



Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu

David L. Swartz

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Power is the central organizing principle of all social life, from culture and education to stratification and taste. And there is no more prominent name in the analysis of power than that of noted sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Throughout his career, Bourdieu challenged the commonly held view that symbolic power—the power to dominate—is solely symbolic. He emphasized that symbolic power helps create and maintain social hierarchies, which form the very bedrock of political life. By the time of his death in 2002, Bourdieu had become a leading public intellectual, and his argument about the more subtle and influential ways that cultural resources and symbolic categories prevail in power arrangements and practices had gained broad recognition.

In *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals*, David L. Swartz delves deeply into Bourdieu's work to show how central—but often overlooked—power and politics are to an understanding of sociology. Arguing that power and politics stand at the core of Bourdieu's sociology, Swartz illuminates Bourdieu's political project for the social sciences, as well as Bourdieu's own political activism, explaining how sociology is not just science but also a crucial form of political engagement.

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