

## EDITORS' NOTE

Our first substantive issue of *Contemporary Sociology* (one that we can call mostly our own because we determined the content of the featured essays) begins with a symposium that fits into our larger plan to highlight changes and innovation in our discipline. The topic featured in this issue is the changing role of radical sociology in the discipline. Rhonda Levine's *Enriching the Sociological Imagination: How Radical Sociology Changed the Discipline* argues that radical sociology has had more influence on mainstream sociology than many observers have recognized. This book assembled now-canonical articles that originally appeared in *The Insurgent Sociologist* during the 1970s and commissioned their authors to write new reflective essays on how the ideas they introduced in the 1970s fared in the ensuing 30 years. The project emphasizes radical sociology's wide impact and shows how the work helped spawn continuing interest in capitalism, class, race, gender, power, and progressive social change. Moreover, it delineated future directions for a critical sociology in a multicultural and global world. The *Contemporary Sociology* editors invited two sociologists, who were active during the 1970s (Immanuel Wallerstein and Anthony Orum), and two younger sociologists who were trained after these articles made their marks (Joya Misra and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva), to comment on the book. What results is a lively discussion with contributions from multiple perspectives.

Using an overarching posture, we contemplate the character and trajectory of our discipline as a whole, and want to offer some thoughts on sociology's recent history and its possible future trends. The Levine book provides us with a vehicle to begin this project by considering the trajectory of one sub-field within the discipline. In the following paragraphs, we add a bit of empirical evidence to the debate about the impact and ultimate fate of "radical sociology" and we identify other sociological sub-fields that will garner our attention in upcoming *Contemporary Sociology* symposia.

The overall structure and changing nature of the sociological discipline is highlighted in

James Moody's recent work on the structure of sociological production. Moody<sup>1</sup> analyzed the topics that sociologists studied during the early 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and the late 1990s (using titles, abstracts, and keywords for over 10,000 articles in each period). He found "radical sociology" to constitute a small cluster of sociological interest in the 1970s, along with the cognate sub-fields of "unions," "class," and "politics," and he identified slightly larger clusters for "gender" and "race." In the 1980s, radical sociology and politics disappeared as clusters. The race and gender clusters reached high points (in the 1970s for race and the 1980s for gender), then gradually decreased in size throughout the late 1990s. The clusters representing unions and class grew slightly throughout this period. Also noteworthy, new clusters in world systems analysis, political economy, and social movements appeared in the early 1990s (and then disappeared in the late 1990s). By this account, radical sociology seems to fade into oblivion. Yet as the essayists in our symposium suggest, radical sociology made its impact by inserting critical ideas into and energizing several new sub-fields (note the rise in the unions and class clusters, and the appearance of world systems, political economy, and social movements clusters) and by merging with "mainstream" sociology (note the prominence in our discipline today of the contributors to this volume).

In the latest period of Moody's analysis (1997–1998), we find that sociological work in health care, drugs, welfare, and sexuality form the largest clusters of interest in sociological (article) publications. Other prominent areas of sociological activity include: HIV/AIDS, education, gender, race, class, urban, technology/science, inequality, police/crime, organizations, language, and unions. And smaller clusters appear in alcohol, domestic violence, networks, morality, postmodernism, ethnicity, and immigration. Although interest in some of these areas seems to have shifted a bit in the last seven

<sup>1</sup> James Moody. 2005. "The (network) Structure of Sociology Production." ASA presentation, Philadelphia, PA.

to eight years, Moody's sociological interest clusters correlate with the issues we identified as ones that satisfy our commitment to feature conceptual and topical issues that are prominent in the discipline and those that highlight the ways in which sociology can inform public debate and public policy.

Because we consider it our job as editors of *CS* to feature work on the *forefront* of the sociological discipline, we are committed to highlighting work in emerging sub-fields. To this end, we have planned upcoming featured symposia on: current morality debates, race and schooling, parole and prisoner reen-

try, sexual abuse, and gender and sexuality. We are currently working on adding symposia on: reexamining the welfare state, healthcare, global inequality, immigration, crime, human rights, and issues of war and peace. We hope this plan highlights what's most interesting and exciting in our discipline. Nevertheless, we welcome all suggestions for additions to our plans.

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A SYMPOSIUM ON RHONDA LEVINE'S  
*ENRICHING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION:  
HOW RADICAL SOCIOLOGY CHANGED THE DISCIPLINE*

Transforming or Reforming the Discipline?  
Radical Sociology of the 1970s and 1980s

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When I started graduate school in 1988, radical sociology was an established presence in the discipline; Marxist thought within sociology may have been at one of its peak moments. While my formal graduate training emphasized a “scientific” and “rational” (read: quantitative) mode of scholarship, my graduate school comrades were, for the most part, deeply invested in critiquing capitalism, analyzing inequalities of class and race (though gender was less visible), and striving for a more just and equitable society. We spent a lot of time thinking and arguing about critical sociology, and believing that we, and sociology, could make a real difference in the world.

Our coursework didn't disappoint us. We were assigned the works of many radical scholars, and held in reverence the scholars who appear in this volume (as well as other radicals). As a graduate student, going to conferences was a little like attending a rock concert (with name tags); the biggest stars in my eyes were these radical scholars (and I simply aspired to be a roadie). To me, radical sociology was, is, and continues to be the very heart of the discipline.

Yet, I learned to do sociology in ways that concealed my passion and my wish to be an “insurgent.” I learned elaborate statistical approaches that would provide “legitimacy” to my arguments. I learned to cloak my deeply felt values in the language of hypothesis testing. I learned how to get along in the mainstream. Of course, this was made easier by the mainstream moving toward the left, in no small part through the influence of radical scholars. But to me, that is still a deeply unsatisfying place to be.

*Enriching the Sociological Imagination: How Radical Sociology Changed the Discipline*, edited by **Rhonda F. Levine**. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press, 2005. 367 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 1-59451-168-3.

Re-reading these essays is a powerful reminder of radical sociology's history. The volume is excellent. The essays are well-chosen and the inclusion of the current thoughts and reflections of the authors provides a fascinating roadmap of how particular American sociologists' thinking has been shaped by changing historical contexts as well as their own intellectual growth. Yet, I must admit to feeling let down. As Michael Burawoy (p. 309) notes in his closing essay, “Revisiting ‘radical sociology’ of the 1970s [and 1980s], one cannot but be struck by its unrepentant academic character, both in its analytic style and its substantive remoteness. It mirrored the world it sought to conquer. For all its radicalism its immediate object was the transformation of sociology, not society.” And although sociology of the time was in need of a transformation (at least, in my eyes), I cannot help but be disappointed to realize that sociology was less transformed than simply reformed (like me?). There is still so much work to be done, in terms of not only our hopes of creating a more equitable and just world, but also our making the practice of sociology live up to our larger goals.

The volume begins effectively with Richard Flacks's 1972 “Towards a Socialist Sociology,” which speaks directly to those interested in doing insurgent sociology. Its arguments are shaped by the moment in

which it was written, yet, the questions it raises about the discipline are enduring. Flacks notes that “a primary intent of this paper is to . . . urge that we go beyond the endless elaboration of polemical criticism of sociology, to produce systematic inquiry that has real use for movements for social change” (p. 30). Flacks’s reflection contextualizes the essay, while arguing that “a new opportunity for sociologists to contribute to processes of radical envisioning is now upon us” (p. 18).

The next section of the volume includes Göran Therborn’s 1976 “What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?,” G. William Domhoff’s 1974 “State and Ruling Class in Corporate America,” and Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester’s 1973 “Accidents, Scandals, Routines.” Therborn’s analysis of the study of power in society demonstrates that he deserves his place in sociology’s pantheon. Therborn’s reflections on the essay were particularly moving: “Those were years of hope, in the end unfulfilled, but of intellectually inspiring hope, of international friendship and comradeship” (p. 38). In his careful and lucid critique of his original and classic essay, Domhoff provides a model of how to think clearly in order to create durable arguments. Molotch and Lester’s essay and reflection eloquently point out that “instead of reflecting a world out there, [the media] might reflect the practices of those who have the power to determine the experiences of others” (p. 92).

The next two sections include Samuel Bowles, Herb Gintis, and Peter Meyer’s 1975 “The Long Shadow of Work,” Val Burris’s 1987 “Class Structure and Political Ideology,” and Martha E. Gimenez’s 1987 “The Feminization of Poverty: Myth or Reality?,” Edna Bonacich’s 1980 “Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race,” and Zillah Eisenstein’s 1977 “Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism.” Bowles, Gintis, and Meyer’s essay provides an important argument about education’s role in reproducing inequality, although their reflection notes their disenchantment with their previous ideas without providing a clear road map to alternative approaches. Val Burris’s essay is a tremendously cogent analysis of the concept of class, while his reflection reminds us how marginalized arguments about class have since moved to the center of sociological theorizing. Martha Gimenez’s

essay notes that we should recognize the “feminization of poverty” as one dimension in a larger process: “the immiseration of the working class brought about by the profound structural changes undergone by the U.S. economy during the 1980s.” (p. 180). Bonacich analyzes five different class theories of ethnicity, drawing out conceptual lessons that inform her integrated approach to understanding the role of imperialism in shaping class and ethnic relations. In her groundbreaking essay, Eisenstein beautifully shows the importance of a socialist feminist perspective that marries a Marxist understanding of capitalism with a radical feminist understanding of patriarchy to develop a “multi-gridded conceptualization [that] mirrors the complexity of sex and class differentials in the reality of women’s life and experience” (p. 245).

However, I was disappointed with the implications of the arguments made by Gimenez and Burris. Both then and now, Gimenez is uncomfortable with the idea that examining women’s experience of poverty might tell us something about class. Burris similarly critiques “the hegemony that concepts of race and gender enjoy,” connecting these to “the fragmentation of the left into single-issue movements, the sway that identity politics hold over the political imagination, and the postmodern turn toward subjectivist and relativist epistemologies” (p. 137). While there is room for criticism against feminist and race-centered scholarship that does not take class seriously, such perspectives have also analyzed class, power, and exploitation very effectively. Neither scholar seemed to thoughtfully consider why so many of us believe it is necessary to conceptualize race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc. in order to better understand class processes. While Bonacich’s current essay (p. 192) reflects concern about the way class can be “treated as an identity equivalent to race or gender,” she still recognizes that it is important to theorize the connections between race and class. Eisenstein (p. 223) goes further to argue that she now more fully recognizes “the intimate relationship between the racializing of gender and the engendering of race in the processes of exploitation and oppression.” Both Bonacich’s and Eisenstein’s essays seem to me to provide excellent examples of why

radicals *should* take issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality seriously.

The next section includes Erik Olin Wright's 1975 "Alternative Perspectives in Marxist Theory of Accumulation and Crisis" and Fred Block's 1975 "Contradictions of Capitalism as a World System." Wright's piece is characteristically well-argued, providing a very useful consideration of the trajectory of the forms of capitalist crisis, while his reflections provide a fascinating example of how a scholar's assumptions and arguments change over time. Block's essay centers on globalization and capitalism, analyzing problems of economic openness in the postwar global financial order. Of all of the authors, Block provides the most painstaking and profound critique of his earlier work. Yet, part of what makes Block so powerful as a scholar is that he is willing to make strong arguments that *can* be proven wrong.

The book ends with a reflective essay by Michael Burawoy that thoughtfully historicizes radical sociology, and then argues "critical sociologists should focus less on radicalizing professional sociology, although there is *always* room for that, and more on fostering public sociologies to bolster the organs of civil society" (p. 316). While his argument does not hold any surprises, it makes excellent points.

I highly recommend *Enriching the Sociological Imagination*. The classic essays are essential statements in sociology, while the authors' reflections on their past work provide a thought-provoking intellectual history of insurgent sociologists over several decades. Perhaps most importantly, the volume reminds us what sociology was, what it has become, as well as what its future potential may be.

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## Radical Roots

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This is an important book, but not for the typical reasons. There is no new theory here and no new project for sociology to take on. There are neither new findings nor new methodological innovations. But what is here is a set of readings that compel one to reflect on the course that the field of sociology has taken over the past three decades or so. One cannot read these articles without engaging in reflections on the course of the field and even reflecting on one's own place in the field.

The intent of the book, organized and edited by Rhonda Levine, is to take articles published in *The Insurgent Sociologist* (now called *Critical Sociology*) and to show how they have helped to make the field of sociology different and more critical than it was at the end of the 1960s. There is no question that the articles do just that. After reading them, one realizes how very different the discipline is today than it was then. At the same time, one must thank their authors for having helped enlarge and diversify the field.

I confess that I know several authors and know their work well. Richard Flacks was

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one of my teachers at the University of Chicago in the 1960s and one of the prominent leaders of the student movement at that time. He was as articulate and forceful then as he is now. And even though I did not agree with everything he claimed, I admired him greatly. So, too, I know Harvey Molotch and Bill Domhoff well, authors that are also represented in this collection. Over the years I have come to appreciate their sociological insights more and more, especially those of Molotch. He took the old Chicago school of sociology very seriously, and then he put both human agency and power into the manner in which it worked. His view of the city, and of growth politics, has been the leading view of urban politics in America for many years. Its position was cemented in that fash-

ion in a book he published with John Logan, *Urban Fortunes*, surely the most widely cited urban book in the past two decades or so.

Bill Domhoff has been preaching about the ruling class in America since the late 1960s, too. He, like Molotch, led an assault on the reign of the pluralist school of political science. His view, built upon the insights of C. Wright Mills, came to be accepted and to replace, for a brief time, the pluralist paradigm; and then it, too, prompted its own response—the view that the state is a central actor in modern politics and politics today. Two of the other authors in this collection—Göran Therborn, whose book on the ruling class I critically reviewed when it was first published more than two decades ago, and Fred Block, who offered a compelling set of insights into the workings of the state in modern capitalism—also helped change and indeed, reshape our understanding of modern politics and the state, moving it well beyond where it stood at the end of the 1960s. (I should note that I gave a negative reading to Therborn's book mainly because I thought it was too programmatic and not sufficiently substantive. I re-read his article in this collection and my view has not changed. Then, too, he notes his own reservations about the article today).

There are other authors in this collection whom I find equally interesting and who have had a similar impact on their respective fields. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, in their view of the way that schooling reproduces the class structure of capitalism, offered a refreshing and critical view of education in America. It is notable that their view remains as relevant today as it was then. But many Americans, sociologists among them, remain committed to the view that education and schooling are the way to improve one's life chances—to add skills and human capital to one's resume, and thus to put oneself in a better position to secure a good job and good income.

I also find the work of Edna Bonacich especially significant, in part because my own interests have lately turned to the matter of immigration and ethnicity. In a series of bold and pioneering writings in the 1970s, on middleman minorities and split labor markets, she helped to show the ways in which class places a central role in issues of race and ethnicity. She continues to do important

and pioneering work in these areas, and remains as committed to her own critical and innovative views now as she was then.

There are other interesting articles in this collection—on matters of class and gender—but I personally, found the ones above most interesting and relevant to my own preoccupations. Or rather, to be more specific, their authors are the ones I found most interesting and innovative. In fact, my chief complaint about this collection is that while the authors of articles have helped to shift the field of sociology away from its conservative moorings to a more enlightened and open agenda—in which human actors struggle with injustice and inequality—the reprinted articles are not the ones for which their authors would become most famous. The article by Molotch on routine events, accidents and scandals, while very insightful, is not the work for which he gained greatest acclaim. The same goes for the article by Bonacich as well as those by Block and Domhoff. Indeed, if I were to have put together something like this anthology, I would have called it the writings of critical sociologists, and then selected those short pieces for which the authors achieved greatest renown.

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I believe the best piece in the entire collection is the concluding one by Michael Burawoy. Burawoy is a terrific writer, and he has the added advantage of having been asked to provide a final set of comments on the collection. He does so from his viewpoint as the standard bearer for “public sociology.” Anyone who reads his article—which, I might add, I think should have come first in the collection inasmuch as it makes so much sense of that which follows—will be impressed with his intelligence and his effort to move sociology into the public realm of the world. In particular, he makes a strong case that the proper realm of an activist sociology is that of civil society, just as the proper realm of economics is the economy, and that of political science the state.

My general sentiments about the articles are roughly the same as those of Burawoy. The articles, themselves, are really not so much about changing society as they are about changing sociology. It turns out that many of us who had the privilege, though

also the burden, to have been alive and working as sociologists during the late 1960s and into the 1970s, felt compelled to work through a series of arguments, with the leading figures in sociology as well as with ourselves, about what the discipline was all about. We had to deal, for example, with Talcott Parsons and his heirs, in particular, and to decide what, if anything, remained useful about structural-functionalism. Today I envy those sociologists who, at the time, did not care much either about dead or living white Anglo-European/American males, and who could therefore forge ahead, test their hypotheses, assemble their empirical results, and continue on their merry way.

I could not. Like Madonna, I had to reinvent myself (forgive me if my later forms are not nearly as attractive as hers). And many of my closest intellectual colleagues—who are among today's most radical sociologists—had to reinvent themselves as well. Unlike today, when young and aspiring sociologists can approach the study of society without having to re-read the corpus of sociological treatises, many of us then believed it essential to read these works and to think deeply about what they said and their implications. I, myself, spent about three or four years reading Marx, Weber, not to say also Kant and Hegel, just to better appreciate the roots of this Western tradition of thought. And it was time well-spent.

★★★

While the critical sociologists who appear in this collection have, in my estimation, moved the field of sociology forward, there are other writers and circumstances that have moved the field even more. Apart from Bonacich, the writers of this collection did not pay much attention to race. Nor did they pay much attention to the ways in which race and poverty intersect. The work of William Julius Wilson, plus countless others who have followed in his footsteps, have fashioned modern sociology into an even more penetrating critique of the flaws and failures of American capitalism.

What now remains to be done, to borrow a phrase from Lenin, is to fashion a set of ideas that provide not only a critique, but also a remedy, or series of remedies, to the failings of our modern world. It is clear to me that old-fashioned socialism, of the kind once envisioned by Flacks, is no longer the answer. I sense that Burawoy is on the right track: the remedies, if such exist, lie in our capacity to better understand the workings of civil society and how they play into the modern state. One hopes that the younger generation of critical sociologists, not having had to plow through the theory my friends and I did, will provide not only better information about how this world works, but also inspiring ideas and strategies for the practical ways to improve it.

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## Who is Radical Sociology, What is She?

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*That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair,  
And wise is she  
The Heav'ns such grace did lend her  
That adored she might be.*

—William Shakespeare

In the wake of the revolution of 1968, radical sociology appeared on the scene, alongside radical economics, radical history, and a lot of other radical versions of disciplines. The main institutional expression of this movement was a journal called *The Insurgent Sociologist*, later to be renamed *Critical Sociology*. Some of the most famous articles

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of the most famous insurgents are assembled in this collection, all with their reflections on themselves some thirty years later. Most of them seem to feel as Göran Therborn explicitly asserts: I regret nothing, but I would write the same article a bit (or a lot) differently today. At least, they regret nothing. It's not a

God that failed, only a God who turns out to be somewhat more mysterious in Her ways than they originally thought.

There are people in this world who think that radical sociology is a redundant expression, since they believe that all sociology, almost by definition, is radical. Margaret Thatcher implied as much when she denied that “society” existed, and there are many economists who would sing the same tune. But clearly not the radical sociologists themselves, since they were insurgent against something—the Establishment, in sociology and in the world. And to hear the editor, Rhonda Levine, and the concluding essayist, Michael Burawoy, they succeeded in changing the discipline, if not yet the world.

Is radical sociology Marxism? Some of the authors seem to say this. Some explicitly deny it. Others fudge. Obviously, using the term “radical” or “critical” was a way of forming a wide coalition, one that could embrace both those oriented primarily to class analysis and those primarily influenced by feminism or ecology or anti-racism as central concerns. Whatever else radical sociology has been in the United States, it has never been an orthodoxy or a party structure, as reading this book should make abundantly clear to younger readers. It was more an emotional commitment, a deep skepticism about received verities, a search for how to reconcile scholarship and radical activism. And as such, eventually it has induced some sober nuances for those who lived it for many decades.

As some hint in this book, it is anomalous that the U.S. political scene has moved significantly rightward since 1968, while the U.S. university scene has moved somewhat leftward. If this normative gulf stretches too far, can it last? Or will one or the other or both move back towards the center?

What is missing in this book, and perhaps more widely among U.S. intellectuals, is a clear widely-accepted program or vision for “what is to be done”—either in sociology or in the world. There certainly is no central organizing agenda, or even a relative consensus about basic principles of either research or political action.

The preface by David Fasenfast says that “radical and critical thinking [has been brought] into the mainstream of sociology.” If, by this, we mean that the substantive

themes about which radical sociologists have been writing—class, power, inequality, racism, gender, capitalism—are accepted today as legitimate concerns of sociologists and therefore acceptable as course offerings or as research topics for dissertations and articles in the most prestigious journals, this is surely true. And this is indeed quite different from what was the prevailing atmosphere in the 1950s. But if, by this, we mean that the majority of U.S. sociologists have abandoned the epistemological commitments of yesteryear, I myself think this is a decidedly premature evaluation.

Those who designate themselves as radical sociologists have moved from the category of dangerous and often scorned outsiders to that of tolerated insiders, even if the tolerance by some colleagues is still only grudging. But is it true that radical sociology has changed the discipline? Not in my opinion, by any means. There is a long path still to tread. And the outcome is very far from certain. I wonder if a little less satisfaction with their presumed achievements and a little more digging in to the enormous tasks ahead are not in order.

Specifically, I myself see three big hurdles in terms of the discipline. There is to begin with, the intellectual task. Here, there are many questions to be resolved. First of all, is sociology really a discipline? Or are we in fact practicing a much larger category of knowledge, one I would call historical social science? And if we are doing the latter, what are the organizational, research, and pedagogical implications of this? And if we know what these are, when and how are we going to restructure our knowledge institutions to take them into account?

There are fundamental epistemological questions before us, and I do not hear very much discussion about them within the confines of U.S. sociology, even by those who call themselves radical sociologists. For example, does the epistemological divide between science and the humanities make sense at all? Does the law of the excluded middle make sense? How can we live with the unresolvable paradox that all our intellectual activities are both universalizing and particularizing simultaneously? And what do all these epistemological questions tell us about how we can frame our analyses of the existing world and its possible trajectories?

However, once we acknowledge that we are living in a world that is changing in intrinsically uncertain ways, what kinds of moral choices are before us? This is the question that Weber raised, but never answered in a satisfactory manner, when he spoke of substantive rationality. (Incidentally, we should remember that “substantive” is a very bad translation of the German original which was *materiell*, and that we should really be speaking of material rationality in its contrast with merely formal rationality.) Radical sociologists seem to think they have their moral choices clearly indicated. I would think rather that the subject is never really debated even by them, and certainly not within the confines of sociology. Weber raised the issues in his Munich lectures, but we—the Weberians, the Marxists, and all the others—

have collectively buried these issues ever since.

It will only be when we have faced up to the major intellectual questions before us (which seem to me to start with the epistemological questions), and then to the questions of what material rationality implies for us all, that we can get to the question that inspired radical sociology originally—the political implications of our intellectual and moral analyses. The radical sociologists of the 1960s and 1970s had less of a lasting effect than they had hoped, primarily because they took for the most part the shortcut of working back from their political objectives to the intellectual and moral tasks. Perhaps if we tried to work our way forward, from the intellectual analyses to the moral debates to the political conclusions, we might have a more long-lasting impact.

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## Towards a New Radical Agenda: A Critique of Mainstreamed Sociological Radicalism

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*To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself.*

—Karl Marx, Introduction to the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"*

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon stated that “Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.” The work of the authors compiled in this edited collection represented an important moment in American history and, for those of us in the field of sociology, an epistemic break with Parsonian-inspired sociology. Their work provided the theoretical weapons for my generation to reframe our agenda and enhance our sociological imagination. In short, their work provided the “mission” for many sociologists of my age. But we are now far removed from the sixties and seventies and, thus, it is time to assess how well their radicalism has aged. Have their views, as with good wine, improved with time? Or have they become rancid and stale? Therefore, with this evaluative goal in mind, I proceed in this essay as follows. First, I make some general comments about this

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book as a book project. Second, I highlight succinctly a few of the articles in this collection that, for one reason or another, best withstood the test of time. Third, I discuss the radical project advanced by these authors and examine if it provides the “mission” for the new generation of radicals. Lastly, I outline a few elements that I believe a radical sociological project for the 21st century ought to include.

This is a dandy of a book. Rhonda Levine has done a fabulous job of producing a very well-organized and edited book. The book begins with a 1972 essay by Richard Flacks conceptualizing what radical sociology should look like and ends with an essay by Michael Burawoy addressing the future of radical sociology. In between, we are treated to a “who is who” in the radical tradition

(e.g., Therborn, Wright, Bonacich, etc.) based on articles originally written in the seventies in *The Insurgent* dealing with the issues of "Power and Class," "Class and Inequality," "Race and Gender," and "Capitalism and the World Economy." Levine did a masterful job of removing unnecessary material from the original articles while still maintaining the essence of the authors' arguments. This editing makes many of these articles much more readable. She also did something else which will be extremely useful for posterity: she asked each author to reflect on their piece and write a short comment on it. Hence, this book will be of immeasurable value for those interested in the history of ideas and in the history of sociology. I also believe this book can be used as a supplementary text in basic courses on political sociology and stratification at the graduate and even undergraduate level.

The article by Richard Flacks is of historical interest and, if only for that, is a must-read. Reading this piece gives us the coordinates of thought among those who developed the notion of a "socialist sociology" in the 1960s and 1970s. Therborn's article is still relevant as political scientists and political sociologists, despite years of radical critique, still operate with "subjectivists" and "functionalists" understanding of power. G. William Domhoff, the most clear and direct writer of this group, produced an analysis of power dynamics that allowed people to understand "who rules America" as well as how they do so. Albeit many structuralists hate his "subjectivism," Domhoff has done a career of producing data and analyses that have forced people to think and maybe act. Bowles and Gintis's piece is as relevant today as the day when it was written. Who has not used their work in "Introduction to Sociology" courses or in graduate seminars on education to show how class is reproduced in schools? And, lastly, the piece that I find the most useful in this collection—and the most advanced for its time—is that of Zillah Eisenstein on "capitalist patriarchy." Eisenstein wrote about intersectionality, the class-gender nexus, and articulation in 1977. And her thinking did not stagnate as she followed this piece with work dealing with race and sexuality.

Now let me proceed with the hard task of criticizing the radical sociological and politi-

cal project offered by many of these authors. And I do so with some trepidation as some of the authors in this volume are my mentors, some are my friends, and some are both. However, and as consolation for those whose ideas I will criticize, I am already of the age when people have begun criticizing my work. As radicals, we should expect to be spanked by a younger generation searching to develop their critical voice. One caveat before I proceed with my critique—I am making general comments about the radicalism of this generation, but my comments, obviously, do not apply to every member of this generation.

The first limitation of the radical project of this cohort was its whiteness. Flack acknowledges this as much when he describes his reference group as "all-white male" (p. 14). These radicals hardly ever included any minorities in their intellectual midst (check the acknowledgements of their books), hardly ever cited minority scholars (check the references in their books), and ended up, with a few notable exceptions, denying the structural import of race in America. This is astounding considering that so many claimed the civil rights movement had a profound influence on them. Their organizational and intellectual whiteness explains in part why these radicals were not able to connect in a meaningful way with the radical efforts of black and Latino sociologists in the 1970s and 1980s.

Second, this movement was not only mostly white, but also mostly male. Not surprisingly then, issues of gender were not dealt with in a forthright manner. I, for example, trained by members of this generation in Puerto Rico and the United States, could not understand in the early eighties how patriarchy could be viewed as a category of equal magnitude to the capitalist mode of production. And, like most Marxists of my generation, I believed "sexism" and "racism" were ideologies used by the bourgeoisie to divide the working class.

The third limitation was the class reductionism of this generation. Their marriage to a narrow-Marxist perspective limited them severely—and I say narrow because there were already some openings to think of the class-race nexus (e.g., the work of W. E. B. DuBois, C. L. R. James, and Cedric Robinson among others) and class-gender nexus (e.g.,

Angela Davis, Gloria Anzaldúa, etc.). Hence, many of them were unable to appreciate the radical possibilities of the race- and gender-based mobilizations of the eighties and nineties. Worse, lacking the tools to fully appreciate how race and class are central cleavages of modernity, too many members of this radical generation *opposed* the praxis of minorities, women, gays and lesbians, and other subaltern folks as divisive “identity politics.” Todd Gitlin is a prime example of this, but unfortunately, some of the authors in this volume seem to hold this view, too!

Fourth, with a few notable exceptions, these authors were—and still are—first-world centered. The problem with this fixation is that their theories of class, state, and politics were accordingly driven by the ideas and experiences of ten percent of humanity. Hence, theorizations they advanced, I suggest, were ultimately of limited use and applicability for most of the societies and peoples in the world-system (on this, see the recent work of Amin, Wallerstein, and most notably, of Anibal Quijano and his colleagues on the subject of the “coloniality of power”). To this day, the Eurocentric imagination still weighs like a nightmare on the brain of many of these authors and therefore, they do not bother to read the radical scholarship produced by Indian, African, Caribbean, and Latin American scholars.

Fifth, too many members of this generation became enamored with theory and forgot one of the central radical elements of the Marxist tradition: its unrepentant call for revolutionary praxis to “change the world.” They traded the streets for the comfort of the sweets and claimed this trade was “revolutionary.” And in their quest for theoretical purity, some became “analytical Marxists” and, much like Althusser, they decided to excise “unscientific” concepts and ideas from Marxism such as “consciousness,” “alienation,” “dialectics,” and, more recently, the “labor theory of value” (see Wright’s comment on page 253). Lacking direct connections to social movements, the radicalism of many of these radicals became inorganic.

Sixth, albeit many of these authors believe they won the battle against mainstream conservative sociology (see, for example, Burawoy’s contribution in this volume), one wonders about the perils of incorporation. What happens when radicals get jobs at

Wisconsin, Berkeley, and other major universities? What happens when their articles are published by the *American Sociological Review* and their books are published by the University of California Press? What happens when their income rises significantly and they no longer have to deal with the threat of insecurity, instability, and unemployment? What happens, in short, when they join the sociological elite?

I will tell you what *can happen* (it definitely did not happen to all the members of this generation) and what I *have seen happen* to members of this radical generation. And my remarks apply to this generation as well as to mine. (As I write this article, I am now a member of Duke’s sociology department and have privileges similar to those that have accrued to my friends and mentors. Thus, my comments here are also a sort of self-criticism.)

First, being professors in major universities means that we have to tone down our politics. We have to become careful in our public statements and interventions. We have to think before we sign a petition or support a cause (e.g., how many of these radicals supported the efforts of minority scholars to challenge the ASA Council’s decision on *ASR* a few years ago or signed the petition to take to the ASA membership a ballot to decide on an anti-war resolution two years ago?).

Second, when we publish in *ASR* or *AJS*, we abdicate formal and maybe even substantive radicalism. We write for a certain audience and in a certain way and that audience, whether it loves or hates us, does its best to co-opt us. We become reviewers for these journals, members of their editorial boards, and guest editors and even editors of these journals. And when we do so, do we break with the canonical rules of normative sociology or do we reproduce their rules and become gate-keepers?

Third, when we make some real money in this business and have stability, we are affected by the process that Marx described so well in *The German Ideology* (“Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life”). That is, we may believe our radicalism is beyond reproach, but when people perceive us as Gucci Marxists, we must pay attention to that perception and to the possibility that it has a material foundation.

Lastly, when we are heralded as academic stars and join the center of the discipline as members of ASA Council, as Presidents of ASA, as distinguished scholars, as name chairs in universities, we must watch out! Our move from the periphery to the core may have changed the discipline somewhat, but it has also transformed us and our radicalism.

Hence, I remain deeply skeptical about the depth of the break we created in sociology. The inclusion of class as a variable, the discussion of Marx as a central theorist, and the like does not mean we gave birth to radical or socialist sociology. Unlike my friend and comrade Michael Burawoy, I do not believe for a second that “The world lags behind sociology” and that “Now the point is not to transform sociology but to transform the world” (p. 314). Sociology, I contend, is still in deep need of transformation and sociologists need to learn from the real experiments of anti-systemic social movements in the world and not the other way around.

Now, I outline some elements I believe will be central for the reconstruction of the radical sociology project in the 21st century:

- 1) If race, class, and gender are articulated in a matrix of domination in modern societies, we must develop practices and theories that fit this reality rather than continue our quasi-religious belief in prefabricated models of collective action (e.g., “Workers of the world. . .”).
- 2) From the radicalism of yesteryears, we must retain the insistence on the central role of praxis. But we must look with disdain on their infatuation with theoretical correctness and their chic radical elitism.
- 3) The disciplines are implicated with power and, therefore, we must remain

critical of them. Hence, sociology, as a discipline, is part of the problem and we must remain critical of its social project (greasing the wheels of capitalism through reform so that the process of accumulation runs smoothly) and skeptical of its various lullabies regardless of what segment of the sociological community they come from.

- 4) Democratic socialism is still our goal, but not based on dated notions of “the industrial working class” or on the notion that class-based politics is the only way of uniting the people here or elsewhere.
- 5) We must seriously question the Eurocentric assumptions and the white nationalism (Americanism, if you will) that have plagued sociology. This is important as it is an obstacle for all of our radical interventions.
- 6) We must struggle against the demons of complacency, objectivism, depoliticization, and incorporation. If we remain in the core of sociology (and I doubt that if we regain our radical spirit, we will remain in the core), we must contend with the positive as well as the negative effects of that location.

But these are just pointers and, since I am getting old and have just moved to the core of the discipline myself, I suspect the new generation of sociologists coming up will not trust my instincts (and I do not blame you). That new generation will carve its own radical script “out of relative obscurity” and I trust they will do a much better job at deepening the radical imagination than my generation—and those before us—did.