

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION:
FROM THE PAGES OF *THE INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST*

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More than twenty-five years have past since the debut of *The Insurgent Sociologist* as an alternative voice in sociological study. Over the years, the journal has provided an outlet for critical and radical scholarship often unwelcome in traditional sociology departments and professional journals. Certainly, the journal was a product of the political and intellectual ferment of the time. The student movements of the 1960s and early 1970s supplied a vision of a different world, and sociology offered the tools for implementation.

The Insurgent Sociologist first appeared as a newspaper of the now-defunct Sociology Liberation Movement/Union of Radical Sociology. In 1971 it began publishing as a quarterly journal, headquartered at the University of Oregon with an editorial collective guided by the late Al Szymanski. In 1987, in a very different political context, the journal changed its name to *Critical Sociology*. In 1999, with volume 24, *Critical Sociology* began a new phase. We are now produced by a commercial publisher and no longer housed at the University of Oregon. Indeed, we have come a long way from our modest beginnings.

This issue of *Critical Sociology* celebrates the journal's beginning, the 15 years when it was called called *The Insurgent Sociologist*. We present edited versions of influential articles that appeared in those years, most of which became the basis for books and extended research agendas. Each article has been updated by its author(s) in an introduction reflecting on its relevance in light of ensuing research and assessment of the scholarly developments since the original publication. The articles have been edited in order to include as wide a range of contributions as possible, given our space limitations. For the complete versions, please refer to the original publication.

The Insurgent Sociologist played a central role in reflecting the growth and developments of a radical sociology in the 1970s, one that often-times took Marx and Marxism as points of departure. It embraced the title of “insurgent,” differentiating itself from a mainstream sociology that too often legitimated a system of inequality and domination. The journal published insightful and path-breaking articles seeking to understand the complexities of continued social inequality and the ways that power and resources were distributed. It was particularly interested in thinking about ways to begin to build a better society. Articles discussed and debated the significance of capitalism as a system of exploitation, the changing nature of the class system across time and space, the role of power and ideology, and steps to overcome systems of injustice. Work tended to focus primarily on the United States, and issues of race, gender, and culture tended to take a back seat to social class concerns.

We have selected a group of articles that reflect radical sociology’s continuing interest in capitalist development and in questions of class, of race and gender, of the structure of power, and of ideology and work. We include both theoretical considerations and empirical studies to illustrate the breadth of our history and we include samples of a variety of substantive areas that have been of particular interest to our readers over the years. Our first section includes two classic pieces by prominent sociologists. Erik Olin Wright’s 1975 article considers traditional Marxist categories and illustrates the importance of a solid theoretical foundation in the development of radical thought. Fred Block’s piece, “Contradictions of Capitalism as a World System,” explores the role of the U.S. interests in maintaining global inflation, providing an effective backdrop for thinking about the current globalization process.

Section II on Race and Gender includes articles by Edna Bonacich and Zillah Eisenstein. In both cases, we see the roots of their later work. For Bonacich, we see the emphasis on the relationship between race, ethnicity, and class that she has developed so effectively over the years. For Eisenstein, we see in this piece the basis for her superb discussion of the socialist feminist position in her 1979 book, *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*. Section III: Power and Class captures a dominant theme of *The Insurgent Sociologist*, and we have selected articles that would give the reader a sense of the various approaches available. Goran Therborn’s article, reprinted numerous times, looks at the different ways that power can be conceptualized, rooting his analysis in classical Marxist thought. Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester explore the methods through which the powerful construct the experiences of general publics and provide an excellent analysis of the role of news

formation in the process. G. William Domhoff's "State and Ruling Class in Corporate America," is one of several of his articles appearing in the journal over the years. It provides us with a glimpse of issues important in the area of power structure, a vibrant and passionate topic of debate in the 1970s and 1980s.

In Section IV we include a variety of articles unified by their attention to class. Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Peter Meyer argue that we can understand the social relations of the U.S. educational system by exploring the capitalist economy in which it is rooted. And we see here some of the ideas developed more fully in the award-winning *Schooling in Capitalist Society*. Val Burris' 1987 piece on class structure and ideology is part of the very important project of understanding intermediate class positions. Martha Gimenez offers a timely critique of the notion of the feminization of poverty, arguing that relying on broad categories of this sort obscures the larger process of social transformation generating declining standards of living for the entire working class. Terry Boswell, Edgar Kiser, and Kathryn Baker provide a critique of the Althusserian theory of ideology, suggesting ways in which an elaborated version can offer interesting directions for future research. Finally, David Gartman's article on Marx and the labor process situates the voluminous work flowing from Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in the theoretical writings of Marx.

The first volume of *The Insurgent Sociologist* was reprinted in Winter 1977. The editorial at that time gave the following reason for reprinting: "It is important that today's new generation of progressive sociologists understand the origins of the radical sociology movement and its close ties with the movements of the 1960s. It is primarily for this reason that we are reprinting Volume One."

In the same spirit, we present these reflections and noteworthy articles as a way to demonstrate our impact on sociology, radical and mainstream, and to inspire a new generation of critical sociologists to continue the work. We may have come a long a way from where we started, but we still have a long way to go.