

## Habitus and Communication Theory

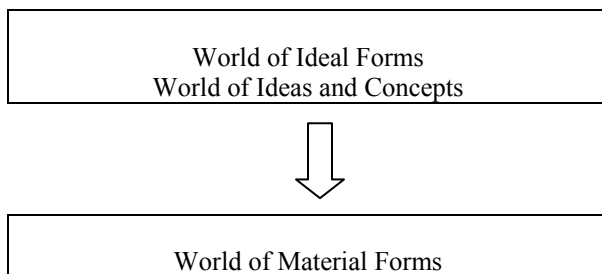
Robert N. St. Clair                      Walter E. Rodríguez  
 Carma Nelson  
 University of Louisville

### Introduction

There is a long tradition of explication and explanation among social scientists between *theoria* and *praxis*. For most communication scholars (Stevenson, 2002), this tradition began with Karl Marx (1845, 1971) and was revised by Althusser (1977). Habermas (1981, 1983), and Fiske (1987, 1989) and challenged by Baudrillard (1970, 1989). Recently, these concepts have been revised once more by Pierre Bourdieu (1963, 1977, 1979 and Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The purpose of this essay is to introduce the concepts of Habitus and field and to draw attention to its implications for communication theory. This journey begins with Plato (Cornford, 1957a, 1957b) and his concept of the eternal world of ideal forms. It continues with the Aristotelian concept of the four causes that was embraced by Hegel and revised by Marx. This investigation ends with the writings of Pierre Bourdieu and his concept of social hegemony as evidenced in the Field and his concept of the embodiment of experience as social Habitus as the foundations for social thought.

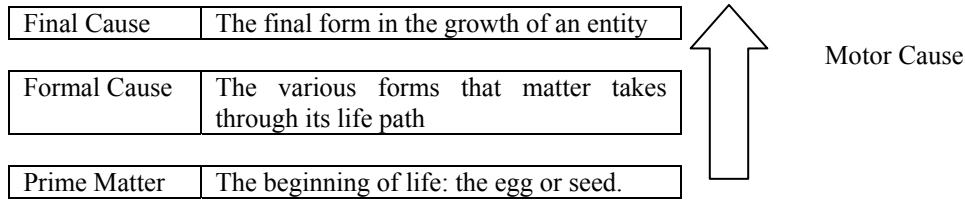
### Plato and the Worlds of Ideal and Material Forms

The concepts of *theoria* and *praxis* can be found in the controversy between Plato and Aristotle. Plato argued that all knowledge exists in a world of eternal ideal forms and that the material world is an imperfect copy of this world of ideal forms. What is important for this discussion of *theoria* and *praxis* is the relationship between these two worlds. Plato argued that things in the material world are merely copies of original forms that exist in the world of ideal forms. The relationship, according to Plato (Cornford, 1957a), was from the abstract to the concrete, from Theoria to Praxis.

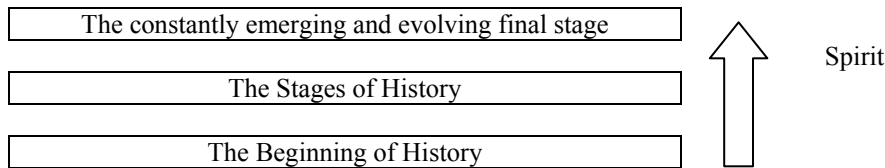


Aristotle, on the other hand, envisioned a different concept of knowledge. He began argued that ideal forms emerge from the material world. He referred to this as his four causes or stages of development forms (Cornford, 1957a, 1957b). The problem facing both of these Greek philosophers was the concept of uncertainty (Greek: *chaos*), an unstructured world

based on chance. They wanted to provide order (Greek: *nomos*) to this world of uncertainty. For Plato, it existed as an eternal world of abstract forms. For Aristotle, it began here on earth as material forms that grew and developed into different forms resulting in a final state (Greek: *telos*).



The motor cause is the driving energy that takes prime matter in the form of an ovum or a seed and transforms into its various stages of growth up to its final stage of *telos* or the final cause. This concept of a motor cause has taken on various names in European philosophy but the most influential treatment of this Aristotelian concept can be found in the writings of Hegel (1807, 1977) who referred to it as Spirit (German: Geist). What is interesting about Hegel’s concept is that it is a blend of two different metaphors. It combines the dual worlds of Plato with the Aristotelian concept of growth (Greek: *φύσις*, becoming).



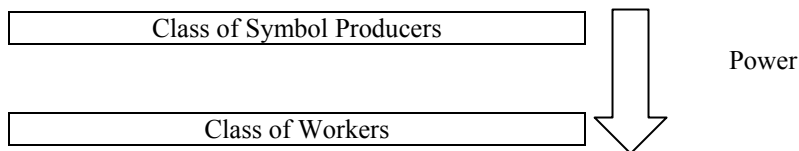
In the Hegelian system of Universal History, the final stage is constantly evolving. It is not the static final stage (*telos*) of Aristotle. Habermas (1981, 1983), a neo-Hegelian, embodied this concept in his theory of Communicative Action.

**Marx and How Praxis Influences Theoria**

Marx came to disagree with Hegel’s concept of Spirit. For him, the driving force behind the human condition that is evidenced in history of mankind was not the Sprit, but Praxis, the patterns of everyday life. People, he argued, are situated in this practice of everyday life. Praxis influences their consciousness of the material world. It determines how they view the world. According to Hegel, the spirit of history was a universal force. Individuals do not make history but are chosen to carry out the forces of history. Hence, Hegel tried to address a conflict between individual and community. He wanted to show how ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of the community (*Gemeinde*) was to be reconciled with private property which sets individuals and classes against each other in a civil society. His solution was simple. People are subject to the universal laws of history. Material labor is not a free self-creating activity of humanity. The life-activity of human beings are enslaved by market forces.

For Adam Smith (1776, 1985), it was an invisible hand of commerce that guided civil society as a universal force. The source of this force was based on the conflicts that

emerged between self-interested private citizens. As for Marx in his earlier pro-Hegelian writings, the conflict was between the individual and the Universal Will of history. Eventually, however, he found himself in conflict with other interpreters of economic history. He did not want to agree with Hegel nor Smith. He wanted to demonstrate how an individual's consciousness emerges from his daily interaction with others. The others, for him, were the other social class that dominated and controlled labor. The workers, he argued, are engaged in a struggle of universal social and human importance. Hence, one finds in the later Marx that his focus was on breaking out of the constraints of a class consciousness imposed on the working class by capitalists. For this reason, Marx revised the Hegelian concept of Spirit into two opposing forces of social classes: the producers and the workers. He wanted to create a society that countered the inhuman way living that he saw around him. He wanted to reconcile the inhumane struggle between these opposing classes (Marx and Engel, 1845, 1976).



### **Field and the Conflict of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge**

Pierre Bourdieu (1993, 1984, 1977) saw this conflict not in terms of social classes per se, but in terms of struggles within every discipline in which those at the top of the hierarchy are invested with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) and those at the bottom are controlled by a dominant ideology and a system of values that are imposed on those who do not possess cultural capital because these values will eventually control practice of everyday life. He attacked the educational system of France (Bourdieu, 1988). He even attacked his own discipline and argued that sociologists are agents skilled at objectivizing others. They impose their self-interested vision of the social world on others and give it the appearance of a scientific sociology. In order to break out of this historical bind, sociologists must make their discipline a reflexive one (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). What is a reflexive sociology? For Bourdieu, reflexivity does not mean that one reflects on one's theories, but on one's practices. It means that those who create theory have an abstract logic that is different from the practical logic of those who live in the social world. Reflexivity is a social inquiry that allows sociologist to uncover the hegemony within their own disciplines. It allows them to see that individuals are socially situated in a or discipline that is dominated by cultural capital and that individuals exist in a social trajectory within this . What he is saying, in essence, is that those who have cultural capital are the producers of their own destiny and that the other participants in that discipline are comparable to their followers. This is tantamount to a restatement of Marx's concept of a two tier class structure: producers and workers. What is new in this restatement of Marx? It takes the class struggle out of its larger contexts across all classes and demonstrates that the same kind of dominant ideological control over individuals occurs within every Field. But this is not the only difference. One needs to consider the role of Habitus in Bourdieu's concept of Field.

Before discussing the concept of Habitus, it is important to understand that this distinction between producers and workers can be found in Bourdieu's (Baron, et alia. 2000; Swartz, 2000) discussion of communication in a mass media society. He asks why people

spend their time and energy in making cultural products (Bourdieu, 1992, 1993). What meanings are attached to these kinds of practices? What are these games of culture (Bourdieu, 1984)? These are all social products that belong to a single class, the producers of the consumer society. They have produced the symbol of economic taste as social capital. It serves their economic interests. The dominance of the business culture in America is evidenced by several cultural shifts within the United States (St. Clair, 1997). The elite culture of the United States at the turn of the last century was orchestrated by the power elite of corporate America. They created the culture of conspicuous consumption. Later, around 1915, the business community faced a crisis in distribution. They had warehouses full of products that needed to be sold. The only consumers at that time were the power elite, the people with money. There was a movement to create a consumer culture in America so as to expand the market base of these products that were not being sold. This business campaign was successful and it resulted in a consumer culture (Ewen, 1977, 1988; Ewen and Ewen, 1988). After the Second World War, there was another economic crisis. In order to create more jobs and increase production, the corporations helped to orchestrate the concept of suburbia. They worked with the oil companies and automobile makers to build highways and cities on the outskirts of various metropolises within the United States. Within a short period of time, the increase of production grew significantly with the building of new homes, new products for the home, etc. The next cultural and social project of the producers of American culture can be found in the inner city where the highest purchasing power can be found for items such as liquor, music, and certain styles of clothing. Advertisers worked once again to create a new cultural shift that benefited their own economic needs. The cultural ideology of the United States is that of corporate business. They are the creator and the controllers of cultural capital that constitutes the culture of contemporary America. The culture of America is a mass culture, a popular culture that was constructed to serve the economic interests of the few, for the few and by the few. In other words, the Field of popular culture has its producers and consumers. Currently, the business focus is on the marketing of America (St. Clair, 1997). Outside of the United States, the most recent project involves the exportation of the business model as the exemplar of the model of world capitalism. This project, however, has met with some national and cultural opposition (Hampden-Turner, Charles, & Trompenaars, Alfons. 1992). Art, Bourdieu say, has been trivialized for the commercial needs of a few. His concept of art and commerce is similar to that of Panofsky (1955). Arts are no longer agents in the distribution of their creative achievements. Their talents are dominated by the agents of cultural production. Their social trajectories have been defined by the dominant ideologies of others.

### **Social Habitus**

What people do constitutes their practical knowledge. Scientists do not only talk theory, they practice it. Is the theory that they discuss the same as the one that they are practicing? Bourdieu has his doubts about this. He wants to study practical knowledge. He calls this venture *A Theory of Practice*. (Bourdieu, 1977). How does he accomplish this? Bourdieu uses the participant observer model and argues that he is studying practical knowledge as an anthropologist.

<p><b>Observer</b>          “The theorist is condemned to see all practice as a spectacle”</p>
<p><b>Participant</b>          Praxis is what one does. It belongs to a world of action. It has its own practical logic</p>

The distinction between observers and participants comes right out of social anthropology. Sociologists, according to Bourdieu, are spectators. They observe participants and then develop a theory of what these participants are trying to do. Their descriptions are referred to as the “sociology of everyday life.” Occasionally, sociologists enter the world of practical knowledge and play the role of the participant. They believe that this experience empowers them even more to define the world of the participants. They claim to have practical knowledge of this world of action. However, they operate from a theoretical logic that is not concomitant with the practical logic of the participants. Their “theoretical gaze” is still that of an observer. Their gaze is based on a different set of interests (*Illusio*) and is not those of the world of practical knowledge. Culture is a map that allows a person to understand the territory in which he exists. The problem with observers is that they have a map of the world of participation, but it is a different cultural map from those who reside there. The map of the participants structures the practical space of the world of action. It is based on a practical logic. Maps are re-presentations. They re-present something that is actually present. The map of the observer does not represent the practical knowledge or the practical activities of the world of action because that world takes things from the experience of the participants and represents things from a perspective that is different from that of the observer.

The participant-observer paradox has to do with a person’s point of view. One is either a participant or an observer. The paradox emerges when one realizes that it is only as an observer that one comes to know that he is a participant and what that entails. To explain this problem of the use of theory, Bourdieu (1977) remarks on the problem that he sees in structuralism. In particular, he addresses the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure (1971) and the concepts of language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*). *Langue* (language) involves theory and it differs from speech which involves practical knowledge and action, knowledge as performance. This dichotomy is similar to the difference of ideal and concrete forms in Plato.

<p>Word of Ideal Forms          Eternal, Abstract Forms          (Bourdieu’s Theoria)</p>
---

<p>World on Material Forms          Ephemeral, Concrete forms          (Bourdieu’s Praxis)</p>
--

What is the relationship between ideal forms and the material counterparts? For Plato, one began with the abstract forms and made concrete copies of them. These concrete forms were subject to decay. For Aristotle, one began with a concrete form and developed it into a final

form, an ideal form. Aristotle used the metaphor of growth (*physis*) in which a seed is a concrete form; it develops through various stages and finally ends in a final form (the ideal potential form inherent in the concrete seed). How does this relate to the concept of practice and theory? Science, according to Bourdieu, is a form of knowledge based on theory that is disconnected from practice. What Bourdieu (1977) wants to do is to create a theory based on practice. He wants to continue to recognize the first cause in the form of sensorimotor intelligence. Bourdieu, it should be noted, was heavily influenced by the writings of Jean Piaget and his concept of genetic structuralism and those of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his philosophy of the embodied mind (Rodríguez, St. Clair and Joshua, 2005). He wants to account for a grammar of practice. His books are an outline of that theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984).

Language and parole is about this distinction. Speech is concrete. Language is abstract. Speech is a precondition for language. Language is abstracted from the concrete situations of speech. Language cannot be understood outside of speech because one learns about language through speech. Hence, speech is a precondition for language. However, there is a problem with this dichotomy language and speech because although speech has to do with practical knowledge, understanding of that knowledge only comes about through language. *It is theory that gives meaning to practice*. Under these conditions, speech is a product of language. There is a unique relationship here between theory and practice. What Saussure did was to separate language from speech and treat it as an abstract system divorced from speech<sup>1</sup>. This, Bourdieu claims, is wrong. One must never forget that there is a relationship between theory and practice. Theory cannot exist as an entity that is separate from practice. He separated it from the physical part of communication. He calls this abstract language the executive side of language, but the execution of language always occurs in the form of speech. The same problem occurs in other models of thought. Models of culture as a structural system or society as a cultural system, Bourdieu argues, must not be separated from their social and cultural practices.

Saussure's Dichotomy	Functions	Bourdieu's explanation
Langue (language)	Language as a system or a theoretical account	Those who study language are aware of its systemic properties and develop theories that account for speech. Language is abstract.
Parole (speech)	Language as practice and performance	People involved in speech are not aware of the structures that they are using. Speech is concrete

Speech provides the basis for the study of language. However, those who use speech are unaware of its structure. They are unaware of the products created by this practice. It is only when they study language that they begin to see the structure of speech. The problem, according

---

<sup>1</sup> This, Bourdieu (1977, Chapter One) notes is the problem with Chomsky's concept of linguistic universals. It is a theoretical model that has been separated from linguistic practice. Universals exist because they are based on particulars. Universals do not exist *per se*.

to Bourdieu, is that Saussure abandoned *parole* and treated *langue* as a theoretical construct. He divorced *langue* from *parole* and went on to build a whole theory of *langue* that he called *semiologie* (semiotics).

Since theory emerges from Habitus (practical knowledge), it must not continue to develop its theory as an entity separate from practice. Phenomenology attempts to address the primary experiences of the world and make them explicit as evidenced by ethnomethodology. But symbolic interactionism, Bourdieu (1977) claims, has gone beyond social practice and has dwelled only in the theoretical realm of symbolic forms. What is important about reflexive sociology is that it is an attempt to relate social experiences to theoretical constructs. Experiences are situated in time and place. Experiences are contextualized. Science, on the other hand, is de-temporalized. It has ignored time. The link between macro-sociology and micro-sociology, he argues, is each has its own language on how acts are performed and each has its own forms of knowledge. This does not mean, however, that they are separated because theoretical knowledge is based on practical knowledge.

Micro-Sociology	Macro-Sociology
Practical Knowledge	Abstract Knowledge
Practical Logic	Abstract Logic
The world of practice and human experience	The world of theory and constructed reality
Habitus and Praxis	Theory

What does this mean for communication theory? It means that theory needs to be connected to the Habitus of the speaker and the context of the situation (St. Clair, 2005). Empirical studies need to be further contextualized because contexts play a major role in the interpretation of theoretical knowledge. Hermeneutics is based on practical knowledge and not theoretical knowledge.

**Making Science Reflexive**

Metacognition is defined as thinking about thinking. The problem with this kind of reflexivity is that it is based on theory. Bourdieu (1977) argues in favor of the metacognition of practice. If rules preserve practices, then customs provide the rational for legal societies. In a sense, customs constitute pre-law. But theories of jurisprudence deal with abstract laws. The question that Bourdieu wants to ask is: Can these laws account for customs? Customs, after all, deal with particular cases. Laws deal with generalizations. Bourdieu argues that laws can only account for particular cases when they are written vaguely so that they are open to interpretation. Where does interpretation come from? Are the observers providing the interpretation of the laws (hermeneutics of jurisprudence) or are the participants providing the interpretation of the laws. Bourdieu argues for the latter. Interpretations emerge from a theory of practice. They are similar to precepts of custom, sayings, and proverbs. They have nothing in common with the transcendental laws of juridical code. He goes on to ask about the use of rules in legal theory. What is this legalism all about? It is fallacious to think that they are based on scientific knowledge, even in a homogeneous community. Rules exist because they reflect practices that have been institutionalized. They express a group memory. They reflect a social habitus. They are based on a philosophy of practice. What is important from a phenomenological point of view is that native experiences of the social world differ from the

system of objective relationships found among scientific models. Agents possess their own habitus. Their discourse is one based on familiarity, custom, tradition, and practice. There is a great difference between the learned reconstruction of the native world and the native experiences of that world. The theoretical accounts of the former give the impression of symbolic mastery of the practices found in the latter. They are based on different practices. One is based on habitus; the other is based on rules. Bourdieu sees many limitations involved in the objectivist approach to practices. He wants to develop a grammar of practice based on the sociology of everyday life.

**A Theory of Practice**

Bourdieu (1992) wants to develop a theory based on practice and not a theory that is divorced from practice. He wants this model to reflect the French tradition of the “explication de texte” (*opus operatum*). Human beings are creatures of habit. They perform routines and live episodic lives. This has been clearly stated by Mehan and Wood (1975), two ethnomethodologists who were students of Garfinkel. Bourdieu agrees with them, but with some exceptions. They believed that this interaction takes place through interaction, from one mind to the other. Bourdieu argues that the interaction is not only between minds but also between individuals who share the same social practices, a mindset of dispositions that guide and direct their social interactions. He chose the word “habitus” rather than “habit” because habitus means much more as a technical term. People are involved in doing things (*opus operatum*) and only when one takes a different mode of thinking (*modus operandi*) that one begins to understand the nature of praxis.

Theoria	<i>Modus operandum</i> (the theoretical mode of thinking about practice). This mode produces structures that are abstract.
Praxis	<i>Opus operatum</i> (the creation of products, and acts of behavior). This practice produces structures that are concrete.

Practices are produced by Habitus and these routines go on to reproduce themselves. They create evolving patterns of behavior that reproduce themselves. They generate variations of a theme. These products are determined by past conditions. What Bourdieu (1984) is trying to address in his theory of practice is the problem of agency. He wants his fellow social scientists to realize that agency does not have to be limited to human beings but they can emerge from human practices. When the latter occurs, this form of agency is teleological but has no definable goals. The original goals have been lost in the traditions of the past. The agency is purposeful but has no overt purpose. The original purposes have been obscured by time and place. They are functional but have no one determined function. The original functions have been severely attenuated.

Habitus produces practices. These practices cannot be ascertained from the objective conditions. They cannot be discovered by looking at the context of the situation, but they tacitly exist as social practices. Habitus has social and cultural agency, but that agency does not exist in any one individual. It exists in tradition, practice, and other forms of tacit

knowledge. Hence, Habitus is a product of history, an *opus operatum*<sup>2</sup>. It is a system of dispositions, a past that survives into the present and perpetuates itself into the future. Children learn not solely by means of theoretical models but also by imitation. Concrete operational thought means that one learns by example. It is earlier in life that formal operational thought emerges in which one learns by models and other cognitive concepts<sup>3</sup>.

### **Habitus: an Example from the Sociology of Sport**

There are certain metaphors that provide useful in sociology. Erving Goffman (1959) used the metaphor of the stage. He saw individuals as persons who were playwrights who wrote their own social scripts, who were actors because they performed them, and as critics who judged their own performances. Lewis Coser (1956) used the metaphor of conflict to explain how people interact. They are in contention with others and prepare themselves for battle with others. Pierre Bourdieu has his own favorite metaphor that he uses as a sociological instrument of investigation. It is the game. As a former rugby player, he draws on this metaphor to explain how a serious athlete engages in a struggle with others. He explains how the game evokes an experience of passionate participation in the athlete. What Bourdieu saw in the game, he also sees in social life. When he speaks of playing the game of life, he speaks of putting oneself on the line. Social life is like a game, but the stakes are higher. It requires constant improvising. No game is understood by simply grasping the rules that define it. It involves having “a sense of the game.” It means that one knows how it is played and to be constantly aware of the field as a whole and to anticipate the actions of one’s team mates. Games are strategic. What this means is that there are many ways of winning a game. There are many different approaches, but winning a game involves knowing when to use a good strategy. Originality and inspiration is only a part of what accounts for a winning strategy.

How does one come to know a game? How does one come to have “a sense of the game?” This is partly a result of years of experience. It means that the human body has internalized these actions. A player has a sense of his body, its strengths and weaknesses. He knows when he is in the “zone” and when he is not. His coach may provide him with a theoretical model of what he does, but theory is used only to analyze his performance and what he does cannot be reduced to theoretical rules. What a player has internalized is a good “sense of the game.” Bourdieu calls this internalized awareness “Habitus<sup>4</sup>.” One is not born with Habitus; it is acquired through repetition, like a habit. It is largely earned. Whereas habits can be essentially individual experiences, Habitus is developed within a social context.

The Individual does not invent the games that he must play in his social life. They are products of social history or social struggles. In studying the meaning of social life, Bourdieu asks what game is played and what is at stake. He wants to know what counts as losing and winning in a game. There are many games in life and most of them are associated

---

<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu is really talking about product and process, but what he means by product is a finished project that is open to an “explication de texte.” One brings practical knowledge and practical logic into the interpretation of these objective forms or *opus operatum*.

<sup>3</sup> Piaget (1952) argued that there are four stages in human development: (1) sensorimotor intelligence, (2) verbal thought or language, (3) concrete operational thought, and (4) formal operational thought. Bourdieu is arguing that the role of concrete operational thought plays a major role in socialization of human beings.

<sup>4</sup> It is a term that was first used by Pascal in his *Meditations*. Pascal used it to describe practical knowledge (Bourdieu, 2000).

with various cultural fields. For example, he argues that science is a game. Scientists work within a field in which they advance their theories, attempt to advance by competing with others, and pursue rewards. Science is organized into activities that provide researchers internal rewards. Bourdieu attacks the concept that scientists are disinterested in personal gain and they are interested in scientific knowledge for its own sake. Although they may not be interested in financial gain, they are motivated by different interests. Scientists, according to Bourdieu, are interested in claiming autonomy for their field. They are interested in creating boundaries around their field. For a field to remain organized as an entity, it must be separated from other disciplines. The actors within these fields help define the boundaries of that field. They participate in the rewards to them by those who participate in that field. They are rewarded for playing the game of science. They do not want to be under the control of outsiders. They reward only those scientists who have a “sense of the game.”

### **Overcoming Dichotomies**

There are certain dichotomies that continue to surface within Western thought. There are divisions such as mind versus body, objective versus subjective, theory versus practice, etc. Bourdieu is critical of these dualities. He wants to transcend them. He wants to move sociology beyond the antinomy of social physics in which social life is seen as being completely external and objective and social phenomenology in which life is seen only through subjective experience. This quest is not new. It is the same claim made by those who reject the grand theories of macrosociology and favor personalized accounts of social behavior characteristically associated with microsociology<sup>5</sup>. Social scientists, he argues, should try not to represent culture simply as rules that people follow, but as the practical dispositions. This concept was discussed in the Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977: Chapter Two) where it was argued that there are social models of culture and that they need to be balanced by the practical knowledge of activity theory.

### **Cultural Fields and Cultural Capital**

There are many cultural fields in society. Science, for example, is a culture; literature is another. Each field has its own games. It has its own rules and has its own challenges. Hence, different fields involve different games. They have different interests about what is at stake. Being successful in a field is important because it provides an individual with cultural capital. One is rewarded for success in many ways. Medical doctors, for example, will find it easier to get their children into medical school than those who are not children of parents in that profession. If one wants to enter a military academy, then it is important to be someone who is the child of a military officer. Hence, prestige and status are important forms of cultural capital. Only those who have cultural capital can play the games in their cultural field. The accumulation of wealth alone will not enable a person to play the game unless that capital was the result of playing the game successfully within a cultural field.

### **The Complexity of Reflexivity**

---

<sup>5</sup> What is missing from social theory, according to Bourdieu, is that social practices are abstracted into the sociology of everyday life (microsociology) and these are further developed into theories of human practices (macrosociology). Macrosociology must be grounded in microsociology and microsociology must be grounded in the social Habitus of the group under investigation.

Being reflexive means much more than being critical of a field. It means that one must know how the field is organized and how it is practiced. Bourdieu was concerned with the unconscious cultural structures that shaped intellectual orientations. He wrote about the French intellectual traditions and argued that their task was to separate themselves from the working class and to prevent those of the lower classes from succeeding within the academic system. His is an interesting attack against the French school system because Bourdieu distinguished himself as an academic. He was born in a poor region of Southern France and continually excelled in his schooling. He studied in the most elite of the Parisian *grandes écoles*, the *Écoles Normale Supérieure* (ENS). His colleagues at the ENS were Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. One would expect Bourdieu to openly support this system and play its game as he earned much cultural capital in the very system that he challenged. Nevertheless, Bourdieu considered himself to be an outsider. He explained that his Habitus was that of a child whose father was a postmaster. Consequently, he felt that he was an outsider. Richard Sennett (1974) presents a similar situation of Habitus in his study of an Irish American in Chicago who moved up in social status. He went to school and received a degree. This led him receiving a position at a local bank. While at work, he was required to speak Standard English, wear a business suit and participate in the other games that are associated with this social class. Before he received this position at the bank, he used to go out drinking with his friends, worn the clothes of his neighborhood and belonged to the group because he shared its Habitus. After he accepted the position at the bank, his friends no longer accepted him. He acted differently. He did not belong. At the bank, he was accepted as a colleague and was treated as a member of their social class. The problem was that although he was accepted, he did not feel that he belonged. Hence, he was alienated. He did not feel that he belonged to his new social class and he was not accepted by his previous social class. He felt that he was an outsider. In Bourdieu's terminology, the individual left his social Habitus to enter into a new social class that possesses a different social Habitus. He is accepted by the new group but his very being feels alien within this new context. His body wants to feel the Habitus of the old group. The problem is that this person cannot return to the past. He has changed and his group has changed. He is an observer lodged between two social worlds and he does not feel that he can comfortably participate in either of them. He cannot divorce himself from his Habitus and he feels that he does not belong to the new one.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of practical knowledge and its relationship to theoretical knowledge is a recurring theme amongst European phenomenologists. This contrasts with the philosophical traditions of positivism in which language becomes the bearer and the marker of knowledge. Austin (1962), for example, epitomizes this trend of embodying linguistic forms with excessive knowledge. There are more avenues to cognition than language. The embodied mind contains numerous physiological systems and subsystems. Some cultures are rhetoric oriented and are usually oblivious to resonance cultures, visual cultures, and other distributed forms of social and cultural knowledge. Each of these favor and legitimize different physiological systems to express structural patterns that may invoke, evoke, convoke or represent complex biological processes that constitute these structural epistemologies. Once such structures are expressed, they may be readily interpreted through the process of structural hermeneutics. What Bourdieu brings to the European philosophy is the argument

that not only agency, but also knowledge exists in a society and its citizenry are embodied with these forms of social knowledge.

What needs further development in his theory is the concept of structure. He does discuss how concepts are embodied and structured on his discussion of the tribes that he encountered in Morocco. What he does here is essentially to take the concepts of assimilation and accommodation from Piaget and rework it into his theory of Habitus. What is need is more work on the objectification of these structures. Mehan and Wood (1975) provide some interesting examples, but they are not tied to Habitus. Most anthropologists can also provide informative examples, but they are not tied to Habitus. If discourse operates on a background of practical knowledge, then what are those structures? A promising example of such a model can be found in the concept of social script theory (St. Clair, Williams, and Su, 2005).

The Restaurant Schema under Social Script Theory	
Event Frame	Dinning at a restaurant
Social Roles	Waiter, customer, cashier, busboy, manager, cook
Episodic Functions	Enter a restaurant Approach the host Have someone direct the customer to a table Have someone bring a menu to the customer The customer peruses the menu Have the waiter approach the customer and ask for an order The customer puts in his order The water leave and eventually returns with the food The waiter signals the end of the main meal by asking about deserts. The waiter customer signals the end of the meal by asking for the bill The waiter brings the bill or the check The customer either pays the waiter or pays the cashier The customer pays the cashier The customer may leave a tip The customer leaves the restaurant
Lexicon	Waiter, customer, table, main meal, deserts, tip, cashier, restaurant, the bill, the check, the menu, etc.
Script <sup>6</sup>	Enter a restaurant, approach the cashier, get assigned to a waiter, go to your assigned table, accept the menus, read them, make an order, wait for the meal, eat your meal, discuss the topic of conversation during the meal, wait for the waiter to ask if you want to have a dessert, order the dessert (Optional), receive the bill, leave a tip, pay the cashier, leave the establishment.

---

<sup>6</sup> The significance of social frames and how they constitute episodic interactions is a major area of investigation by St. Clair (2005). It is argued that humans interact in terms of social recipes, scenarios, and frames and this insight is the basis upon which they are developing a cognitive model of social theory.

What this social script outlines is the fact that human behavior is structured and that routines can be further articulated into subsections. The tacit knowledge of the restaurant scene provides the Habitus for the social script of dining out. Events occur within an ordered sequence. The players in this scene have roles to follow and those that work in the restaurant also have their roles. What is important about social scripts is that everyone in the restaurant knows the script of the customer. They all perform it tacitly or even consciously, but they know that a script occurs. Followers of Bourdieu need to further articulate the social structures that constitute the social Habitus of a group. Furthermore, such social scripts can be modified and form the basis for other social scripts.

<b>The Cafeteria Schema</b> under Social Script Theory	
Event Frame	Dinning at a Cafeteria, a self-serve establishment
Social Roles	No Waiters, customer, cashier, busboy, manager, cook and many servers
Episodic Functions	<p>Enter a Cafeteria</p> <p>There is no host. One encounters a hallway or a series of roped areas that guide the customer towards the serving area</p> <p>The customer goes along a row of food selections and chooses what he wants to eat. He either pays for his food when he exists this area or when he is ready to leave the premises.</p> <p>No one directs the customer to his table. He carries his own tray and finds himself a table</p> <p>There are no menus. One sees what is available before him.</p> <p>There is no waiter. One acts as his or her own waiter.</p> <p>Contrary to a restaurant, one does puts in his order for food by pointing to selections along the food line.</p> <p>The customer is his own waiter.</p> <p>The main meal and the desserts are not separated from the mail meal. One purchases them together and puts them on his own tray. .</p> <p>At the end of the mail, there is no waiter to remind one to pay his bill. The customer simply walks up to the cashier with his cash register receipt and pay the stipulated amount plus taxes.</p> <p>The customer pays the cashier</p> <p>The customer is not expected to leave a tip</p> <p>The customer leaves the restaurant</p>
Lexicon	Waiter, customer, table, main meal, servers, desserts, tip, cashier, restaurant, the cash-register receipt, the check, the menu, etc.
Script	Enter a cafeteria, approach the hallway, move towards the food line, pick up a tray, ask for servings from a wide range of meals (salads, desserts, main meal, etc.). There are no waiters. One serves himself. There are no menus. The menu is a visual array along the food line. . The customer leaves when he is ready. In some cafeterias, one must bus his own tray. In others, one may leave the remaining food on the table and quietly leave the establishment.

What does this concept of a social script contribute to discourse theory? It argues, in essence, that discourse is not only structured, but it is also contextualized. This is the same point that Bourdieu was attempting to convey with his concept of Habitus. What does this mean for communication theory? It means, essentially, that communication takes place within a wide range of contexts and these contexts need to be investigated and their structures articulated and incorporated into communication theory. The study of social Habitus should play a greater role in the communication sciences.

## References

- Althusser, L. (1977) *Marxism and Humanism*. Edited by Ben Brewster. In Louis Althusser, *For Marx*. London: Verso Classic.
- Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to do Things with Words*. J. O. Urmison and Marina Sbisa (Editors). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Baron, Stephen, Field, John and Tom Schuller (Editors). (2000) *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1989) *The Ectasy of Communication*. In Hal Foster (Editor), *Postmodern Culture*. London: Pluto Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1970) *The Mirror of Production*. Translated with an introduction by Mark Poster. St. Louis: Telos
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production*. NY: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1988) *Homo Academicus*. Stanford, CA : Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984) *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1992) *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Cornford, Francis M. (1957a) *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*. Indianapolis, Indiana: The Library of Liberal Arts, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.
- Cornford, Francis M. (1957b) *Plato's Cosmology*. Indianapolis, Indiana: The Library of Liberal Arts, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.
- Coser, Lewis. (1956) *The Functions of Social Conflict*. NY: The Free Press.
- Ewen, Stuart. (1977) *Captains of consciousness: Advertising and the social roots of the consumer culture*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ewen, Stuart. (1988) *All consuming images: The politics of style in contemporary culture*. New York: Basic Books/Harper Collins.
- Ewen, Stuart, & Ewen, Elizabeth. (1988). *Channels of desire: Mass images and the shaping of American consciousness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fiske, J. (1987) *Television Culture*. London: Methuen.
- Fiske, J. (1989) *Understanding Popular Culture*. London: Unwin Hyman
- Goffman, Erving. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. NY: Anchor, Doubleday and Company.
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1981) *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume I: Reason and Rationalism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Habermas, Jürgen. (1983) *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume II: The Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hampden-Turner, Charles, & Trompenaars, Alfons. (1992). *The seven cultures of capitalism: Value systems for creating wealth in the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands*. London: Currency/Doubleday.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1807, 1977) *The Phenomenology of Spirit. (Phenomenologie der Geist)* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, Karl. (1857, 1971) *Die Grundrisse*. Edited by David McLelland. NY: Harper and Row.
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. (1845, 1976) *The German Ideology: Part One*. C. J. Arthur (Editor). NY: International Publishers
- Mehan, Hugh and Houston Wood. (1975) *The Reality of Ethno-methodology*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Panofsky, Erwin. (1955) *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Piaget, Jean. (1952) *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Rodríguez, Walter E.; St. Clair, Robert N. and Irving G. Joshua. (2005) Esquemas fisiológicos, creación cognitiva, y el teatro de la mente encarnada. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación* 21, febrero 2005
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. (1971) *Cours de linguistique générale*. Paris: Payot,
- Sennett, Richard. (1974) *The Injury of Class*. NY; Ballantine.
- Smith, Adam. (1776, 1985) *An Inquiry into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Book IV*. D. D. Raphael (editor). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stevenson, Nick. (2002) *Understanding Media Cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Inc.
- St. Clair, Robert N. (1997) The Invisible Door between Cultures. In John Reyhner (Editor), Chapter 23, *Teaching Indigenous Languages*, (pp. 287-291). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.
- St. Clair, Robert N. (2005) *Language and the Sociology of Knowledge*. Lewiston: Mellen Press.
- St. Clair, Robert N., Williams, Ana C. Thomé; and Lichang Su. (2005) The Role of Social Script in Conceptual Blending. In Manuel F. Medina and Lisa Wagner (editors), *Special Issue of Intercultural Communication Studies, XIV (3)*.
- Swartz, David. (2000) *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.