable results, as mentioned above.

A second challenge was that not all students had access to a computer throughout the course or had to share it with other family members. The computer was necessary to upload content to the site on GitHub and to use some tools such as Timeline JS or Zotero. In addition, as the campus was still closed due to the pandemic, students could not use university computers. To address this problem, we divided the class into teams and made sure that at least one person had access to a computer.

Another challenge has been the lack of institutional openness to host projects of this nature. WeberWeb is not hosted on an institutional server. This is because there are no mechanisms to request the hosting of this type of resource, and although our university in Mexico has an institutional repository, it is not self-archiving and, in addition, it does not have a specific platform to host interactive websites. Other digital pedagogy initiatives in Mexico have encountered the same challenge of a lack of infrastructure for digital projects (Álvarez Sánchez and Peña Pimentel 5). In addition, the recent calls for proposals to provide recognition to what the university calls "didactic materials" do not contemplate a single item where something like an open educational resource can be applied for.

Conclusions

Developing OER in collaboration with undergraduate students, in Spanish, in Latin America, and for the specific case of social sciences, is a challenge not so much because it is a novel project, but because initiatives of this type are scarce in this context.

Proposals of this nature could open new ways to update teaching practices that seem to be, to a certain extent, stagnant. In the last twenty or thirty years, the teaching of social sciences in Latin American universities has undergone very few changes, even more so when it comes to completely theoretical classes, where a selection of readings related to the topics marked in the syllabus, previous readings by the students, and reflections by the teacher in charge are used.

Of course, the incorporation of alternative pedagogical practices has more scope in classes with more practical content than in purely theoretical ones. Therefore, the main challenge faced by university teachers of social sciences in the framework of emergency remote education during COVID19 was to adapt their traditional face-to-face classes to digital environments (Hodges et al.).

Looking back on the experience of creating an open educational resource in collaboration with undergraduate students, we could say that, given the circumstances of the pandemic, we did not seek to recreate a robust educational ecosystem, but to provide temporary access to instruction and pedagogical support in a way that was agile and easy to set up during an emergency.

The particular challenge at the time this proposal was implemented was that the change of environment had to be done at an unprecedented speed, where virtuality in education was mandatory. Therefore, it was necessary to improvise quick solutions in the shortest possible time. No matter how smart the solution was, the important thing was to provide a way to allow classes to continue and learn to offer meaningful knowledge.

This project demonstrates the importance of developing a culture of open sharing, and behind this lies a commitment to community. A community that is no longer only limited to our own institution's teaching and research peers—which is our small universe—but, thanks to the internet, connects us with other colleagues around the world who are interested and who work on topics close to ours.

We recognize, however, that the proper development of a culture of sharing must go hand in hand with the processes of evaluation and recognition of this type of work. Today, the development of OER is not considered academic work in higher education institutions in the Latin American region. However, we are convinced that change is possible, and, for this, it is necessary to continue making proposals, especially if they are made collaboratively.

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Footnotes

1. The site is also available on [OER Commons](#). ↵
2. The concepts of open science, open humanities, and open scholarship seem to overlap. Some authors prefer open humanities because they notice in open science a certain absence of the arts and humanities (Knöchelmann). Open scholarship, on the other hand, emphasizes the process of scholarly communication, i.e., opening up the way research is conducted and communicated (Neylon). ↵
3. Examples of introductory MOOCs to sociology are [Classical Sociological Theory](#) from the University of Amsterdam and [Introduction to Sociology](#) from the University of Texas Permian Basin. ↵
4. [OER Commons](#) is a repository of open pedagogical materials. The searches were performed before submitting the WeberWeb metadata to this repository. ↵
5. [Timeline JS](#) is a tool to create timelines online from a Google Sheet template. ↵