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THE CONCEPT OF HABITUS IN THE RESEARCH OF DIGITAL DIVIDES AND INEQUALITIES

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Abstract

In the paper, we discuss the relevance of the concept of habitus, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in the research of social inequalities and divides in digital practices. We approach digitalisation as a field of practice and social inequality, in which social processes are deeply imbued with the mediation of technologies. We particularly emphasise dimensions and levels of digital inequalities and divides, including the first-level digital divide that points to Internet access, the second-level digital divide that aims to differentiate the binary inequalities of Internet access from inequalities in skills and uses, and the third-level digital divide that poses the question of inequalities in the outcomes of Internet use. We present relevant empirical studies, with the aim of testing our main hypothesis regarding the relevance of the concept of habitus as an adequate research tool in the field. We confirm the hypothesis, demonstrating that this concept has both theoretical and methodological significance in the research of digital divides and inequalities.

Key words: digitalisation, digital divide, social inequalities, habitus, Pierre Bourdieu.

КОНЦЕПТ ХАБИТУСА У ИСТРАЖИВАЊУ ДИГИТАЛНИХ ПОДЕЛА И НЕЈЕДНАКОСТИ

Апстракт

У овом чланку се бавимо питањем релевантности концепта хабитуса, који је развио француски социолог Пјер Бурдије, у истраживањима друштвених неједнакости и подела у дигиталним праксама. Дигитализацију одређујемо као поље праксе и друштвених неједнакости, те као поље у којем су друштвени процеси прожети медијацијом технологије. Посебан акценат стављамо на представљање различитих нивоа дигиталних неједнакости и подела, укључујући први ниво дигиталне поделе који се односи на приступ Интернету, други ниво дигиталне поделе који има за циљ да диференцира бинарне неједнакости приступа Интернету од неједнакости у домену вештина и начина употребе, као и трећи ниво који

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отвара питање неједнакости које се јављају као последица употребе Интернета. У раду представљамо релевантна емпиријска истраживања из области са циљем да тестирамо нашу главну хипотезу, а то је претпоставка о релевантности хабитуса као адекватног концепта за ову врсту истраживања. Главна претпоставка рада је потврђена, тако да закључујемо да концепт хабитуса има и теоријски и методолошки значај у истраживању дигиталних подела и неједнакости.

Кључне речи: дигитализација, дигитална подела, друштвене неједнакости, хабитус, Пјер Бурдије.

INTRODUCTION

Today, digital technologies have relevance in almost every aspect of our daily lives. These technologies can indeed "be constitutive of new social dynamics, but they can also be derivative or merely reproduce older conditions" (Sassen, 2002, p. 365). Generally speaking, the latter seems to be the case when we consider the social inequalities in the development and use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). Digital media generates new and contradictory discourses about their cultural and social consequences. Questions about access to ICTs, but also the ways of their use, and the outcomes and inequalities implicated in their use are among the most important questions for sociologists in this field of research (Robinson et al, 2015).

The term *digitalisation* refers to technology and the transformation of data. But, it should also denote the whole network of communication and media technologies, practices and actions relating to these technologies and media, as well as the processes that shape these practices and actions. Like any other social field of practices, digitalisation is about social differentiation, divides and inequalities. Of particular importance, as the most ubiquitous media in this context, is the Internet, which is a *paradigm*, and the main lever of digitalisation and social transformation.

This is the case because, today, the key economic, social, political or cultural activities are enabled and structured by the Internet and its online networks. Furthermore, exclusion from these networks is one of the most harmful forms of exclusion and marginalisation in contemporary societies (Brydolf-Horwitz, 2018; Liu, Baumeister, Yang, & Hu, 2019), since it represents a crucial aspect of exclusion from one's social networks in general (see Allan & Phillipson, 2003).

In this respect, digital exclusion is prevalent in low-income communities (Powell, Bryne & Dailey 2010), among relatively deprived individuals (Helsper, 2017), in rural areas (Warren, 2007; Park, 2017), among women (Mariscal et al., 2019), the disabled (Macdonald & Clayton, 2011), users of mental health services (Greer et al., 2019), older adults (Gallisti et al., 2020), and especially in regards to adult learning (Gorard, Selwyn & Williams, 2000; Eynon & Helsper, 2011). Digital exclusion

was particularly notable during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Seifert, 2020), and it was also a critical issue in education (Madigan & Goodfellow, 2005; Rye, 2008; Sims, Vidgen, & Powell, 2008; Khalid & Pedersen, 2016).

The *digital* and the *social* exclusion variables directly influence each other, relating mostly to similar (economic, cultural, social, personal) fields of resources (Helsper, 2012). The digital divide still persists when it comes to gender, age, ethnicity or disability, depriving significant proportions of the population from the opportunity to use ICTs, and to participate in their digital and/or social communities. This is exactly why the whole field of research considering the use and the effects of ICTs is focused on the question of social inequalities (Chambers, 2006, p. 126).

In general, inequality is about the unequal possibilities of *access*, in terms of social class, gender, language, age, and cultural or geographical belonging (Goode, 2007). Social hierarchies are a cultural universal, regardless of their gross variation in type and degree (Brown, 1991). Social inequality usually implies a hierarchy in which some individuals have greater social power, status or influence than others, while inequality transforms into social stratification when differences in power or privilege become significant enough to form visible social strata or classes (Sanderson, 2001). Thus, it is possible to describe the changing patterns of social divides and inequalities in the process of sociocultural evolution (Lenski, 1966).

This is the reason why digital divides are visibly present across the stratified domains within one society, and from a comparative perspective. The Internet as a digital space is not just a medium of communication, but a medium for the accumulation of capital and the operation of global capital (Sassen, 1998). As we will put forth in this paper, Internet as a global social and spatial structure seems to be deeply dependent on territoriality and space, which is shaped by national, legal, administrative and cultural frameworks (Sassen, 2007). This speaks in favour of the need for the comparative research of a wide range of levels of social inequalities, from global to local (and macro and micro) perspectives.

The sociological and anthropological study of social structures implies two types of basic units – the relational characteristics which arise from the location and interaction between individuals (which translate into institutions or macro patterns), and the relational characteristics among groups and social associations which have a common interaction and affiliation, distinguishing them from out-group entities (Smelser, 1988). These two relationships can be represented as both micro and macro aspects of social structure. In addition, the basic elements of interaction must also be *repetitive* in space and time (see also Giddens, 1984; Collins, 2004), which applies to the social practice of digitalisation as well.

When we consider inequalities, we first think of economic inequalities, as an unequal distribution of wealth. However, this type of social inequality represents only one aspect of the spectrum. The links between social inequality and human emotions are also interesting, since there exists a predictive correspondence between how the actor feels and the social conditions under which the actor's feelings unfold (Thamm, 1992), especially in the digital sphere.

In different sociological research, there seems to be a consensus that inequality is always a multidimensional phenomenon (Collins, 1975). From a theoretical perspective, all hierarchical systems (including class, status, notions of prestige, or any ranking system) represent the implications of social variation concerning the processes of conflict and consensus. The social logic of inequalities remains the same, no matter the field of practice, including the social practices of digitalisation, and the creation and use of technology.

The general research question in this paper is the question of what kind of social inequalities exist in the field of the use of ICTs, particularly the Internet. Our specific research question is whether, and to what extent, the concept of habitus, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2013), is an adequate research tool in the field. To answer these questions, we will look for examples in the empirical research studies regarding social divides and digital inequalities. Our assumption is that the concept of habitus is particularly significant in the research of (digital) social inequalities, since it points to the social background, and to the cultural and social capital of individuals, as well as their capacities for social action. Thus, our research task is to perform a critical review of relevant studies in this research field, and to demonstrate why we find this concept relevant through concrete examples.

DIMENSIONS AND LEVELS OF DIGITAL INEQUALITIES AND DIGITAL DIVIDES

Digital inequalities are a common subject of sociological research because they point to "the disparities in the structure of access to and use of ICTs" and "the ways in which longstanding social inequalities shape beliefs and expectations regarding ICTs and its impact on life chances" (Kvasny, 2006, p. 160). According to Christoph Lutz, it is recommended to speak about inequalities in plural rather than the singular form, in order to stress the fact of "the plurality, multi-dimensionality and complexity of social stratification in the context of digital technology" (Lutz, 2019, p. 145). Research and literature on digital inequalities have found that they tend to mirror existing social inequalities (Robinson et al., 2015; see also Helsper, 2012), since the online and the offline social worlds closely resemble each other (Wellman & Hampton, 1999). This also implies that

'traditionally disadvantaged citizens' become disadvantaged in a similar way when it comes to the access to and use of the Internet, or the possibilities to develop digital skills (Hargittai, 2002; Zillien & Hargittai, 2009).

Scholars have widened the understanding of digital inequalities by suggesting that there are different *levels* of social inequality and exclusion. For example, differences are identified at the level of technical access (physical availability) and social access (including knowledge and skills). Thus, it is possible to identify the overlapping factors of social exclusion (low income, physical or mental disability etc.), digital exclusion (lack of hardware devices and Internet service), and the issues of accessibility (rural-urban divide, ICT illiteracy, etc.) (Khalid & Pedersen, 2016). According to Norris (2001, p. 4), divides exist at three levels:

> The global divide, refers to the divergence of Internet access between industrialized and developing societies. The *social divide* concerns the gap between information rich and poor in each nation. An finally within the online community, the *democratic divide* signifies the difference between those who do, and do not, use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life.

DiMaggio and Hargittai (2001) differentiate five dimensions along which these divides exist:

> technical means (software, hardware, connectivity quality), autonomy of use (location of access, freedom to use the medium for one's preferred activities), use patterns (types of uses of the Internet), social support networks (availability of others one can turn to for assistance with use, size of networks to encourage use), and skill (one's ability to use the medium effectively).
>
> (also in: Hargittai, 2002)

The digital divide is also a concept that has been measured and researched on 'internal' and 'external' country levels, either focusing on one country or approaching the matter from a comparative perspective. In both cases, this concept highlights the "gaps between groups of people, whether these people are grouped by socio-economic status, geographic location or other characteristics" (Petrović et al., 2012, p. 598). That is why researchers like Norris (2001) conclude that the Internet and the digital environment did not create or enable social mobility, nor did they lead to less stratified societies.

In this regard, Christoph Lutz (2019) offered a comprehensive and inclusive typology, by distinguishing first-, second-, and third-level digital divides. This distinction "has emerged organically" and is based on over more than two decades of research in the field.

The first-level digital divide refers to "the gap between those who do and those who do not have access to new forms of information tech-

nology" (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 221-222; Lutz, 2019, p. 142). Research on this level often relied on large scale surveys, and confirmed inequalities in Internet access, either between different population segments or groups (race or gender gaps, for instance) or differences between states, mirroring global economic and social inequalities. For example, "while Internet access might be mostly saturated in rich countries, the same cannot be said about social media access", "the mobile Internet", or "the AI-powered technologies such as smart speakers, smart homes, social robots, and Internet-of-things (IoT) applications" (Lutz, 2019, p. 142). A good example for "a theory-based first-level digital divide approach" is Napoli and Obar's (2014) study and the notion of the "mobile internet underclass", developed in order to discuss mobile Internet access.

The term second-level digital divide was coined by Hargittai (2002), and it aims to "differentiate binary inequalities in Internet access (first-level) from inequalities in skills and uses (second-level)" (Lutz, 2019, p. 143). Studies concerning this level have shown differentiated inequalities along the socio-economic lines. For example, Blank and Groselj (2014), in a study conducted on a sample of British Internet users, showed how age, gender and education have a substantial effect on how often individuals use the Internet, and identified ten types of Internet use. The point is that each type of use reveals a different social structuration. There are numerous research studies in the field that point to the differences in online participation (social media particularly). According to the Pew Research Center (Pew, 2018), "age has proven to be a strong predictor of online participation and social media use, and some platforms are clearly gendered" (see also: Lutz, 2019, p. 143).

Finally, the third-level digital divide refers to the outcomes of Internet use (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste & Shafer, 2004), implying gaps in individuals' "capacity to translate their internet access and use into favorable offline outcomes" (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2015, p. 30; see also: Lutz, 2019, p. 144). The outcomes of Internet use encompass both its benefits and its harmful effects. Researchers in the field thus investigate "tangible offline outcomes from Internet use in economic, social, political, and cultural terms" (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2015; Lutz, 2019, p. 144). Results indicate that uses and skills, as well as the attitudes of Internet users, are more predictive as outcomes than demographic or socioeconomic characteristics (Lutz, 2019, p. 144).

In this manner, the disadvantaged position of different social groups usually influences the outcomes of Internet use. For example, Madden et al. (2017, p. 68) show that "marginal Internet users" are more likely to "engage in online behaviors that make them susceptible to potential privacy problems, such as being tracked with third-party cookies or unwittingly disclosing their information to fraudulent or predatory websites". The research of this dimension demonstrates how digital environ-

ment reinforces or reproduces already established social/structural inequalities, rather than changing them. Besides, there are many other topics and research problems, such as the question of the so-called 'digital traces', algorithmic surveillance or dataveillance, and algorithmic bias and data-based discrimination (Lutz, 2019). In the following section, we shall turn our attention to the concept of (digital) habitus, and its possibilities and constraints in the context of the research of digital inequalities.

(DIGITAL) HABITUS AS A RESEARCH CONCEPT

Research on digital inequalities points to the ways in which social factors influence activities related to the access to and the use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet. There are different approaches developed in the field. The so-called interpretative approaches aim to understand people's 'interaction with algorithms'. They could be "complemented by surveys and experiments to quantify and generalize individual's understanding" (Lutz, 2019, p. 144). Actor-network theories, and feminist theories and approaches also have significance as "promising ways forward in understanding digital social inequality" (Halford & Savage, 2010, p. 947).

Bourdieu's theory of practice (2013) is our focus, and particularly his concept of *habitus*. Some researchers have already demonstrated that it is a useful conceptual tool in the studies of digital inequalities (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017). The key concepts of Bourdieu's theory of practice seem to have significance in this field of research, since they are 'calibrated' to explain social (class, cultural) differences and inequalities (Štrangarić, 2017; Marković Krstić and Milošević Radulović, 2020). For example, this is the case with the concept of the *field* (Hilgers and Mangez, 2015), which is significant in the research of Internet use as well (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017, p. 952). There are many other examples of digital divide research studies that rely on Bourdieu's concept of the field (Zillien and Marr, 2013; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008; Levina and Arriaga, 2014).

Bourdieu's concept of *capital* is also used in this research area, when (re)conceptualised as the information capital or *digital* capital. Although the early conceptualisation of information capital derives from other researchers, Van Dijk's (2005) notion remains the most influential. It deals with the type of capital that is achieved through financial resources and the possibilities of access to digital networks, technical skills, attitudes, valuing, as well as the ability to find the "right information" or relevant sources online (Van Dijk, 2005, pp. 72-73). It is, like the symbolic and cultural, a 'secondary form' of capital.

Habitus is one of the best known and most influential theoretical concepts developed by Bourdieu. He conceptualised it in the 1960s, and he

surely did not have the 'digital environment' in mind. Some critics argued about the complexity and constraints of the concept, such as its imprecision or implausibility, and problems with its operationalisation (DiMaggio, 1979; Goldthorpe, 2007; Ambrasat et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it proved to be relevant in the context of digital research, as we shall demonstrate.

In short, habitus is a system of *dispositions*, understood as manners of being, seeing, acting or thinking. It is a system of 'long-lasting' (rather than permanent) structures of perception, conception and action (Bourdieu, 2013). It refers to people's thoughts and practices in everyday life, which are *socially learned* and usually taken for granted. Habitus is a scheme or a disposition that is not just limiting, but also enabling. It has a 'generative capacity' and both the subjective and objective dimensions. They stand in dialectic relation, and this concept attempts to overcome the dualism of subject and object (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 782).

One of the most important functions of habitus, especially in empirical social research, is its capacity to explain *distinctions* (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus points to cultural differences and inequalities, but also implies political and class dimensions (Birešev, 2014). It is a dynamic concept 'inscribed' in social actors as a 'sense for practice' (*Fr. sens pratique;* Bourdieu, 1980). In other words, it enables individuals to economise with their practices and actions. Bourdieu conducted research among the Kabyle community in Algeria to investigate how habitus 'functions' in practice (Bourdieu, 2013), with social actors being left with the possibility to carry out strategies that are prescribed and 'already there'. This is not to say that the behaviour of individuals is absolutely determined, since the concept of habitus leaves the possibility for 'creativity' to exist in social actors. This is something we should recognise in different aspect of everyday life, and in the use of ICTs as well.

Considering the use of this concept in research of the Internet and the digital environment in general, it can be said that habitus becomes an important notion for the depiction of social inequalities. For example, such is the case in research regarding the differences in attitudes towards the ICTs (Kvasny, 2005). The question is how individuals with different 'social biographies' and social status form their attitudes or 'use' the discourses about these technologies. The concept of habitus in this kind of research is crucial, since it helps to focus on the question how social actors with different social backgrounds (class, status) use technology *as a resource* for different purposes.

A remarkably interesting and important study was conducted by Laura Robinson (2009), who used the term 'information habitus'. Her research was about access to, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among families with low or middle-range incomes in rural areas in California. Robinson spoke of *playful habitus*, a characteristic of families with higher incomes, since it was something like

a 'serious game' when it came to the use of ICTs. This type of habitus promotes technological engagement and the learning of skills (Robinson, 2009; Ignatow &. Robinson, 2017, p. 954). On the other hand, among families with lower incomes, she identified the *task-oriented habitus*, and something she characterised as a 'taste for the necessary'.

This is a concept already developed by Bourdieu. He attributed it to the lower social strata ('popular classes') and to their conditions of scarcity and desire. Bourdieu's original claims were about working-class families' "choice of the necessary" and "taste for necessity", made out of social need (Bourdieu, 1984; Deeming, 2014). In Robinson's research, it was about the attempt to situate new media use within respondents' larger lifeworlds, and to examine the effects of digital inequality on the economically disadvantaged American youth (Robinson, 2009, p. 488).

Robinson thus analyses the dramatic divergence in informational habitus internalised by the respondents with varied access to primary resources. In order to grasp "how individuals relate to IT resources" (Robinson, 2009, p. 491), she claims that it is first necessary to understand "how their informational habitus emerges from their experiences of scarcity and abundance with respect to other primary goods" *(ibid.).* What was evident is that "the enactment of these dispositions creates distinctive patterns of usage that are best understood as outcomes of the different forms of habitus that correspond to Bourdieu's opposed categories of 'playing seriously' and 'the taste for the necessary'" (Robinson, 2009, pp. 492-493). As a result, Robinson identifies different kinds of information habitus: the *playful* information habitus that "allows individuals to derive the benefits that accompany open-ended roaming and browsing" (Robinson, 2009, p. 493); and the *task-oriented* information habitus, recorded with respondents "without plentiful resources" (*ibid.*) that are "constrained in terms of both access and autonomy" (*ibid.*), enacting "a 'taste for the necessary' in their rationing of internet use" (*ibid.*).

We can recognise two important aspects of using the concept of habitus in this case. It is a concept that can be *multiplied,* or adapted to the complexities and particularities of the social situation in focus. There is no prescribed 'number' or quantity of habitus(es), nor is it just a firm and unchangeable quality of a particular social class. In other words, this is a concept that allows for flexibility and adaptation. Still, habitus remains relatively stable, despite the development of new technologies and new disciplinary frameworks in social sciences, allowing for additional explanations and development, which is also important for this paper.

For instance, habitus is crucial in the research of "the ways in which longstanding social inequalities shape beliefs and expectations regarding ICT and its impact on life chances" (Kvasny, 2006, p. 160), or in the research of the 'digital disconnect' and social exclusion (McChesney, 2013). Studies already show the existence of structural social differences

and inequalities which impact the development of digital literacy (Lareau, 2011). One study from Italy clearly demonstrated that young people from different social classes spend their time online in different ways (Micheli, 2015), either in search of information important for their education and to acquire some form of capital (in higher classes) or to merely play or amuse themselves (in lower classes).

There is no possibility to make conclusions about the far-reaching implications of the use of habitus in this kind of research. What we wanted to show, however, is the importance of this concept in both theoretical and methodological terms. It seems that the concept of habitus, applied to digital practices, has enough 'methodological flexibility'. This is the case because it opens up a whole field of numerous operationalisations through the development of its subtypes. This was clearly demonstrated by Robinson's research and the case with different information habitus(es). At the same time, it seems that this concept opens up many other theoretical possibilities. It is not just a concept that we can use to explain social practices, but a concept that can be used to explain social practices and social differentiations (or inequalities) that are changing and provoking the need for a further theoretical 'calibration' of the concept. The general conclusion is as follows: habitus is still relevant, and it is a pivotal concept related to the identification and explanation of social inequalities, both in the physical reality and in the online sphere.

Furthermore, it seems that the concept of information habitus is also plausible in the context of the wide understanding of the different levels of digital inequalities. This is the case because researchers in the field identified differences at the level of both technical access (physical availability) and social access (knowledge and skills). Information habitus seems to bridge these differences, since it is able to identify the importance of both aspects of social inequality.

When it comes to the typology of digital divides offered by Christoph Lutz (2019), information habitus also seems as a flexible concept able to grasp different levels, including the access to information technology (first-level digital divide), and the second-level that differentiates between the users' skills and different uses among users. Consequentially, the third-level digital divide emerges, as do the gaps in individuals' "capacity to translate their internet access and use into favorable offline outcomes" (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2015, p. 30; see also: Lutz, 2019, p. 144).

It is also important to mention the criticism of the concept of habitus – for instance, the approach of Anthony King (2000). He argues that Bourdieu was right for insisting on the flexibility of habitus and the possibility of it encompassing and recognising both the *opus operatum* of structure, and the *modus operandi* of practice (King, 2000, p. 426). Robinson's study in particular seems to confirm this, as it concerns the theoretical and methodological flexibility of the concept, as well as its 'expli-

cative power'. However, we should not forget that this concept is a part of the following 'theoretical formula': [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice (Bourdieu, 1984). In case we recognise and accept the critique of habitus as an 'objectivist' theoretical concept which is hard to operationalise, and which struggles to explain social change, we could possibly find 'a way out' of circularity or objectivistic implications only by taking into account the entirety of Bourdieu's theory of practice. Empirical research requires the application of the entirety of Bourdieu's 'theoretical formula' if we want to raise the possibilities for its explicative potential (Spasić, 2013; Costa and Murphy, 2015).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we attempted to demonstrate the potential of Bourdieu's concept of habitus in the research of social inequalities in the field of digital practices. We deliberately did not pay particular attention to theoretical discussions, or the advances and detailed critiques of this concept. Despite the theoretical issues, the empirical research we refer to undoubtedly shows the flexibility of the concept and the possibilities for its advancement. Furthermore, the presented research indicates the creation of socially stratified patterns of perception, classification, meaning creation, and social action.

Communities on the Internet are real communities, implying that the Internet is not just a medium which exists 'out there', but a social fact which must be understood in relation to local culture (Wellman & Hampton, 1999). According to Barry Wellman, while humans used to live in 'little boxes', today they live in 'networked societies'. Although networked communities can be divided into 'online' and 'offline'communities, there is *no* sharp distinction between online and offline social connections and relationships. They overlap and reinforce each other, which also includes the prevalent social divides and inequalities (see also Wellman, Boase, & Chen, 2002).

In today's world, with its ubiquitous digital practices, the importance of the research on digital inequalities is reflected in the fact that there is no equal access to and use of the Internet and digital technologies. This research field could help us recognise the constraints of the technologies themselves, their potentials for social change, and the changes in people's chances in life. However, it is hard to foresee the changes in this dynamic field of development. If we bear in mind the past and current experiences in our sociocultural evolution (Lenski, 1966; Sanderson, 2001), we could ultimately conclude that the levels of inequalities will possibly become more and more differentiated and stratified in accordance with the development of more differentiated and sophisticated digital technologies or ICTs.

Finally, we can conclude that Bourdieu's concept of habitus could be *revitalised* in the field of digital research, since it provides many conceptual resources. On the one hand, the rise and the importance of digital media technologies create new domains and practices, but on the other hand, they seem to replicate existing social patterns, divides and inequalities.

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КОНЦЕПТ ХАБИТУСА У ИСТРАЖИВАЊУ ДИГИТАЛНИХ ПОДЕЛА И НЕЈЕДНАКОСТИ

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Резиме

Тема којом се бавимо у овом истраживању је питање релевантности концепта хабитуса, који је развио француски социолог Пјер Бурдије, у истраживањима друштвених неједнакости и подела у дигиталним праксама. Истраживачко питање се односи на то које врсте друштвених неједнакости постоје у домену информационих и комуникационих технологија (ИКТ), а посебно Интернета, и на то да ли је Бурдијеов концепт хабитуса адекватно теоријско-методолошко оруђе за емпиријска истраживања у наведеном подручју. У раду представљамо типологије дигиталних неједнакости и подела, укључујући први ниво дигиталне поделе који се односи на приступ Интернету, други ниво дигиталне поделе који има за циљ да диференцира бинарне неједнакости приступа Интернету од неједнакости у домену вештина и начина употребе, као и трећи ниво који отвара питање неједнакости које се јављају као последица употребе Интернета. Како бисмо одговорили на истраживачко питање и потврдили или одбацили хипотезу о адекватности концепта хабитуса у истраживањима дигиталних подела и неједнакости, у раду смо направили преглед релевантних емпиријских истраживања. Један од најважнијих примера који издвајамо је употреба и разрада концепта хабитуса као „информационог хабитуса“, где се концепт диференцира у складу са различитим начинима коришћења ИКТ и употребом Интернета. Такође указујемо на значај употребе концепта хабитуса у истраживањима која се баве неједнакостима као дугорочно успостављеним друштвеним трендовима који имају везе са употребом ИКТ, али и животним шансама. Студије такође указују и на постојање структуралних друштвених неједнакости које утичу на развој дигиталне писмености. Иако не постоји могућност да се донесе закључак о коначним импликацијама употребе хабитуса у овој области, на основу типологије подела, неједнакости и емпиријских истраживања која приказујемо закључујемо да хабитус има и теоријски и методолошки значај у наведеној области. Другим речима, закључујемо да је у питању концепт који не само да има потенцијал за објашњење, већ представља истраживачку алатку коју је, управо кроз поменута и слична истраживања, могуће даље развијати.