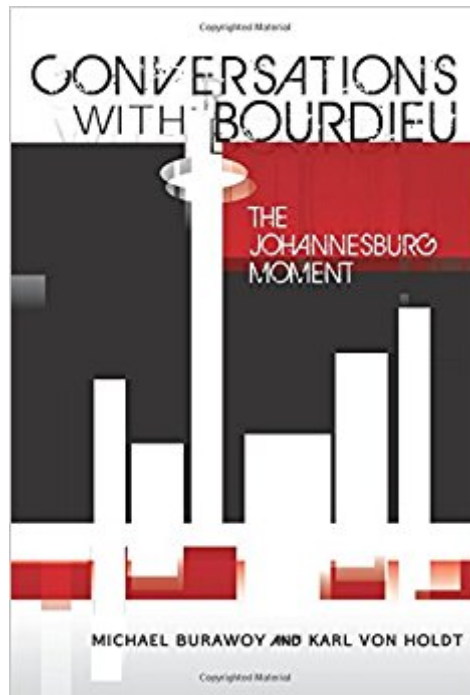


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Conversations With Bourdieu: The Johannesburg Moment



Synopsis

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) is the most influential sociologist of our time. His works take in education, culture, sport, literature, painting, class, philosophy, religion, law, media, intellectuals, methodology, photography, universities, colonialism, kinship, schooling and politics. Not much remains outside Bourdieu's sociological eye. His works are widely read across disciplines and he was one of the most prominent public intellectuals in France. *Conversations with Bourdieu* presents the first comprehensive attempt at a critical engagement with Bourdieu's theory as a totality. Michael Burawoy constructs a series of imaginary conversations between Bourdieu and his nemesis •Marxism• from which he silently borrowed so much. Starting with Marx, and proceeding through Gramsci, Fanon, Freire, de Beauvoir, and Mills, Burawoy takes up the challenge Bourdieu presents to Marxism, simultaneously developing a critique of Bourdieu and a reconstruction of Marxism. Karl Von Holdt, in turn, brings these conversations to South Africa, showing the relevance of Bourdieu's ideas to a country he never visited. Armed with Bourdieu, Von Holdt takes up some of the most pressing social and political issues of contemporary South Africa: the relation between symbolic and real violence, the place of intellectuals in public life, the intervention of gender in politics, the grappling with race, the critique of education, the importance of habitus, the history and future of class mobilisation, and the legacy of the liberation struggle. *Conversations with Bourdieu* pioneers a distinctive approach to doing social theory that is neither a combat sport nor an artificial synthesis, but a way of pushing theory to its limits through dialogue •dialogue between theorists and dialogue between theory and the world it represents. The book is distinctive too in pointing towards a new global sociology consciously rooted in a dialogue between the social realities and theoretical perspectives of North and South. The conversations were first presented as Mellon Lectures at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 2010.

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Customer Reviews

Michael Burawoy is a professor at the University of California—Berkeley. He is a sociological Marxist, best known as author of *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*—a study on work and organizations that has been translated into a number of languages—and is the leading proponent of public sociology. In the XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology he was elected president of the International Sociological Association (ISA) for the period 2010–2014. Karl van Holdt is a senior researcher at the Society Work and Development Institute at Wits University. Before that he was at the COSATU-linked policy institute, NALEDI. He is the author of *Transition from Below: Forging Trade Unionism and Workplace Change in South Africa*.

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