

Practice-driven theory: Using Bourdieu's critical lineage in ICT4D work

Kirstin E.M. Krauss

k.krauss@ru.ac.za

Department of Information Systems, Rhodes University,
Grahamstown, South Africa

Abstract

In this paper, the author reflects on the value of using key concepts from Bourdieu's critical lineage at the grassroots-level of research practice. The author writes from a position of being ethnographically immersed in an ICT4D project in a traditional Zulu community in a deep rural part of South Africa, where he studied worldview collisions and how it affected emancipatory ICT4D work. Using the terminology and concepts from Bourdieu's critical lineage, one may argue that ICT4D discourses and practice are social situations or a playing field where agents in the field struggle and strategize to improve their position and social capital. The different worldviews of people assumed to participate in ICT4D discourses and practice in South African contexts may translate into a conflict of values and a situation where outsiders make untested assumptions about their own position, knowledge, and power in the social situation. A key guiding argument throughout this paper, therefore, is that the emancipation of the researcher is a precursor for the emancipation of the researched. The researcher shows how Bourdieu allows us to expose and critique the dominating position of the "developed" and Western worldview in ICT4D discourses and practice in Africa. In context of this study, Bourdieu offers guidance on how to do fieldwork and seek maximum immersion in the social phenomena, how to critique ethnocentrism in fieldwork practices, and how to construct adequate knowledge of the "game" of ICT4D research practice. This paper thus offers a theoretical underpinning for *doing* critical research in situations where there are worldview collisions and, subsequently, offers a special case of how the theory and practice of critical research in an ICT4D situation informed each other.

Keywords

Critical Social Theory, Pierre Bourdieu, Critical Ethnography

Introduction

Authors on critical research in Information Systems (IS) often scrutinize the relationship between the theory and practice of critical work (e.g. Ngwenyama, 1991; Čečez-Kecmanović, 2005; McGrath, 2005; Walsham, 2005; Stahl, Tremblay and LeRough, 2011;

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

Krauss, 2013a). Čečez-Kecmanović (2005), for example, holds that “t[T]he validity test for a critical IS theory is ... in IS practice” (p. 37). McGrath (2005), however, argues that the theory and practice of doing critical research often do not adequately inform each other and that critical work in IS is mostly conceptual in nature. Stahl, Tremblay, and LeRough (2011) hold that there is a lack of empirical research in the critical tradition and that this is mostly because of a lack of agreement on what constitutes the methodology of critical research. Ngwenyama (1991) suggests that the theory of critical social theory (CST) cannot be separated from practice, because it is against the philosophy of CST. With respect to IS research in developing countries, Walsham and Sahay (2006) conclude that there is a need for more studies that are explicitly critical in nature. This paper attempts to address these concerns by offering a special case of how the theory and practice of critical research in an Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) situation informed each other.

Confirming the tension between the theory and practice of social research, Bourdieu puts forward a *Theory of Practice* for social science where he challenges, amongst other things, those that practice social life without reflecting on it, as well as those that reflect on (or study) social life without practicing it (Nice in Bourdieu, 1977; Barnard, 1990). He is adamant that the researcher who comes from an outsider objectivist position, and who wants to construct adequate knowledge about a particular social situation, should apart from building objectivist knowledge about the social situation, also seek practical immersion into the social situation in order to also get a sense of subjectivist experiential knowledge of the “game” of social interaction.

In this paper, I reflect on the practical value of using key concepts from Bourdieu’s critical lineage (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990, 1998) at the grassroots-level of research practice (or fieldwork). I show how Bourdieu allows us to expose and critique the dominating position of the “developed” and Western worldview in ICT4D discourses and practice in Africa. I also show how he offers guidance on how to do fieldwork and seek maximum immersion in the social phenomena, how to critique ethnocentrism in fieldwork practices, and how to construct adequate knowledge about the “game” of ICT4D research practice in cross-cultural situations (Walsham and Sahay, 2006). The paper thus contributes by offering a theoretical underpinning for the *doing* of critical research in cross-cultural situations where there are worldview collisions.

I write this paper from the position of being ethnographically immersed in a community development and ICT training project, where I used critical ethnography to study worldview collisions and how it affected emancipatory ICT4D work. In the sections that follow, I reflect on the problem of worldview collisions in ICT4D discourses. Thereafter, I present a brief overview of the project context and some reflections on my own historicity and starting prejudices. I then reflect on how the problem situation developed from my involvement in the ICT4D situation. A number of sections are then allocated for discussing key concepts from Bourdieu as they pertain to ICT4D discourses. I conclude by reflecting on the value of using some of Bourdieu’s ideas in an ICT4D situation where there are worldview collisions.

In the sections where I describe the project context, how the problem situation emerged, and towards the end of the paper where I reflect on how Bourdieu’s ideas were used in the ICT4D situation I encountered, I specifically use a confessional writing style (Van Maanen, 1988) as a way of foregrounding my own subjective experiences (Schultze, 2000) as critical researcher and as primary participator in the social phenomena. The value of confessional writing is that it highlights the ethnographer’s experiences in doing fieldwork

by giving a self-revealing and self-reflexive account of the research process (Whyte, 1996; Van Maanen, 1988; Schultze, 2000; Myers, 2009). It “presents the ethnographer’s role as a research instrument and exposes the ethnographer rendering his/her actions, failings, motivations, and assumptions open to public scrutiny and critique” (Schultze, 2000: 8).

Worldview collisions in ICT4D discourses

A central concern in many ICT4D discourses is the need to critique the assumptions about ICT and what ICT can do in developing situations (Avgerou, 2005; Thompson, 2008; Avgerou, 2010). Literature also express doubts about the value of ICT and ICT4D implementation in the first place (Du Plooy and Roode, 1993; Roode, 1993; Avgerou, 2010). Avgerou and Walsham (2000) and Lewis (1994), for example, show that new technologies can cause damage to the fabric of local communities outweighing any economic advantages to be gained. Roode (1993) suggests that the detrimental consequences of the introduction of ICTs in societies should be anticipated to avoid further dehumanisation of people. “Not all societies can absorb information technology without harmful side-effects such as loss of privacy, unemployment, computer crimes, technostress and similar woes.” (Roode, 1993: 2).

Emerging and ongoing ICT4D discourses, therefore, compel the ICT4D researcher to take a position of inquiry where he or she can question the underlying assumptions, expectations, motives, beliefs, and values that drive ICT4D work, including those that developing communities have among themselves (Du Plooy and Roode, 1993). Myers and Avison (2002) also show that in ICT4D discourses people are potentially constrained by various forms of social, cultural, and political domination, which implies that one should not only strive for mutual understanding in development discourses but also the emancipation from “false and unwarranted beliefs, assumptions and constraints” (Ngwenyama and Lee, 1997: 151) both within “developed” (or often more powerful) and “developing” (less powerful) groups (Lewis, 1994; Myers and Avison, 2002).

ICT4D discourses appear to emerge from, as well as sensitises one to, a potential non-understanding of the situation and the manner in which ICT is supposed to enable development (Ali and Bailur, 2007). These discourses draw attention to a non-understanding of and a non-enlightenment regarding the motives, assumptions, and expectations that drive the implementation of developmental ICT. It sensitises one to potential contradictions, collisions or conflicts between the different assumptions, values, views and cultural systems of the “developed” and “developing”, i.e. collisions between different views on how ICT4D should be introduced, valued, and understood (Jackson, 2002; Avgerou, 2010). In essence therefore, false expectations, assumptions, and views regarding development and doing developmental work as well as resultant development concepts and practices equate to false consciousness that that keeps people (both the “have’s” and “have not’s”) in a state of non-emancipation and non-enlightenment.

From ICT4D literature one can find several discourses on such false ideologies or consciousnesses regarding ICT4D, i.e. false consciousness embedded in the assumptions, motives, views, and expectations of researchers, practitioners, and receivers of developmental ICTs. Zheng (2009), for example, questions the assumption that there is a link between ICT and economic growth, or that there is a connection between ICT and human well-being. Heeks (2005) highlights concerns associated with technocratic assumptions and universal modernist development criteria. Thompson (2008) argues for

the need to critique “unqualified ‘technological optimism’” (p. 822), mentioning international players such as Cisco and Microsoft, who may see developmental ICT as an potential for market expansion, and who may exert untested motives. Thompson highlights conflicts of interests between the different role-players involved in policy formulation and practical implementation of ICT4D and the need to question the relevance of “hard” or Western approaches (and its embedded assumptions and values) to developmental ICT. Wilson (2004) also questions the automatic assumptions about the universal benefits associated with technology diffusion and suggests that developmental ICT is potentially deeply embedded within social structures.

All of these false consciousnesses and ideologies are in some way deeply entrenched in, and thus resultant from, the worldviews of the “developed” and the “developing”. It is consequently a problem in need of critique. Those promoting or believing such views are essentially in need of emancipation, enlightenment or social transformation (Thompson, 2008; Zheng, 2009; Thompson and Walsham, 2010).

Therefore, key to understanding the problem area lies in the starting assumption that all stakeholders and participants involved in ICT4D potentially suffer from various types of inabilities and cultural entrapment with regard to emancipatory ICT4D research and practice. These false consciousnesses may lead to false expectations, assumptions, non-emancipatory practices, and on-going ICT4D failures if not addressed correctly. All stakeholders and participators in ICT4D are therefore in need of empowerment, enlightenment and emancipation with regard to ICT4D and assumptions about power relations and position in development discourses. Associated with false consciousness and ICT4D collisions, is the issue of contradictory meanings attributed to emancipation and emancipatory concepts and the questioning of power relations in establishing consensus on the meaning of emancipatory concepts (Hammersley, 1992).

The project context

In this section I briefly reflect on the ICT4D project context and the types of roles I had in the project.

The greater research project (and also my PhD work), of which this paper forms part, evolved from my ethnographic immersion in an ICT4D project, titled the Happy Valley Project (a Pseudonym), in traditional Zulu community in a deep rural part of South Africa (for other papers on other aspects of the project see Krauss et al., 2009; Krauss, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b; Krauss and Turpin, 2013). In partnership with several key community members and development agents (or agents of development), I have since 2008 been involved in the many aspects of community engagement and ICT training that have evolved since the inception of the project. As *ICT4D practitioner*, my role was (until December 2011) that of the primary driver and outsider champion of the project. This involvement includes being part of how the Happy Valley Project started and gained momentum, how relationships with teachers and key community members developed and matured, how key community members were empowered through ICT and train-the-trainer initiatives, and how the ICT training slowly progressed towards becoming sustainable and community owned (see Krauss, 2013a). My role evolved from being a doer of ICT work and training to someone who was consulted for guidance, quality control, and certification. From an *ICT4D project management* point of view, I presided over activities such as preparing project proposals, acquiring international funding, implementing ICT4D,

overseeing ICT training initiatives, project reporting and feedback on ICT policy, and after-implementation service and support of community gatekeepers and development agents. My *ethnographic role* evolved from initial community entry, to becoming a member, and to being recognised as a member of a community of development agents and caregivers. *Ethnographic relationships* in the project were strongly focussed on those participants who played a caregiving, agency, visionary, or entrepreneurial role in the community. Throughout this process, I became deeply involved in the social phenomena that I investigated, i.e. I became the data, lived the data (Whyte, 1996), and was collaboratively part of data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

Who I am

A key principle of doing critical ethnographic work is that I should reflect on my own historicity and prejudice (Myers, 1997; Klein and Myers, 1999; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000; Harvey and Myers, 2002; Myers, 2009; Myers and Klein, 2011) and how it could possibly affect the project situation and what I encountered in the field, i.e. how I possibly influenced the interpretations of people I engaged with (Walsham, 2002). This section thus presents a brief overview of who I am.

As a white Afrikaner male, I experienced a number of difficulties during the community entry phases of participant-observation. Initially two key issues stood out, namely, the difficulties associated with intercultural communication and some ideological remnants associated with the Apartheid legacy. Because of Apartheid, I was initially somewhat oversensitive to race-related differences, mainly because I didn't know how the Zulu people felt about the issue. However, my apprehension very quickly dissolved as I made friends with local people and learnt about the richness of diversity. A more challenging issue was that of learning new cultural mannerisms (and unlearning others). During the early stages of enculturation, which is a specific phase in participant-observation during which one has to come to terms with a new cultural situation (De Vos et al., 2007; Myers, 2009), some of the cultural informants told me that because of my Afrikaner way of communicating, I unintentionally offended some of the more traditional locals. It caused me to reflect very carefully on my own behaviour and assumptions. At times I even experienced a sense of insecurity in this regard. Friendships with cultural interpreters, however, created an openness where they could correct and guide me in cultural mannerisms and intercultural communication.

As I progressed from enculturation to being-a-member I experienced what Van Maanen (1988) contended; that is, "... a description of culture can never be settled once and for all" (p. 45). I found myself studying a "moving target". As I learned about the Happy Valley community, their caregiving nature and the associated emancipatory practices, I adopted many of their values and principles in my own life. As I matured in the research situation, I experienced a gradual escape from the cultural entrapment (Thomas, 1993) that my own background and culture afforded me. I became accepted into a community of caregivers in Happy Valley, because although I was different, the locals seemed to discern my motives and attitude. In addition, being a married man, with children and in my late 30s offered me a type of social status associated with responsibility and leadership that was easy for traditional Zulus to relate to. My historicity, age, social status as married man, and position of outsider champion in the project affected the type and depth of data that could be collected and the interpretations I could make. Moreover, being who I am allowed me to build relationships with more influential community members in leadership roles, which a

younger or single person probably would not have been able to do. It affected the type of trust and rapport that I could establish with people and the types of stories people told me.

How the problem situation emerged

During ethnographic immersion and in line with the literature presented in previous sections, three key problem issues emerged from doing fieldwork. Firstly, I realised my and some of my project partners' inability with regard to intercultural matters and understanding each other's worldviews, specifically against the background of trying to understand, interpret, and evaluate ICT4D work. Secondly, I realised my inability to do community entry appropriately and ethically, especially because of my lack of understanding of the cultural context, underlying values, emancipatory concepts and interests, and the oppressive circumstances that the people of Happy Valley find themselves in. The third issue, which emanates from the prior two problem areas, relates to an inability to interpret and explain the collisions that emerged from introducing, aligning, or implementing ICT4D. Therefore, in addition to studying the interaction dynamics in the social phenomena and their social meanings, I also sought to understand, describe, and participate in emancipation and fieldwork collisions as they emerged from the social phenomena and involvement in the social phenomena. Throughout the project, I sought to understand the *process* of deciphering meaning, both in terms of understanding and articulating emancipatory concepts as well as understanding the worldview of research participants, and that which underpin their worldview, such as value systems and local emancipatory practices.

In order to address these issues, my research partners and I had to collaboratively find ways to do ICT4D work appropriately and ethically, i.e. to introduce, align, and implement ICT4D so as not to create or reinforce oppressive circumstances or ideologies, or disrupt the unique social fabric of the Happy Valley people. A central issue that emerged within myself is how my own false consciousness (e.g. misunderstandings, conflicting assumptions, and untested motives, views, and approaches with regard to ICT4D work) affected assumptions about power, position, and roles in development discourses. Through ethnographic methods and critical reflexivity I became aware of how these inabilities, collisions, and false consciousnesses emerged and were seen to be the result of the cultural entrapment (Hammersley, 1992; Thomas, 1993) and ethnocentrism (Harvey and Myers, 2002) that I suffered from initially.

A key guiding argument throughout my study, therefore, was that the emancipation of the researcher is a precursor for the emancipation of the researched. I, therefore, constantly asked myself: In what ways should ICT4D researchers and practitioners (like me) achieve self-emancipation, in order to ensure the on-going emancipation and empowerment of the deep rural developing community in South Africa? It is in the process of addressing this primary research question that I used key concepts from Bourdieu's critical lineage to understand the ICT4D social situation and ethnographic phenomena I was confronted with. A unique perspective on these problems is presented as this study it looks at emancipatory ICT4D research and practice in context of a deep rural Zulu community in South Africa, and specifically the journey of social transformation that I embarked on.

As a result of the practical nature of the community work that I was involved in, even before the research started, participant-observation (or fieldwork) and critical ethnography emerged as the most appropriate methodological approach for investigating the social situation (Hammersley, 1992; Harvey and Myers, 2002; De Vos et al., 2007; Myers, 2009).

Ethnographic approaches allowed me to alleviate the tension between research and practice (Twinomurinzi, 2010).

For the purpose of understanding the methodological approach that I pursued in the greater ICT4D project, it is important to note that the focus of critical ethnography is on absurdities, contradictions, oppositions, tensions, and conflicts in the social situation (Thomas, 1993; Myers, 1997). Devising ways to gain access to deeper meaning and conflicting and contradicting accounts may present challenges to the ethnographer's creativity, flexibility, and innovation (Thomas, 1993; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). The collisions, conflicts, contradictions, etc. that I sought to understand as part of my ethnographic data, emerged to be the result of worldview collisions (Krauss, 2012b).

As I learnt lessons about *why* things are and *why* collisions occurred in the social phenomena, one particular theme stood out. This eventually became my primary data emphasis. I construe this theme as *the collisions between the typical task-orientated or performance-orientated value system of Western-minded societies and the traditional loyalty-based value system or people-orientated culture of the Zulu people* (Krauss, 2012b). My discovery of this collision developed in parallel with my learnings about the people-orientated culture of Zulu people and their loyalty-based values. I could explain almost all manifestations of conflicts, collisions, and emancipatory practices in the context of this theme or by contrasting people-orientatedness with my own subjective view of Western task-orientatedness. This theme also allowed me to articulate differences in meaning attributed to emancipation and emancipatory concepts. An understanding of this collision affected the way I did fieldwork, my understanding of community entry and gaining access to people, the way I approached the ICT4D project, my understanding of the tensions I observed in development agents involved in development initiatives, and even transformations within myself. It also related to the fact that different social groups have "different experiences, histories, dispositions, cultural needs, desires and tastes" (Kvasny and Keil, 2006: 31, 32) and that these differences are not always treated as equal. This collision consequently has implications for the ways in which ICT4D is viewed, valued, evaluated, and expected to contribute to development. My understanding of this collision eventually helped me to also participate in and assume the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) of the local people, and ultimately embed myself, with particular social and symbolic capital in the field, where I could affect transformation and change in an ethical manner.

Bourdieu's critical lineage

As one of their principles for critical research, Myers and Klein (2011) suggest "that critical researchers should organize their data collection and analysis around core concepts and ideas from one or more critical theorists" (p. 25). Although I believe it is possible to apply key concepts from other critical theorists to my work (e.g. Habermas, Foucault), it was Bourdieu's critical lineage that appealed most to my approach and findings. His work developed primarily from ethnographic field studies (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Myers and Klein, 2011) and aligns well with the typical nature of ethnographic findings (e.g. Barnard, 1990; Schultze, 2000; Levina, 2005). Also, an explicit aim of Bourdieu's critical lineage is to understand why certain social groups have remained in repression (Kvasny and Keil, 2006; Myers and Klein, 2011). "The Bourdieu lineage gives emphasis to asymmetric distribution of symbolic and social assets in society, which then cause and reproduce (i.e., maintain) discriminatory social stratification between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'" (Myers and Klein, 2011: 21). I found it to align well with the value position I have taken

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

regarding the role of ICTs in development in South African contexts, which is about avoiding the careless and disruptive diffusion of ICT into the social dynamics of the developing community (Du Plooy and Roode, 1993; Avgerou, 2010), and the importance of negotiating the implications of existing repression sustaining ideologies, beliefs, and practices evident in those perceived to participate in the ICT4D discourses, so as to not reinforce hopelessness and discouragement through further destructive ICT4D. Essentially, though, and as Walsham (2006) also noted, my choice of theory was subjective. Bourdieu “spoke” to me (Walsham, 2006) and the findings I encountered.

Two of Bourdieu’s critical discourses stood out for me. The first is his critique of the gap between the subjectivist and objectivist views of social phenomena and secondly, his views on the reflexive practice of social science, which includes the concepts of habitus, structures, field, and capital.

The limits of objectivist and subjectivist understanding

One of the Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990, 1998) key criticisms is about the neglect of the social conditions in which social science is possible. In particular, Bourdieu highlights the need for the researcher to reflect on the sense-making relationship he or she has with the social phenomena. Bourdieu argues that the outsider social scientist has in reality no place in the social system observed, and consequently as outsider affects what is observed. He thus critiques the gap between outsider-observers who attempt to construct the social world from an objective, distant, non-participatory position and those that possess knowledge of practical mastery of their social world and who do not objectively reflect on their social world.

According to Bourdieu, there are real limits to the outsider-researcher’s point of view of the social situation. The outsider observer lacks practical mastery and therefore runs the risk of enforcing an outsider-constructed, and predetermined set of rules, discourses, and action onto the social phenomena, thus misrepresenting that social reality (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). The researcher, if not explicating the social conditions of the relationship with the social phenomena and acknowledging and thus reflecting on the subjective position needed to build adequate knowledge of the social world, lacks the experiential knowledge to construct, create, and innovate in the social space and therefore cannot explain the social reality adequately.

Bourdieu argues that the social world should be understood in ways that do justice to both the objectivist and the subjectivist knowledge of the social world. He argues that the subjectivist viewpoint has at its core, practical mastery (thought, beliefs, desires, emotions, judgements) of agents who not only experience that social world but also construct the social world. The objectivist view is often viewed as superior and more “meaningful” by social scientists. Bourdieu views this as ethnocentric. Subsequently outsider-observers subconsciously consider themselves, in an ethnocentric manner, to be in a more powerful position than agents who possess the subjective and practical mastery of the social world.

Bourdieu argues for two necessary knowledge breaks for an adequate understanding of social phenomena and subsequently explains three modes of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977). The first break, he argues, is with subjectivist knowledge, i.e. with the “native experience and the native representation of that experience” (p. 2). In the second break one needs to “question presuppositions inherent in the position of an outside observer, who, in his preoccupation with *interpreting* [sic] practices, is inclined to introduce into the

object the principles of his relation to the object” (Bourdieu, 1977: 2). The first mode of knowledge is about “primary experience” and “unquestioning apprehension” of the social world which does not reflect on itself. The second mode of knowledge is objectivist knowledge, which implies a break with primary knowledge, but excludes from its definition the social conditions that make that experience possible. The third mode of knowledge according to Bourdieu, is needed to understand the limits of objectivist knowledge. This mode of knowledge pursues enquiry into the social conditions that make an adequate knowledge of social science possible. According to Bourdieu (1977) this is rigorous science of practice, as it explores the limits of all objective exploration, and thus makes “possible both an objectively intelligible practice and also an objectively enchanted experience of that practice” (Bourdieu, 1977: 4).

Bourdieu (1977, 1990) presents detailed examples of gifts and gift exchange to explain and contrast objectivist and subjectivist knowledge. According to his examples the objectivist model of gift exchange represents a simplified and distant cycle of reciprocity that is reversible and separated from context, meaning, subtle nuances, timing, and the individual mechanisms that social life brings into it. Even the official account of agents in the social situation is limiting as an explanation of a practical sense of gift exchange is missing. However, the subjective experiences of the exchange bring into the explanation issues of meaning embedded in the subtle nuances of the act of gift exchange. These subtle nuances, which may include, for example, the separation in timing (tempo) between gift and response, style of giving, choice of occasion, manipulation of time, social efficacy, and so forth, lies in practice or experiential knowledge. Knowing the game of gift exchange, according to Bourdieu, and how to intuitively and subconsciously apply these subtle operations, may be used strategically to exert power and improve social capital. It is far from the norms, rules and models that objectivist knowledge of gift exchange alone portrays.

Developing a sense of the game of social interaction

In Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990, 1998) theory he argues that the outsider-observer, apart from reflecting on his own position, also needs to develop a sense of the game. He explains the limitations of objectivist knowledge, by referring to the difference between having the “benefit” of reflecting on a social situation after time has passed and the outcome is known, as opposed to being in the social situation while time is still going on and while the outcome is yet to be determined (Bourdieu, 1977). When a social situation is completed and time has gone its full cycle (things are in the past), the outsider-observer, who looks at the phenomena, knowing what has happened and how things panned out, is able to model and decode what has occurred. However, being in the moment and knowing how to react to unexpected occurrences in the situation requires a deep sense of the game in order to know how not only to model but also create and innovate according to a sense of the game. He uses the concept of habitus to explain the idea of the “sense of the game”.

Bourdieu (1977) compares an experiential understanding of social phenomena to a dog fight and a boxing match, where each action has an intuitive reaction in the opponent, with countless adjustments of movements (reactions) to actions, all according to the rules of the game which are deeply inscribed in the minds and bodies of opponents. Every move or counter move is loaded with meaning and perceived and understood by those participating in the “fight”. From an objectivist point of view the fight can be modelled from the position of hindsight and distance. But in the situation, an objectivist approach is limiting as it

neglects an explanation of the sense of the game of social interaction.

Ethnocentrism in outsider-observers

Bourdieu relates ethnocentrism of outsiders to the devices that they use to keep their distance and “for making a virtue out of necessity by converting *de facto* [sic] exclusion into a choice of method.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 10). Using the example of forced conversation he warns that it may create within the outsider a false sense of the game. People strain themselves to almost artificially keep the conversation going, while they always maintain the position of being able to retreat to the safe ground of exiting the game. Bourdieu also relates this to a mock fight where fighters can always retreat to the safe ground of agreement. It is only when the fighters (outsiders) in the mock fight get carried away by the game and the fight gets the better of them, that they in fact escape from ethnocentrism and truly participate in the game. It is about moving from knowing the objective rules of the game to having a sense of the game – a second break with knowledge. Bourdieu argues that the social situation should not simply be passively observed or recorded (Bourdieu, 1990). He argues that when the observer brings into the social situation “the principles of his relation to the object”, without allowing himself to be carried away by the game, that observation is “taken from high positions in the social structure” (Bourdieu, 1990: 52).

Bourdieu also uses language to illustrate the difference between objectivist and subjectivist knowledge of social phenomena. Objectivist knowledge is portrayed as being able to model and decode language, when it has gone through the full cycle of time. I.e. the message has been concluded, the receiver and sender are known, and the context is known. Subjectivist knowledge is obtained when one has developed a feel for the language beyond decoding and translation, to being able to create with it, to come up with new words and expressions understandable by others who can also feel the language. The speaking subject – the person feeling the language – has the power of innovation and the power of adaptation, to construct language in constant changing situations and to contextualise language and acknowledge its use in a “socially structured interaction” (Bourdieu, 1977: 25). It is not enough to only understand the code of language, but also to innovate with it in the context and situation in which it is used. Similarly, to understand the social situation, it is not sufficient to only objectively (retrospectively) model the situation, but also to elaborate on the situation, context, and timing in which the model manifests. There is a difference in understanding between those inquirers that play the game of social interaction in order to be carried away by the game and those who simply play the game as a game to leave it later to tell stories about it (Bourdieu, 1990).

Habitus

Bourdieu puts forward *field*, *habitus*, and *capital* as conceptual tools to explain the dynamics of the social space.

Bourdieu uses habitus to refer to the organising principle of people’s actions in a particular social setting. Habitus is a “system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.” (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). Habitus is the guiding structure and principle for practices and correctness of practice, produced by

history and creating history. It is produced by a particular class of conditionings and conditions of existence.

“H[h]abitus tends to generate all the ‘reasonable’, ‘common-sense’, behaviours” (Bourdieu, 1990: 55) of people which are possible within the limits of structured structures and structuring structures of habitus, of which some (behaviours) are positively endorsed by society and other are not. Habitus is internalised in agents as “second nature” (Bourdieu, 1990: 56), subconsciously and deeply rooted in us. In a particular worldview, habitus functions spontaneously without will or consciousness. Habitus functions as “intentionless invention or regulated improvisation.” (Bourdieu, 1990: 57) and as a practical sense, i.e. a “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” (Bourdieu, 1990: 57), embedded in the bodies and minds, and “dispositions, cultural needs, desires and tastes” (Kvasny and Keil, 2006: 31) of agents. The meaning of practice is established when agents have reached consensus on it, i.e. it is considered common sense knowledge.

There are certain ways in which habitus manifests in people, for example everyone is able to reproduce the rules of the system, but not necessarily cite or recite the rules from memory. In his explanation of habitus, Bourdieu highlights the link between habitus, structures, and power (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). His concept of field is in fact a field of forces within which agents struggle and strategize (individually or collectively) to keep society in order and ultimately to improve their positions through the currency of symbolic, cultural, or economic capital.

Habitus is communal. A class of people from similar social conditions or a system of the same dispositions belong to the same class habitus. In such a society, common schemes of perceptions, conception, action, and so forth are harmonized in accordance with the structured structures and structuring structures of the class habitus. Individual habitus, although with differences in style, is the result of the same dispositions, and variants of others. Habitus has a defence against change (of habitus) and ensures consistency (of habitus) (Bourdieu, 1990). However, habitus enables agents to adapt to changing and unforeseen situations, according to structuring structures, schemes, and disposition of the habitus.

One of Bourdieu’s key reasons for putting forward the concept of habitus is to explain the limits of objectivist and subjectivist knowledge and the need for reflexivity in research practice. He uses the concept of habitus to show how the researcher should, apart from producing objectivist knowledge, also transcend the gap, escape from ethnocentrism, and develop a sense of the social game, be carried away by the game, and ultimately get a sense of practiced habitus. Habitus therefore should be understood against the background of the limits of objectivism and the limits of subjectivist knowledge. Bourdieu argues that modelling or describing the social situation with the “benefit” of hindsight is an illusion of reality, as the urgency of “real-time” habitus action is not there. In this sense the observer views the final outcome of action and how action developed in the light of habitus as something that was known and predetermined from the beginning, and not a product of inventing in the setting of subjective reality and a sense of the social game. Bourdieu (1990) argues that in order to step down from a distant or the foreign viewpoint of objectivist knowledge or “objectivist idealism” (p. 52), that the researcher has to situate himself in the social situation and real social activities, in order to get a sense of practiced habitus of the people.

Bourdieu argues that one has to both escape from the ethnocentricity of objectivist knowledge which models the world outside of practical sense and historic reality, and

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

guard against falling into subjectivist knowledge which is unable to give an adequate account of the social situation.

Political action, struggles, and strategizing

Political action can be exercised by appealing to that which keeps the group “in order”, e.g. a responsible man would not do this or that, or a man with honour will not do so and so (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). According to Bourdieu, it is a manipulating strategy, designed to keep a group in order, to improve capital, and to maintain and further the self-interests of dominating agents. Political action and strategies are about regulated habitus and regulating habitus. Strategy in this sense is not conscious or calculated. It is also not mechanically determined. It is the intuitive product of knowing the rules of the game (Mahar, Harker and Wilkes, 1990).

Groups sharing a habitus exist through particular functions, association or kinship, “community of dispositions” (Bourdieu, 1977: 35), and interests. Practical kin relationships are about practices that produce and reproduce. “[t]hey are the product of strategies (conscious or unconscious) oriented towards the satisfaction of material and symbolic interests and organized by reference to a determinate set of economic and social conditions.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 36). Symbolic capital may be accumulated through lineage, like the possession of an inherited title. Those in a dominant position (thus possessing capital) have the “right” to structure the habitus that they are part of in order to protect and legitimise their shared interests. Agents associate themselves with others with whom the relationship is practically useful (those who are spatially close and socially influential), and then struggle and strategize to maintain this network of privileged and useful (practical) relationships. Groupings of people with shared interest and position, power, and influence may collectively manipulate (through their collective influence) the social situation and the way in which reality is constructed (such as the collective definition of a situation), and thereby mobilise the group through the capital of authority for example (Bourdieu, 1977). In this way those with influence and the capital to structure and maintain influence, and thus shape the official account of a situation (or the official definition of a situation), are regulating habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). The group may enjoy the advantages of symbolic profits and practical relationships and how they are used to improve capital. Those dominated may remain so because of the appeal to be a “responsible” man, or to be for example, honourable, patriotic, respectful, loyal, ethical, and so forth (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

Symbolic violence is to “struggle to accumulate symbolic capital in the form of collective recognized *credit* [sic]” (Bourdieu, 1977: 41), without the use physical force or laws (Kvasny and Keil, 2006). In order to increase the capital of those in dominating positions, the habitus is structured to maintain or improve the situation (status quo) and to keep those with less capital, through practical relationships as opposed to official relationships, in a position to support the self-interests and capital of those with more symbolic capital and who has power to structure, manipulate, and shape.

A sense of the game and in particular a sense of the mechanisms used by the group to keep the group in order is a permanent disposition according to Bourdieu, embedded in the minds and bodies of people, manifesting as “schemes of perception and thought” and also “at a deeper level, in the form of bodily postures and stances, ways of standing, sitting, looking, speaking, or walking.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 15). Habitus is a “disposition inculcated in the earliest years of life and constantly reinforced by calls to order from the

group, that is to say, from the aggregate of the individuals endowed with the same dispositions, to whom each is linked by his dispositions and interests.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 15). It is a cultivated sense of the game and of the ordering and controlling mechanisms of the game that is consistent with the *logic of practice* in a particular habitus and that allows agents to intuitively participate.

First- and second-order strategies

Bourdieu (1977) explains first-order strategies as those that are directly orientated towards the “primary profit of practice” (p. 22). Second-order strategies have the purpose of apparent satisfaction of the rule, where the real, but hidden purpose is self-interest. Second-order strategies are there to portray an image of “ethical impeccability” (Bourdieu, 1977: 22). Bourdieu uses the example of parallel-cousin marriage (which I will not labour) to explain the difference between and purposes of first- and second-order strategies, and to explain how the official version of practice subtly hides first-order strategies from being made explicit. Bourdieu notes that an inadequate theory of practice (practiced reality) may only yield contradiction and difficulties, neglecting the political functions that need to be exposed in an adequate account of the social situation. Ultimately, an adequate account of how and why things are should also refer to the political functions of such an account and the self-interest of those with power, position, and control, those who possess the currency of social, symbolic or cultural capital, and who can shape others’ meanings and views of reality. Bourdieu aims to expose the inconsistencies between the model of a social situation and actual practice, or the conflicts between first- and second-order strategies.

Bourdieu explains that the holders of authority (guarantors) in a group have the ability to awaken schemes of perception and appreciation that have been deposited in every member of the group – i.e. the dispositions of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Those in the group with a superior position, power, or capital and who have developed the skill of playing the game and keeping the group in order are those that can influence others’ sense of taste, meaning, judgement, desires, and so forth. A second-order strategy here is to put forward the values of, for example, unity, patriotism, or to create in agents awareness of “what will the others say”. An agent, who can play the game well and who by abiding by the explicit rule, falling in line, and honouring the values that the group honours, can establish a position of domination. There is an interest and advantage in aligning or obeying the rule or political governance of the group – when there is much to gain or much to lose. That is, when aligning with the rule of the group, there is more to gain than when not aligning.

The limitations of the informant’s discourse about practice

Practice is not an obedience to the rules of a theoretical model of the social situation. An adequate understanding of practice from the outsider’s point of view lies rather with gaining access to subconscious understanding of practice, the spirit of practice, or a sense of the game. Therefore, an official definition of the social situation may be imposed on the ethnographer, by those who consider themselves to be spokespeople of the group, and hence in a position to shape the field of forces, and thus the views, tastes, beliefs, etc. of people of similar habitus. This official, and also explicit, definition/account of the social situation is repression sustaining, as it represses or dominates other practical but implicit definitions/accounts of the social situation. The primary reason is to protect power, influence, self-interest, various forms of capital, and the outcomes of first-order strategies. Bourdieu equates this official account put forward by those who consider themselves

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

spokespeople, to an ideology imposed onto the outsider-researcher and onto the habitus of a group. The outsider-observer should not consider the official definition as adequate. Practical functions of association (kinship) may remain hidden if the ethnographer does not expose them through the hermeneutics of suspicion and other means, e.g. seeking meaning behind meaning, practical accounts, and exposing first-order strategies, capital, and so forth.

According to Bourdieu, there are real limits to what the cultural informant can explain, explicate, or articulate about his own worldview. There is a “distance between learned reconstruction of the native world and the native experience of that world, an experience which finds expression only in the silences, ellipses, and lacunae of the language of familiarity.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 18). The cultural informant has to bring into a “state of explicitness, for the purpose of transmission, the unconscious schemes of his practice.” (p. 18). The informant, however, in order to portray his mastery of habitus will draw attention to only the most prominent or most remarkable manifestations of the game of social interaction, and not the principle underlying the game or action. These remain in an implicit state. “The explanation agents may provide of their own practice, thanks to a quasi theoretical reflection on their practice, conceals, even from their own eyes, the true nature of their practical mastery ... a mode of practical knowledge not comprising knowledge of its own principles.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 19). Bourdieu refers to this as “learned ignorance” and “native theories” (Bourdieu, 1977: 19), which lack objective truth about the informant’s own practical mastery. Native theories may produce illusionary explanations of the logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1977).

In short, agents cannot be relied on to explain the reasoning behind their reasoning and there are explicit and probably political explanations (ideologies, superfluous theories) in place that conceal agents from the implicit explanations of their society’s logic of practice. It’s about the *conflict* between practice and an informant’s discourse about practice (Bourdieu, 1990). To come up with a science of practice that adequately explains the social situation, one needs to recognise that representations may be an obstacle to an adequate understanding of practice. This representation can be used in the group to teach “truth” to itself, and also conceal its own truth from itself. It can become binding to the group because representations have been done through public declaration.

Capital and domination

Bourdieu extends the concept of capital to also include symbolic capital and symbolic interests. “He defines the ‘symbolic’ as that which is material but not recognised as being such (dress sense, a good accent, ‘style’) and which derives its efficacy not simply from its materiality but from this very misrecognition.” (Mahar, Harker and Wilkes, 1990: 5). Symbolic capital is the primary reason for unrecognised domination. “Symbolic systems are instruments of knowledge and domination” (Mahar, Harker and Wilkes, 1990: 5). Dominating agents struggle and strategize to accumulate symbolic capital in order to support or maintain their symbolic interests in a society. Symbolic struggles (symbolic violence and domination) are designed to remain hidden as first-order strategies, and it is typically accepted and maintained through unsaid consensus within a community, i.e. regulated habitus.

Bourdieu argues that symbolic capital is both cultural and social. A person’s position is defined by the distribution of the appropriate form of capital. Cultural capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital are that which struggles and strategizing are about. People

attempt to position themselves in their social space so that they can best play the game of social interaction in order to improve their symbolic capital and improve and maintain their symbolic interests.

Symbolic violence is the self-interest capacity of those in dominant positions to justify the legitimacy of existing social structures. When a holder of symbolic capital uses his power to confer against agents who hold less, and thereby seek to dominate or change their actions or worldview, they exercise symbolic violence. Symbolic violence may be destructive or reductive. The state, for example, has power to ensemble and may legitimising symbolic and physical violence (Bourdieu, 1979 in Mahar, Harker and Wilkes, 1990).

The field of forces is a field of struggles in which agents confront each other with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the field, in order to conserve or transform the field (Bourdieu, 1998). The aim of struggles and strategies are to conserve or transform and to maintain the equilibrium of power and influence. These are the roles of those who possess sufficient amounts of capital to dominate or conserve for example the exchange rate between cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1998).

Bourdieu and ICT4D discourses

From the readings of Bourdieu one needs to distinguish between his philosophical assumptions, i.e. his orientation to knowledge about the social world, and the concepts that he uses to describe and critique the social world. i.e. it is one thing to use his concepts (e.g. habitus, field, symbolic capital, etc.) at a superficial level to describe a social situation – which one can do from the outside, but it is something else to align with his epistemological assumptions (e.g. to be carried away by the game of social interaction) and subsequently provide evidence from data and practice of such alignment. One of Bourdieu's key epistemological contributions is his discourse around reflexivity in scientific research practice (Postone, LiPuma and Calhoun, 1990). Regarding reflexivity and the researcher's subjective position, Bourdieu (1990) cites Nietzsche (1969):

“...L[et us guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject'; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason', 'absolute spirituality', 'knowledge in itself': these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unimaginable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing something, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective 'knowing'; and the more affects we allow to speak about one thing, the more eyes, different eyes, we use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity', be.” [sic] (p. 28).

In context of Bourdieu's lineage and reflexivity, I argue that the misrepresentation of social reality by not making the second break with objectivist knowledge and not acknowledging the researcher's own ethnocentrism, and thus enforcing an outsider (objectivist) perspective onto the ICT4D social situation may equate to a repression-sustaining situation for the research participants and a false consciousness and cultural entrapment on the side of the researcher, especially if the outsider-constructed knowledge is supposed to guide emancipatory efforts. Hammersley (1992) holds that the meaning of emancipation depends on the values that one accepts, and if a different worldview implies an alternate

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

value system, there may be value conflicts and therefore disagreement on what emancipation and other developmental concepts should mean and achieve. The outsider-researcher may construct inadequate knowledge of social reality and through the symbolic capital that he/she possesses in the habitus of the research fraternity, may firstly, impose a repression sustaining construction of knowledge onto the social situation (i.e. onto people who can really do without more suffering and oppression), and secondly, sketch an inadequate sense of “truth” and understanding to the research fraternity. Enforcing a particular ethnocentric outsider construction of knowledge onto the social phenomena may end up in a situation where research subjects’ meanings, tastes, and desires are continued to be shaped by outsiders in order to subconsciously improve the position and self-interests of the outsider or others that can play the game of ICT4D. Moreover, the idea and concept of development has a sense of “ethical impeccability” (Bourdieu, 1977: 22) entrenched in its use in the ICT4D research fraternity, which according to Bourdieu can be seen as a hidden first-order strategy (i.e. it is about improving the primary profit of practice), thus manifesting as a repression sustaining ideology.

Bourdieu argues that researchers of social phenomena are in a situation where they struggle and strategize to improve their position and capital. Researchers’ second-order strategies might be to investigate and critique development initiatives, but their first-order strategies are to publish, to improve their own knowledge (e.g. knowledge to pursue, manipulate, or recreate an official account of the social situation), to collect data, to complete a degree, and so forth. For the critical ethnographer it implies the need and necessity to reflect on the implications of this position and associated self-interest, and as Bourdieu argues, how it may affect the social situation, the type of data collected, what is perceived and interpreted, and whether in the end the people the ethnographer works with are really emancipated and empowered through development efforts. In context of this study, Bourdieu offers guidance in how to do fieldwork and seek maximum immersion in the social phenomena, how to critique ethnocentrism in fieldwork practices, how to be carried away by the game of emancipatory ICT4D practice, and how to critique power issues in the social space.

Gaining access to deeper meaning implies difficulty and conflict. Bourdieu argues that implicit explanations of a society’s practice may be hidden from the consciousness of cultural informants and will only manifest in subtle cultural nuances, silence, and conflict (or “silences, ellipses, and lacunae”, (Bourdieu, 1977: 18)). Also, the official account of social reality may be brushed with a political or ideological agenda, where the informants only articulate that which reflects second-order strategies or the most remarkable manifestations of practice. The real and implicit agenda, meaning, motives, beliefs, etc. may remain hidden. There may be a conflict between an informant’s discourse and practice. It is something that the outsider needs to expose and bring to the fore, by means of a second break with knowledge, in order to construct an adequate knowledge of social reality. If the researcher cannot fully explain reasons for conflicts and collisions, he should at least highlight the fact that there are collisions and conflicts as a basis for further emancipatory and enlightened ICT4D work.

An ICT4D discourse may be viewed as a social situation or playing field where agents struggle and strategize to improve their position and capital. Different worldviews of people assumed to participate in ICT4D discourses and practice and the accompanying conflict of values translate into a situation where people make inadequate assumptions about their own position, knowledge, and power in ICT4D discourses. A potentially dysfunctional relationship emerges which is based on the assumed ability of people to participate in

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

ICT4D discourses or play the (read developmental) game of social interaction. ICT and assumed, but inadequate knowledge about how to participate in ICT4D discourses and practice, becomes a source of symbolic and social capital that people use to dictate assumptions, enforce worldviews, evaluate development, implement ICT4D, and so forth; which ultimately implies inadequate value judgements and invalid norms for guiding responsible action and open and informed choices (Ngwenyama, 1991) in ICT4D practice.

Cultural entrapment and ethnocentrism may manifest in ICT4D discourses when the outsider-researcher (often Western-minded) may view their own worldview, mind-set, culture, and artefacts (such as ICT) as superior (Escobar, 1992), and when they subconsciously insist on transferring this dominating belief during ICT4D discourse or practice. Bourdieu allows us to expose and critique the dominating position of the “developed” and Western worldview in ICT4D discourses and practice, i.e. the worldview, symbolic capital, and dominant strategies of those outsiders who make assumptions about the value and meaningfulness of their own worldview, or who are subconsciously applying unquestioned first-order strategies to improve their own positions, capital, and self-interests. Using Bourdieu’s critical lineage, Kvasny and Keil (2006: 31, 32) argue this point as follows:

“[E]very society has some form of educational institutions that serve to reproduce and legitimize dominant culture values. This process of cultural reproduction inevitably entails a form of power, which Bourdieu (1993) refers to as symbolic power. This is power exercised through hegemony of norms and techniques for shaping the mind and body without the use of physical force or laws. The ‘have nots’ are identified and then persuaded to defer to educational institutions that will enable them to partake in the cultural practices such as online banking and electronic commerce that are privileged by more dominant agents. However, social groups have different experiences, histories, dispositions, cultural needs, desires and tastes (i.e. habitus), but these differences are not treated as equal. The dominant agents are better positioned to define their cultural arbitrary as superior to that of the working classes, and thereby to naturalize their superiority through symbolic power. Educational institutions serve as sites that provide everyone with a chance to be co-opted into the groups possessing symbolic power.”

Forces in the field may also be the assumptions people make about the meaning of development, based on the evidence they have construed from their own ethnocentrism. These forces (manifesting as struggles and strategies for gaining various forms of capital) evolve from false consciousness and afford people with more (Western) symbolic and cultural capital to be viewed (consciously or subconsciously) as holding a superior position in development discourses. In this paper, I argue that these perceptions evolve primarily from different values or “different experiences, histories, dispositions, cultural needs, desires and tastes” (habitus) that are not treated as equal (Kvasny and Keil, 2006: 32). For example, I may construct the meaning of emancipation, repression, development, and associated concepts in the light of my own ethnocentricity and that which “I” value. Consequently I consider “the others”, or “the developing” as deprived, because I see practices and realities that do not align with values which I understand from the point of view of my own entrapment. This is a repression sustaining consciousness (belief, ideology, etc.) that needs to be exposed, challenged, and critiqued.

In ICT4D discourses this type of false consciousness may ultimately lead to ICT4D failures and continued suffering and oppression. In fact, it may be argued that “development” is a

discriminatory concept (Escobar, 1992; Lewis, 1994; Heeks, 2005), constructed in the West to keep so-called developing societies in a state of dependence and repression, i.e. to maintain *practical* relationships. In such cases a false consciousness may manifest in the repression sustaining assumption that you are “developed” and that those you are “helping” or researching are in need of development, that it is inherently better to be “developed”, and that you know how to develop others. This repression-sustaining belief keeps people in a state of non-emancipation and non-enlightenment.

A summary of lessons learnt from using Bourdieu

As explained in the introductory sections, this paper offers a special case of how the theory and practice of critical research in an ICT4D project situation informed each other. The paper also presents a theoretical underpinning for doing critical research in situations where there are worldview collisions. In this section I summarise reflective lessons learnt from doing critical ICT4D fieldwork practice, i.e. reflections on practice-driven theory for emancipatory ICT4D work.

Reflexive practice – the need for the researcher to be emancipation

Bourdieu argues that an adequate understanding of practice lies in gaining access to intuitive understanding of practice, the spirit of practice, or a sense of the game, rather than relying on the official account that may be imposed onto the researcher by informants. There are real limits to what the informant can explain about his/her worldview. I argue, therefore, that through critical reflexivity and allowing myself to be carried away by the game of ICT4D social interaction is my greatest evidence of rigour and adequate understanding of the social situation.

Throughout my work I have attempted to provide empirical evidence (albeit not in this paper) that I have developed a practical sense of the game of ICT4D, of practiced critical reflexivity in the social situation, and that I have challenged my own ethnocentric approaches. In concurrence with Bourdieu, I believe that there is a difference in understanding between those outsider-inquirers that play the game of social interaction in order to be carried away by the game and those who simply play the game as a game to leave it later and tell stories about it. In my work, especially towards the end, I found myself consumed by my choice of maximum immersion in the social situation.

Using Bourdieu’s discourse on first- and second-order strategies, I can argue that researchers or agents in a community are emancipated if they expose and critique their hidden first-order strategies and subsequently bring those in line with their second-order strategies. This is an emancipatory position and the start of ethical ICT4D research and practice. I thus argue that there is a link between the need the ICT4D researcher-practitioner to be emancipated and empowered and ethical ICT research practice for community engagement in rural South Africa, and I thus offer an answer to my primary research question.

Agents and researchers are emancipated as they mature in critical reflexivity *in* the social situation, and subsequently developed the skill and discernment to ethically apply their social capital for uplifting, empowering, and truly emancipating other agents in their social situation, i.e. they are able to use their power, capital, and position to emancipate others. There is, therefore, a strong connection between critical reflexivity and the emancipation of the researched. Self-emancipated individuals are the agents in the fieldwork situation that

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

one needs to discover and become a member of, to truly do emancipatory ICT4D work.

Depth of engagement – a primary strength of my approach

I found my ethnographic position to be immersed in an ICT4D project in a deep rural Zulu community and not as much in the community itself. Although I learnt much about the Zulu people and their worldview, a three-year period was not enough for me to become a Zulu – my informants told me this also. Habitus is embedded in the minds and bodies of people and develops from childhood, and I didn't grow up in that context.

In the project I engaged with those caregivers, teachers, project owners, entrepreneurs, and so forth, who are involved in various types of development initiatives in Happy Valley. They acted as cultural interpreters and primary informants. They became my friends and partners in the project. From this position I found myself to be deeply immersed in the social phenomena. As I became part of the Happy Valley project, I observed that practiced habitus action became more intuitive and spontaneous within me as I matured in the social situation, even though I remained significantly different. In the beginning, I tend to reflect much about my own ways and mannerisms. However, as I became part of the project and the people (i.e. the social phenomena), I started to behave intuitively. I experienced what Walsham (2006) explains as being socialised with the views and values of the local people.

I started out as project leader of an UNESCO funded initiative in June 2009 (Krauss, 2013a). Later, as I attempted to withdraw from the project in order to hand it over to some of my partners, I was quickly informed that I have a specific role to play, namely, that of the representative of the University. I had to ensure quality control and liaise with the University, as their own efforts were only considered credible by the local people because of the involvement and backing of the University. The position I had, affected the social situation and what I experienced. My position in the situation determined the lessons that I could learn and that I could not learn, and the type of people I connected with. I thus represent a “special case of what is possible” (Bachelard in Bourdieu, 1998: 2).

In the end, though, I can with confidence claim embedded understanding of collisions between worldviews. I allowed myself to be carried away by the game of ICT4D collisions. I experienced the frustration, anger, conflicts, miscommunication, and all that goes with it and causes it, to its utmost. At stages I wanted to “flee the scene”, but loyalty to the people I met and people-orientatedness got the better of me (Krauss, 2012b). I got carried away by the game of ICT4D and its collisions. I got caught up in the fight and could not leave the fight because of commitments I made and because I didn't want to mistreat or abuse the trust that people placed in me – ethicality was what I discovered, what I valued and desired. In the project there were much evidence of both ICT4D success and failure. I didn't back down from trying though. Being totally immersed in the social situation and having made the second knowledge break became evidence of an adequate understanding of the social situation.

After my exit from the community in 2012, I found it difficult to write about the social phenomena of ICT4D collisions. I seemed to understand and “feel” the phenomena better when I was there, than when I moved out and tried to reflect at a distance. I was stuck with a dilemma though, because I had to move away to be able to write my thesis chapters. Luckily I had my reflections and fieldnotes to fall back to.

Reflecting on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and power struggles

Although I cannot fully describe the habitus of the Zulu people, I discovered a worldview that has a totally different system of values and meanings from my own. This affected the way in which I viewed and constructed the meaning of emancipation and the improvement of a situation, and it affected the way I did ICT4D work.

In my discovery of collisions, I can agree with Asante (1983), Escobar (1992), Lewis (1994), Kvasny and Keil (2006), and others that developed Western societies have a tendency to enforce their worldview and all that goes with it onto developing communities. Various reasons for this have been noted in literature. In Bourdieu's terminology I have observed that the ICT4D situation often becomes a playing field of forces where outsider-agents subconsciously (assume the right to) struggle and strategize to improve their positions or to further their undisclosed self-interests through Western symbolic, cultural, or economic capital. They subconsciously and often unknowingly (thus misrecognising it) attempt to influence others' sense of taste, meaning, judgement, desires, and so forth. ICT4D discourses and practice in the South African context becomes a field where outsider-westerners attempt to establish practical relationships with developing communities, in order to improve their own position, capital, and interests.

Based on my subjective experiences and the stories told to me about previous development efforts from outsiders in Happy Valley, I argue that because of the Western's productivity-driven worldview and unchallenged ethnocentric assumptions, outsiders tend to enforce onto the local community principles, values, and controls explicitly associated with productivity that are implicitly designed as first-order strategies to improve the capital of those in power. Such first-order strategies can, for example be to build capacity as a researcher, to create opportunities for market expansion, or to simply satisfy a guilty conscience and desire to show sympathy for "poor" people in a place where they can easily leave the playing field and tell stories (boast) about it. Bourdieu refers to this as symbolic violence and symbolic struggles. The official account of why outsiders pursue development endeavours often has an implied, but misinformed sense of ethical impeccability (Bourdieu, 1977) or empathy (Lewis, 1994) associated with it.

Referring to Bourdieu's critical discourses, Kvasny and Keil (2006) present a debate around the "haves" and "have nots". I extend the debate to *perceptions* about "having" and "not having" from a task-orientated worldview as opposed to a people-orientated worldview and values (Krauss, 2012b), and consequently to those perceptions and themes that are evident in Western dominated ICT4D discourses about what development and the improvement of a situation should mean. I concur that one can only interpret that which you are able to perceive (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Thomas, 1993; Krauss, 2012b), and this includes interpreting why different people value and perceive things differently.

The reality is that task-orientatedness is the dominant worldview internationally. The traditional community, however, may not have the social capital to participate in the international playing field of ICT4D discourses according to Western developmental values and concepts, and therefore may not be able to articulate (using someone else's concepts) or resist according to expected (Western) lines of reasoning. This intensifies collisions. Moreover, the Happy Valley people is characterised by a tendency to reserve opinion as a way of showing hospitality, respect, and seeking communion, while habitus has a defence against change (Bourdieu, 1977). This resistance and contrast is in conflict with Western-
Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3
Pages 126-151

outsider imposing tendencies, and results in ICT4D failures. It is not possible to simply transfer Western thinking wholesale onto developing communities, such as Happy Valley. The idea of habitus collisions thus emerges.

Collisions also manifest as a dysfunctional relationship between the Western-driven ICT4D and the local worldview. A misrecognised ethnocentric inability, even though there may be good intentions, is the reason why critical reflexivity is put forward as a guiding (and starting) principle for ICT4D research and practice in the South African context. I thus challenge those with the social capital to influence, shape, and structure, to hold back and do introspection first. I also argue, in line with Bourdieu, that the researcher has to situate himself/herself in the social situation and engage in real social activities in order to get a sense of the practiced habitus of the people. This will enable him/her to escape from ethnocentrism and adequately – and may I add ethically – describe the social situation.

Conclusions and limitations

In this paper I present a case of how the theory of CST and the practice of critical research informed each. I also explain how key ideas and concepts from Bourdieu's critical lineage were used to reflect on the practice of doing critical ethnography and ICT4D in a traditional Zulu community in a deep rural part of South Africa. The key question that I asked myself throughout the entire Happy Valley project was: *In what ways should I achieve self-emancipation, in order to ensure the on-going emancipation and empowerment of the people I engaged with.* For me this research question was indeed intimate and self-challenging. In this paper, which is a brief but important part of my ethnographic work, I showed that worldview collisions are an unavoidable part of ICT4D research and practice in South African contexts. I argue for the need to allow oneself to be carried away by the game of ICT4D practice and thus challenge and expose one's own cultural entrapment, ethnocentrism, and repression sustaining assumptions, in order to adequately understand alternate worldviews and associated practices, and ultimately to build an adequate sense of the ICT4D social situation.

A note on self-emancipation: I believe that the struggles I encountered while doing ICT4D work and the manner in which I discovered my own cultural entrapment through critical reflexivity, may be a caution to people, like me, who feel that they know how to develop others: You honestly don't know how to do things if you haven't been there and collaborated, and took the hand of a real insider. And even then you should mostly stay away from *doing* things, lest you disrupt things. The best way, probably, is to simply make friends, and inspire and support those that do the work and should do the work. Like Bourdieu, I came to believe that my entire study is based on the belief that "the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a 'special case of what is possible'." (Bachelard cited in Bourdieu, 1998: 2). Like Bourdieu I am convinced that "an approach consisting of applying a model constructed according to this logic to another social world is without doubt more respectful of historical realities (and of people) and above all more fruitful in scientific terms than the interest in superficial features of the lover of exoticism who gives priority to picturesque differences." (Bourdieu, 1998: 2). Embeddedness in the social situation became my greatest evidence of rigorous scientific practice (Bourdieu, 1977).

A difficulty with writing a paper such as this – i.e. extracting aspects from a greater and

involved ethnographic encounter – is that one should in reality provide empirical evidence to support claims of rigour and relevance. In addition, Bourdieu's concepts are dense and interrelated and should be discussed in a single paper. However, space does not allow for the entire ethnography to be represented here. Data collection alone took me the better part of three years of total immersion in an ICT4D project. This paper therefore, merely presents a brief glimpse of my empirical evidence, and I only highlight the most remarkable theoretical reflections (my key findings in this case) on manifestations of research practice.

Furthermore, in order to fully understand my work in the Happy Valley project, one needs to also reflect on my approaches to field notes and data gathering, how I did critical reflexivity *in* the situation, my grounding in the theory of CST, the nature of critical ethnographic work, critical hermeneutics, and so forth. There is also a need to reflect on some of the limitations of Bourdieu and how I had to adapt his critical discourses for the practical situation I encountered. I will attempt to address these issues in follow-up papers on the Happy Valley project.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the Department of Informatics at the University of Pretoria under whose affiliation most of this research was done, and also his project partners from the Happy Valley community and elsewhere.

References

ALI, M. and BAILUR, S., 2007. The Challenge of “sustainability” in ICT4D—is bricolage the answer. In: *Proceedings of the 9th international conference on social implications of computers in developing countries*, São Paulo, Brazil. 28-30 May 2007, International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP).

ALVESSON, M., and SKÖLDBERG, K., 2000. *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

ASANTE, M.K., 1983. The ideological significance of Afrocentricity in intercultural communication. *Journal of Black Studies*, 14(1), pp. 3-19.

AVGEROU, C., 2010. Discourses on ICT and Development, *Information Technologies & International Development*, 6(3), pp. 1-18.

AVGEROU, C., 2005. Doing critical research in information systems: some further thoughts. *Information systems journal*, 15(2), pp. 103-109.

AVGEROU, C. and WALSHAM, G., 2000. Introduction: IT in developing countries. In: AVGEROU, C. and WALSHAM, G., eds, *Information technology in context: studies from the perspective of developing countries*. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 1-8.

- BARNARD, H., 1990. Bourdieu and ethnography: reflexivity, politics and praxis. In: HARKER, R., MAHAR, C. and WILKES, C., eds. *An introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: the practice of theory*. London: Macmillan, pp. 58-85.
- BOURDIEU, P., 1998. *Practical reason: on the theory of action*. Cambridge: Polity.
- BOURDIEU, P., 1990. *The logic of practice*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- BOURDIEU, P., 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- ČEČEZ-KECMANOVIĆ, D., 2005. Basic assumptions of the critical research perspectives in information systems. In: HOWCROFT, D. and TRAUTH, E.M., eds. *Handbook of critical information systems research: theory and application*. Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, pp. 19-46.
- DE VOS, A.S., STRYDOM, H., FOUCHE, C.B. and DELPORT, C.S.L., eds. 2007. *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human services professions*. 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- DU PLOOY, N.F. and ROODE, J.D., 1993. Information technology and economic development: some ethical considerations. In: *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Development and Future Studies*, 13-15 December 1993.
- ESCOBAR, A., 1992. Reflections on 'development': grassroots approaches and alternative politics in the Third World. *Futures*, 24(5), pp. 411-436.
- HAMMERSLEY, M., 1992. *What's wrong with ethnography?: methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- HAMMERSLEY, M. and ATKINSON, P., 1983. *Ethnography: principles in practice*. London: Tavistock.
- HARVEY, L.J. and MYERS, M.D., 2002. Scholarship and practice: the contribution of ethnographic research methods to bridging the gap. In: MYERS, M.D. and AVISON, D., eds. *Qualitative research in information systems: a reader*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 169-180.
- HEEKS, R., 2005. ICTs and the MDGs: on the wrong track. In: *UK Development Studies Association conference Open University, Milton Keynes, 2005*, pp. 7-9.
- JACKSON, T., 2002. Reframing human resource management in Africa: a cross-cultural perspective. *International journal of human resource management*, 13(7), pp. 998-1018.
- KLEIN, H.K. and MYERS, M.D., 1999. A set of principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies in information systems. *MIS quarterly*, 23(1), pp. 67-88.
- KRAUSS, K. 2013a. Collisions Between the Worldviews of International ICT Policy Makers and a Deep Rural Community in South Africa: Assumptions, Interpretation, Implementa-
- Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

tion, and Reality. *Information Technology for Development*. DOI:10.1080/02681102.2013.793167

KRAUSS, K.E.M., 2013b. *Ethical ICT research practice for community engagement in rural South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria.

KRAUSS, K., 2012a. Towards self-emancipation in ICT for development research: narratives about respect, traditional leadership and building networks of friendships in rural South Africa. *The African Journal of information systems*, 4(2), pp. 46-60.

KRAUSS, K., 2012b. "You can only interpret that which you are able to perceive": demonstrating critical reflexivity in ICT4D work. In: URQUHART, C. and CHIRCU, A., eds. *Proceedings of the first Pre-ECIS special interest group for ICT in global development workshop on ICT and sustainable development*, Barcelona, Spain. June 10 2012.

KRAUSS, K. & TURPIN, M. 2013. The emancipation of the researcher as part of Information and Communication Technology for Development work in deeply rural South Africa. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 59 (2).

KRAUSS, K., TURPIN, M., ASMELASH, D., JERE, J. and GEBREGZIABHER, S., 2009. Informatics outreach initiative: final workplan and feedback on teacher training in Tugela Ferry. UNESCO.

KVASNY, L. and KEIL, M., 2006. The challenges of redressing the digital divide: a tale of two US cities. *Information systems journal*, 16(1), pp. 23-53.

LEVINA, N., 2005. Collaborating on multiparty information systems development projects: a collective reflection-in-action view. *Information systems research*, 16(2), pp. 109-130.

LEWIS, J., ed, 1994. *World Mission: an analysis of the world Christian movement*. 2nd ed. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

MAHAR, C., HARKER, E., and WILKES, C., 1990. The basic theoretical position. In: HARKER, R., MAHAR, C. and WILKES, C., eds. *An introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: the practice of theory*. London: Macmillan, pp. 1-25.

MCGRATH, K., 2005. Doing critical research in information systems: a case of theory and practice not informing each other. *Information systems journal*, 15(2), pp. 85-101.

MYERS, M.D., 2009. *Qualitative research in business & management*. London: Sage Publications.

MYERS, M., 1997. Critical ethnography in information systems. In: LEE, A.S., LIEBENAU, J. and DEGROSS, J.I., eds. *Information systems and qualitative research*. London: Chapman and Hall, pp. 276-300.

MYERS, M.D. and AVISON, D.E., 2002. An introduction to qualitative research in information systems. In: MYERS, M.D. and AVISON, D.E., eds. *Qualitative research in information systems: a reader*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 3-12.

Steyn, J., Van der Vyver, A.G. (eds.). (2013). Public and private access to ICTs in developing regions. Proceedings of the 7th International Development Informatics Association Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand. ISBN: 978-0-620-58040-3 Pages 126-151

MYERS M.D. and KLEIN H.K., 2011. A set of principles for conducting critical research in information systems. *MIS quarterly*, 35(1), pp. 17-36.

NGWENYAMA, O.K. 1991. The Critical Social Theory Approach to Information Systems: Problems and Challenges. In: H-E. Nissen, H.K. Klein, R.A. Hirschheim, eds. *Information Systems Research: Contemporary Approaches and Emergent Traditions*. NorthHolland, Amsterdam, pp. 267-280.

NGWENYAMA, O.K. and LEE, A.S., 1997. Communication richness in electronic mail: critical social theory and the contextuality of meaning. *MIS quarterly*, 21(2), pp. 145-167.

POSTONE, M., LIPUMA, E. and CALHOUN, C.J., 1993. Introduction: Bourdieu and social theory. In: CALHOUN, C.J., LIPUMA, E., and POSTONE, M., eds. *Bourdieu: critical perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1-13.

ROODE, J.D., 1993. Implications for teaching of a process-based research framework for information systems. In: SMITH, L., ed. *Proceedings of the 8th annual conference of the International Academy for Information Management*, Orlando, Florida. 3-5 December 1993, Georgia Southern University, pp. 61-78.

SCHULTZE, U., 2000. A confessional account of an ethnography about knowledge work. *MIS quarterly*, 24(1), pp. 3-41.

STAHL, B.C, TREMBLAY, M.C. & LEROUGE, C.M. 2011. Focus Groups and Critical Social IS Research: How the Choice of Method can Promote Emancipation of Respondents and Researchers. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 20, pp. 378–394.

THOMAS, J., 1993. *Doing critical ethnography*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

THOMPSON, M., 2008. ICT and development studies: towards development 2.0. *Journal of international development*, 20(6), pp. 821-835.

THOMPSON, M. and WALSHAM, G., 2010. ICT research in Africa: need for a strategic developmental focus. *Information technology for development*, 16(2), pp. 112-127.

TWINOMURINZI, H., 2010. *Facilitating policy implementation using ICT in a development context: a South African ubuntu approach*. Ph.D. University of Pretoria.

VAN MAANEN, J., 1988. *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

WALSHAM, G., 2006. Doing interpretive research. *European journal of information systems*, 15(3), pp. 320-330.

WALSHAM, G., 2005. Learning about being critical. *Information systems journal*, 15(2), pp. 111-117.

WALSHAM, G., 2002. Interpretive Case Studies in IS Research: Nature and Method. In: MYERS, M.D. and AVISON, D.E., eds. *Qualitative research in information systems: a reader*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 101-114.

WALSHAM, G. & SAHAY, S. 2006. Research on Information Systems for Developing Countries: Current Landscape and Future Prospects, *Information Technology for Development*, 12(1): pp. 7-24.

WHYTE, W.F., 1996. On the evolution of street corner society. In: LAREAU, A. and SHULTZ, J., eds. *Journeys through ethnography: realistic accounts of fieldwork*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 9-73.

WILSON, E.J., 2004. *The information revolution and developing countries*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

ZHENG, Y., 2009. Different spaces for e-development: What can we learn from the capability approach? *Information technology for development*, 15(2), pp. 66-82.