



Blurring Public and Private Sociology: Challenging an Artificial Division

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Abstract

This article encourages sociologists to take a hybrid approach to the incorporation of public sociology into the discipline. The idea of public sociology rests upon a double conversation between sociologists as public actors, and the involvement of the 'extra-academic' world into the dialogue. However, the separation of public sociology from professional sociology is artificial. The division of labour between those working solely in academia, and those reaching out to the public at large is imaginary: sociologists do work in both the public and private. By blurring the line between public sociology and professional sociology (which constitutes a 'privacy' of sorts), sociology is able to reach a larger audience. To illustrate this argument, I examine how three theoretical approaches within sociology, governmentality literature, critical realism and second modernity, exemplify both public and private sociology, while remaining methodologically coherent and rigorous. These approaches show sociology to be a field in which disparate, multiple, fluid theories and metatheories exist side-by-side in work that is both public and professional.

Keywords: *Public Sociology; Professional Sociology; Critical Realism; Governmentality; Second Modernity; Public/private; Michael Burawoy*

Introduction

1.1 In 2004, in a now famous attempt to shift the conversation of the discipline, Michael Burawoy, then President of the American Sociological Association, devoted the annual meetings of the association to the notion of public sociology. Burawoy and his supporters viewed sociology as needing to engage more substantively with extra-academic audiences. The 'public' in this enterprise was two-fold: on the one hand, sociologists would create categories of people in collaboration with implicated individuals themselves, and on the other hand, they would be a public in their own right, with a political platform (Burawoy, 2005: 8). Many sociologists have embraced Burawoy's notion of public sociology because of the emancipatory potential intrinsic to this kind of approach^[1]. The normative and political possibilities that proponents see within a public sociology framework are enticing. 'Public sociology brings sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversation. It entails, therefore, a double conversation' (Burawoy, 2005: 7). For Burawoy (2005), the division of labour is intrinsic to public sociology:

We have to move forward and work from where we really are...the division of sociological labour. Public sociology strikes up a dialogic relation between sociologist and public in which the agenda of each is brought to the table, in which each adjusts to the other... Professional sociology supplies true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks (9-10).

1.2 Central to this distinction is the enactment of the difference between sociology focused on social justice, and professional or academic sociology. The above definition illustrates the fundamental differences that supposedly exist between the two branches.

1.3 This division of labour which public sociology rests upon is more complex than Burawoy and supporters imagine. In many ways, a division of labour that separates public sociology from professional sociology is simply a heuristic move. It does not take into account how sociologists blur the lines between public and professional sociology in theoretical and analytic work. Proponents of public sociology seem to envision a dichotomy between sociological scholarship that is public (for extra-academic audiences) and that which is

private (professional or academic sociology). This distinction between public and private is problematic both in terms of sociological research, and in our general understandings of what public and private constitute. The difference between so-called public sociology and private sociology fits into the larger discussion about the blurring of public and private. Richard Sennett (2002) argues the erosion of public life has an impact on intimate relations, thus highlighting the many ways that the public and private interact (7). Furthermore, the idealism of the concept of 'public man' is eroded as private life extends to a greater extent than in the past. As Sheller and Urry (2003) contend, the perception of what is public and what is private needs to be reconceptualised: 'these notions of the public rest on a separate basis and presuppose a particular contrasting 'private'... we criticize such static conceptions and emphasize the increasing fluidity in terms of where moments of publicity and privacy occur' (107-08).

1.4 Conversations on public sociology, therefore, cannot escape larger questions around the fluctuating and changeable nature of what constitutes the public/private. Instead of upholding the division of labour between public and private as central to the social science project, public (or critical) sociology and professional (or policy) sociology are constantly blurring and overlapping. In the same vein, the public and private are part of a dialectic in which they both play an important role. We can best consider urgent sociological questions by embracing a hybrid approach to the issues of publicity and privacy, and public and professional sociology.^[2]

1.5 Current academic research illustrates the changing nature of public and private within sociological work and, more importantly, in society generally. Sociology is normative and political, even in supposedly professional sociological research. We can acknowledge the role of ideology in sociological work, without dividing the discipline into different camps. Sociological research is neither completely public nor completely professional. To explore how sociology blurs the private/public line, we can examine how three well-known theoretical frameworks in sociological discourse take up questions of publicity and privacy. Literature on governmentality, critical realism and second modernity exemplifies the ways in which sociological research navigates the tension between the two interrelated spheres. Scholarship in these areas is often both prescriptive and public-oriented. Furthermore, the approaches examined in this paper are concerned with the breaking down of 'zombie' categories. Nowhere is this more evident than in the deconstruction and reconstruction of public and private within the discipline and in the outside world. An analysis of the political and theoretical implications of these approaches will illustrate why public sociology does not need to rely on an artificial divide between the public and the private within and outside of academia.

Framing the Analysis

2.1 A concern of critics of public sociology is that an embrace of this type of scholarship will result in academically sloppy work in the name of political progress. As supporters point out, this need not be the case (Burawoy, 2005). What supporters tend to ignore, however, is that it is simply a heuristic move to separate the public from the private in sociological research. Sociological theories and metatheories can be both public and private at the same time. To examine how this is possible, we can turn to the question of how privacy and publicity blur and intersect within the approaches of governmentality, critical realism and second modernity. In this process, we also unfreeze the artificial division between theory, method and evidence (Alford, 1998: 11).

2.2 The three approaches examined in this paper, governmentality, critical realism and second modernity, question the automatic usage of age-old sociological concepts such as race, gender, and class in traditional social science work. One of the dualisms that sociologists have tried to problematize is the public/private (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 108). Academics, activists and concerned individuals have expressed fear that public spaces, interests and objects are being privatized (Sheller and Urry, 2003; Stevenson, 2002). Critics claim that the public, as an object (in terms of spaces, interests, spheres) and a subject (as those inhabiting the spheres and spaces), needs to be protected from privatization (Sheller and Urry, 2003). Numerous activist campaigns and social movements have worked to resist this encroaching privatization.

2.3 Similarly, Burawoy considers a division between public sociology and professional sociology necessary in order to ensure that some academics remain committed to social justice causes, while at the same time allowing for the fact that other sociologists are not interested in work that is overtly political. Burawoy (2005) sets up professional sociology as having an academic audience and using instrumental knowledge, while public sociology has an extra-academic audience and uses reflexive knowledge (11). Professional sociology, therefore, takes on aspects of the 'private', if we conceive of it as research done within the university using a scientific approach. It is naive to imagine that sociological research in private sociology is somehow different from research done in the name of the public. Publicity and privacy, in sociology or otherwise, do not occupy completely different realms. In everyday life, as well as in academia, the separation of private and public is an illusion. There is a perpetual blurring of lines between what constitutes each supposedly separate domain.

2.4 Sheller and Urry (2003) illustrate this phenomenon with their example of the modern automobile. We understand a car, symbolically tied to rugged individualism of the American capitalist system, to be a private entity (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 115). However, cars are actually implicated in a variety of 'publics': they drive on public highways, seat at least two or more individuals, and often become places for conversations and experiences of those who ride in them (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 116). In this way, cars are neither public nor private. They exhibit characteristics of both realms simultaneously. This point is important to our understanding of public and private sociology as it is similarly impossible to be solely involved in private or public sociological research.

2.5 When we talk of 'zombie categories', we are speaking of concepts within sociology which are, for all intents and purposes dead, and yet they continue to be discussed in academic work as meaningful tools of

analysis (Beck, 2000: 80). In particular, terms such as class, gender, and race need to be re-examined and re-structured if they are to have meaning in sociological discourse.^[3] This is especially true of *public* and *private*. The necessity of the division of sociological labour disappears when the focus shifts to the ways in which the intermeshing of privacy and publicity is fraught with fluidity and plurality. Governmentality, critical realism and second modernity provide an avenue to examine this duality by illustrating current strands of thinking in sociological research.

2.6 A discussion about the difference between public and private scholarship is not entirely new: early sociologists including Marx, Weber and Durkheim all dealt with this question in some way in their works. It is not easy to imagine how sociologists of the past would fit into the public/professional sociology divide, but we do know that the discipline's founders were engaged with academic *and* extra-academic audiences. For Marx, scholars ought to play an active role in creating changes in society. The *Communist Manifesto* is a call to action: Marx made no effort to hide his ideological leanings, and it is built into the structure of his theorizing (Ritzer, 2000: 149). At the same time, though, Marx did academically rigorous work within and outside of university and institutional frameworks. Weber also straddles the line of public and private scholarship. By taking a historical approach to understand contemporary issues (like the spirit of capitalism), Weber envisions a more traditional role for scholars of explaining the *why* rather than the *how*. He saw academics as having different responsibilities depending on where they were. Ritzer (2000) explains his views as such: 'academicians have a perfect right to express their personal values freely in speeches, in the press, and so forth, but the academic lecture hall is different... The most important difference between a public speech and an academic lecture lies in the nature of the audience' (225). Finally, Durkheim's work is both private and public as well: he used social 'facts' to examine problematic issues, and applied his conclusions to real world matters (Ritzer, 2000: 192). His concern with issues afflicting French society indicates that he sees the role of social science to be one of prescription, rather than just description, although his involvement in the public sphere was more limited. For all three of sociology's early scholars, then, professional work was both public and private, and often quite overlapping.

2.7 Before we turn to our topic at hand, let us consider C. Wright Mills' take on the question of public and private scholarship. In his influential text, *The Sociological Imagination*, Mills (1959) looks at the role of the sociological imagination in doing good social science. He claims, 'No special study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey' (Mills, 1959: 7). Social scientists can use their sociological imaginations to understand how 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure' intersect (Mills, 1959: 9-10). For Mills, engaging in so-called 'public' sociology is integral to sociological work. We cannot do sociology without considering these important questions. In the last half-century since Mills wrote that the promise of the sociological imagination was to take on issues of history and biography in society, theorists have continued to recreate and renegotiate the field of sociology. The blurring of the private/public sociology remains a concern for many social scientists and activists alike.

Public vs. Private Sociology: Eradicating Categorizations

3.1 Burawoy's discussion of the division of labour between public sociology and professional sociology raises questions as to what role sociologists ought to play in society. However, this separation of labour within the discipline into those who do academic or theoretical research and those who do public research is meaningless. Social theorists often do work within a framework of *both/and* of sociological research by engaging in projects that critically assess structure, agency, and materiality for public and so-called professional purposes.^[4] Consequently, research produced has political possibility even if it starts from what we might see as a professional or private viewpoint. If we can accept that professional sociology need not preclude the political, and that public sociology need not be concerned only with the so-called 'extra-academic world', then we can value both sides of the public/private coin. Work developed by those who consider themselves 'professional' researchers can have political and normative implications regardless of how this work is used. The three approaches in question illustrate how sociological research is not either public or private: it is inevitably and necessarily *both/and*.

Governmentality

3.2 Foucault's well-known work on governmentality suggests that in social theory, the entrenched notion of power remains static, 'there is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence and this is to analyze, elaborate and bring into question power relations and the 'agonism' between these relations and the intransitivity of freedom' (Foucault, 1983: 223). The literature on governmentality, from Foucault onwards, has concerned itself with the rejection of the idea that only the state holds power. Instead, power relations are decomposed into political rationalities, government programs and technologies of government (O'Malley et al., 1997). The liberal-economic approach to public and private interests sees the state as connected to the public and the market as representing the private. By using a governmentality framework, we can highlight the relational nature of power, and the multiple ways in which power operates. Similarly, the idea that the private is 'fundamentally rooted in private life and delineated by private space' (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 112) is problematized when we look at the process by which individuals are turned into subjects. Individuals are subject to control by someone else (governance by or of others), and tied to their own identity through self-knowledge (governance of self) (Foucault, 1983: 212). The process against subjugation is an active one and we cannot see it happening either within a private space, or outside of that space in the so-called 'public' arena. The state's power is both individualizing and totalizing in terms of its potential for exercising power (Foucault, 1983: 213). This illuminates the fact that the state is not seen as being public in the sense of being in the interests of the population as a whole. Instead, it both constricts and enables the process of individualization and subjection.

3.3 In recent governmentality literature, the prevalence of the neoliberal state dominates authors' concerns

(O'Malley et al, 1997; Rose and Miller, 1992). A re-entrenchment of neoliberalism has meant a 'proliferation of strategies to create and sustain a 'market' to reshape the forms of economic exchange on the basis of contractual exchange. The privatization programs of the new politics have formed perhaps the most visible strands of such strategies' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 199). The reach of neoliberalism is evident in the surveillance techniques available. In particular, today's 'surveillant assemblage' is such that individuals and groups can transcend and avoid institutional boundaries (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 607). It is simply not possible to destroy one institution in an effort to change how surveillance works. The convergence of systems signifies that it is increasingly difficult to find spaces, public or private, where these assemblages are not operating. The increase in surveillance systems is very different from the Panopticon-like model imagined by Foucault. Using the metaphor of a rhizome, a weed that grows through interconnected areas over large spaces, Haggerty and Ericson (2000) illustrate how surveillance has transformed the hierarchy of scrutiny. Haggerty and Ericson appear overly confident in imagining a world where all members of society feel observation and surveillance equally. In reality, individuals with different material and structural constraints still face far more scrutiny than those who have the resources to avoid some of the more insidious forms of surveillance.^[5] However, the point that the authors make is still important, 'Privacy is now less a line in the sand beyond which transgression is not permitted, than a shifting space of negotiation' (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 616). The blurring of the private/public spheres is widespread, and technological advances make boundaries less evident than in the past. Barack Obama's relationship with his pastor, a personal bond we might traditionally conceive of as private, became a very public part of the 2008 Democratic primary process, due in large part to new communicative technologies, such as YouTube.

3.4 The methodological underpinnings of governmentality, as well as the possibilities for political action, indicate a theory that emphasizes the creative agency of the individual. Governmentality calls for a new way to look at dividing practices, which artificially separate and subjugate, in order to illustrate how these practices are re-constructed and broken down (Foucault, 1983: 211). Foucault's concept of *pastoralism* comes from the historical trajectory of triangulation in the Western world of government, sovereignty and discipline, which in turn targets populations through mechanisms of security (Foucault, 1978). Forms of resistance against different kinds of power emphasize the political possibilities available. The diffuse reach of a neoliberal state is not absolute: the relational nature of power means that individuals are implicated in this process. If we are to look at the public to study the private, or the proletariat to study the capitalist, we can attempt to investigate how resistance is manifested by disassociating normalized relations. Foucault wants us to go farther than simply claiming that these struggles are anti-authority. We instead have to look at the nature of the struggles themselves. These struggles do not just question or attack institutions or classes of power; instead, they confront power techniques themselves (Foucault, 1983: 212). In breaking down the public/private divide, therefore, we need to look at how this divide is constituted in its many forms, and then re-imagine different ways in which surveillance and governmentality could be constructed for potential political emancipation.

3.5 Critics have claimed that there is a lack of a political thrust in Foucault's work (O'Malley et al., 1997: 504). His historical analysis leaves some commentators wondering if there is potential for change in simply emphasizing the discursive. Later governmentality theorists illustrate this problem when they show that Foucault's focus on the texts of government rather than the messy actualities of creating equitable forms of governance, can be politically limiting (O'Malley et al., 1997: 504-506). However, other governmentality literature, while calling into question the practices of power, still finds Foucault's theoretical framework useful. Rose and Miller (1992), for example, call for a re-envisioning of traditional sociological concepts in a way that is consistent with Foucault's genealogical approach: 'the language of political philosophy... cannot provide the intellectual tools for analyzing the problematic of government in the present. Unless we adopt different ways of thinking about the exercise of political power, we will find contemporary forms of rule hard to understand' (201). The authors indicate that the way for governmentality to maintain its grounding in questions that Foucault raised, while adapting to concerns of modern social scientists, is to adopt new ways of imagining political power relations. In this way, we can highlight the political potential of governmentality while remaining rooted in Foucault's theorizing on this subject.

Critical Realism

3.6 Critical realism, like second modernity, can be conceived as a metatheory. Theorists from these approaches aim to encapsulate 'what is' as well as 'what could be'. As critical realists argue, transitive (in this case, theories) can be studied in relation to intransitive (in this case, what theories are about). In other words, what we are studying does not necessarily change even if our theories do (Sayer, 2000: 11). This is evident in the debate over the nature of public and private: even as our theories about what constitutes 'public' change, the space, concept or even body itself may not physically undergo a change. Critical realists examine underlying mechanisms of particular phenomena. We look at the emergent properties to understand the constraining and enabling effects that these mechanisms might have (Sayer, 2000: 27). Therefore, in critical realism, theorists avoid using terms like public or private haphazardly.

3.7 To understand what 'public' connotes, critical realists must *abstract* the very concept of a public/private divide. It is not enough to deconstruct the term as post-modernists might attempt to do. Instead, critical realists reconstruct what new hybrids of publicity and privacy could possibly look like once we illuminate emergent properties, mechanisms and conditions. In a critical realist version of causation, the same mechanism can produce different outcomes (Sayer, 2000). For example, the gradual deregulation of industry since the Second World War has had a vastly different impact on developed countries than on developing countries. Certain individuals and groups are more affected than others are. It cannot be assumed that the effects of a mechanism will be the same; the future is open and there is a chance that things will happen otherwise (Sayer, 2000; Danermark et al., 2006). As Archer (1988) illustrates, agency and structure, for critical realists, must be seen as separate phenomena: the shift from privacy to publicity, and vice versa, can be conceptualized as having arisen from the constraining and enabling characteristics

of structures, as well as the transformational ability of human agency (93).

3.8 By engaging in a process of conceptual abstraction, the difference between public and private can be both construed and constructed. Depending on cultural, social and political context, we interpret what is meant by *public* differently, and, at the same time, *public* can be constructed in various ways through changes in the properties of the materials (Sayer, 2000: 44). This would indicate that as the people, institutions or ideas that make up the public changes, our interpretation of what public means changes too. We can see that this is what happened with feminist struggles over making the *private* or personal both *public* and political. The process of shifting the meaning of private necessarily influences the understanding of the term itself, as well as the empirical experiences of individuals implicated in the course of action. Making the private political changed the lives of (white, middle-class) women in the West regardless of their involvement in the feminist movement.

3.9 For critical realists then, ontology is stratified. The 'real' is the realm of objects, including their structures and powers, the 'actual' is what happens when powers are actualized, and the 'empirical' describes the domain of experience (Sayer, 2000: 12). Reality can and does exist outside our understanding of it, but there is a dimension that includes socially determined understandings (Danermark et al., 2006: 6). This influences our understanding of, and possibilities for, hybridities of publicity-privacy. In traditional sociological literature, the term public space refers to areas outside the home where people can potentially gather to socialize and organize, and there are often symbolic and physical markings of the boundaries of these places (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 110). However, early sociological theorists rarely realized the abstraction from actual 'space' present in their theorizing. Human beings have spatial extensions within relationships that we can conceptualize and then understand (Sayer, 2000: 110). In this way, we explore how context matters – space and place play a role in our understanding of ontological questions and concerns. Theories need to identify the necessary spatial qualities of objects, while acknowledging the contingent (neither necessary nor impossible) nature of this association (Sayer, 2000: 123). In public space literature, the importance of geography can often be overstated. What is considered 'public' (socializing, organizing, debating) can and does occur in places and areas that are thought to be private, and so theorists who decry the changing nature of physical spaces thought to be public miss the possibilities for resistance in these places (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 107-08).

3.10 An engagement with normative thinking is considered important to the political possibilities of critical realism (Sayer, 2000). The breaking down of the public/private divide, by looking at contingent properties of each supposedly separate sphere, can be emancipatory in that formerly constricting labels are stripped away. Even something as simple as driving a car means that the spatial relationship of privacy and publicity changes. In a private vehicle, an individual moves along public roads, with other cars and drivers, thus, complicating simplistic notions of public/private (Sheller and Urry, 2003). This example shows that the public and private are mobile and situational. Critical realism allows theorists to criticize structures whose mechanisms have caused suffering to individuals (Danermark et al., 2006: 194). Politically speaking, critical realism can create change through its illumination of emergent properties and mechanisms.^[6] In this case, critical realists could point to the underlying mechanisms of the connection between the public and private aspects of automobiles, thus suggesting that our understanding of privacy is based on a false understanding of space. This revelation has the potential to instigate change among publics.

Second Modernity

3.11 The literature on second modernity provides further evidence that current sociological research is erasing the gap between the public and private, both in relation to the nature of work done in the discipline and the destruction of the zombie terms themselves. As in governmentality literature, the process of struggling against forms of subjection lies at the heart of the second modernity project. In second modernity, however, the focus is on disembedded individualization: 'individual action becomes qualitatively more important...Biographies cease to be pre-given by society. Instead, the construction of a narrative that makes sense of the individual life becomes a task performed by the individual (Beck and Willms, 2004: 63-64).

3.12 Second modernity refers to a non-linear process that sees the radicalization of modern society, and provides a way in which we can better imagine an amalgamation of public and private. When the individual becomes the basic unit of social reproduction, previous distinctions, such as those between class, race and gender, become more fluid and flexible. We can see the same fluidity within publicity and privacy: 'the decomposing of public/private spaces also occurs through informational disruption so as to impede the juggernaut of the global media and global economic policies' (Sheller and Urry, 2003: 120). This change is what constitutes the public, in opposition to the private, is particularly evident in new media.

3.13 In a culture of underdetermination and ambiguity, we need to explain the socio-technological sites of mediation, and not just look at so-called risk conditions (Hier, 2008: 41). Subject-hood becomes a less rational, more fluid process under second modernity, and it becomes more difficult to ignore the role of technological interaction. Public space and so-called private bodies intertwine in new ways within a landscape of socio-technical mediation (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000). The meaning of privacy as something which manifests itself in a personal or exclusive way changes when we see the many ways in which technologies interact with bodies both in the online world and within scientific discourse. This is evident in the call to action by Andrea Brighenti for a category of social science of visibility, 'Visibility lies at the intersection of the two domains of aesthetics and politics... Visibility is a metaphor of knowledge, but it is not simply an image: it is a real social process in itself' (2007: 324-25). Visibility, and invisibility, are not separate and distinct spheres; the personal and impersonal, social and individual, public and private, all collide when we talk about what is seen and what is not seen.

3.14 An embrace of *reflexive modernization* characterizes the era of second modernity. The term reflexive is often bandied around somewhat inappropriately: it does not mean that people in our current age are more conscious of themselves and others than in earlier times (Latour, 2003: 36). It does mean that this modernization is characterized by risk societies in which the diffusion of responsibilities and uncertainty of what could happen become important. This is not to say that a utopian world in which the sanctity of global well-being triumphs. Instead, the fact that we do not know when or where risks might be means that there is value in the formation of communities that are cognizant of risk potentialities and possible responses. Globalization, as understood within second modernity, illustrates the potential for an amalgamation of the private and the public: we can reconcile what we do as individuals with what it might mean for those in different parts of the world (Beck et al., 2003; Beck, 2000). Second modernity sees possibility and potential in what has happened in developing countries in terms of communities living side-by-side, regardless of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual tensions. As national boundaries become less essential, in the sense that our biographies are no longer pre-given, the private (what happens within the home and within our personal space), and the public (the so-called 'outside world') blend together. Second modernity ontology, therefore, is both 'messy' and fluid. In turn, this is conducive to an integrated public/private reality that places value on what we traditionally think of as 'public'. Stevenson argues, 'Cosmopolitanism needs to be able to rejoin questions of difference and a reformed universalism without either pole being reduced to a handful of dust' (2002: 266). While we have moved past simple, linear modernity, present in many societies for the last 400 years, this does not preclude the return to conflicts or battles of the past: counter-modernity exists alongside second modernity.

3.15 Counter-modernity leaves open the possibility that freedom of the individualization process will not be successful: further development of global capitalism could continue unabated (Beck and Willms, 2004: 108). It is here that we can situate the normative and political element of those doing work within the second modern project. As a metatheory inherently tied to the present and future, second modernity transcends old boundaries, and shows how the private and public once again collide. The potential for political action in second modernity does not come from traditional confrontations between the worker and the capitalist, or even the antipathy between different ethnic groups (Beck, 1997). Instead, the side effects from the process of reflexive modernity become political. Sub-politics movements develop out of what is often discarded or ignored by mainstream sociology: the hybridities possible with a public and professional approach are an example of this.

3.16 The question becomes, then, what does this blurring of public and private mean in second modernity? Nigel Rapport's (2007) articulation of a cosmopolitanism that embraces an individualist position methodologically for gaining access to universal human truths illustrates how it is that we can apply cosmopolitanism in sociological work. Rapport argues, 'Long warranted in artistic productions, introspection provides key social-scientific insights of a number of kinds: epistemological, ontological, and moral ("cosmopolitan")' (257). With this in mind, we can use this introspection to facilitate the erosion of the public/private divide in sociology as a discipline. We do not need to decide, a priori, whether we are working in a professional or public tradition at any particular moment. Instead, the cosmopolitan project allows for an acceptance of ambiguity in both the state and self, and we can see this happening already with the breaking down of a reliance on so-called experts, and the possibilities of new forms of democratic activism (Beck, 1992; Stevenson, 2002). Individual action is not the result of group pressures or social attributes. The possibility of an individualization that is disembedded while being institutionalized remains utterly and unreservedly social.

Conclusion

4.1 The process of engaging in sociological research within an emancipatory framework can begin from either public or private origins. Not all sociological research sets out to be explicitly emancipatory. We can transcend the artificial division of public/private through a realization that exploratory research is political and normative, as is so-called public sociology. It is only a heuristic move when we claim that public and professional sociology are somehow divided: in reality, they overlap with each other in many ways. There is political potential in research that engages the public while also remaining grounded in techniques of so-called professional study.

4.2 Not only does a false enactment of a public/private divide in sociology create an unnecessary division of labour, it also is problematic when we look at questions of publicity and privacy in our daily lives. As current strands in sociological research including governmentality, critical realism, and second modernity show, the public and the private are not static. They change depending on situation and context. In public/private spaces, bodies, and even lives, we are often aware of the both/and quality of privacy and publicity. This is also true in social science. As C. Wright Mills famously declared, 'The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of the classic social analyst' (7).

4.3 Sociology is a disparate, multiple, fluid field that embraces the both/and inherent to the many theories that make up what we consider 'sociology'. We can reject a false binary dualism of private/public through an integrated approach to questions about politics, society, economy, structures, actions, and materiality. Zombie categories, including public and private, conceal more than they reveal, and this is also true of an artificial division of labour within the discipline. Sociological research is both political and the professional: we do not need to create more barriers to good research by enacting superficial divisions.

Notes

¹ There has certainly also been criticism of the public sociology approach, particularly for its supposedly utopian views of the world, as well as what some critics see as a retreat from the scientific

² As Sayer (2000) illustrates, the term society is often mistakenly used to refer to nation-states; instead, this term should be understood as referring to an interdependent world within increasingly disrupted and disordered spatial boundaries (108).

³ Feminist work on intersectionality explores how race, sex and gender operate in different ways depending on context (Collins, 2000; Glenn, 1999). Chrys Ingraham's (1994) work on the heterosexual imagery illustrates how sexuality norms are also subsumed under gender categories.

⁴ See Ulrich Beck's (1997) *The Reinvention of Politics* for a further discussion of both/and, and what this means for our understanding of late (post) modernity

⁵ One only needs to look at the scrutiny facing lone mothers on welfare to observe this discrepancy. Poor, single mothers are often the target of governmental agencies surveillance projects (Little, 1998).

⁶ Critical realism has been criticized for lacking a political thrust. See Murphy (1988) for a thoughtful critique of the critical realist approach.

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