Reflections on Public Sociology: Public Relations, Disciplinary Identity, and the Strong Program in Professional Sociology[1]

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Public sociology is an attempt to redress the issues of public engagement and disciplinary identity that have beset the discipline over the past several decades. While public sociology seeks to rectify the public invisibility of sociology, this paper investigates the limitations of it program. Several points of critique are offered. First, public sociology's affiliations with Marxism serve to potentially entrench existing divisions within the discipline. Second, public sociology's advancement of an agenda geared toward a "sociology *for* publics" instead of a "sociology *of* publics" imposes limitations on the development of a public interface. Third, the lack of a methodological agenda for public sociology raises concerns of how sociology can compete within a contested climate of public opinion. Fourth, issues of disciplinary coherence are not necessarily resolved by public sociology, and are potentially exacerbated by the invocation of public sociology as a new disciplinary identity. Fifth, the incoherence of professional sociology is obviated, and a misleading affiliation is made between scientific knowledge and the hegemonic structure of the profession. Finally, the idealism of public sociology's putative defense of civil society is explored as a utopian gesture akin to that of Habermas' attempt to revive the public sphere. The development of a strong program in professional sociology is briefly offered as a means to repair the disciplinary problems that are illustrated by emergence of the project of public sociology.

Introduction: Sociology and Its Public Face

Michael Burawoy is right—if sociology is to thrive, it needs a stronger public presence. Sociology has an unconvincing presentation of self, and is wracked by a marked inability to establish and manage a coherent and public face. In many respects, sociology is all but invisible to the public eye, dominantly overshadowed by its social science brethren—psychology, economics, and political science. The

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emergence of public sociology has once again elevated the problem of sociology's public (in)visibility to an issue central to the discipline. However, the debates that it has engendered have raised the important concern of whether or not sociology is ready to go "public." The dubious reception of public sociology by sociologists themselves highlights an issue that must be confronted in the discussion about "going public." In short, sociology does not simply have a problem of public relations; sociology itself has an identity crisis.

That sociology has a problem of public relations should be of little surprise to most sociologists. The recent attempts to disembowel sociology departments at American universities (Wood, 1998, 1999) only serve to underscore the tenuous legitimacy held by sociology in the academic and public consciousness. We are typically and frequently confronted with the question, "Sociology? (pause) Huh. (pause) What's that? What exactly do you study? Is it something like psychology?" While for sociologists this question is rather easy to manage, the public misconceptions about sociology are somewhat troubling. Frequently, sociology is conflated by the layperson (and even by some academics) with psychology, social philosophy, social work, criminology, social activism, urban studies, public administration, journalism, and perhaps, most disquieting of all, with socialism.

The concern endemic to this problem of public relations is that as a discipline we do not, ourselves, seem to know who we are. Are we scientists or activists, ideologists or empiricists, symbolic interactionists or functionalists, positivists or postmodernists, philosophers or theorists, teachers or researchers, qualitative or quantitative, micro or macro? The trouble is that in an eclectic way we are a *bricolage* of all of these elements. Sociology tackles a broad range of issues, from manifold perspectives, using multiple methodologies. In many respects, sociology has good reason to celebrate this eclecticism as it provides rich and broad insights into the social world. However, amidst its polymorphism and multivocality, it is easy to lose the disciplinary coherence of sociology. It is as if sociology's manifold nature causes it to be stretched too thinly, forming a segmented series of subdisciplines that have broken into factions and fragments competing not only for hegemonic status in the discipline but also for public attention. It is no wonder that students of sociology are often confused about what they do.

This paper is centrally concerned with the legitimation crisis endemic to sociology and stems from questions about the possibilities of sociology's public engagement and the coherency of its disciplinary identity. Burawoy's public sociology attempts to provide answers to these questions and should be commended for its efforts; but in many ways it falls short of a successful resolution to sociology's identity struggles and much needed public interface. In the following sections, we take up the issues of sociology's problem of public relations and its identity crisis. First, we examine sociology's problem of public relations by exploring the development of public sociology with respect to the questions of publics, public opinion formation, and the contemporary public intellectual. Next, we explore sociology's identity crisis and its relationship to public sociology. Here, issues of multivocality, disciplinary coherence, and the hegemonic structure of its institutionalization come to the foreground. Of particular concern are the misrepresentations of scientific knowledge within sociology and their contributions to hegemonic structure of the sociological discipline. We suggest that Burawoy's endeavor to legitimize sociology through a greater public engagement is a necessary project, but much too

idealistic. In place of energies devotes to the development of a public sociology, we contend that efforts should first be directed toward increasing the coherence of sociology's disciplinary knowledge and the development of a strong program for professional sociology.

Sociology and Its Problem of Public Relations

The emergence of Burawoy's public sociology raises a single, overarching question: Why is there a perceived need for an institutionalized public sociology within the discipline? Burawoy's answer is tied to an issue raised by Turner and Turner (1990) in their historical examination of the institutionalization of sociology. While there has been more than one period in sociology's history where it was viewed as an important and necessary science in the public sphere, sociology's contemporary level of influence is suffering. Today, there is a detachment of sociology from the public consciousness, a fact that is one of the primary catalysts for the emergence of public sociology. The appearance of public sociology is no doubt timely, as it has created momentum toward investigating the prospect that sociology should have "something to say" to the larger public. As Burawoy (2004) states, public sociology is ostensibly inspired by Mills' (1959) sociological imagination, the ability to transform private troubles into issues of public concern, initiating conversations with these publics, and strengthening the relevancy of the discipline. Like Seidman's (1994) push towards a postmodern social theory, grounded in an invigoration of sociology through local discussion and moral advocacy, Burawoy's public sociology implies that without open, moral dialogue with laymen, sociology will wallow in irrelevancy.

It is clear that sociology has a problem with its public relations. The public at large has a very limited conception of what kind of discipline sociology is, who the notable sociologists are, or what kind of insights sociologists has about the social world. In short, sociology has a very limited public visibility and has earned little respectability within extra-academic populations. Burawoy's public sociology seeks to rectify this situation, but falls short in many respects.

Conceiving Public Sociology

Public sociology is a renewed attempt to establish a greater social visibility and relevance for the discipline of sociology. Burawoy (2005c) argues that one of the chief sources of sociology's failure to engender social contributions and achieve societal prominence is its lack of public standing and interface. He contends that the inability of sociology to develop a public significance is deeply problematic for the profession and a mark of its growing self-insulation and irrelevance. The efforts directed toward the development of a public sociology are Burawoy's attempt to salvage the waning public face of sociology and bring a common focus to the discipline.

Burawoy (2005c) paints the picture of sociology as a left-leaning professional community, naturally politicized, that has vested interests in communicating and disseminating its views and insights to the wider public. He outlines a renovated vision of sociology that embodies four "faces"—professional, critical, policy, and public—and advances an agenda for a sociology organized around a greater pub-

lic involvement. In Burawoy's model, public sociology is the face that ostensibly will directly intersect with the extra-academic social world, serving to both inform and influence the greater public. It will not only carry the trove of sociological knowledge to the wider society but will also be directed toward the establishment of meaningful public conversations toward the advancement of the social good.

Burawoy suggests that public sociology has two distinct but complementary manifestations: traditional and organic public sociologies. On the one hand, traditional public sociology is based upon an accidental or providential engagement with the public. Sociologists who fall into this course of public sociology do not necessarily set out to address the public but, instead, develop insights during the course of their professional activities that come to acquire significant public notability. The efforts of Robert Bellah et al. (1985), Diane Vaughan (1996, 2004), and David Riesman (1950) stand out as exemplars of traditional public sociology. On the other hand, organic public sociology is premised upon an intentional and conscious public engagement where sociologists work closely with individuals and groups in the public sphere, sharing insights and working together toward the solution of problems. William Gamson's (2003) efforts with the Media Research Action Project and Bonacich and Appelbaum's (2000) labor market study are illustrations of organic public sociology. Burawoy suggests that most contemporary public sociology is of an organic nature and that, while it is often informed by traditional approaches, it is the form of public sociology that will provide the discipline with the greatest public currency.

Although public sociology is the central focus of Burawoy's discussion, he both interrelates and juxtaposes this form of sociology with the three other types. As Burawoy sees it, professional sociology, is that which is dominantly practiced within the discipline, organized around theoretically driven empirical research programs and emphasizing scientifically oriented investigations. The conversations and debates that sociologists have with one another in academic journals, classrooms, conference rooms, and behind closed doors are the hallmarks of what Burawoy describes as professional sociology. In his approach, professional sociology is the *sine qua non* of sociology itself (Burawoy, 2005c: 10) providing the foundation for all other dimensions of sociological practice. Critical sociology, on the other hand, is that component of sociology that is self-reflexive, providing the basis of sociology's self-examination and critique, establishing its moral compass, and acting as the self-monitoring mechanism of the discipline. Finally, there is policy sociology, which is performed as sociologists are hired out on a contractual basis in order to practice their craft. In short, policy sociology is sociological work done under the auspices of an agreement, oriented toward the pragmatic investigation of specific clients' requests. Combined, these four forms of sociology comprise Burawoy's model of the discipline as it stands today. In his view, each should work with the others in a cybernetic, interdependent, and dialectic fashion, together providing the support and coherency to the discipline as a whole. Burawoy's model of sociology is presented in Table 1.

While this four-dimensional model of sociology is a clear and simple portrait of the discipline, Burawoy suggests that this typology is an ideal type that is vastly oversimplified relative to the empirical reality of contemporary sociological practice. On his own account, Burawoy contends that all four dimensions of sociology are, in fact, "organically" interrelated, informing and supporting one another

Table 1

Burawoy's Model of Public Sociology

	Academic Audience	**Extra-academic Audience**
Instrumental Knowledge	Professional Sociology	Policy Sociology
Reflexive Knowledge	Critical Sociology	Public Sociology

(Burawoy, 2005c: 15). However, Burawoy also suggests that the discriminations between these four types of sociology blur fractally into one another. Each form of sociology embodies elements of all the others. Professional sociology is often critical; critical sociology is found in policy sociology; policy sociology is embedded in the professional path; all three are aspects of the public; and so on with many other combinations (Burawoy, 2005c). In fact, public sociology is not only a *type* of sociology, but also a dimension of any one of the other forms of sociology. With all of these interdependencies, one wonders why this project has been labeled "public sociology" in the first place.

One of the troubling features of Burawoy's model of sociology, when understood as a typology of forms of sociological practice, is that it lends itself to such easy reification around one face as a dominant focus of the discussion. While Burawoy's clear intent is to develop a greater public presence for sociology—making appropriate the label "*public* sociology"—it is certainly not clear why public sociology itself needs to be established as a distinct form of sociology. If, as Burawoy (2005c) suggests, professional sociology already carries a public dimension, why not develop the public face of professional sociology instead of establishing public sociology as a distinctive form of sociological practice? After all, the public dimension of professional sociology is, in essence, what he means by "traditional" public sociology. If the discipline truly embodies the multidimensionality that Burawoy describes, why choose "public" sociology as the moniker for a new professional identity? Why not choose one of the other three faces of sociology—professional, critical, or policy? Such a move is certainly feasible, and similar attempts have been offered.[22]

The move to establish public sociology with a fair amount of disciplinary distinction and autonomy raises important concerns that do not find adequate resolution in Burawoy's model. Does sociology need a *public* sociology (i.e., Burawoy's organic public sociology) or a public dimension to *professional* sociology (i.e., that which is seemingly described by what Burawoy calls "traditional public sociology")? Is there an important difference between them, which should frame the agenda for sociology's public engagement, and why? A more nuanced answer to these questions needs to be found and requires a further explication of Burawoy's proposal for public sociology and its putative role in sociological practice.

Public Sociology or Sociological Marxism?

The emergence of public sociology by a sociologist of an overtly Marxist orientation raises the question of the ideological orientation of "public sociology." As

others have suggested (Nielsen, 2004), Burawoy's affiliations with Marxism elevate the concern of whether or not public sociology is simply an attempt to redress the late twentieth-century failings of Marxism, to place old "red" wine in new bottles, creating a new niche for sociologists inspired by left-leaning politics. Is public sociology a magicians' "smoke and mirrors," misdirection trick to disguise the reinvigoration of Marxist sociology? While Burawoy is clear on the point that public sociology has no "intrinsic normative valence" (Burawoy, 2005c: 8), the leftward tilt of public sociology is a salient concern.[3] As one reads Burawoy's vision of public sociology, it seems impossible to not be reminded of his "Sociological Marxism" (see Burawoy, 1989, 1990; Burawoy and Wright, 2002) where he advances a vision of the flagging Marxist enterprise that, much like public sociology, is both normative *and* scientific. In some readings, one must work hard to overlook the contradictions in that alliance. Public sociology and its affiliations with sociological Marxism serve to create a similar paradox in Burawoy's work.

In his most comprehensive statement of public sociology (his "manifesto" of public sociology), Burawoy (2005c) paints the picture of the potential for an admittedly leftist, sociological community to utilize politically normative standards in order to advance sociological knowledge to the foreground of a public consciousness. This is simultaneously the point of both his support of public sociology and sociological Marxism; the two seem to be ideologically and structurally parallel. In the same way that the *Communist Manifesto* can be seen as one of the earliest calls to a public sociology, so too can the writings on public sociology be seen as a revival of Burawoy's sociological Marxism. It is no coincidence that Burawoy's "manifesto" of public sociology is written in 11 theses, directly invoking Marx's famous 11 "Theses on Feuerbach." In fact, Burawoy's eleventh thesis on public sociology parallels that inscribed by Marx in his celebrated call to praxis. Whereas Marx invoked a call for social philosophy to not simply theorize about the social world but, instead, to change it; Burawoy does much the same for sociologists. He writes:

> If the standpoint of economics is the market and its expansion, and the standpoint of political science is the state and the guarantee of political stability, then the standpoint of sociology is civil society and the defense of the social. In times of market tyranny and state despotism, sociology—and in particular its public face—defends the interests of humanity (Burawoy, 2005c: 24).

In this final thesis on public sociology, Burawoy contends that the objective of sociology (and not just *public* sociology) is "partisan," oriented toward the "defense of the social" and the reinvigoration of civil society. While this is a noble goal for sociology (no doubt a noble goal for humanity), it is clearly driven by an ideological orientation that is not uniformly shared by those who are personally invested in the discipline. Burawoy's (2005b) essay "The Critical Turn to Public Sociology" only exacerbates this situation by invoking the last two of Marx's theses as an epigraph[4] and then directly linking public sociology to the development of "socialist utopias." Such an explicit connection serves to prescribe a potentially problematic normative agenda for public sociology, further segmenting the discipline along ideological lines and reinforcing questions of the collusion between public sociology and Marxism.

The affiliation of public sociology with Marxism, incidental as it may seem, is a liability for the project of public sociology and for sociology in general. Such an

alliance not only threatens to further segment an already divided sociological discipline along ideological lines, but more importantly, it jeopardizes the acceptance of sociological insights within publics dramatically unreceptive to Marxism. The costs for American sociology are of particular concern, as the reception of Marxism has a history of stolid and passionate skepticism among the general public; moreover, it is a central point of division within the profession itself. In short, the Marxist connotations of Burawoy's project of public sociology are problematic both in their means of attempting to revitalize an increasingly specialized and divided discipline, and in their normative and teleological bent towards the historically unpopular ideals of Marxism.

Toward a Sociology of (for) Publics

Regardless of the true ideological face of public sociology, there are key conceptual problems that also frame the project. While the central concept in the development of public sociology is the "public," Burawoy is surprisingly vague in his definition of the term, using it in a broad range of contexts—from local community groups, to organizational structures, to marginalized populations, to the nebulous "civil society"—without developing any one guiding conception. Despite his insufficient definitions of "public," Burawoy does offer a number of examples. Students, he suggests, are sociologists' "first" and most immediate public, followed by secondary and tertiary publics in professional associations, community groups and the broader public sphere (Burawoy, 2005c: 7-9). Burawoy argues that these publics have the common characteristic of unification and constitution by shared discourse, remarking that even populations shaped by sociological definitions come to form publics (2005c: 8).

While, the idea of "creating" a public is ripe with possibilities, this notion creates a paradox. Should public sociology be oriented toward a "sociology *of* publics," as Burawoy (2005c: 8) suggests, or toward a "sociology *for* publics"? As it exists, the sociological endeavor is putatively a "sociology of publics" investigating the history and organization of individuals in society. Burawoy's public sociology (and here we disagree with his characterization) advocates more of a "sociology *for* publics" establishing forms of knowledge that can be utilized by individuals in society, and at times constituting those individuals as publics. In short, public sociology appears to be an attempt to convert a sociological discipline oriented toward a "sociology of publics" into one organized around a "sociology for publics," and perhaps blurring the distinction between the two.

It is not difficult to imagine Karl Marx as the first true "public sociologist," and the first to noticeably make fuzzy the distinction between a sociology "of" and "for" publics. Clearly, Marx wished to make his sociological impact felt in the world that surrounded him, developing a systematic set of sociological insights with the intention of both informing workers about the exploitative nature of capitalism and unraveling its scientific laws. Marx's work is often separated between that of the young, activist Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and the *Communist Manifesto*, and the older more scientific Marx of *Capital* (Fromm, 1961). The efforts of the young Marx, in the advocacy of worker solidarity and improved working conditions, are most clearly directed toward a "sociology for publics" (and of the development of workers as a public-for-itself); while the works

of the older Marx, in analyzing the theoretical principles of the capitalist political economy, are more directed toward a "sociology of publics" (and an analysis of workers as a public-in-itself). Thus, Marx's early sociology can be seen as an attempt to transform a "public-in-itself" into a "public-for-itself" through the production of discourse, a project motivated by Marx's intention of creating a collective awareness and a common identification among workers.

Bearing a kinship with Marx's project, Burawoy envisions public sociology not only as a process through which publics can be studied "in-themselves" but, moreover, as a means through which they can be constituted "for-themselves" by the insights of sociologists. While it is too much of a caricature to cast-type Burawoy's conceptualization of public sociology as obviating the concerns of a "sociology of publics" entirely in favor of a "sociology for publics"—as his project clearly contains both elements—it is obvious that he places the emphasis of public sociology on the latter. Consider Burawoy's examination of the constitution of women as a public. He writes:

> "part of our business as sociologists is to define human categories—people with AIDS, women with breast cancer, women, gays—and if we do so with their collaboration we create publics. The category woman became the basis of a public—an active, thick, visible, national nay international counter-public—because intellectuals, sociologists among them, defined women as marginalized, left out, oppressed, and silenced, that is, defined them in ways they recognized" (2005c: 8).

While Burawoy highlights other examples in his discussion of public sociology, this description is highly reminiscent of Marx's move to develop a "sociology-for-publics" and create the proletariat as a "public-for-itself."

The development of a public sociology has to clearly distinguish between its analytic role as a "sociology of publics" and its constitutive role as a "sociology for publics." Realistically, sociology can both investigate publics (the putative goal of professional sociology) and invigorate them as an active component of civil society (the apparent objective of organic public sociology). However, this duplicity of sociological roles is a significant source of confusion for the discipline of sociology. Burawoy's project does not resolve this dualism but in fact reproduces it in the question of whether or not an increased public presence to sociology should be earned under the auspicious of "public sociology" or through a more developed public component to professional sociology.

As Burawoy's project of public sociology reveals, simultaneously analyzing and constituting civil society is tricky business (to which many of those engaged in contract-based policy sociology will attest) because of inevitable conflicts of interest. A public sociology bent on shaping or constituting civil society walks a dangerous line, as it may not only provoke an ideology of social engineering, but may be undeservedly and unwarrantedly prescriptive. With this in mind, the distinction between professional sociology and public sociology seems decidedly premature.

Public Sociology and the Problems of Public Engagement

Whatever one believes about the roles of sociology in respectively analyzing and constituting publics, there are considerable issues that must be examined in articulating a public face to sociology. Sociologists have long explored images of publics—from Weber's "inarticulate mass" and Marx's metaphor of peasants in a

potato-sack, to the Frankfurt School's "mass society" and Habermas' "public sphere"—as well as the obstacles endemic to the development of a sociologically informed and active public. While Burawoy (2005a) recognizes the history of these debates, there is still a concern about the methods of public engagement that are left unaddressed by public sociology. In short, and as Brady (2004) suggests, there is no "concrete proposal for practice" delineated in the public sociology enterprise.

Because Burawoy's formulation of public sociology is only, as he recognizes, in "primitive" form (2005c: 8), it is not surprising that its "action plan" is underdeveloped. However, his articulation of public sociology does not address in a meaningful way those dynamics of contemporary public opinion formation that will likely create significant obstacles for sociology's public engagement. In a way that echoes Habermas (1989), Burawoy (2005c) does point out that the contemporary public sphere has been threatened, destroyed by market forces, colonized by the influence of the mass media, and thwarted by bureaucratic rationalization. However, and in a way that again parallels Habermas, Burawoy contends that these obstacles can be overcome if sociologists actively seek out publics and attempt to build dialogical relationships with them. On the face of it, this is a methodology for public sociology that is much too idealistic and one that will inevitably have to confront the sociological threats to the public sphere that he assumes conversation will resolve.

Let's take as an example the contemporary sociological world of public opinion in the United States. Today, not only do sociologists have to compete for public attention with social sciences that have much greater public currency and cultural resonance—i.e., psychology, economics, and political science—but we must also contend with advertisers, broadcasters, marketers, spin-doctors, special effects experts and many others whose skills of public engagement grandly outshine our own. C.W. Mills (1956), who certainly advocated a greater public presence to sociology, was well aware of this problem, and was much more pessimistic, and perhaps more realistic than is Burawoy, about the possibilities of public engagement. If we follow Mills' analysis of the manipulative power inherent in public opinion formation, it becomes apparent that the public today can no longer be understood as a simple social fact—a mass organized around a "herd consciousness"—but rather as a contested terrain dominated by powers of influence that have extensive resources and considerable expertise. The contemporary public is continually invoked, addressed, spun, and disenchanted by the powers of political influence and the arbiters of the mass media. However, in this message-saturated climate, the public has also become increasingly skeptical of such power plays. How public sociology will be able to differentiate the intentions behind its own efforts from those of a sophisticated power elite requires more than a moment of thoughtful consideration.

The climate of public opinion formation imposes significant constraints upon the emergence of public sociology and in particular the development of sociologists as public intellectuals. Sociologists have long known that intellectuals play a significant role in the advancement of public debate, focusing public attention, and enriching the ideas that circulate in the public sphere (Parsons, 1969; Shils, 1958, 1982). The strong interrelationship of intellectuals and civil society has always been the classic role of the *intelligentsia* (Gouldner, 1985). However, in the contemporary climate of public opinion, there have increasingly been significant ques-

tions raised about the diminished role of the public intellectual in society (Bender, 1997; Jacoby, 1987; Posner, 2002). Michaels (2000) argues that the contemporary public intellectual is too frequently conflated with media celebrity, reducing their overall impact and the seriousness of their message. Public intellectuals have been heavily criticized for their pretentiousness, status-seeking, intellectual dilution of complex ideas, and self-aggrandizement (Posner, 2002). The collapse of the prominence of the public intellectual has been perhaps best announced by the *New York Times* who in a recent review of intellectual ideas, listed the "public intellectual" as one of the most overrated (*New York Times*, 2003). Burawoy (2005c: 15) recognizes these issues, but reduces the decline of the public intellectual to a disciplinary tug-of-war between "pop sociology" and professional hegemony.

Academics who write for popular audiences have always been marginalized with respect to the hegemonic legitimacy structure of their discipline. Burawoy's attempt to balance this situation is through the elevation of the general stature of public engagement within the profession, by leveling the disciplinary "playing-field" between the legitimacy of professional and public dimensions of sociology; but, there is no attempt to address the public skepticism of intellectual activity. Consideration must be give to the fact that the emergence of public sociology has come at a time of significant popular concern over the demise of the public intellectual. If the milieu of the contemporary mass media is any reflection of the current state of "the public" then clearly, as Michael (2000) suggests, these are politically and culturally anxious times for intellectuals, public sociologists among them.

In short, given that sociology must compete with the skilled architects of mass mediated discourse questions must be raised, not only about who public sociology will serve, but also about how a publicly oriented sociology will interface with the general public. When the contemporary cultural climate of public discourse is fully considered, it will become obvious that public sociologists will likely have to take a serious lesson from educational, political and religious practitioners, who have grappled with the issues of successful public engagement for decades.

Reflections on Sociological Identity

Many of the problems surrounding sociology's public invisibility likely stem from its disciplinary incoherence. The multivocality of contemporary sociology has broken the discipline into a loose assemblage of fragments, making it difficult for its practitioners to establish a coherent sense of identity. Given the currently complex and segmented disposition of the profession, one wonders what will be presented to a public audience by public sociology. While Burawoy is correct in his diagnosis of the public failures of contemporary sociology, it is questionable whether or not the development of public sociology is actually a solution to sociology's public invisibility or simply another symptom of the problem. We suggest that the latter is likely to be the case and that the development of Burawoy's public sociology as a panacea for sociology's disciplinary ills is a misdirected and premature offering. The movement toward public sociology seems to be premised upon the idea that collective efforts toward public engagement will serve to ameliorate sociology's crisis of incoherence, thus facilitating the development of a more cohesive professional agenda. We contend, however, that issues of disciplinary identity and internal coherence must first be resolved before any public presence to

sociology will be significantly attained. It is not so much that a public sociology should simply strive to have a more salient public involvement; it must also have something to say to publics.

Burawoy argues that sociology already accumulated a vast storehouse of knowledge that is ripe for public use (Burawoy, 2005c: 5), and that the advancement of public sociology is intrinsically based upon the coherence of disciplinary knowledge that sociology has accumulated for almost two centuries. It is true that sociology has acquired a great deal of knowledge about human behavior and the social world. However, most sociologists would probably have a good deal of trouble delineating what it is that sociology knows *as a discipline*; furthermore, it is far from certain that when acting as a collective body the members of the profession would identify a common set of ideas as an intellectual foundation. Even the classical cannon of sociological theory has become a ripe point of controversy for the discipline (see the Connell, 1997 and Collins, 1997 debate for an example). Concerns over the state of knowledge in the profession strike directly at the issue of what the discipline of sociology is, what it has to say, how it might say it, and what contributions it might make to public life.

Public Sociology and the Problem of Disciplinary Identity

Burawoy argues that public sociology can be useful in providing a coherent identity for sociology through its greater efforts at cultivating public engagement. To illustrate his vision, Burawoy (2005c: 25) invokes the image of tributaries flowing into a common stream, where a myriad of public sociologies combine to create a common sociological current. This lofty image of a sociological future is ideal, but it is also contradicted by Burawoy's less than idealistic description of the contemporary state of the discipline—one characterized by internal multidimensionality and power struggles, where the hegemonic dominance of professional sociology reigns over the critical policy and public dimensions. For Burawoy, the public irrelevancy of sociology does not stem simply from the disciplinary incoherence and power plays endemic to the discipline. Instead, sociology's public irrelevance is also derived from its squelching of moral commitments, and the discipline's decreased interest in cultivating an ethos directed toward the formation and advancement of civil society (Burawoy, 2005c: 14).

Burawoy seeks to rectify this situation with the development of public sociology. In his eleventh thesis on public sociology, he suggests that economics, political science and sociology (geography, history and anthropology are excluded from this analysis and, strangely, psychology is completely ignored) all address "partisan" aspects of the social sciences, investigating realms of social life that are of particular concern. Economics, he argues, reflects the standpoint of the market and seeks to ensure its expansion, while the standpoint political science is the state and the assurance of political stability. Sociology reflects the standpoint of the civil society and embodies the goals of protecting the social and defending the "interests of humanity" (Burawoy, 2005c: 24); and, it is clearly public sociology that will have the primary objective of carrying out this defense.

These putative goals for sociology are tall orders and certainly present a sociological agenda that is clearly partisan not only with respect to other social sciences, but within sociology itself. As we have suggested, it is extremely doubtful that

practicing sociologists, who carry a multiplicity of orientations and agendas, will accept the "partisan" goal of protecting and defending the social as the teleology of their sociological practice. Although most sociologists would probably support the moral direction of this pursuit, Burawoy threatens to further entrench an already divided profession by advocating this agenda as an overarching disciplinary identity for sociology. It is clear that Burawoy's eleventh thesis is not just a statement of advocacy for a publicly engaged sociology; it is also a statement of identity for sociological practitioners.

The question over the proper "standpoint" and identity for sociology raises deep-seeded concerns and sends resounding echoes of C.P. Snow's (1959) pronouncement of the emergence of "two cultures" in intellectual life. With some prescience, Snow contends that intellectual discussions are increasingly splitting into two distinct traditions separated by an impassible gulf, with scientific inquiry on the one side and humanistic concerns on the other. Twentieth-century sociology has been characterized by this same duplicity, and public sociology has exacerbated the distinction. The professional embodiment of Snow's two irreconcilable cultures has already made the disciplinary identity of sociology deeply problematic. Today, it is common to hear of departments divisively separated over major themes internal to sociology (e.g., science vs. activism, quantitative vs. qualitative, structure vs. agency, value-neutrality vs. ideological advocacy, etc.). The discord over the American Sociological Association's vote to condemn the United States military involvement in Iraq has only served to further entrench these divisions. Disappointingly, there is little new to these debates, and few collective attempts at disciplinary resolution. In many ways, public sociology has served to intensify these disputes and enflame deeply scarred disciplinary wounds.

In recent decades, however, these debates have taken on a new dimension. Largely driven by the popularity of postmodernism and cultural studies, sociology has witnessed what Ward (1995) has called "the revenge of the humanities" whereby the efforts of the sociological enterprise have been confounded and appropriated by the logic of literacy criticism. Inspired by the metastasis of postmodernism throughout both the humanities and social sciences it has become increasingly common to find interdisciplinary appropriations of humanities discourse within the social sciences and a reversal of this process within the humanities. It is an ironic, and often bewildering, experience for social scientists to read descriptions of literary "theory" and "methodology." The simulation of the language of the scientific method in literary criticism has certainly served to increase the legitimacy of literary discussions, but the social sciences have not fared as well in the exchange. On the one hand, literary theories and methods certainly borrow legitimacy from the conceptual currency of the social sciences and elevate their own prestige. On the other hand, the interpenetration of cultural studies and textual analysis with sociology has deflated the general legitimacy and efficacy of sociological discourse. This is not to say that the humanities cannot have theories and methods; they can and should label them as they choose. This is also not to imply that cultural studies are an irrelevant avenue of social investigation; they are not. The problem is that sociology has come to embody increasingly a conflation of literary and social science approaches, where the methods of textual analysis have been applied to the study of social life. As a result, the disciplinary schisms that divide sociology have expanded, making it all the more difficult for the profession to establish a coherent

identity. As Seidman (2003) suggests, sociological knowledge is now surely "contested knowledge," as uncertainties have escalated about the kind of discipline sociology should be.

The conflation of the social sciences and the humanities is perhaps a primary illustration of the postmodern moment in contemporary sociology. The decentered and multivocal nature of the discipline has localized sociological knowledge in a way that would make Lyotard (1984) and Derrida (1978) proud. However, the contemporary polyvalence of sociology raises some crucial issues for the discipline; namely, who, or what, sets the standards for intellectual discourse, *and* who, or what sets the standards for public sociology. On the one hand, it cannot be a case that anything passes for sociology. On the other hand, not everything will serve as effective public sociology. In many ways, the current postmodern moment to sociology is a threat to both the traditional practice of sociology and Burawoy's notion of public sociology.

Burawoy's public sociology is an answer and, alternatively, a response to the postmodern condition in sociology. The failure of sociology to establish and maintain disciplinary coherence matched with its inability to establish a commonly shared, professional identity has left it defenseless in the wake of postmodern fragmentation. While some celebrate our disciplinary patchwork, as does Burawoy, the tangled web of sociological interests poses a series of dilemmas for both the development of its public face and for the ultimate fate of the profession. If we cannot agree upon our disciplinary identity and, more importantly, upon the state of our cumulative knowledge, then who will listen to us, and why should they? What serious and long-lasting public contributions can we make if we have little sense of cumulative, sociological knowledge upon which we can establish a common ground? Burawoy does suggest that the goals of professional sociology should be based upon the establishment of theoretically based research programs around specific areas of investigation (2005c: 16-17). However, our sociological research programs are less than coherent and are internally segmented. The advancement of a public face to sociology is intrinsically tied to collective agreements about what we know and who we are as a discipline based upon that knowledge.

Burawoy recognizes the dependence of public sociology on professional activities and is correct in his contention that professional sociology is, and should be, the *sine qua non* of sociology. It is difficult to disagree with the premise that our professional efforts should be the means by which sociological knowledge accumulates and upon which public sociology is premised. However, given that the discipline lacks a cohesive paradigmatic structure, and that it is dominated by a multivocality of perspectives and orientations, both the discipline *and* public sociology are left without any true intellectual foundation. Without a foundational compass, who, or what, will monitor sociology and its public efforts? What will prevent the hegemonic institutionalization of *public* sociology within the profession?

Burawoy suggests that the standards for intellectual discussion in sociology should be established through a dialectical relationship between professional and critical sociology (Burawoy, 2005c: 10). He argues that there is a clear sociological division of labor within the discipline, where the objective of professional sociology to develop the instrumental knowledge that drives the discipline, and the role of critical sociology to be the conscience of professional sociology and provide it with a moral and evaluative direction. However, Burawoy gives these two dimensions of

his sociology model an equivalence that is disorienting. The professional and critical faces of sociology cannot be equal partners in the dialogue. Somewhere a standard must be set for what counts as sociology and as sociological knowledge. An intellectual foundation for the discipline, and for public sociology, cannot be based simply upon a dialogue between the critical and professional components of sociology but, moreover, upon a system through which the results of the dialogue are evaluated. We contend that the most effective foundation upon which both sociology and public sociology can be based, as well as the results of the dialectical engagement of professional and critical sociologies, is the scientific process.

Public Sociology and Scientific Reflexivity

It may be cliché today, and perhaps a bit unfashionable, to invoke science as both the foundation for sociology's disciplinary identity and as a method for developing a cumulative storehouse of sociological knowledge. In fact, it summons a longstanding debate in sociology about the respective roles of scientific and critical knowledge. Burawoy addresses this debate in his development of public sociology, but in a rather caricatured manner, and he clearly takes sides. On the one side, he places the "declinists" (e.g., Bell, 1996; Berger, 2002; Collins, 1989; Horowitz, 1993; Turner, 1989, 1998) who advocate the scientific method in sociology and bemoan the theoretical fragmentation and disintegration of the discipline, believing it to be overrun by the growth of identity politics and political correctness. On the other side, are those who contest the hegemony of science as a basis of sociological legitimacy and, instead, support a strong political, moral and normative agenda for the discipline. By his own account, Burawoy sides with the latter, arguing that the current hegemonic order of the discipline drowns out critical voices and creates a Bourdieuian "field of power" where those who are inclined toward public sociology eventually either capitulate to hegemony or experience marginalization (Burawoy, 2005: 18-19).

Burawoy is undoubtedly correct in his depiction of the hegemonic structure of the discipline, and argues that the primary cost to sociology has been the deterioration of the reflexive and critical capacity of the profession (2005c: 14-15). In the contemporary sociological field, a rigid and hegemonic institutionalization of the profession does exist that smacks of elitism and smothers marginalized perspectives—where quantitative overshadows qualitative, formal theory trumps "soft" sociology, and publication in one or two top-flight journals brings disciplinary prestige. Wilner's (1985) analysis of the narrowness and public irrelevance of *American Sociological Review* is perhaps the one of the most poignant demonstrations of sociology's institutional hegemony; as is Burris' (2004) examination of nested hiring practices among elite departments. Of course, as sociologists we have the sufficient, disciplinary knowledge to facilitate self-criticism about our own institutional hegemony and to make reparations. But, sadly, we rarely exercise that wisdom to its fullest extent.

In his description of the organization of the discipline, all too often, Burawoy finds the fault of sociology's institutional narrowness in the hegemony of scientific pursuits. Although he describes it as the foundation for the discipline, Burawoy depicts the current structure of professional sociology to be constricting of

marginalized voices, and the valorization of science is a major factor in this condition. Clearly there are undeniable associations between science and hegemony within our discipline. However, the hegemonic organization of sociology is first and foremost a problem of the means by which science has been institutionalized in the profession and not of the scientific practice in and of itself. Sociology has undoubtedly been constituted as a "field of power," as Burawoy suggests; however, this is not a result of the use of science by sociologists; but is, instead, a consequence of a parochial institutionalization of science within the discipline and a failure to utilize and understand science effectively. At its base, science is an intrinsically reflexive and critical practice that can serve to shatter longstanding assumptions and reorganize taken-for-granted knowledge, even those developed by science itself. In many ways, science is an ideal method for the critical reflexivity that Burawoy advocates for the discipline.

Burawoy's understanding of science is clearly not simplistic, as his works on scientific Marxism demonstrate (Burawoy, 1989, 1990). However, his criticism of the hegemony of science in sociology is certainly narrow, and tends to reflect a critique of the institutionalization of science within the discipline and not of the scientific practice itself. As Burawoy recognizes (2005c: 10), both the philosophy and sociology of science have long explored the limits of the scientific practice and the different ways in which science has been institutionalized; but he does not expand this point. These investigations have not simply denounced the "truth" claims of science. They have also examined the limitations inherent to the ways in which science has been institutionalized and practiced. It is true that the claims of scientifically oriented sociology to produce "truth" have recently been considered a failure by many well-respected sociologists (Lemert, 1995; Seidman, 1994; Wallerstein et al., 1996). It is also true that the institutionalization of science and the production of scientific knowledge have been roundly critiqued in many social investigations (Bourdieu, 1993; Foucault, 1970; Garfinkel, 1967; Harding, 1986, 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1993; Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Luhmann, 1994). Far from a call to the abandonment of science, however, these studies demonstrate that the sociological discipline understands a great deal about science, the limitations of its institutionalization, and the means by which the merits of scientific knowledge and practice can be reflexively assessed.

As an example, take the work of Niklas Luhmann (1994). Luhmann argues that scientific knowledge is quintessentially a modern enterprise and that it has too frequently been conflated with hegemonic discourse. He suggests that science and its methodologies are systematic means for simplifying (even rationalizing) both theoretical and empirical understandings, reducing them to surrogates for objectivity in order to establish baselines for knowledge, and to communicate to wider audiences. The label of "true" or "scientific" simply serves to move science past struggles over validity so that it does not need to continually reinvent its claims and can instead rely upon mechanisms that simulate consensus even in the reality of its absence. On Luhmann's account, the way that science deals in the currency of truth works to limit conflict and expedite the resolution of validity claims. Thus, the ability to attach the label of "truth" to scientific work is in many ways a function of the way that science is institutionalized, and not simply a hegemonic dominance of scientific "truth" over both the empirical facts of reality and the means of acquiring legitimate knowledge.

The critiques of science, like that espoused by Luhmann, raise the issue of what Whitehead (1967) has called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness," where conceptual understandings of reality are misrecognized as concrete instances of the truth. Strangely, Burawoy's description of the use of science in sociology is consistent with this same fallacy. Within sociology, science and scientific knowledge have been significantly undermined by discipline-wide fallacies over the misunderstandings of scientific claims to truth. In many ways, the idea of the scientific pursuit of "truth" as concrete reflections of objective reality is a well-worn idea and has been met with significant criticism. The collective works of Popper (1959), Lakatos (1978) and Kuhn (1962)—all of whom Burawoy cites (2005c: 10)—have emphasized a philosophy of scientific practice organized around a questioning of scientific "truth." Of particular relevance is the work of Popper, who initiated a model of science that is driven by falsification as opposed to verification. While it may be convincingly argued that scientific sociology has advanced our knowledge of the social world, it is a fallacy to claim that the outcome of these investigations has resulted in the "truth."

Despite the mispresentations of the objectivity of its knowledge, science is the most "tried and true" system for evaluating validity claims about the physical and social world; and, it is the only system of knowledge that can be subject to empirical falsification. In short, scientific knowledge can be wrong, and science itself can be used to make this kind of evaluation. However, Burawoy (2005c: 16) suggests that scientific knowledge is not the only means by which sociology makes claims to validity. Driven by scientific norms, professional sociology provides theoretical and empirical knowledge based upon the correspondence of theory to real-world observations; critical sociology stipulates foundational knowledge organized around a moral vision and normative claims to truth; policy sociology offers concrete knowledge based upon effective and pragmatic problem solving; finally, public sociology supplies communicative knowledge that pivots upon public relevance and consensual understandings. Burawoy claims that each of these forms of knowledge make necessary contributions to sociology, but it is the communicative knowledge that is most relevant for facilitating public engagement. We disagree. While each of these forms of knowledge provides insight into the social world, only the scientific knowledge of professional sociology is based upon a system that is intrinsically organized around falsification. In addition, science and the pragmatic problem solving it engenders is the most likely avenue through which a convincing set of insights about the social world can be offered to a public that is already skeptical and indifferent to sociology's public contribution.

If sociology is to have a greater public presence it should seek to establish a disciplinary identity that is based upon a form of knowledge that can be convincingly presented to those naturally unresponsive to sociological insights. We can expect a public already indifferent to sociology (and embracing of other social sciences like economics and psychology) to be skeptical of moral and normative claims without an empirical basis of support. Science already has strong public legitimacy and it seems appropriate that sociology should channel its efforts to make the most of this affinity. Instead of a sociology organized around public engagement, it seems much more appropriate for the discipline to develop a strong program in professional sociology, bringing clarity to its scientific insights and assessing its potential to make social contributions. If professional sociology is to

be the foundation of a public sociology, as Burawoy recommends, it is essential that some coherence be first established around sociology's body of scientific knowledge. A stronger move toward the development of theory-driven research programs will certainly help in the pursuit of disciplinary coherence and facilitate the advancement of the cumulative knowledge of the discipline. Such an investment will not only serve to crystallize sociology's disciplinary knowledge, but it will also help to provide a more coherent identity to the profession.

Out of Utopia … Again: The Utopian Identity of Public Sociology

We have argued that one of the problems endemic to contemporary sociology is its identity crisis. The project of public sociology is not simply an attempt to facilitate a greater public engagement for sociology; it also strives to provide sociology with a common identity around a broader communicative engagement with the public. Burawoy's articulation of a more public sociology, however, is strongly utopian, not only in its ideals, but also in its conceptualization. Resonant with his advocacy of socialist utopias (Burawoy and Wright, 2002), Burawoy argues that public sociology can be used not only to increase the public use of sociological ideas, but also to advance the ideals of "real utopias" (Burawoy, 2005b). We conclude our discussion of Burawoy's public sociology with an investigation of his utopian agenda and the limitations of its promise for the development of a greater public presence for sociology.

In his essay "Out of Utopia," Dahrendorf (1958) warns sociologists about the fallacies of utopian thinking within sociology. Although the primary target of his critique is the ideological conservativism of Parsonsian functionalism, Dahrendorf extends his caution to all of sociological thought and suggests that a scientific sociology, "problem-conscious at every stage of its development is very unlikely to find itself in the prison of utopian thought" (1958: 124). Dahrendorf's prescription for sociology is based upon a program of continual reflexivity of sociological insights and perspectives, with particular admonitions given to the blinding effects of ideological associations.

As we have suggested, Burawoy's public sociology is strikingly ideological in its Marxist affiliations. On his own account, Burawoy's four-box conceptualization of public sociology is also surprisingly reminiscent of Parsons AGIL-model of the social system that dominated sociology during the medial years of the twentieth century (Burawoy, 2005c: 11). While Burawoy's own Marxist position bears a certain polarity to that reflected in the conservativism of Parsonsian functionalism, his model of public sociology is also strikingly utopian. However, instead of directly reflecting the idealistic conservativism of Parsons' functional theory, Burawoy's utopian thought runs parallel to that of Jurgen Habermas and this theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1985, 1987). Like Parsons, Habermas' work also has been considerably criticized for its idealistic and utopian framework, especially his normative idealism of the public sphere (for examples see Calhoun, 1992; Kellner, 2000; McCarthy, 1978). Burawoy's conceptualization of public sociology is reminiscent of Habermas' theory of communicative action, and seems to reflect a very similar idealism.

Like Burawoy's four faces of sociology, Habermas' work speaks to four dimensions of social life. Habermas identifies four types of rationality (i.e., instrumental,

moral-practical, aesthetic-expressive, and communicative), their integral connections to four "worlds" that describe the layers of sociological reality (i.e., objective, social, subjective, and the lifeworld), and the respective moments of reason to which they are connected (i.e. science, law, art, and communication). These four dimensions of social life directly parallel the faces of sociology described by Burawoy in his description of the sociological discipline (see Table 1 above). Habermas' theory also illustrates a utopian emphasis on the establishment of communicative action in the public sphere in much the same way that Burawoy seeks to direct the efforts of public sociology toward the reinvigoration of civil society. A comparison of Habermas' theory of communicative action and Burawoy's model of public sociology is presented in Table 2.

As illustrated in this table, for Habermas, instrumental rationality is based on action bent towards strategic ends, and directed toward the objective world. This form of rationality raises questions of truth and knowledge that are resolved by science as a social institution. Moral-practical rationality on the other hand, corresponds to the social world and is concerned with the norms, mores and common values that actively bind society together, and serve to address issues of justice and morality that are ensconced in the institution of law. Habermas' third type of rationality is aesthetic-expressive, which is connected most intimately with the subjective world where individuals evaluate their inner experiences, thoughts, feelings, desires, and self-presentations and form structures of taste and aesthetic judgment. The institution of art is a manifestation of this form of rationality. Finally, communicative rationality is the essence of the lifeworld, where individuals develop social relations, establish common interpretive schemas, create collective value orientations, and come to consensual agreement through dialogue.

As Table 2 illustrates, there are clear parallels between Burawoy's typology of public sociology and Habermas' conceptual framework. Here, one can see that the structure of the two theories is nearly identical. Professional sociology, ostensibly objective in nature, is concerned with the instrumental forms of rationality and their subsequent concern with truth, knowledge, and science. Critical sociology is the moral base of the discipline, creating the norms and mores of sociology, acting as the conscience or informal law of the land. In policy sociology, sociologists represent the discipline according to their own subjective standards; each decides which projects to take, and which aren't sociologically sound. It is neither a purely

Table 2

Comparison of the Models of Habermas and Burawoy

Habermas				Burawoy
Rationality	**World**	**Questions Addressed**	**Moment of Reason**	**Face of Sociology**
Instrumental	*Objective*	*Truth/Knowledge*	*Science*	*Professional*
Moral-Practical	*Social*	*Justice/Morality*	*Law*	*Critical*
Aesthetic-Expressive	*Subjective*	*Aesthetics/Taste*	*Art*	*Policy*
Communicative	*Lifeworld*	*Social Relations*	*Communication*	*Public*

objective nor moral moment in the sociological discipline, but rather is one that is up to the tastes and subjectivities of each individual sociologist. Lastly, public sociology is championed as the communicative form of sociology, addressing issues of social relations, and invigorating the lifeworld toward the constitution of civil society. While Burawoy stipulates that each of his faces of sociology should be informed by professional sociology, as the *sine qua non* of sociology, Habermas, also claims that even though the other forms of rationality emphasize one world over the others, each must *also* take into account the objective world in order to be successful. Thus, in both conceptual frameworks, the investigation of the objective world holds a place of particular importance and prestige.

It should be clear that the theoretical models of Burawoy and Habermas both emphasize communication as solution to dissensus and discord over knowledge. Both suggest that, under ideal conditions, the interface of instrumental knowledge and everyday, public life can serve to enrich and empower civil society. Toward these ends, Habermas emphasizes "narration" as a specialized form of communicative and constitutional speech. For Habermas, narrative speech represents a communicative translation of instrumental ideas such that they are accessible to the lifeworld, can be used to enrich and shape taken-for-granted understandings, and perhaps play a central role in identity formation for both individuals and groups. Burawoy's project of public sociology parallels this Habermasian approach in that it endeavors to reframe sociological understandings such that they can be made more accessible and useful to the public sphere, and facilitate the identity formation of publics "for-themselves."

The arguments of both Burawoy and Habermas are premised upon the assumption that communicative action within the public sphere can be instrumental in the advancement of civil society, and that knowledge of the objective world is central to this process. While the enrichment of civil society is a dignified goal, Burawoy's approach to public sociology illustrates the same idealism that has beleaguered Habermas' theoretical approach. A sociological project that is primarily directed toward the development of civil society confronts a teleological utopianism that underlies many of the endeavors that are centrally premised on normative ideologies. Burawoy's public sociology reflects this same idealism, possibly as an extension of his Marxist project of "utopian socialism." Communicative action is only idealistic dialogue without proper grounding in a reflexive, and falsifiable, system by which knowledge can be assessed and agreement can be determined. We think that a strong program in professional sociology is crucial in developing such a reflexive system and should be established before a more public sociology advances further. Otherwise, Burawoy's public project for sociology may simply reproduce the utopian efforts of Habermas' theory of the public sphere.

Conclusion: Toward a Strong Program in Professional Sociology

Michael Burawoy's project of public sociology undoubtedly seeks to advance the interests of both the discipline of sociology and of the greater public. We agree that efforts toward both of these ends are essential, but disagree that public sociology has gotten off on the right foot. Public sociology is a premature sociological venture that first requires significant reflection upon and consolidation of sociological knowledge. Burawoy argues that the sociological professional has accumu-

lated a vast trove of knowledge that is ripe for use in our efforts at public engagement, and this is probably true. However, the discipline demonstrates very little consensus over the state of this knowledge, what exactly is known, and the best means by which sociological knowledge can be gained. In short, sociology does not have a systemic inventory of its professional storehouse of knowledge.

It is true that the sociological discipline is multifaceted and multivocal, rich with ideas, perspectives and insights. While some may celebrate the virtues of this diversity, the lack of sociological coherence may be detriment to the discipline and to its public face. This is not to say that the homogenization of sociology should be the goal, but some degree of uniformity and agreement *within* the discipline and *about* the discipline is long overdue. We have argued that public sociology is, in part, premature because sociologists do not agree on what is known; we have also suggested that public sociology lacks a vision for public engagement that will find general acceptance within the professional community. Without a sense of collective coherence, any disciplinary voice that endeavors to speak for sociology will only serve to segment the profession further. The discipline is probably too fragmented at heart for it to be otherwise. Already, fragmentation has been a principal consequence of public sociology.

It is clear that sociology needs to develop a stronger and more coherent public presentation of self; but we should be careful in doing so. Our demeanor must reflect the respect that we have for our public audience, and a greater reflexivity about our sociological knowledge. A public indifferent to sociology is not likely to be won-over with ideology and speculation. In essence, we believe that establishing a strong program in professional sociology, based upon the inherent reflexivity of science, presents the most promising avenue for the strengthening of the discipline and the facilitation of our public engagement. Burawoy may be right—by attempting to become public "narrators" within society, sociologists may establish a disciplinary identity and find their collective and public voice. However, in exploring the avenues of our public engagement, the ultimate lesson of public sociology may not primarily involve our interface with civil society. Instead, public sociology may first and foremost serve to increase the reflexivity of the discipline and teach the profession about itself.

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank Vincent Jeffries and Larry Nichols for their efforts in assembling this special issue on Public Sociology and for their insightful editorial suggestions on this paper.
2. See Turner's (1998), for one example. Turner advocates the development of a sociological discipline that mirrors that of engineering. He outlines what might be called a mixture of Burawoy's professional and policy sociologies.
3. In fact, Burawoy frequently mentions the leftward nature of sociology, and mentions the "left" frequently with positive connotations. While the "right" are rarely criticized in Burawoy's descriptions of public sociology, they are hardly ever mentioned.
4. "The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or social humanity" and "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."

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